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Swiss English teachers and Euro-English: Attitudes to a non-native variety

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Englisch hat sich in den letzten 20 Jahren zur grössten Lingua Franca in Europa entwickelt und wird wahrscheinlich von einem grösseren Prozentsatz der Bevölkerung verwendet als in Indien oder West-Afrika, wo bereits regionale Varietäten des Englischen entstanden sind. Corpus-basierte Studien über die englische Sprache als Lingua Franca in Europa sind bereits durchgeführt worden, und bis in ein paar Jahren können wir mit Beschreibungen des 'Euro-Englischen' rechnen. Während die präzise linguistische Beschreibung dieses Phänomens noch aussteht, haben wir eine Untersuchung über die Einstellung von Schweizer Englisch-Lehrkräften zum 'Euro-Englisch' sowie zu den möglichen Veränderungen, die eine nicht-native Varietät des Englischen mit sich bringen könnte, durchgeführt. Unsere Fragebögen wurden von einer repräsentativen Auswahl von 253 Schweizer Englischlehrern beantwortet. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass entgegen den Erwartungen Englisch-Lehrkräfte mit englischer Muttersprache einer nicht-nativen Variante gegenüber toleranter eingestellt sind als Nicht-Muttersprachler. Ein Wechsel zum 'Euro-Englisch' als Zielsprache würde aber in den Augen vieler Englisch-Lehrkräfte eine Veränderung in Bezug auf Fehlerbehandlung und Prüfungskriterien bedingen, da heute meistens viel Wert auf die Unterschiede zwischen nativem und nicht-nativem Englisch gelegt wird.

1. Introduction

The number of non-native speakers of English in the world is somewhere between 450 and 1350 million (Crystal 1997). With the total number of native speakers estimated at under 350 million, English is clearly spoken by many more non-native than native speakers[1]. In other words, English has within a relatively short time become a language used by far more bilingual and multilingual than monolingual speakers, with consequences for the language that are both predictable and unpredictable. One predictable consequence is that, as the number of L2 speakers of English increases, the use of English as a lingua franca will become ever more common.

In discussions of what has come to be known as World English, Global English or English as an International Language, Kachru's designations of *inner circle* (for countries where English is spoken as the main L1, e.g. in the U.S. or Australia), *outer circle* (for countries where English is officially used for intranational purposes, e.g. in India or Nigeria) and *expanding circle* (for countries where English is widely studied as a foreign language, e.g. in China

1 Non-native to native speaker ratios for English are estimated at anywhere between 2 to 1 and 4 to 1 (Seidlhofer 2002b).

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or Switzerland) are frequently used to refer to the varying roles played by English (Kachru & Nelson 2001:13). In outer circle countries, which tend to be former colonies, English plays an institutionalized role in education, law, and government and is therefore actually only used by certain strata of the population. This long and widespread use of English has led to relatively stable and 'standardizing' (Crystal 1995) varieties such as Nigerian English, Hong Kong English or Indian English, which recently have achieved some degree of recognition through codification.

However, the outer circle countries are no longer the only places where English is used as a lingua franca. In the last 20 years, as the nations of Europe have grown closer politically, English has also started to take on a new role here. As Graddol (2001:47) points out, "English is now more widely spoken [in Europe] than in many of the former British colonies .... Furthermore, there is a serious debate about whether English has already become, or should become, the lingua franca of Europe".

2. European multilingualism and a new variety of English

As multilingual Europe grows and new links are forged, communication in English is becoming increasingly common. According to the most recent Eurobarometer survey (2001:82-86), 32% of the continental EU population knows English well enough to hold a conversation in it, making English the leading foreign language in the EU, followed at considerable distance by French (11%), German (8%) and Spanish (5%). In fact, up to 80% of the population of some northern European countries (NL, S, DK) now say they can speak English conversationally, although the figures for southern Europe are much lower (around 18-28% for I, P and E). The Eurobarometer results also reveal that EU residents regard English as the most useful language to know, with the language receiving 80-90% of the vote not only among residents of Scandinavia but also among those of Spain, France and Greece. Perhaps most telling of all, however, are the generational differences within European countries: an earlier survey revealed, for example, that the proportion of French youth (aged 15-24) claiming to speak English is 5.5 times higher than that of their compatriots over the age of 54 (Graddol 2001:49). It therefore seems fairly clear that English will increasingly predominate as the main foreign language in Europe for the next 30-40 years at least.

The use of English among younger Europeans is high due both to its prevalence in popular culture and sports and to its accessibility. Over the past

50 years English has supplanted French and German as the first foreign language in almost all European schools, and has even become compulsory in a third of them (Truchot 2002). A further contributing factor to its increasingly widespread use among younger adults is that English instruction is becoming longer due to its introduction in primary schools, where "early learning of languages has benefited English almost exclusively" (Truchot 2002:8).

Two principal domains of English use as a lingua franca in Europe are in scientific communication and business. The education systems in Europe, particularly at the university level, are in the process of becoming more mutually compatible, with the result that English is becoming more prevalent not only as the lingua franca of research but also of instruction (cf. Ammon 2001). It should therefore surprise no one that EU research programmes are administered completely in English.

In business, English has always been important in US-dominated multinationals, but even among merging European firms with no US or British parent companies (e.g. ABB, Aventis, Novartis, Alcatel), English is frequently chosen as the company language. The reasons for this are at least fourfold: a high percentage of employees can be counted upon to know English; English appears to be a neutral choice for many European companies; English opens up communication with the rest of the world; English is currently prestigious. As Truchot provocatively remarks, "What gives English its status ... is not so much its utilitarian function as the prestige attached to it and the social role attributed to it" (Truchot 2002:21).

Even at EU headquarters in Brussels, where one would expect a model of European multilingualism, there is widespread official use of English, especially with the widening of the EU. Dollerup reports that French is used extensively by permanent staff among themselves, but English is often used as a lingua franca in working groups: "All told English is slowly but surely gaining ground as the major working language at meetings, formally as well as informally", with each expansion further strengthening the position of English in Brussels (1996:35). Brussels neatly exemplifies the paradox of a continental European variety of English. On the one hand, there is the traditional European ideal of national identity embodied in one language and culture represented by rules guaranteeing the use of all members' languages; on the other, there is a new political will to unify and communicate, even if that means favouring one language – with the multitude of non-European values it has come to symbolize - over all others.

The case for the existence of English as a European lingua franca has thus been made[2]; the question of whether it is a stabilizing variety of English and, if so, what this variety is like, remain to be answered.

3. Describing Euro-English[3]

What might a European variety English be like? Projects aimed at collecting and analyzing samples of intra-European English have been launched in the last few years, but a linguistic description still lies some distance in the future. Seidlhofer and colleagues from the University of Vienna are working on the compilation of the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), a corpus of spoken English. James (2000) also mentions a pilot project on the English used as a lingua franca by German, Italian, Friulian and Slovenian speakers in the Alpine-Adriatic region. Finally, here in Switzerland, a major study of Pan-Swiss English (the English used as a lingua franca by German-, French- and Italian-speaking Swiss), was inaugurated in 2001[4]. These projects have been undertaken in the belief that extensive use of English as a lingua franca in Europe is leading to the emergence of one or more endonormative indigenous varieties that, given adequate research, can be described and, if desired, codified and taught using appropriate instructional materials (Seidlhofer 2001c).

In the absence of a description, we can still speculate with some degree of certainty as to how Euro-English probably differs from native speaker varieties. Crystal (1995:362) points out that countable/uncountable distinctions present problems for non-native users of English with a range of L1s, allowing the prediction that forms such as *an advice* and *advices* or *an information* and *informations* will turn up in Euro-English data. Seidlhofer (2002b:19) reports

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2 The fact that Europe is embracing English as never before does not, of course, mean that Europe is about to become a monolingual English-speaking area. As House argues,

"Paradoxical as this may seem, the very spread of English can motivate speakers of other languages to insist on their own local language for identification, for binding them emotionally to their own cultural and historical tradition. There is no need to set up an old-fashioned dichotomy between local languages and English as the 'hegemonic aggressor': there is a place for both, because they fulfil different functions.... Using English as a lingua franca in Europe does not inhibit linguistic diversity, and it unites more than it divides, simply because it may be 'owned' by all Europeans – not as a cultural symbol, but as a means of enabling understanding" (2001:84).

3 The term Euro-English was first used to denote the particular register of English spoken by bureaucrats in multinational discussions in Brussels, but is also used to denote the emerging variety of English spoken as a lingua franca by EU residents.

4 The Pan-Swiss English project, supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation, is being carried out by the English departments at the universities of Bern and Fribourg.

that preliminary data reveals Euro-English communication to be unhampered by certain non-native forms normally considered to be errors. Such 'errors' include dropping the –s from third person present tense verbs, using the relative pronouns *who* for things (e.g. *a book who*) and *which* for people (e.g. *a friend which*), and omitting definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in native speaker language use.

We can also predict that Euro-English speakers will regularly use structures like *I know him for a long time* (instead of *I have known him ...*) or *if there would have been more Polish voters* (instead of *if there had been*), or *the situation gets worse* (instead of *is getting worse*) because such usage can be regularly heard on international radio or television from extremely articulate European speakers of English. Word order differences, particularly those involving adverbs and objects, can also be predicted to exist in Euro-English, as can the use of apparently English loan words (or 'pseudo-transfers'), such as *handy*, *fitness* and *dancing* in Switzerland, which have different meanings for British or American users.

On a more subtle level, as Görlach (1999) points out, a European variety might differ from English as a native language (ENL), not due to violation of ENL rules, but to relative overuse or underuse of certain syntactic patterns. Thus, for example, Euro-English speakers might tend to say *they have the possibility* rather than *they can*, or *already last year* instead of *as early as last year*.

4. Euro-English and the native-speaker monopoly in English Language Teaching (ELT)

If Euro-English were one day to become a recognized, standardizing variety of World English, would it be a target language to be taught in European schools? And, if this were the case, how might English teaching have to change? These are among the questions that arise as work on the description of Euro-English progresses.

The target language where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) is today almost exclusively an idealized form of some ENL variety, usually British or American English. Learners are corrected when they deviate from ENL usage; test results usually reflect how close learners come to ENL competence; teachers monitor learners speaking in groups, noting mistakes that go unnoticed by the learners themselves, but which 'might impede

communication with native speakers'. In Europe as elsewhere, the focus of English teaching

> ... has so far remained very much on 'cumulative' proficiency (becoming better at speaking and writing English as native speakers do) and on the goal of successful communication with native speakers and for some levels, approximating native-like command of the language. (Seidlhofer 2002b:13)

Not only do teaching materials around the world take ENL as their model, but they also largely represent English as communication between two native speakers or between native and non-native speakers. Despite its prevalence in the real world, communication in English between two non-native speakers is for the most part ignored[5]. This is quite possibly the result of a long tradition in linguistics and applied linguistics that makes the native speaker the measure of all things. Native speaker culture, furthermore, regularly provides the content or context for English lessons.

If Euro-English were accorded primacy or even co-primacy with ENL in European schools, however, authentic native-speaker language and culture, which are key selling points in ELT today, would have to be reconsidered, relativized and re-packaged. As Graddol (2001:51) notes:

> The European experience represents a radically new context for English as a second language, both in terms of Europe's own cultural legacies regarding the learning of languages and in terms of the functions which English is expected to serve.

Thus, with a considerable effort of imagination, we can envisage a (partly idealized) standard variety of Euro-English as the target language in European classrooms, embodied in authentic conversations and written communication between competent L2 speakers with the odd ENL speaker thrown in for color. European and other non-Anglophone countries would provide the situational background, and strong emphasis might be placed on accommodation to a variety of Euro-English accents and speech styles.

One factor that makes it difficult to imagine Euro-English as a future target language is the current dominance of ENL speakers in English language teaching. In addition to being the key actors in course books, native speakers dominate international English teaching journals, teaching materials production and EFL examinations. Above all, native speakers are used to being authorities on what is and what is not English, and understandably find it extremely difficult to relinquish the long-held and privileged position of being arbiters of normal or correct usage. As can be imagined, non-native English

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5 This is not the case in some teaching materials for international Business English.

teachers are at a distinct disadvantage in areas of the ELT world where a 'perfect' command of ENL is assumed to be necessary, and may thus enjoy less prestige and power – especially on an international level. As Medgyes writes:

> For non-natives ... a deficient command of English is a source of constant dismay. And this handicap is all-embracing: compared to native speakers, they do less well in every aspect of language performance, as a rule. ... We are in constant distress as we realize how little we know about the language we are supposed to teach (Medgyes 1994:15/40).

It is therefore interesting to speculate on the effects that the establishment of a non-native variety such as Euro-English might have on the native/non-native balance of power in ELT. Would non-native speaker teachers become the arbiters of correctness? Or would correctness lose its importance in examinations, making way for different criteria more closely connected with successful communication? Would ELT materials change to reflect more typical Euro-English communication situations? With questions such as these in mind, we decided to survey a cross-section of Swiss native-speaker and non-native speaker teachers of English.

5. The survey of Swiss English Teachers

Although it is not (yet) a Member State of the European Union, Switzerland is very much a party to the changing use of English in Europe, as many of the other articles in this volume attest. In addition, with four national and dozens of immigrant languages, Switzerland is in some ways a microcosm of Europe. With these linguistic facts in mind, we[6] decided to survey Swiss English teachers' general reception of Euro-English, as well as their attitudes to changes in native-speaker prestige and power that a larger role for Euro-English in ELT might entail.

A questionnaire (see Appendix) was sent by post and e-mail to English teachers in private and state schools in the three main language regions of Switzerland. These teachers were encouraged to copy and distribute the questionnaire to colleagues, so that single questionnaires multiplied to become clusters of questionnaires from schools around the country. In all, 253 questionnaires were returned. Of the respondents, 69.8% were from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, 21.0% from the French-speaking part and 3.6% from the Italian-speaking part, which is reasonably close to Swiss

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6 The original survey was conceived by Maria Dessaux-Barberio, Jackie Gottschalk and the author.

language proportions in the general population, although Italian should have been somewhat higher[7]. Just over half, or 54.6%, were native speakers of English, 41.1% were non-native speakers, and 4.3% claimed to be full bilinguals. The high proportion of native-speaker respondents is probably due to using a large teachers' organization to channel the distribution, although it may also reflect a greater readiness on the part of native speakers to give their opinions on English. Among respondents, 44.4% were teachers of adults exclusively, while 55.6% taught children or teenagers or a mixture of age-groups.

The aims of the questionnaire were twofold. First, we wanted to find out about teachers' attitudes to changes which Euro-English might conceivably bring to ELT, and second, we wanted to explore the acceptability of certain types of Euro-English formulations. The questionnaire was therefore divided into two parts. In the first part, respondents were asked to react to six statements dealing with issues of power and authority related to Euro-English (e.g. "Learners should have more say in whether they imitate native or non-native speakers") by using a 5-point scale of responses ranging from 'strongly agree' through 'don't know' to 'strongly disagree'. In the second part, they were asked to judge whether 11 sentences, each containing one grammatical or lexical particularity of Euro-English, were either 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable' as English. Questionnaires were collated and responses subjected to statistical tests. The individual questionnaire items will be described in more detail in the next section.

6. Results: Swiss teachers' views on standards and authority in ELT

6.1. TEACHERS

Statement 1: Native speakers should respect the English usage of non-native speakers more.

Statement 1 was aimed at finding out whether teachers thought rejection of Euro-English might be a sign of disrespect for non-native-speaker English in general. Overall, a comfortable majority (67.6%) of respondents agreed with the statement, that is, they felt non-native-speaker English usage deserved more respect. However, there was a highly significant difference (t-test for

7 A further 5.6 % said that they taught in areas where both German and French are spoken.

means; $p<.001$) between native and non-native speaker teachers, with native speakers agreeing with the statement much more strongly. This was a surprising outcome: we had expected the strongest agreement from non-native teachers, who might have felt looked down upon by native speaker teachers because they lack ENL competence and cultural knowledge.

Statement 2: Non-native teachers might be in a better position than native speaker teachers to judge which varieties of English are most appropriate for their learners.

This statement raised the issue of what kinds of linguistic competence enable teachers to choose appropriate language models for their students. Respondents had no clear preference, with approximately equal numbers agreeing and disagreeing with the statement. The item also received the highest percentage (24.5%) of 'Don't know' responses. There was no difference between native and non-native speaker teachers.

6.2. LEARNERS and LEARNING

Statement 3: Learners should have more say in whether they imitate native or non-native speakers.

Statement 3 was an attempt to find out how teachers felt about consulting learners on the variety of English used as a model in their classes, and in the context, raised the possibility that some learners might prefer non-ENL models. For the group of respondents as a whole, there was no clear majority, although over 10% more disagreed with the statement than agreed. More detailed analysis revealed that teachers of adults were balanced in their pro and con responses, while 60% of teachers of teenagers and children disagreed, indicating perhaps that they thought children might choose inappropriate models.

Statement 4: I think I should spend more time getting students to communicate in English instead of spending hours trying to eradicate mistakes that are typical of Euro-English.

This statement aimed at eliciting teachers' opinions on whether they would ideally prefer either to foster communication in Euro-English or to push learners towards a closer approximation to ENL forms through error correction. A large majority of 78.4% backed communication, and a very small proportion said they didn't know (5.7%). A number of respondents commented that they already did devote much more time to communication than to

corrective exercises. Separate analysis of native speaker and non-native speaker responses revealed that the latter agreed significantly ($p<.005$) less strongly than their native-speaker colleagues. Teachers of children and teens also agreed less strongly ($p<.005$) than those of adults.

6.3. TEACHING MATERIALS

Statement 5: Most of the situations in my course book assume that my learners will later be speaking English with native speakers; I think there should be more situations showing non-native speakers communicating with each other.

Statement 5 took up the issue of whether the reality of Euro-English situations should be portrayed in course books. Thus it represented a move toward greater authenticity and away from the current under-representation of lingua franca English use. The proportion of 'Don't know' responses was low this time, but only a slim majority of 51.4% agreed. A comparison of native and non-native speaker responses revealed a highly significant ($p<.001$) difference, with native speakers tending to show weak agreement and non-native speakers tending towards weak disagreement. This same division was shown when age-groups taught were compared: 60% of teachers of adults agreed, while 66% of teachers of teens disagreed. This could imply that an ENL model is more essential to English teaching in schools than in adult education.

Statement 6: Course books convey the notion that English is either British or American, but there are actually many different possible models for English in the world and these should appear in course books in the future.

This statement, which is related to statement 5, tried to assess teachers' opinions of the language model chosen for course books, hinting but not explicitly stating that a model such as Euro-English is worthy of serving as a model in future English instructional materials. A respectable majority (61.3%) agreed with this statement, despite the teachers' scepticism about course books showing lingua franca communication in response to statement 5. There was again a significant difference ($p<.05$) between non-native and native-speaker respondents, with non-native speakers agreeing with the statement less strongly. It is possible that this statement attracted more agreement than statement 5 because respondents were thinking of alternative

English varieties, such as Australian or Indian English, rather than Euro-English.

7. Results: Acceptability judgments

Respondents were also asked to judge whether 11 typical Euro-English sentences, shown in Table 1, were acceptable as English (A) or unacceptable as English (U).

Table 1. Euro-English items tested in the survey in order of acceptability.

	Euro-English survey items	**Standard ENL version**
1	That big blue Mercedes is the car of my dentist.	*That big blue Mercedes is my dentist's car.*
2	Already in 1999 they introduced "English for Kids" courses.	*They introduced "English for Kids" courses as early as 1999.*
3	Last October I had the possibility to attend a workshop on media.	*Last October I had the opportunity to attend a workshop on media.*
4	I had a ski accident and broke the right arm.	*I had a ski accident and broke my right arm.*
5	How do you call this?	*What do you call this?*
6	That's my handy ringing – excuse me.	*That's my mobile ringing – excuse me.*
7	I know him for a long time.	*I've known him for a long time.*
8	I'm in terrible shape. I should go to a fitness.	*I'm in terrible shape. I should go to a fitness centre.*
9	You should see doctor.	*You should see a doctor.*
10	I'm going by the dentist tomorrow.	*I'm going to the dentist('s) tomorrow.*
11	That's the film who I saw yesterday.	*That's the film that/which/ I saw yesterday.*

The six items above the heavy line in Table 1 were pronounced acceptable by a majority of respondents, while the five below it (7-11) were deemed 'unacceptable as English'. However, acceptability levels varied from item to item: for example, whereas 81.2% of our sample judged *That big blue Mercedes is the car of my dentist* to be acceptable, only 13.9% accepted *That's the film who I saw yesterday*. Fig. 1 illustrates the cline of acceptability levels.

What are possible explanations for these differences? One fairly obvious generalization to be made is that the sentences characterized as 'acceptable' by a majority of the respondents do not break any of the explicit grammatical rules taught in Standard English teaching materials. In contrast, sentences

7-11 do break commonly taught rules or contain easily identifiable lexical anomalies.

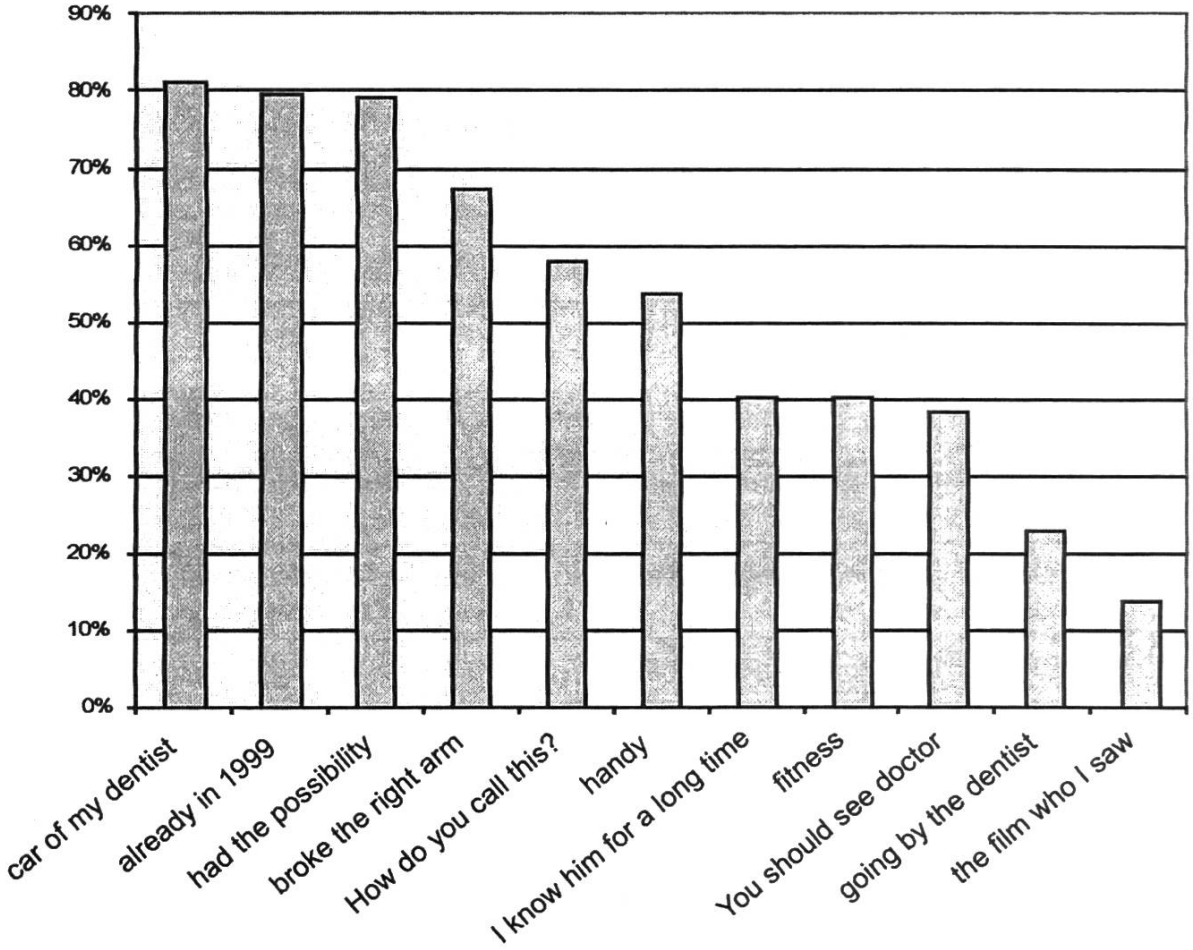

Fig. 1 Acceptability judgments (percentage acceptance)

As with the attitudes part of the questionnaire, there were also interesting differences between native and non-native speaker teachers and even between teachers from different Swiss language regions in this part. There were significant (t-test for means; $p<.05$) or highly significant ($p<.001$) differences between native and non-native speaker acceptability judgments on the six least acceptable sentences (sentences 6-11), with a higher percentage of non-native speakers pronouncing them unacceptable. Thus, whereas only 50.4% of native speakers thought sentence 9 was unacceptable, a resounding 76.5% of non-native speakers rejected it. Furthermore, sentence 6 about the ringing handy was rated acceptable by 60.3% of native speakers, but actually rejected by a majority (55.6%) of non-native speakers. While these discrepant views on acceptability may surprise at first glance, they are consistent with the main body of error evaluation research (cf. James 1998; Murray 2002) that has accumulated in the last 30 years: non-native teachers are generally less tolerant of errors than native speaker teachers.

Teachers are also notoriously influenced by the errors of their learners, and since learners with different L1s can be expected to commit different errors, we also predicted differences between the acceptability judgments of teachers working in German- and French-speaking regions of Switzerland. Judgments on four sentences (1,2,6,8) showed significant differences, with a higher percentage of teachers from French- than from German-speaking Switzerland voting to reject sentences 1, 2 and 6. Conversely, sentence 8 was acceptable to more teachers in the French-speaking area. In compiling the questionnaire we deliberately chose the sentences containing the words *handy* and *a fitness* as typical false loanwords heard in German-speaking or French-speaking Switzerland, respectively, to see whether local teachers were more or less tolerant of such non-ENL items. As Table 2 shows, a firm majority of teachers from the French-speaking region rejected *handy* (58.8%), while an even larger majority from the German-speaking area rejected *a fitness* (66.7%). Thus on the basis of these examples at least, our hypothesis that exposure to non-native features of Euro-English makes teachers more open to them appears to be confirmed.

Table 2. Differences in acceptability among teachers from the German- and French-speaking regions

	German-speaking area		French-speaking area	
	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
1. car of my dentist	87.1%	12.9%	67.9%	32.1%
2. Already in 1999	83.1%	16.9%	70.6%	29.4%
6. my *handy* ringing	57.1%	42.9%	41.2%	58.8%
8. go to *a fitness*	33.3%	66.7%	57.7%	42.3%

8. Discussion and comment

The teachers in our survey proved to hold fairly liberal opinions in claiming to favour communication over error-correction, and to respect less mainstream varieties of English, including non-native varieties. On the other hand, they tended to have doubts about including non-native communication situations in course books and about allowing learners to choose their language models for themselves. There were significant differences between native and non-native speaker teachers, with the latter tending to respond more conservatively, either by disagreeing with or showing less enthusiasm for statements in favour of Euro-English.

The responses suggest that Swiss English teachers are, in principle, somewhat open to what would amount to rather fundamental changes in the subject matter they teach, but that they tend to cling to the *status quo* when it comes to concrete changes in the direction of Euro-English. Two sub-groups of teachers appear to contrast particularly strongly in their views. Native-speaker teachers of adults tend to be more open to accepting Euro-English as a target language for teaching, while non-native teachers of children and teenagers tend to reject it. The ENL model thus seems more firmly tied to English teaching in schools than in adult education.

Possible reasons for this difference are the fact that most schools teach English for a host of future purposes, none of which are very concrete. In the absence of a concrete purpose, motivation becomes a problem, which is, in turn, solved by heightening the ENL cultural content of course books for schools. A further reason is that non-native speaker teachers, who make up the vast majority of school teachers in Switzerland as elsewhere, invest a substantial amount of time developing their competence in (ENL) English and are reluctant to discount this investment. Finally, foreign language teaching at school tends to test and value what has been taught rather than what has been acquired. The consequent emphasis on accuracy relies on a codified variety to a much greater extent than does adult language teaching, which places greater emphasis on performance and communication.

As for the acceptability judgments, the sentences judged to be unacceptable by the majority of respondents represented violations of taught rules rather than possible but unusual structures. Thus, *the film who I saw*, which breaks a relative pronoun rule taught at elementary level, was rejected by nearly five times as many teachers as *the car of my dentist* or *already in 1999*, which are merely uncommon in ENL usage. Furthermore, the two false English loanwords, *handy* and *fitness,* were only rejected by majorities of teachers in regions where they are not used. I think the significance of these findings is that they indicate the way in which Euro-English will become accepted as a target language in Europe. There will not be a revolution in which all ENL-model syllabuses are suddenly revised and all ENL-based course books burned; rather, non-rule breaking Euro-English usage will increasingly find its way into listening and reading materials, which will serve as indirect models for learners' speaking and writing. This gradual infiltration by a sanitized form of Euro-English will spread from materials for adults (where it has already started) to those aimed at younger learners. At the same time, examining bodies, education authorities and, ultimately, teachers will have to re-consider

their policies with regard to structures like *I know him for a long time*, which clearly break ENL rules.

Although, as a group, the Swiss English teachers were only lukewarm about a larger role for Euro-English in ELT, they were curious about the outcome of the survey and usually very animated in their responses. Almost every questionnaire returned contained a request for results as well as several comments; a handful of respondents even attached pages of typed notes, indicating a high level of involvement. Some teachers were adamantly against teaching a European variety of English,

> No way! MTV ≠ school. It's not up to me to say what is [acceptable] or [unacceptable]; that's why there are grammar books.
>
> Why should [my students] be satisfied with some kind of 'pseudo bastardised English'?

while others had difficulty imagining English without the native speaker standard:

> When I learn a language I want to learn a very standard version. Does it help a student to learn the slang English spoken in their home country?
>
> [I'm] not sure what this new form of English is, as it no doubt comprises a multitude of incorrect English depending on the students' L1.
>
> I've never met a learner who wanted to imitate a non-native speaker.

Several seemed ready to contemplate teaching the new variety,

> I welcome the development of Euro-English ... because it confirms my growing discomfort with correcting what I call 'picayune' errors ... which do not interfere with understanding, because it confirms my belief that pronunciation is the user's own business, as long as he or she is understandable ..., [and] because it gives voice and power to the means of expression that many people are using.
>
> I am no longer sure whether [switching to Euro-English] would be so bad.

or had even started to change their teaching in accordance with findings:

> I have more or less eliminated all metaphors, idioms, etc. from my courses and only insist on correcting grammar mistakes when they inhibit understanding ... I don't put any emphasis on phrasal verbs as I find Europeans understand their synonyms better. ... I only talk about British culture as a kind of recreation for the students and try not to integrate too much into the course ... However, as most course books are UK or American culture-based, I can't always maintain my policy. I'd love to teach [Euro-English] but am not sure that our students would really accept such a course...

This last teacher is, however, very much in the minority at present, and probably not only in Switzerland.

It can seem paradoxical indeed that although the role of English in global communication is generally acknowledged, teachers and learners alike still have trouble accepting any kind of English other than the native speaker model. As Seidlhofer points out:

> "...the question ... is whether ways of thinking about English have kept pace with the rapid development in the functions of the language, whether concepts in people's heads have changed as the role of English in the world has changed." Seidlhofer 2002b:12

I would have to say that as far as Swiss English teachers are concerned, it is no longer a question. We have the answer: ways of thinking about the language itself have not kept pace with changes in concepts as to who uses English, where, when and with whom. Swiss English teachers are caught between accepting and even supporting the existence of Euro-English in the abstract, but rejecting it as a classroom target, mainly because they are at a loss as to how to answer all the practical questions that arise in connection with evaluation, syllabus criteria, and the teacher's responsibilities if ENL competence is no longer the ultimate – albeit unattainable – goal. One of our respondents spoke for many when she wrote:

> Although I agreed with the statements about accepting Euro-English I had great trouble finding the typical mistakes 'acceptable'

The shift away from the 'gold-standard' of native speaker English in ELT is still some time off. Europeans, including the Swiss, probably need to become more aware of the new functions of English in their midst before they are ready to accept anything other than an ENL target. One thing is, however, certain: if such a shift ever occurs, it will be non-native speakers of English – both learners and teachers - who decide.

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Appendix

Questionnaire for English teachers

What is ELFE and how does it affect me?

English is being learned and used around the world by more and more people. What this means is that a high percentage of communication in English (up to 80%) takes place, not between a native speaker and a non-native speaker, but between two or more non-native speakers. In Europe as in other countries, English is becoming a lingua franca - a language that people often fall back on when they have different first languages. ELFE stands for English as a Lingua Franca in Europe; some people call it "EuroEnglish".

When Spanish and French and German and Italian people communicate with each other in English, they use pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar that is somewhat different from what British or American native speakers might use. However, they understand each other very well and, in time, tend to use some of these non-nativelike forms over and over.

What we would like to know is: How do you feel about this development? How does it affect you as an English teacher? Can you imagine teaching this newly emerging form of English?

Questionnaire

Please give your opinion of the following statements about ELFE. Indicate whether you ***(1)*** *Strongly agree,* ***(2)*** *Mostly agree* ***(3)*** *Don't know* ***(4)*** *Mostly disagree* ***(5)*** *Strongly disagree*

1. Native speakers should respect the English usage of non-native speakers more. ____
2. Learners should have more say in whether they imitate native or non-native speakers. ____
3. Most of the situations in my course book assume that my learners will later be speaking English with native speakers; I think there should be more situations showing non-native speakers communicating with each other. ____
4. Non-native teachers might be in a better position than native speaker teachers to judge which varieties of English are most appropriate for their learners. ____
5. I think I should spend more time getting students to communicate in English instead of spending hours trying to eradicate mistakes that are typical of ELFE. ____
6. Course books convey the notion that English is either British or American, but there are actually many different possible models for English in the world and these should appear in course books in the future. ____

About you...

1. I am a __native speaker of English ___non-native speaker of English ___ other

2. Most of my students speak ❒ German ❒ French ❒ Italian ❒ _____

3. I teach ❒ adults ❒ children ❒ teenagers *(More than one choice possible.)*

Acceptable or unacceptable?

Please give your opinion of the following examples of what many Europeans say when they speak English. Indicate whether in your opinion the example is

A. Acceptable as English or U. Unacceptable as English.

(Remember, these are not students in a class but people using English as a lingua franca in their daily lives, talking to colleagues, business partners and friends.)

1. You should see doctor. _____
2. That big blue Mercedes is the car of my dentist. _____
3. I know him for a long time. _____
4. I had a ski accident and broke the right arm. _____
5. Already in 1999 they introduced "English for Kids" courses. _____
6. Last October I had the possibility to attend a workshop on media. _____
7. How do you call this? _____
8. That's the film who I saw yesterday. _____
9. I'm going by the dentist tomorrow. _____
10. That's my handy ringing, excuse me. _____
11. I'm in terrible shape, I should go to a fitness. _____