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„PPOCS 1 revisited: Exploring the implications of ELF for English pronunciation teaching"

verfasst von

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To my late mother, Mag. Margit Thir-Lameraner.

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Abbreviations used

EFL	English as a foreign language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELT	English language teaching
ENL	English as a native language
ESL	English as a second Language
GA	General American
LFC	Lingua Franca Core
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NNS	Non-native speaker
NS	Native speaker
PPOCS 1	'Practical phonetics and oral communication skills 1'
RP	Received Pronunciation
TEFL	Teaching English as a foreign language
TESOL	Teaching English to speakers of other languages

Introduction

When I came to the University of Vienna in 2008 straight after high-school, I was completely unfamiliar with and oblivious to the field of English phonetics and phonology. I vividly recall sitting in the Phonetic Transcription course (a tutorial accompanying the introductory lecture to English linguistics) and failing miserably at my first attempts to transcribe English words phonetically. /æ/ or /e/? /v/ or /w/? And what is this ə-sound supposed to be that keeps reappearing in every word where I would rather pronounce a full [u], [e] or [o]? Despite being utterly frustrated and extremely anxious about the final exam, I quickly became fascinated by English phonetics. I fell in love with the sound of RP, and tried very hard to approximate my own pronunciation to it as far as possible. I soon learnt that a compulsory pronunciation course was part of the curriculum of my degree and started looking forward to it ever since, despite the worrisome rumours I heard about it. To cut a long story short, I thoroughly enjoyed the Vienna English Department's pronunciation course ('Practical phonetics and oral communication skills 1', commonly referred to as 'PPOCS 1') when doing it myself in the winter term of 2009. I am most grateful for having had a course that has enabled me to come closer and closer to my goal of native-like English pronunciation, which I eventually reached as I passionately kept working on my pronunciation after PPOCS 1. For a long time, I have thus been an advocate of PPOCS 1, trying to defend it against critics of various kinds. I believed that pronunciation was a matter of correctness and that PPOCS 1 was an invaluable opportunity to eliminate one's 'errors'. And I often failed to understand why some of my fellow students would not appreciate this as much as I had done. This attitude stayed with me for quite some time, and when I finally became a PPOCS 1 tutor myself (a dream come true!), I felt a certain responsibility to protect the 'good cause' from which I had profited so much and which I was now part of myself.

So why, then, is my diploma thesis dedicated to an overhaul of PPOCS 1 from a point of view that differs radically from the one I used to have when I studied? During my work as a pronunciation tutor at the Vienna English Department, I had to face certain problematic aspects of PPOCS 1 on a regular basis. One of these was the heterogeneity of students in PPOCS 1. Although many of my students in the language laboratory seemed to genuinely enjoy the course, there were always some for whom PPOCS 1 was far from enjoyable: the workload was too heavy for them and consequently, they were getting more and more frustrated and anxious, especially when the final exam approached. Often, they did not seem to actually enjoy modifying their pronunciation towards the chosen model. It was painful for

me to see how their first encounter with focused pronunciation training was such an off-putting experience for them. It became clear to me that PPOCS 1 simply did not meet their specific learner needs, and I frequently longed for the possibility to provide them with a different approach to pronunciation learning. And I finally accepted that these learners, despite being English majors, would probably never feel the same way about English pronunciation as I did (and still do).

When I learnt more about the socio-psychological aspects of pronunciation learning, my perspective on English pronunciation teaching changed fundamentally. I became aware of my own judgmental attitudes towards foreign accents and stopped perceiving of them merely as erroneous learner productions. I finally understood that the relationship of some people with their accent in English is very different from the one I have with mine, and that sounding like a native speaker is not as desirable to them as it has always been to me (cf. Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 7-9). At the same time, I learnt about the fact that the majority of non-native learners of English will nowadays use English more often in communication with other non-native speakers than with native speakers, and that native speaker pronunciation norms are not only partly irrelevant for this type of communication, but that strict adherence to them might even constitute a barrier to understanding (Jenkins 2000). I finally made the experience myself that certain aspects of my native-like RP accent might impede rather than facilitate communication with non-native speakers. All of these realisations made me question the objectives of PPOCS 1 more and more, especially because I noticed that the course seemed to encourage some problematic views on L2 variation amongst students at the Vienna English Department: those students who managed to reduce their L1 accent in English to a large extent appeared to develop an attitude of disdain towards foreign accents, whereas those students who did not succeed in acquiring a native-like accent in English seemed to perceive of themselves more and more as failures.

I finally came to the conclusion that although the efforts on the part of the Vienna English Department to provide students with a pronunciation course with an extensive practical component are well-intentioned, this course does not meet the needs of learners of English in a globalized world. PPOCS 1 is an excellent opportunity for students to become more and more native-like in English pronunciation, which could have been considered an appropriate goal for students of English some decades ago when English had not yet become the primary lingua franca around the world and learners were prepared for communicating primarily with native speakers of the language. Yet, the sociolinguistic landscape of English has changed radically over the past decades, with the number of interactions in English occurring amongst

different types of non-native speakers outnumbering all other uses of English by far. The phenomenon of 'English as a lingua franca' (i.e. "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option", Seidlhofer 2011: 7) has been found to be of increasing relevance to all users of English around the world, but probably in particular to those in Expanding Circle countries like Austria. Clearly, this has serious implications for the teaching and learning of English, but these are not taken into account in the current PPOCS 1. In addition, the course aim of attaining a native-like pronunciation in English within one semester of training seems to be an inappropriate goal for some students at the Vienna English Department, as it is not only difficult or impossible to achieve but also restricts students in their freedom to express their L1 identity via their pronunciation.

This thesis is built on my conviction that pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department needs to change in accordance with the transformed communicative needs of users of English in the 21st century. It is also built on my personal wish to educate students about the many different facets of English pronunciation learning which they might initially be unaware of. If you want to acquire a native-like accent, fair enough. If you don't, that's ok too. But in any case, you must not fear the diversity of English pronunciation. Rather, you should appreciate it. As David Crystal pointed out in a recent article in the *Time* magazine's online edition: "There is no such thing as an ugly accent, like there's no such thing as an ugly flower".[1] If we present English pronunciation to students in all its richness and variety, different types of learners in PPOCS 1 might be able to discover certain aspects of it for themselves, thereby profiting from the course in the best possible way, no matter how advanced their pronunciation skills or how (un)ambitious their personal goals for English pronunciation may be.

The main objective of this thesis, then, is to find ways of updating and improving the pronunciation course at the Vienna English Department by paying special attention to the implications of the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca for English pronunciation teaching. In chapter 1, I present and discuss a number of key concepts that I draw on in this thesis, such as English as a lingua franca (ELF) itself, Kachru's famous 'Three Circles of English', and two ideologies still prevailing in the professional and academic discourse on English language teaching: native-speakersim and Standard English ideology. I will also

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[1] See http://time.com/3525767/you-say-potato-accents-david-crystal-ben-crystal/ (24 October 2014).

discuss how ELF differs from the notion of 'English as a foreign language' (EFL) and address the implications of both these concepts for English language teaching.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of important issues in English pronunciation teaching: after discussing why pronunciation is an important area of English language teaching, I will present a number of learner factors that must be taken account of when planning a pronunciation course. I then move on to discuss the status of goals, models and norms in English pronunciation teaching and critically examine the currently most common goals and models. The remaining sections of chapter 2 are dedicated to two crucial issues in English pronunciation teaching: the expression of identity via pronunciation (section 2.4.) and the complex notion of intelligibility (section 2.5.). Section 2.5. also includes a summary of the most important findings of Jenkins' (2000) research on intelligibility in ELF.

In chapter 3, I subject PPOCS 1 to a closer analysis so as to find out what exactly constitutes the main strengths and weaknesses of this course. This chapter also comprises a detailed discussion of the exchange between Spichtinger and Hüttner & Kidd in *Vienna English Working Papers* (2000), which deals with the arguments put forward by both parties in favour and against a re-orientation of PPOCS 1 towards the pronunciation criteria of international communication.

On the basis of my conclusions and findings made in the previous chapters, I finally present my suggestions for an overhaul of PPOCS 1 in chapter 4 of this thesis, which I offer as a starting point for discussion about possible future alterations to the course.

1. Key concepts and terminology

1.1. Users of English around the world: the Kachruvian circle model

Kachru's model of the three concentric circles of English is extensively referred to in scientific literature on English as an international language, and is thus widely known amongst scholars in the field. Although the model clearly has its limitations (which I shall comment on below), it nevertheless has proven a convenient way of categorizing the different types of users of English that exist around the world. As some of the literature quoted in this thesis as well as I myself occasionally will make reference to Kachru's Three Circles, I shall provide a brief explanation of his model in the following.

In his works dating from the eighties and the early nineties, Kachru suggested classifying users of English around the world intro three different categories (e.g. Kachru 1985): the 'Inner Circle', the 'Outer Circle' and the 'Expanding Circle'. The 'Inner circle' encompasses those countries where English is traditionally spoken as a first language (such as the USA, the UK, or Canada). The 'Outer Circle' (also sometimes labelled 'Extended Circle') refers to those regions to which English has spread during the period of Anglo-Saxon colonisation and where it has subsequently been institutionalized, often assuming the status of an official or state language. These countries are at least bi- if not multilingual, i.e. although English plays an important socio-political role there, it is only a second or additional language for the residents of these areas. The term 'Expanding Circle' is used to designate countries where English is a foreign language. Kachru therefore equally employs the term EFL ('English as a foreign language') to refer to how English is used in Expanding Circle countries, whereas he uses ESL ('English as a second language') for the English spoken in Outer Circle territories. Yet, he admits that there is in fact no clear-cut boundary between Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries, and that the status of individual regions may of course change over time (Kachru 1985: 13-14). The counterpart to ESL and EFL that refers to English when used in the Inner Circle is ENL ('English as a native language').

Kachru's Three Circles model certainly constitutes a useful construct for conceiving of different types of users of English in a global context and has, thereby, enhanced our understanding of the spread and expansion of the English language in the world. Yet, it clearly exhibits certain shortcomings that have been the subject of criticism in a number of publications in the field of World Englishes research (see for example Graddol 1997,

Bruthiaux 2003, Kirkpatrick 2007, Pennycook 2007).[2] The reader may be referred to Jenkins (2009: 20-21) for a summary of the most important limitations of Kachru's model. Graddol (2006: 110) points out that the model was in fact obsolete a decade after its publication in 1985, as it did not display the growing significance of the Outer Circle as well as the gradual blurring between EFL learners and ESL users in certain parts of the world (most notably in Europe). What is more, Graddol observes that

> [i]n a globalised world, the traditional definition of 'second-language user' (as one who uses the language for communication within their own country) no longer makes sense. (ibid.)

That is to say, numerous speakers of English in the Expanding Circle nowadays make use of the language for various purposes in a number of different settings, both with native speakers[3] and other non-native speakers (cf. Jenkins 2009: 20). Yet, according to Kachru's model, they would still have to be classified as foreign-language users rather than as second-language users. Thus, despite being a seemingly straightforward way to conceive of the different ways in which English has been used in the world during the past decades, Kachru's model clearly fails to capture the more recent, yet fundamental developments in the global spread and use of English, in particular the fact that English is nowadays extensively used as a global lingua franca in the Expanding Circle as well as across all three 'Circles'. Another problematic point of Kachru's model has to do with the question of the 'ownership' of the English language and the model's implications for how the language is believed to evolve in the future. This issue will be the topic the next section.

Who owns the English language?

A further point of criticism of Kachru's 'Three Circles' model concerns the fact that he defined his 'Circles' as concentric, indicating that the model has an implicit hierarchical structure in the sense that it presents ENL varieties as lying at the heart of the development of the English language although their global impact has evidently decreased (Jenkins 2009: 21). It should be noted that Kachru did actually not mean for his labels to suggest a relationship of

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[2] It seems worth mentioning that Kachru himself admitted to the fact that his classification should be understood as provisional (1985: 12).

[3] Note that I also use the abbreviations 'NS' and 'NNS' to refer to the terms 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker'.

superiority or inferiority between his 'Circles' (ibid.).[4] Nevertheless, it is a fact that Kachru assigned a certain role with regard to the distribution and adoption of linguistic norms to each of the three 'Circles': he defines Inner Circle varieties as 'norm-providing', as, being used by 'the natives', they are generally accepted as models for teaching and learning; Outer Circle varieties as 'norm-developing', as they go beyond Inner Circle standards; and the Expanding Circle as 'norm-dependent', which he claims to be "essentially exonormative" (Kachru 1985: 16-17). According to Kachru, then, whereas Outer Circle varieties have the potential to emerge as 'New Englishes' in their own right, speakers of English in the Expanding Circle must necessarily orient themselves towards the linguistic norms provided by Inner and, maybe one day, Outer Circle speakers. Apart from the fact that in this sense, Kachru's model (albeit unintentionally) clearly constructs a hierarchy of users of English, this kind of categorization seems to be problematic for a number of other reasons. Firstly, native (or Inner Circle) speakers of English are nowadays outnumbered by far by the ever growing number of Expanding Circle speakers, with estimates of 500-1000 million EFL speakers as compared to 320-380 million ENL speakers (Crystal 2003: 61). Secondly, it has been estimated that about 80 % of interactions in which English is used either as a foreign or second language nowadays proceed without any native speakers of English being present at all (Beneke 1991: 54). It seems questionable indeed why a relatively small group of speakers should have the privilege of exerting control 'from afar' (i.e. without being present for the majority of interactions) over the way English is used by a far larger number of speakers, for the sole reason that the former are native speakers of the language and the latter are not. This issue was discussed by Widdowson in his famous article on the 'ownership' of English (1994), in which he argues that native speakers of English have in fact no right to claim custody over the English language in order to control its development in the rest of the world:

> 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. (Widdowson 1994: 385)

In his article, Widdowson also addressed the often cited argument that the preservation of NS Standard English norms would be crucial to ensure effective communication and intelligibility in international communication. Without this 'stable core', it is assumed, English would break

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[4] Kachru reiterates this view in a later discussion of his model, stating that the term 'Inner Circle' is simply intended to indicate where the English language historically originated from (Kachru 2005).

into various mutually unintelligibly varieties, thereby losing its potential to work as an international means of communication. Widdowson rejects this idea and points to the necessity of linguistic adaption within a particular context and community, which itself inevitably entails nonconformity to former standards. He therefore concludes that English **must** consequently be diversified in nature if it is to assume a communicative and communal function for various groups of speakers (Widdowson 1994: 385). Yet, Widdowson doubts that this will result in the development of mutually unintelligible 'Englishes', but expects that English will automatically evolve into a balanced standard form as far as is necessary according to the groups of speakers involved (ibid.). He furthermore concludes that

> a standard English, like other varieties of language, develops endo-normatively, by a continuing process of self-regulation, as appropriate to different conditions of use. It is not fixed by exo-normative fiat from outside: not fixed, therefore, by native speakers. They have no special say in the matter, in spite of their claims to ownership of real English as associated with their own particular cultural contexts of use. (1994: 386)

According to Widdowson, then, ENL varieties should not be regarded as 'norm-providing', nor should the Expanding Circle be regarded as 'essentially exonormative'. Rather, users of English in the Expanding Circle can be expected to develop their own linguistic norms and standards, **independently** from the impositions made by native speakers of the language.

Yet, the idea that native speaker authority over how English is used outside of ENL countries is, in fact, unwarranted is by no means universally accepted in English linguistics. Andreasson (1994: 402), for instance, believes that English speakers in the Expanding Circle should essentially aim to emulate native speakers of Standard English, and Trudgill still considers native speakers as the custodians of English, claiming that the language "resides in them" (2005: 87). What Trudgill overlooks is that a language clearly resides not merely within its native speakers, but, as Brumfit observes, within everyone who uses it on a regular basis:

> [t]he ownership (by which I mean the power to adapt and change) of any language in effect rests with the people who use it, whoever they are, however multilingual they are, however monolingual they are. The major advances in sociolinguistic research over the past half century indicate clearly the extent to which languages are shaped by their use. […] Statistically, native speakers are in a minority for language use, and this in practice for language change, for language maintenance, and for the ideologies and beliefs associated with the language – *at least in so far as non-native speakers use the language for a wide range of public and personal needs*. (Brumfit 2001: 116 [my emphasis])

Thus, the answer to the controversy of the 'ownership' of the English language seems to boil down to the question in how far non-native speakers actually make use of English for a wide

range of different purposes. That they do so to a very great extent indeed has been demonstrated by a number of researchers. Jenkins (2009, section A7), for example, provides a detailed overview of the diverse functions which English fulfils in Asia and Europe respectively, and Crystal (2003) lists various domains in which English is extensively employed by non-native speakers, such as international relations, the media, tourism, education, and electronic communication systems. Additionally, English plays an important role in world economy as the language of global business[5] and is also used as a global academic language as well as a medium of instruction in higher education in non-English speaking countries (Graddol 2006). An increasing number of scholars, such as Graddol (1997: 10), therefore expect that non-native speakers rather than native speakers will be the ones to impact powerfully on how English will develop as a global language in the future.

Given these worldwide developments in the use of English amongst non-native speakers of the language, Seidlhofer demands the latters' acknowledgement as "legitimate users [of English]" instead of considering them as non-proficient language learners struggling their way towards NS competence (2011: 9). Only this will lead to an increased scientific interest in how non-native speakers of English use and shape the language according to their needs, which, in turn, may lead to research findings that may have valuable implications for English language pedagogy throughout the world. The most widespread type of NNS English nowadays (and, in fact, of the English language as such) and the one which therefore might prove the most relevant for foreign learners of English is English as a lingua franca (ELF). It is this type of English that I am concerned with in this thesis and we shall have a closer look at this phenomenon in section 1.3.

In spite of the growing realization that non-native speakers of English, too, should be regarded as language users in their own right whose impact on the future development of the English language must not be underestimated, the idea of native speakers as having a special claim to the English language and of the superiority of native speaker English is still widespread amongst English scholars, language teachers and laypeople alike. The entirety of these and similar beliefs can be identified as being part of an extensive ideology that seems to underlie the TESOL domain which is commonly termed *native-speakerism*. In the next section, we shall have a look at this set of beliefs, along with its implications for the field of English linguistics and for the teaching and learning of English around the world.

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[5] Yet, Graddol (2006: 62) notes that its importance in this respect is increasingly challenged by other languages, such as Chinese.

1.2. *Native-speakerism* and the native/non-native dichotomy

According to Holliday, *native-speakerism* can be defined as

> an established belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology. (2005: 6)

This assumption puts ENL countries and native speakers of English in a highly advantageous position. The Inner Circle countries, especially the UK, profit immensely from the great number of learners visiting in order to pursue language courses taught by oh-so proficient NS teachers in what they are led to believe is the language's 'home'.[6] Native speakers benefit from their assumed expertise in English language teaching and learning, which earns them employment options in the education sector and authority in research and literature on ELT. The problem is that exactly those qualities and opportunities are consequently denied to non-native speakers of English, who are automatically considered less competent than their native speaker colleagues. What is more, Holliday (ibid.) also blames native-speakerism for causing an ideologically-motivated 'us' vs. 'them' division in the TESOL community, which undermines the "common, international professional-academic identity" he wishes for (2005: 2).

But where, one might ask, does the assumption of native speaker supremacy originate, and can the latter actually be justified on rational grounds?

The native speaker fallacy

One reason why native speakers are often considered as ideal language teachers is that, due to their linguistic proficiency, they are assumed to constitute an optimal model for learners. As Phillipson observes:

> Why should the native speaker be intrinsically better qualified than the non-native? The tenet would hold that this is the case because of greater facility in demonstrating fluent, idiomatically appropriate language, in appreciating the cultural connotations of the language, and [...] in being the final arbiter of the acceptability of any given samples of the language. (Phillipson 1992: 194)

Yet, most learners of English will nowadays be using the language for international communication rather than in NS-NNS interaction, where other non-native speakers will be

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[6] See for example the section "Why learn English in the UK?" on the British Council's *Education@UK* website (http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/why-learn-english-in-the-uk/, 25 January 2014).

the judges of whether a particular use of language is acceptable or not and where the use of cultural connotations will be inappropriate if not detrimental to communication. This makes the value of the above qualities for English teachers in most contexts in which the language is nowadays learnt and taught doubtful in itself. What is more, even if one would disregard this argument against the assumption of the supremacy of NS teachers, it can still be argued that all of the above-mentioned qualities can be acquired by non-native speakers through teacher training (ibid.). In addition, in contrast to native speakers, NNS teachers have the invaluable advantage of having experienced the (often arduous) process of learning English as a second language themselves, which makes them likely to have a better knowledge of the "linguistic and cultural needs" of their students (Phillipson 1992: 195). Phillipson concludes that non-native speakers might therefore actually be more competent language teachers than native speakers, and that the idea of the native speaker as ideal language teacher is but a fallacy. Similarly, Canagarajah suggests that their bilingualism enables non-native speakers to cultivate "a deep metalinguistic knowledge and complex language awareness" (Canagarajah 1999: 80). He also points to the fact that the first language is increasingly considered a useful pedagogic resource rather than an obstacle in second language learning, and concludes that the tenet of NS teachers' superiority can be justified neither on linguistic nor on pedagogical grounds, and is but pure ideology (Canagarajah 1999: 80-81).

Native-speakerism and the status of Outer Circle and Expanding Circle Englishes

The ideology of native-speakerism is also closely connected to the idea that native speakers speak the only 'real' English which non-native speakers should try to replicate as closely as possible. This echoes the idea of native speakers as the only ones to have a rightful claim to the 'ownership' of the English language discussed in the previous section. Apart from the negative consequences of the ideology of native-speakerism for non-native teachers and scholars in the domain of TESOL which I outlined above, the continued prevalence of native-speakerist thinking also has serious implications for how English is taught to foreign learners of the language all over the world as well as for the way the field of English linguistics perceives itself as an academic discipline. If NS English is viewed as the ultimate linguistic norm towards which the rest of the entire English speaking world should orient itself, it will undoubtedly continue to prevail not only as 'a' but as **the** standard in ELT, i.e. also in teaching contexts where the adoption of alternative models and goals would be more appropriate. What is more, the degree of scholarly interest of NS English as opposed to the

one of ESL varieties and EFL 'varieties'[7] (and, of course, the one of ELF) is likely to be overemphasized within the native-speakerist framework. To put it in a nutshell, native-speakerist thinking prevents ELF as well as Outer Circle and Expanding Circle Englishes from gaining acceptance and recognition in the English-speaking world, thereby underrating their significance for English linguistics and English language teaching alike. In this sense, native-speakerism is closely linked to a similar ideological movement in English linguistics which Seidlhofer (2011) discusses under the heading of 'Standard English ideology'. The latter is no less relevant than the ideology of native-speakerism here, yet I will postpone my discussion of this subject to a later point, as it is necessary to first look at the phenomenon of ELF itself (see section 1.3.) in order to be able to follow my argument on this matter.

Two things remain to be said about native-speakerism. First, as Holliday observes, it appears to be an extremely widespread way of thinking that is so deep-rooted in the subconscious of the TESOL community that its members are often ignorant of both its existence and its influence on their thinking and acting (Holliday 2005: 10). Secondly, it seems that it is exactly this unawareness and ignorance that is the source of non-native speakers' belief in the seemingly unquestionable linguistic superiority of NS English, which, unfortunately, makes them unlikely to embrace the notion of English as a lingua franca (Jenkins 2007: 59). Native-speakerism can thus be considered a powerful ideology that is at least partly responsible for the 'conceptual gap' in the consciousness of English linguists and ELT practitioners alike where ELF should find its place, which Seidlhofer already pointed to in 2001 (cf. Seidlhofer 2001a). Obviously enough, this has serious consequences for the teaching of English throughout the world: with numerous English language teachers either being suspicious or simply unaware of the notion of ELF, the 'E' in ELT will most probably continue to be English as spoken by (a small group of) native speakers in most teaching contexts, i.e. also in those where the adoption of alternative teaching models would be more appropriate. It seems high time, then, to raise awareness amongst ELT practitioners – be they teachers, teacher trainees or student teachers at university – of the significance of ELF for learners of English in the Expanding and Outer Circles and the possible implications of ELF research for English language teaching.

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[7] For a critical discussion of the concept of variety, see Seidlhofer (2007).

A short note on terminology

There is yet one terminological issue in connection with the distinction between native and non-native speakers that needs clarification before moving on to the discussion of ELF in section 1.3. Given the problematic ideologies surrounding the native/non-native distinction discussed in this section, it has been debated whether or not linguists should continue to make use of this labelling at all. Jenkins (2000: 8-9) argues against the use of the term 'native speaker' by indicating its conceptual deficiencies when applied to Outer Circle contexts where it is often problematic to differentiate between a speaker's first and second language. Citing Rampton (1990), she also criticises that it constructs Anglo-English as a benchmark in accordance to which other types of English are to be evaluated, "which cannot be acceptable or appropriate for a language that has passed into world ownership" (Jenkins 2000: 9). Jenkins also points to the negative consequences of the native/non-native dichotomy for non-native speakers which I already touched upon above, i.e. the lack of self-confidence and authority experienced by non-native teachers and scholars alike, all of which often lead them to be disadvantaged in their professional lives (ibid.). A further problem of the label 'non-native' concerns its morphological structure and its semantic implications: as Seidlhofer notes, the prefix 'non-' might be interpreted as indicating some sort of lack or deficiency (2011: 5; see also Holliday 2005: 4). Yet, unlike Jenkins (2000), who rejects the use of the terms 'native' and 'non-native' and who suggests an alternative, yet more complex labelling, Seidlhofer does make use of this terminology in her work, partly in order to avoid terminological confusion, but primarily because for her, the terms do not possess any kind of negative or positive connotations:

> While I fully endorse Jenkin's reasoning, I do not generally adopt alternative labels at this point [...] This is because I take [the terms 'native' and 'non-native'] to mean very simply what they actually denote (rather than what they have come to connote for many): a native-speaker of English is somebody whose L1 is English, and a non-native speaker of English is somebody who has an L1, or L1s, other than English. (Seidlhofer 2011: 6)

I fully agree with Seidlhofer on this point and hence have decided to employ the terms 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' in this thesis in the same way as she did in the work cited above. What is more, doing away with these terms would probably only aid the concealment of their problematic nature rather than actually help resolve the difficulties surrounding them (Kubota in an email to Holliday, cited in Holliday 2005: 5).

The notion of non-nativeness as being an L2/Ln rather than an L1 speaker of a language is furthermore central to the concept of English as a lingua franca, which it is now time to consider more thoroughly.

1.3. English as a lingua franca: what it is, what it isn't

When speaking of 'English as an international language' (EIL), linguists usually conceive of English as being used "within and across Kachru's 'Circles', for intranational as well as international communication" (Seidlhofer 2011: 3). However, as Seidlhofer (2011: 3-4) observes, there are two fundamentally distinct forms of EIL: a localized and a globalized one. The former refers to uses of English in contexts where the language has been institutionalized as a means for communication within Kachru's Outer Circle countries (ibid.), which are nowadays often summarized under the term 'New Englishes' (Jenkins 2009) or 'World Englishes' (Kirkpatrick 2007). The latter, on the other hand, is left unrevealed by Kachru's model, and refers to English as it is used around the globe for communicating internationally, i.e. as a global *lingua franca* (Seidlhofer 2011: 4). This use of English is nowadays commonly referred to as 'ELF' (English as a lingua franca).

In order to fully understand the concept and nature of ELF, it is necessary to take a quick look at the concept of 'lingua franca' itself. A 'lingua franca' is commonly conceived of as any kind of linguistic medium employed by speakers of different first languages, neither of whom is a native speaker of this language (Samarin 1987: 371, quoted in Seidlhofer 2011: 7). Whilst some definitions of English as a lingua franca thus exclude native speakers from ELF communication (Firth 1996: 240; House 1999: 74), it is a fact that speakers for whom English is a first language participate in ELF interactions (Seidlhofer 2011: 7). Seidlhofer therefore defines ELF as

> any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English
> is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option. (ibid.)

One might ask whether it actually makes sense to insist on including native speakers in a definition of ELF, especially because it seems particularly important to highlight that ELF is **not** EFL (and that orientation to NS norms is hence unnecessary, if not harmful, in ELF interactions). The answer to this question lies in the need to avoid confusion and misunderstanding on what ELF actually is. As mentioned above, ELF interactions may involve native speakers of English, and may, furthermore, even take place in Inner Circle or

Outer Circle countries (Seidlhofer 2011: 7). The point is that neither the geographical context in which English is used nor the (possible) presence of one or more native speakers determines the linguistic **function** of English in a particular speech event. To put it in a nutshell,

> ELF does not stop being ELF if inner or outer circle members happen to be present. (Jenkins 2007: 2)

Thus, in order to avoid the misconception that the presence of a native speaker would automatically make any exchange between non-native speakers EFL instead of ELF (and thereby reduce their linguistic output to some kind of learner language), it seems sensible to acknowledge native speakers of English as possible participants in ELF interactions right from the start. However, it seems important to remember that numerically, their presence will often be the exception rather than the norm, and that it is primarily non-native speakers who establish and co-construct the linguistic norms and rules of ELF, independently (to a large extent) from the ones of NS English. ELF research, then, is concerned with the specific characteristics of ELF interactions as opposed to NS-NNS and NS-NS communication, i.e. "in what ways ELF interactions are actually *sui generis*" (House 1999: 74).

The nature of ELF: not 'a', but the epitome of, linguistic variety

Probably the most important key characteristic of any lingua franca is their inherent linguistic hybridity, which is brought about by the different language systems involved in their makeup (Jenkins 2007: 1). This is especially true for ELF, as – due to its global spread – the number of different L1s affecting its structure is particularly high (Seidlhofer 2011: 8). It is worth noting here that it is exactly this intrinsic hybridity that seems to constitute one of the main reasons for the lack of acceptance and interest some linguists exhibit with regard to ELF (I shall pursue this point in more detail in section 1.4.). What adds further to the intrinsic hybridity of ELF is that, in contrast to users of localized varieties of EIL, interlocutors who use English as a means for international communication

> do not orient to their local speech communities but are involved in de-territorialized speech events, so that establishing common linguacultural ground […] becomes an intrinsic part of the encounter. (Seidlhofer 2011: 4)

Thus, given that ELF speakers do not share a common cultural background and that they are, moreover, communicating in a language other than their L1,[8] ELF interactions are bound to constantly feature linguistic negotiations.

The distinction between research in the field of ELF and the study of World Englishes is undoubtedly a crucial one, for the two differ substantially in the way they look at non-native English varieties (Deterding 2013: 6). The study of World Englishes is concerned with the investigation of particular uses of English as newly emerged, autonomous varieties of the language that are, as pointed out above, localized, i.e. tied to a specific geographical area (ibid.). As a result, research in this field tends to centre upon the distinguishing linguistic characteristics that set these varieties apart from one another (ibid.; cf. Kirkpatrick 2007 and Jenkins 2009), i.e. there is a focus on linguistic **differences**. The study of ELF, on the other hand, investigates the functioning of cross-national communication, and is therefore interested in the interlocutors' linguistic **common ground** (Deterding 2013: 6; see also the above quotation of Seidlhofer 2011). It is equally important to note that ELF research does not claim English as a lingua franca to be simply another variety of the English language that can be pinned down in terms of its formal characteristics (i.e. another 'World English', such as Indian English or Hong Kong English). As Deterding makes clear:

> [I]t is fundamentally incorrect to suggest that research on ELF is proposing the emergence of a single variety of English. Indeed, even though it seeks to investigate some of the shared patterns by which people from different backgrounds communicate, it always acknowledges and indeed celebrates the fact that there continues to be wide variation in the ways that English is used around the world. (ibid.)

Nevertheless, it seems to be a somewhat widespread misconception that ELF research is 'monocentric', i.e. that it would seek to promote a single uniform variety of English which should be employed in international communication. This is yet, as stated in the above quotation and as a number of other ELF researches have tried to assert (e.g. Seidlhofer 2006: 46-48; 2011: 25, note 7; Jenkins 2007: 19), **not** the aim of ELF research, but quite the contrary. The idea of implementing a single invariable 'ELF norm' goes against the very concept of ELF itself, since ELF cannot and never will be a single monolithic variety, for the simple reason that ELF speakers explore the linguistic and cultural repertoire available to them in a way that serves their particular local needs (Cogo 2012: 98). It is thus also incorrect

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[8] This is also true for native speakers of English, as their L1 is ENL, not ELF. In this sense, ELF is a prototypical lingua franca with no native speakers, for "nobody has grown up as a speaker of it" (Seidlhofer 2001: 149).

to think of ELF as a completely non-localizable way of using English: in fact, it has been suggested that different ELF 'varieties' (for lack of a better word) may be evolving in certain parts of the world, in the sense that these forms of ELF may exhibit certain regional characteristics due to the particular L1s of the speakers involved and the specific functions that English fulfils in these areas (such as European ELF or ASEAN ELF).[9] But of course, these 'varieties', too, are not to be regarded as linguistically uniform, and of course ELF exists on a larger international scale as well. As Cogo affirms:

> The reality is that ELF communication can both show characteristics that localize it and make it typical of a certain region, but it can also be fluid and realized in transnational, or international, networks, and movements. (ibid.).

Another widespread misconception about ELF research that leads many people to reject the idea of ELF and its scientific investigation is that it would try to identify a 'core' of linguistic features of ELF (i.e. the aforementioned 'ELF norm') that should subsequently replace NS norms in the teaching of English as a second and foreign language. ELF research has thus frequently been accused of "patroniz[ing] learners" (Jenkins 2007: 21), in the sense that it would try to prevent learners from aspiring to attain native-like proficiency in English. Again, this is a mistaken assumption, which ELF researchers have hence tried to counteract (e.g. Seidlhofer 2006: 48). As Jenkins (2007: 22) makes clear, from the point of view of ELF research, it is entirely up to the learners what kind of English they need and want to attain proficiency in, be it EFL (i.e. in fact ENL), ESL or ELF. She concludes that

> [i]n this way, ELF increases rather than decreases the available choices, while it is the insistence on conformity to NS norms […] that restricts them. (ibid.)

It seems, then, that some of the negative attitudes towards ELF are simply due to a misinterpretation of the concept of ELF and/or the aim of ELF research. Others, however, are more ideologically motivated, as we shall see in the next section.

1.4. Unfavourable attitudes towards ELF: Standard English ideology

While localized forms of EIL are nowadays generally acknowledged as legitimate nativized varieties of English, ELF still frequently meets with scepticism (Seidlhofer 2011: 48 & 74). One reason why ELF still lacks acknowledgement and recognition as a legitimate object of study appears to be that a number of people tend to associate certain negative qualities with

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[9] With regard to ELF in ASEAN, cf. Kirkpatrick (2007: 163).

the term 'lingua franca'. Seidlhofer (2011: 75) observes that the latter seems to evoke pejorative connotations amongst a number of linguists such as the one of a primitive ersatz language.[10] She then goes on to demonstrate that a lingua franca is not by its own nature an underdeveloped substitute language, reminding us that some of the most complex and impressive works of human history were written in the lingua franca Latin (ibid.).

What is also worth considering is that resistant attitudes towards ELF are to be found notably amongst those who are of the opinion that the study of the English language should primarily consider NS varieties (Deterding 2013: 7). Indeed, it seems that negative attitudes towards ELF are closely linked to certain ideologically-motivated sets of beliefs about language ownership and linguistic norms. One of these ideologies, 'native-speakerism', has already been discussed in section 1.2. Another one is what Seidlhofer (2011) calls 'Standard English ideology'. This term relates to the well-established linguistic notion of 'Standard language ideology', which refers to

> [t]he belief that imposed language uniformity is good for society and that the standard variety is the only legitimate one. (Seidlhofer 2011: 42)

'Standard English ideology', then, can be described as a particular type of 'Standard language ideology', which is based on the belief that national English standard varieties should not only be valid within a particular nation, but should also constitute the linguistic norm for speakers of English as an international language (ibid.).

With regard to the status and legitimacy of Outer Circle and Expanding Circle Englishes, the ideas of Standard English ideology are similar to the ones of native-speakerism, in that they both deny non-native English varieties acceptance and approval. Seidlhofer (2011, ch. 2) provides interesting examples of how these ways of thinking are present in the English-speaking media and even amongst well-known socio-linguists (who, one should assume, should be aware of and stay above any ideological positioning towards particular uses of language). One of these, Randolph Quirk, argued in favour of Standard English as a linguistic norm for non-native speakers of English in a paper published in 1985 as follows:

> The relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-native needs to use English (even in ESL countries) is arguably well catered for by a single monochrome standard form that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech.

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[10] See for example Kachru (1996: 906) and McArthur (2001: 1), both referred to in Seidlhofer (2011: 75). Eoyang (1999) makes no secret of his aversion for the concept of 'lingua franca', considering it a "linguistic hodgepodge[]". He also regards the semiotic structure of the term itself ("a Latin phrase that refers to French yet designates a mixed language of widespread currency") to be illustrative for "mongrelness or wordliness" (ibid.).

> There are only the most dubious advantages in exposing the learner to a great variety of usage, no part of which he will have time to master properly, little of which he will be called upon to exercise, all of which is embedded in a controversial linguistic matrix he cannot be expected to understand. (Quirk 1985: 6)

Apart from the fact that Quirk seemingly fails to recognize the difference between exposing learners to and thereby familiarizing them with linguistic diversity (which clearly is of immense pedagogic importance to the contemporary L2 learner of English) and the actual mastery of different language varieties, his argument is clearly invalid in the light of the immense developments in the socio-linguistic landscape of the English-speaking world that have happened during the past decades. As Seidlhofer (2011: 45) notes, from today's point of view, it is simply not true that non-native speakers use English for 'a relatively narrow range of purposes' (see also section 1.1.), and it is therefore questionable whether 'a single monochrome standard form' will suffice to serve the extended range of purposes for which English is nowadays used by ESL and EFL speakers. What Quirk overlooks as well is that speakers of a language, regardless of whether it be their native language or not, will always feel the need for expressing their identities through the way they use language. Widdowson (1982: 12) maintains that it is simply impossible for a natural language to only serve as a neutral medium of communication, due to the simple fact that the need for self-expression through language is inherent to human nature.[11] In the light of these considerations, the idea of a single standard variety being able to cater to the need for self-expression of millions of people from a wide range of culturally diverse backgrounds seems more than dubious.

Quirk continued to hold his adverse position towards non-native varieties in later years, especially towards non-institutionalized ones, such as ELF is. Thus, he regards any non-native, non-institutionalized varieties of English as fairly uninteresting to the linguist's enterprise, for these 'performance varieties', as he calls them, "are inherently unstable" (Quirk 1990: 5-6 & Quirk 1995: 24), and therefore apparently too unsystematic to invest effort into their investigation. ELF seems to be particularly vulnerable to this reproach, for, as we have seen in section 1.3., any lingua franca is linguistically hybrid by nature, and ELF even more so due to the large number of different L1 backgrounds of its speakers. Yet, as Seidlhofer (2011: 48) argues, Quirk's argument can easily be refuted: firstly, any natural language is characterized by inherent instability. What is more, there is scientific evidence which proves that ELF

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[11] This, as we shall see in section 2.4., seems to be particularly true of pronunciation.

exhibits regularities (much like any natural language) which contradict the notion that 'performance varieties' are totally arbitrary and erratic. (ibid.)

Seidlhofer (2011, ch. 3) offers a much more extensive discussion of Quirk's assumptions with regard to non-native English varieties in connection with Standard English ideologist thinking, a replication of which not only lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but which would offer hardly any new insights on this matter. Instead, I would like to maintain that the arguments put forward against the legitimacy of ELF (and other non-native English varieties) often seem to stem from misconceptions grounded in ideological beliefs about the supremacy of standard NS language use rather than factual or logical argumentation. It seems high time, then, to raise awareness amongst scholars and English language teachers alike of the different ideologies that currently seem to profoundly affect their thinking, so as to grant ELF the status of a scientifically interesting, legitimate subject of study that it is and to finally recognize its relevance for learners of English throughout the world.

The phenomenon of ELF has increasingly gained importance over the last decades especially for learners in the Expanding Circle, with ELF nowadays being the most widespread type of English in these areas, and in the entire world in general. It follows that ELT practitioners must finally start to take account of the implications of ELF for English language teaching, not only, but first and foremost in Expanding Circle contexts, so that teaching practices, learning goals and classroom models can be adjusted accordingly. These implications, and how ELF is to be distinguished from the currently prevailing notion of EFL in Expanding Circle countries, will be the topic of the next section.

1.5. ELF, EFL and ELT

Despite the fact that the global rise of ELF and its implications for the teaching of English have been the subject of numerous publications in the past years and research into the nature of ELF is increasingly carried out, the practices of English language teaching seem to have remained largely unaffected by the findings and pedagogic suggestions of ELF research. According to Seidlhofer (2011: 14), the unchallenged prevalence of NS norms in ELT/TEFL/TESOL can be attributed to a 'conceptual gap' in the consciousness of people where ELF should find its place. Indeed, many practitioners in the field of English language teaching are simply oblivious to the concept of ELF, and consequently fail to recognize its importance for learners in the Expanding and Outer Circles. As a result, the kind of English

taught to non-native learners of the language is still often exclusively the one spoken by native speakers who are considered the so-called 'target language community'.

In order to promote the acceptance and recognition of the notion of ELF, Seidlhofer stresses the need for clarifying conceptual and terminological confusions, and suggests to clearly distinguish between 'English as a lingua franca' (ELF) on the one hand and 'English as a foreign language' (EFL) on the other hand (Seidlhofer 2011: 17). If a 'foreign language' perspective is adopted, language teaching will be oriented towards the linguistic and cultural norms of the NS community of the language in question. From this point of view, language learning is essentially aimed at becoming 'native-like', with learners being encouraged to 'do as the natives do', not only in terms of linguistic competence, but also with regard to cultural and situational norms, all of which act as 'membershipping devices' of the respective NS community (ibid.). The aim of language learning is to appeal to native speakers of the language by adhering to the lingua-cultural norms valid within their linguistic community. For non-native learners of English, this means that

> you make a bid for membership of this NS community, you strive to abide by these norms and are judged by your success in doing so – and you expect to be praised or criticized, accepted or rejected by native speakers of English. (ibid.)

It follows, then, that native speakers are to be regarded as the 'norm-providing' (Kachru 1985: 16-17) speech community within an EFL perspective, and that so-called 'native speaker competence' is the ultimate goal of English language learning that learners are supposed to strive for.

Within an ELF perspective, however, it is not NS norms that are of interest, but what is acceptable in a particular communicative encounter between speakers of different L1s who use English as a lingua franca. The linguacultural norms in ELF encounters are thus not pre-existent, but **negotiated** by the participants in an interaction, by means of active collaboration and by exploiting the linguistic resources at hand in order to reach communicative efficiency. As Seidlhofer puts it:

> The crucial point […] is that [ELF] norms are tacitly understood to be established during the interaction within the current possibilities, and that they are primarily regulated by interactional exigencies, rather than by what native speakers would say, or would find correct, or 'normal', or appropriate. […] In such situations, it would be interactionally counter-productive, even patently absurd in most cases, for speakers to (strive to) adhere to ENL linguacultural norms when no ENL speakers may even be present. (Seidlhofer 2011: 18).

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This means that in ELF interactions, a speaker's strict adherence to English NS norms may be perceived as somewhat inappropriate or even irritating by other speakers or may, at worst, reveal itself as harmful to the interlocutors' communicative enterprise. Thus, instead of adopting or imitating ENL norms, successful ELF speakers **adapt** them to suit their communicative purpose while at the same time taking account of and accommodating to their interlocutor's linguistic needs (ibid.). An approach to ELT that takes proper account of how English is used in ELF contexts will therefore have to acknowledge the fact that the often praised 'authentic NS usage' does not constitute a suitable reference point for speakers who intend to use English in international communication. Instead, such an approach must attempt to help learners develop communicative strategies that have been found to be most valuable in ELF encounters, and privilege the teaching of those linguistic forms and aspects of language that were found to be crucial to maintaining mutual intelligibility in ELF.

The 'foreign language' perspective on teaching English is very much how the majority of ELT professionals and policy makers in Austria (and virtually everywhere else) currently conceive of the subject of English, and consequently, terms such as 'target language community' or 'target culture' are extensively employed in school curricula and other official documents designed to establish standards and norms for teaching and learning English. Whereas a 'foreign language' orientation may be appropriate for the teaching of languages which are hardly used outside the native speaker community (Seidlhofer 2011: 17), such an approach seems questionable with regard to the teaching of a language that has reached such an immense global spread as English. This does not mean that a strict ELF approach should be adopted in all contexts of English language teaching, which seems to be a somewhat common misconception of what ELF research seeks to promote. As Seidlhofer (2006: 48) makes clear, what kind of English is taught will always depend on the respective learners' needs and wants. The crucial point is that it is precisely these learner needs and learner preferences which are often not considered at all in ELT, especially in Expanding Circle contexts (such as in Austria and other European countries). That is, the fact that the majority of learners of English in these areas will be using ELF rather than EFL is rarely taken account of in official curricula and school policies, and consequently not in actual classroom practice, either. What is more, many people, for ideological rather than scientifically well-founded reasons (cf. the previous section), seem to regard the ways of speaking employed by ELF users as merely 'erroneous' rather than as communicative strategies that are worthy of scholarly attention and potentially useful to L2 learners of English. For these reasons, the predominance of the EFL perspective in the Expanding Circle is simply not questioned

enough, and numerous English teachers (and scholars in the field of ELT) seem oblivious to alternative perspectives on teaching English. What would be of utmost importance, then, is to raise awareness amongst practising and future teachers alike of the notion of ELF and its significance for learners of English who intend to engage in intercultural communication in their future lives (who, in today's globalised world, constitute a clear majority), and to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate an ELF perspective in their teaching. It follows that a consideration of the most important findings of ELF research and their potential implications for different areas of ELT should occupy an important place in English language teacher education. Pronunciation is probably an area of language that should receive special attention in this respect, as it is this area that was found to be of particular importance to successful ELF communication (Jenkins 2000; cf. section 2.1.).

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to present a state-of-the-art approach to English pronunciation teaching for future language teachers that takes proper account of the findings of ELF research in order to help teaching degree students acquire the skills and knowledge needed to adequately prepare their future students for ELF interactions. Before presenting my suggestions for this in section 4, it is necessary to have a look at some important key issues in English pronunciation teaching which must be taken into consideration before any attempt at designing a pronunciation course can be made. This will be done in the next chapter.

2. Key issues in English pronunciation teaching

2.1. Why English pronunciation teaching is important

The importance accorded to pronunciation teaching has varied greatly with the many different approaches to language teaching that have emerged in the 20th century. Whilst form-focused pronunciation teaching was considered to be of utmost importance in *Audiolingualism* or the *Silent Way*, it has been attributed less significance in *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*, which is the approach nowadays most frequently employed in language teaching (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 3-8). Clearly, as Levis (2005: 369) observes, the significance accorded to pronunciation has often been motivated by ideological beliefs rather than scientific evidence. So why is English pronunciation teaching important? Probably the most important reason to teach English pronunciation is that a certain level in pronunciation is necessary for learners of English to maintain intelligibility in spoken conversation and to avoid communication breakdown (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 7). In CLT, this level is usually referred to as 'threshold' level. If learners fail to attain said level, they might have serious difficulties in oral communication, even if their grammatical and lexical competence in English is exemplary (ibid.).[12] This claim seems plausible insofar as differences in pronunciation may affect various other levels of language in English: they may alter the lexical meaning, the grammatical meaning or the discourse meaning of an utterance (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 3; for examples see table 1).

Table 1 Examples of linguistic differences due to differences in pronunciation

Lexical meaning	<u>p</u>in vs. <u>b</u>in, <u>ch</u>in vs. <u>g</u>in, <u>th</u>in vs. <u>t</u>in
Grammatical meaning	′record (noun/adjective) vs. re′cord (verb)
	tee<u>th</u> (noun) vs. tee<u>the</u> (verb)
Discourse meaning	I **thought** he might like me. (But I was wrong.)
	I thought he might **like** me. (But not that he was actually in love with me.)
	I thought he might like **me**. (Not my sister.)

Given the fact that pronunciation constitutes the conceptual basis for higher linguistic units (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 2), it follows that deviation from pronunciation norms can possibly change the meaning of an utterance and may even have a considerable impact on communicative success. This has proven to be particularly true for ELF contexts, where pronunciation emerged as the predominant cause of communication breakdown (Jenkins 2000). In Jenkins' data, over two thirds of communication breakdowns (27 out of 40) were

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[12] Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin refer the reader to a study by Hinofotis and Bailey (1980) to support this claim. This study investigated NS undergraduates' perceptions of foreign teaching assistants' communication skills, i.e. it is located within the ESL/EFL (and not the ELF or EIL) domain.

due to pronunciation errors, all of them being caused by negative L1 transfer.[13] Similar results were obtained by Deterding (2013) in his investigation of misunderstandings in South-East Asian ELF, who found that over 86% of misunderstandings in his data involved pronunciation. A possible explanation for the great impact of a speaker's accent on his/her intelligibility in ELF communication may be that non-native speakers of English tend to make use of bottom-up rather than top-down processing strategies (cf. Brown 1990: 59-60). As Jenkins observes,

> [w]hile most people would nowadays support an interactive processing model rather than one which is purely top-down or bottom-up, it seems that NBESs [non-native speakers] do not follow the same pattern. Difficulties which they encounter with top-down skills, particularly in relation to making use of contextual cues, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, and linguistic redundancy, force them back to an over-reliance on bottom-up skills which, in turn, lead them to focus too firmly on the acoustic signal. (Jenkins 2000: 20).

This overemphasis on the incoming signal significantly increases the possibility of phonological errors leading to communication problems in ELF. Jenkins found that even errors on the phonetic level may lead to comprehension difficulties in ELF talk, as non-native speakers of English are more sensitive to allophonic variance than native speakers of English (ibid.). Non-native speakers' difficulty of correctly decoding acoustic signals that are phonetically or phonologically distorted is compounded by the fact that pronunciation is the area of language in which L2 varieties exhibit the greatest diversity (Jenkins 2000: 1). Jenkins (ibid.) thus concludes that pronunciation is "the linguistic area that most threatens intelligibility" in ELF talk. It follows logically that an approach to ELT that aims at preparing learners for international communication will have to accord special attention to pronunciation teaching and take account of findings in the area of phonological intelligibility in ELF.

Although not directly relevant to the topic of this thesis, it is still worth mentioning that pronunciation also seems to be an important part of ELT within an EFL perspective: it is interesting to note that although native speakers seem to be less dependent on acoustic signals than non-native speakers, they still appear to be particularly sensitive about phonological deviance. Drawing on the observations of Mey (1981), James states that

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[13] Interestingly, Jenkins found that accents of speakers whose L1 was unrelated to their listeners' first language tended to be less intelligible than accents of speakers whose L1 belonged to the same language family as the one of their interlocutors (2000: 20).

NS are at their most authoritative on matters of phonology, less so on morphology, less still on syntax, and less on semantics. Moreover, this scale corresponds to a scale of the native speakers' tolerance of linguistic deviance: they instinctively abhor phonological deviance, hate the morphological sort, merely dislike the syntactic, and can live with the semantic. (James 1998: 47)

Why should native speakers be less tolerant of errors on the phonological level that **potentially** affect the grammar or meaning of an utterance than errors on the grammatical or semantic level themselves? One possible explanation for the kind of disapproval described above may be the fact that pronunciation seems to be particularly closely linked to people's social and personal identities (cf. section 2.3.1. & 2.4.), and that a person's accent can thus serve as both a powerful in-group or out-group marker. From the point of view of a native speaker, a foreign accent might hence not only be an indication of the proficiency level which a non-native speaker was able to reach in English pronunciation, but might also be perceived as a manifestation of a speaker's lack of solidarity with the native speaker community, an immediate signal of 'otherness'.

Apart from the danger of inhibiting comprehension or even causing communication problems when a certain level of pronunciation is not reached by a learner of English, there are a number of other reasons for teaching English pronunciation. First, pronunciation does not only convey linguistic meaning, but also gives clues about a person's mood and emotional state (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 4). In English, this is primarily achieved through intonation: through the use of different tones, but also by varying one's voice quality, speed, loudness and pitch range, speakers of English can express moods such as hesitancy or reservation (cf. Rogerson-Revell 2011: 192-193). For learners whose mother tongue differs considerably from English in how to convey attitudes and emotions through pronunciation, it may be particularly important to draw attention to the way in which this aspect of pronunciation works in English in order to avoid giving a false impression of one's emotional state to the listener.[14] Another argument in favour of pronunciation teaching and learning is that competence in pronunciation might help a speaker become more fluent in a language (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 5). Learners who have great difficulties in pronouncing a large number of English sounds (especially consonants and consonant clusters) may be considerably 'slowed down' when speaking, making fluent speech a constant struggle for them. In my personal experience, this often has an additional, harmful effect on other aspects of pronunciation, such as sentence

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[14] This aspect of pronunciation has not been found to be crucial for intelligibility in ELF, but might be of special importance to learners who intend to use English primarily in interactions with native speakers, where orientation to NS norms will be more expected and more important than in international communication.

stress and intonation, which become neglected due to the effort and attention invested in the production of particular sounds. What might be helpful to such learners is a considerable amount of practice of the segments that pose problems for them and/or helping them to find substitutions for the sounds they find difficult to produce in the form of sounds that are easier to pronounce and still acceptable from the point of view of intelligibility, so as to enable them to produce a continuous stream of speech with greater ease and, thereby, to become more fluent in English.

What is more, it has to be remembered that L2 learners (in particular adult learners) cannot be expected to naturally acquire pronunciation by exposure to native speaker speech such as they did the phonology of their L1 (ibid.). While some learners are indeed "naturally gifted mimics" (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 67), others may need support in the form of explicit practice and instruction in order to attain the threshold level in pronunciation. There are certain groups of learners, however, who – mostly for professional reasons – need to attain a level of pronunciation that goes beyond this 'minimum requirement', i.e. their pronunciation has to be particularly intelligible. According to Morley (1987: 2), these include:

> 1. Foreign student teaching assistants in colleges and universities
>
> 2. A growing population of foreign-born [sic] technical, business, and professional employees in business and industry,
>
> 3. Adult and teenage refugees in resettlement and vocational training programs,
>
> 4. International businessmen and business women who need to use English as an international lingua franca.[15]

To this list, Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996: 8) add the following two points:

> 5. teachers of English as a foreign language who are not native speakers of English and who expect to serve as the major model and source of input in English for their students
>
> 6. people in non-English-speaking countries working as tour guides, waiters, hotel personnel, customs agents, and the like, who use English for dealing with visitors who do not speak their language.

Especially the points 4, 5 and 6 are relevant to the topic of this thesis. Whilst the points 4 and 6 emphasize the significance of intelligible pronunciation in successful ELF communication as discussed above, point 5 points to the potential role of English language teachers as major

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[15] I would rephrase this last point as 'any speaker of English who uses English as a lingua franca in what House (1999: 74) terms an "'influential framework', i.e., global business, politics, science, technology and media discourse". Clearly, the use of ELF is not restricted to international commerce, but, since Morley wrote this in 1987, has spread to various other domains, in some of which miscommunication and misunderstandings could have serious consequences for large numbers of people.

pronunciation models for their students. Future English teachers will therefore need to attain a level in pronunciation that goes beyond being 'just intelligible', as their accent may constitute an important reference model for their own students in their later professional lives. It should be noted, however, that in the age of electronic media, teachers have long ceased to be the only pronunciation models in the ELT classroom. Which level in pronunciation should be attained by future language teachers and which kind of pronunciation training they should receive as a consequence is a topic open to debate and will be considered in more detail in section 3.2. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that for teaching degree students (and certain other groups of learners), attaining a minimum level in English pronunciation will certainly not be enough, which justifies the existence of a pronunciation course as part of English language teacher education (such as is currently the case at the Vienna English Department) as such.

Having established that English pronunciation teaching is of importance to all sorts of learners of English (and even more so to those who intend to engage in international communication and/or work as English language teachers), the question remains what exactly English pronunciation teaching should aim at, i.e. which goals, models and approaches should be adopted when teaching English pronunciation. There is no straightforward answer to this question, since what should be taught will always depend on the particular teaching context as well as the specific type(s) of learners involved. The next section provides an overview of a couple of learner variables that are suspected to play an important role in the process of L2 pronunciation learning and that therefore should be taken into account when deciding on the goals, models and methods used in a pronunciation course.

2.2. Learner variables in L2 pronunciation learning

Before deciding on what and how to teach (English) pronunciation, it is of paramount importance to thoroughly consider the type of learners concerned. Wong (1987: 17) stresses the need to consider learner variables such as the learners' personality traits and their background in pronunciation learning (and language learning in general) in the planning of a pronunciation course, as she believes that these factors are likely to have a bearing on the effectiveness and outcome of pronunciation instruction. For example, extrovert learners might be more willing to participate in exercises that require the production and imitation of foreign sounds or to imitate NS intonation patterns than introvert ones. In a study conducted by Suter (1976), however, extroversion did not prove to be a statistically significant determinant for L2

pronunciation achievement. Instead, his results suggested that the 'strength of concern' of a learner about pronunciation accuracy might be an important factor in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation. Besides the amount and nature of a learner's prior pronunciation instruction (and language instruction in general), another important factor in L2 pronunciation learning seems to be the amount of exposure to the target language a learner has received and will be able to receive during the process of pronunciation learning (cf. Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 16-17).

In the following, I will take a closer look at a number of other factors that are commonly suspected to play an important role in L2 pronunciation learning.

The role of L1

The way in which a learner's L1 might affect pronunciation learning has been of interest to numerous scholars in the field of L2 acquisition for quite some time. One theory of language learning that strongly emphasized the impact of the L1 system on second language acquisition[16] is the *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis*, which was originally proposed by Lado (1957). According to this theory, our L1 system acts as a filter during second language learning, easing the acquisition of L2 features that exist in a similar or equivalent form in a speaker's first language (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 19), in which case we may speak of 'positive L1 transfer'. However, wherever the L2 language system differs from a learner's L1 system, learners might cope by incorrectly using strategies and structures of their L1 in the L2, i.e. 'negative L1 transfer' is taking place; this phenomenon is also sometimes referred to as 'L1 interference', for the learner's L1 is said to be 'interfering' with L2 acquisition (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 19-20). Thus, it was believed that a simple comparison of a learner's L1 system with the L2 system to be acquired would make it possible to anticipate areas of difficulty which would have to receive greater attention in language teaching. Although the *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis* proved to be unable to account for all kinds of errors that occur during L2 acquisition and is nowadays widely considered to be of little relevance with regard to most areas of language learning, numerous researchers still believe in its validity with regard to pronunciation (cf. Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 20), considering L1 interference to be "a significant factor in accounting for foreign accents" (ibid.). Setter and Jenkins (2005: 3), for example, acknowledge the

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[16] Unless otherwise stated, the term 'second language' is here used in the broad sense of the term, i.e. it refers to both second and foreign language.

potential impact of a learner's L1 phoneme inventory on L2 pronunciation acquisition, and also suggest the importance of considering L1 syllable constraints in pronunciation teaching (which, they argue, may prove significant for many Chinese learners of English). Thus, taking note of our learner's L1 background might not enable us to fully anticipate the process of L2 pronunciation acquisition, but it will surely help us to be prepared for **some** difficulties which learners might experience, and will increase our awareness of and our understanding for the cognitive challenges those learners face throughout the learning process.

Age

As regards the variable of age in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation, researchers have often been intrigued by the so-called 'Joseph Conrad phenomenon'. The latter was first described by Scovel (1969) and is named after the famous polish-born writer who only learned to speak and write English at the age of eighteen. Conrad eventually managed to reach such a high level in grammar and lexis in English that he was able to use the language creatively in writing and produce literary masterpieces. Yet, he never attained a level in pronunciation that was in any way comparable to his achievements in other linguistic areas.[17] Similar to Conrad, many L2 adult learners are able to become highly proficient in syntax and morphology, but have considerable difficulty reaching the same level in pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 15). Scovel (1969) therefore suspected that there might be a 'critical period' (as suggested by Lenneberg 1967) for the acquisition of L2 pronunciation which ends after puberty, thus making it impossible for adult learners of a foreign language to reach 'nativeness' in pronunciation due to the completion of brain lateralization. Flege (1987), however, seriously doubts the existence of such a 'critical period' for L2 pronunciation learning, especially because the findings of a number of empirical studies seem to contradict certain fundamental premises of the *Critical Period Hypothesis* (CPH). He furthermore worries that the CPH might in fact prevent the advancement of research into L2 speech learning "because it makes certain hypotheses which *can* be tested appear unwarranted" (Flege 1987: 174 [original emphasis]). Finally, a great number of scholars remain sceptical of the CPH as it fails to consider obvious differences between adult and child learners, such as ego permeability (see below), amount of exposure, motivation and attitudes towards the language being learnt (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 15).

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[17] In fact, it is reported that Conrad's strong accent made it impossible for him to give public lectures in English (Gerard 1967, cited in Scovel 1969: 247), and that his pronunciation remained on the verge of unintelligibility throughout the rest of his life (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 15).

Affective factors: ego-permeability, anxiety, motivation

A further issue that has received much research interest in the field of L2 pronunciation learning is the role played by psychological factors such as levels of anxiety, attitudes, self-perception and identity. The significance of the latter two for L2 pronunciation learning was particularly emphasized by Guiora (1972), who was probably the first to truly recognize the close relationship between pronunciation (and language in general) and an individual's identity. Drawing on the psycho-analytical notion of 'body ego' (which refers to our bodily self-image), Guiora introduces the concept of 'language ego', i.e. the way in which a person constructs a mental representation of his or her self through language and speech. Of all aspects of language, Guiora argues, pronunciation is "the most critical and most valuable contribution of the language ego to self-representation" (1972: 145). He compares learning a new language with absorbing a new identity (ibid.), and suspects individual differences in L2 pronunciation acquisition to essentially result from differences in 'ego permeability', i.e. the flexibility and adaptability of a person's ego. The latter is developmentally determined and therefore bound to decline with age, i.e. our ego boundaries get less flexible in the course of our lives. This, according to Guiora, explains the great differences in the levels of success in L2 pronunciation learning achieved by adult and child learners respectively, and he even suspects that it might therefore be impossible for an adult to ever reach native-like proficiency in L2 pronunciation:

> […] a child can assimilate native-like speech in any language. Once ego development is concluded, however, that flexibility will be sharply restricted forever. It will be well-nigh impossible for an adult to learn any new language with authentic pronunciation. (ibid.)

Thus, it is again the age factor which is suspected to play a crucial role in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation, yet according to Guiora, it is not certain cognitive abilities that are believed to decrease with age, but the psychological ability to incorporate an additional (or new) identity.

The notion of ego permeability was subsequently taken up by Schumann (1975) in his affective theory of second language acquisition. Similarly to Guiora, Schumann believed that the seemingly greater aptitude of children to acquire a second language as opposed to adult learners might be explained by the fact that children are psychologically more susceptible to influences of their environment, and that they are therefore far more ready to take up linguistic influences than adults (Schumann 1975 in Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 8). What is more, being generally less self-conscious than adolescent or adult language learners, children

may also experience lower levels of anxiety about making pronunciation errors and may consequently be more willing to participate in pronunciation exercises involving the uttering of 'strange' foreign sounds. Although his work dates as far back as the late 1930ies, Stengel (1939: 477-478) aptly compares using a foreign language to putting on a fancy dress: whereas adults may be anxious of appearing comic or experience a feeling of shame when using a foreign language, children enjoy playing with their new medium of communication, free from fear of making mistakes:

> There is no fear of talking nonsense, for talking nonsense is a source of pleasure.
> Nor is there any fear of fancy-dress – the child loves to wear it.
> (Stengel 1939: 478)

Stengel regards the degree of repression of exhibitionistic impulses as the crucial difference between child and adult learners, and concludes that the more 'infantile' (i.e. the more exhibitionistic) the character of an adult learner, the easier it will be for him/her to acquire a second language. Stengel's theory seems to be of particular value for L2 pronunciation learning, since pronunciation is "a surface structure phenomenon that is most noticeable" (Canagarajah 2005: 365), which explains the consciousness and embarrassment many adult learners exhibit when making pronunciation errors as well as their frequent reluctance to engage in playful pronunciation exercises.

Despite the increased social and psychological impediments which adult learners face in the language learning process, Schumann suspected that, under the right circumstances, adult learners too can be successful[18] in second language learning. A supportive and understanding environment, for example, may help the adult learner to overcome affective impediments to L2 acquisition such as 'language shock' (the feeling of inadequacy, insecurity and anxiety when using a second language) and the trauma experienced from cultural disorientation (cf. Schumann 1975: 210-214), and can thereby function as an important initiating factor for successful language learning in an adult. Similarly, internal factors such as positive attitudes towards the target language or an 'integrative' motivation for language learning might help the adult learner develop a greater level of ego permeability, so as to

> [p]artially and temporarily give up [their] separateness of identity from the speakers of the target language (Guiora et al.) and to incorporate a new identity so essential to bilingualism. (Schumann 1975: 231)

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[18] By which he presumably means the attainment of native-like proficiency. From an ELF perspective, success in L2 learning is, of course, defined quite differently.

Schumann later reiterated the importance of affective variables such as levels of anxiety, motivation or ego-permeability in his acculturation model of second language learning (1986). Within this model, acculturation, which he defines as "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language (TL) group" (Schumann 1986: 379), is regarded as crucial for second language acquisition. Originally designed for second language learning by immigrant communities, Schumann's model might be of more interest to second[19] rather than foreign language learning contexts. Yet, an interesting aspect of his model is the useful (and often-cited) distinction between two types of motivation in language learning which Schumann adopted from Gardner & Lambert (1972): integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. An instrumentally-oriented learner exhibits a utilitarian mindset with regard to language learning, i.e. he/she is learning the language for more pragmatic reasons such as to enhance his/her professional opportunities. Integratively-oriented learners, one the other hand, experience a genuine desire to integrate themselves and get into contact with the target language community. This type of motivation is, according to Schumann, "more powerful", as learners who want to socially integrate in the target language community will strive to achieve a higher level in language learning than learners who are content with 'getting around' in their everyday lives (1986: 383). Yet, Schumann acknowledges that in reality, the relationship between levels of integrative and instrumental motivation and language proficiency is less straightforward than one would assume, and that success in language learning depends very much on how the variable of motivation interacts with the particular social contexts learners find themselves in (1986: 383-384).

In pronunciation teaching, integrative motivation is generally believed to be of greater importance than instrumental motivation, as it is assumed that integratively-oriented learners will be more likely to identify with the target language community and that they might therefore be more inclined to acquire a native-like accent in the second language. Yet, with regard to English pronunciation teaching in foreign language learning contexts, the applicability of the concept of integrativeness (or integrative motivation) seems to be limited. Dörnyei and Csizér (2002: 453) argue that given the global spread of English nowadays, the language ceases to be associated with one particular national culture, which "undermines the traditional definition of integrativeness as it is not clear any more who the 'L2 speakers' or the members of the L2 community are". Within an ELF approach to English language teaching, integrativeness and the resulting desire to adhere to NS (pronunciation) norms is not

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[19] Here in the sense of language learning that takes place in contexts where the language learnt is spoken by the general public and can therefore be experienced in naturally occurring communication.

applicable, since linguistic norms in ELF are not adopted from NS models, but negotiated and adapted to suit the interlocutors' needs in a particular situation, and the community to integrate with is the 'international community'. Nevertheless, integrative motivation is still often regarded as desirable and crucial to successful learning in English pronunciation teaching, for the reason that the EFL approach to language teaching and learning (cf. section 1.5) still largely prevails over the ELF perspective in most contexts of ELT.

Learner needs

Apart from the different learner variables discussed above, another crucial point to be taken into consideration in English pronunciation teaching is the learners' needs for using English in their future lives. A needs-based approach to pronunciation teaching is of particular importance in the cases of learners whose goal of learning English is a less straightforward one than the one of those learners who seek to integrate into and/or assimilate to the NS community (Pennington 1996: 240). According to Pennington (ibid.), there are two crucial variables that need to be taken into consideration in this respect:

a) the learners' potential *audiences*: are the learners going to use English in interactions with native speakers or with non-native speakers of English, or with both? Who will their primary sort of interlocutors be?

b) the *functions* learners will need to perform in English: will they be using English in formal and/or informal contexts, for community-internal and/or for community-external purposes?

An analysis of these variables, Pennington argues, will permit teachers to plan their teaching according to their learners' needs, which means that ideally, the above variables are going to have an immediate influence on the goals and models selected for English pronunciation teaching in a particular teaching context. This is important in so far as, quite obviously, learners will otherwise not be able to profit from pronunciation teaching in the best possible way: a learner who will be using English primarily for international communication with other non-native speakers will benefit much more from instruction that takes account of the research findings made in this area and their implications for language teaching than from instruction which assumes that learners will need and want to assimilate to the linguistic and cultural norms of a particular subgroup of the English NS community. In other words, analysing our learners' needs is crucial in order to decide whether we should adopt an EFL or

an ELF approach to English pronunciation teaching (or both). Unfortunately, the necessity of analysing and considering both learner variables and learner needs is not always recognized by English language teachers, many of whom think it to be best to make students attain native-like pronunciation by imitating one of the traditional model accents commonly used in English pronunciation teaching. That is, instead of taking into account the type of learners being taught, numerous English language teachers are strongly influenced by the prevalent native-speakerist discourse in ELT which leads them to consider more recent, alternative proposals for English pronunciation teaching (such as the use of NNS models or Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core) as unsuitable or even ludicrous – despite the fact that the suitability of traditional models for English pronunciation teaching is increasingly put into questions for various reasons.

In the next section, we will have a closer look at the topic of goals and models in English pronunciation teaching in general and the 'status quo' as regards the goals and models most commonly employed in English pronunciation teaching around the world.

2.3. Goals, models, norms

2.3.1. Common goals in English pronunciation teaching

In pronunciation teaching, it is important to distinguish between what exactly we want our students to achieve and what reference points we use to guide our students in their learning process. Thus, we have to distinguish between the goals of pronunciation teaching and the models we use to help learners attain these goals. Let us consider the former first. Rogerson-Revell defines a 'goal' in pronunciation teaching as

> the level which a learner's pronunciation aims to reach in order to facilitate effective communication. (ibid.)

This level is not universally defined, but depends on the type of learner him/herself and "on the particular contexts in which the learner needs to communicate" (ibid.), and may thus range from near-native proficiency to the 'threshold level' mentioned earlier in this thesis. For obvious pedagogic reasons, it is important that a learning goal is both realistic and achievable for a particular group of learners.

It follows that an adequate goal for pronunciation learning can only be established after the respective learners' needs and characteristics have been sufficiently considered. Actual teaching practice, however, does not always follow this principle, but continues to be

influenced by two major points of view as regards the question of what the final aim of pronunciation teaching should be. The latter deserve to be discussed more thoroughly, which is what I will do in the next section.

Intelligibility or nativeness?

There are two opposing principles that have governed the domain of pronunciation teaching and the scientific debate surrounding it for quite some time now: the *nativeness principle* and the *intelligibility principle* (Levis 2005: 370). According to the former, acquiring a native-like accent in L2 pronunciation is thought to be an achievable goal for the foreign language learner that is worth striving for. Yet, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, it is a fact that only a minority of adult learners are able to acquire a native-like accent in a foreign language (ibid.). Whereas biological reasons, notably the Critical Period Hypothesis (cf. section 2.2.), have been put forward to account for the apparent lack of aptitude of older learners to reach nativeness in L2 pronunciation, Jenkins (2000: 16) suspects identity to play a greater role here rather than (biologically conditioned) motor control. The importance of the issue of identity in L2 pronunciation acquisition is also suggested by Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994b: 8), who argue that

> [p]eople invest so much of their identity in the way they speak that their pronunciation frequently proves extremely resistant to change, particularly with older learners.

A similar view is reflected in a number of theories about L2 pronunciation acquisition, which I briefly touched upon in section 2.2. Some of them consider age a relevant variable in L2 pronunciation learning not because of irreversible neurological developments, but due to the different socio-psychological profile of adult and child language learners. All these theories raise the question in how far it is actually possible, or desirable, to attain nativeness in the pronunciation of a foreign language for the average adult or adolescent learner, and whether adopting nativeness as a goal in L2 pronunciation teaching thus actually makes sense from a pedagogic point of view.

The fact that the nativeness principle can be considered a pedagogically questionable approach to pronunciation teaching is yet not the only argument that has been put forward against it. For example, it has been argued that it is morally wrong to require students to modify their pronunciation so as to conform to a NS standard, as this "may be seen as forcing them to reject their own identity" (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 7). Walker (2010a: 20), too,

views such an approach to teaching pronunciation as inappropriate, for it deprives learners of "their right to express their identity through their accent". Thus, the nativeness principle is also ethically problematic. It must not be forgotten, though, that there are of course learners who do indeed identify with a particular English-speaking culture, and who therefore genuinely want to acquire a native-like pronunciation in English. There is no reason why these learners should be prevented from striving for and attaining this goal. The point is that those learners who do not identify with the English NS community (or rather a particular subgroup of the latter) should not be forced to acquire an accent with which they actually do not identify, or be made to feel inferior because of their preference to preserve some features of their L1 accent in their pronunciation. Unfortunately, the nativeness principle does exactly that, as it disregards L2 learners' need for self-expression through their accent and as it suggests the linguistic superiority of native-like pronunciation over foreign accented speech, regardless of the communicative context a speaker finds him/herself in. What is more, the nativeness principle overlooks the fact that nativeness in pronunciation is by no means a necessary prerequisite for communicating successfully with native speakers of English, and even less so for ELF communication, where NS norms often lose their validity.

Despite the problems outlined above, the nativeness principle continues to impact on pronunciation teaching practices and teachers' and learners' beliefs about what is 'desirable' in pronunciation teaching and learning. As Levis observes:

> In language classrooms, it is common for learners to want to 'get rid of' their accents […]. Many teachers, especially those unfamiliar with pronunciation research, may see the rare learner who achieves a native-like accent as an achievable ideal, not an exception. (Levis 2005: 370)

In this sense, the nativeness principle may lead to considerable frustration on the part of both learners and teachers due to the almost inevitable experience of failure while trying to attain a seemingly realistic, yet virtually unattainable goal.

Clearly, the nativeness principle is probably not the most effective and appropriate perspective to guide pronunciation teaching for most learners of English and in most teaching contexts. A less ambitious and – in the light of the reasons given above – less problematic approach to pronunciation teaching is the *intelligibility principle*. It states that pronunciation teaching should aim at helping learners attain an accent that is intelligible to others, thereby acknowledging that intelligibility in pronunciation does not necessarily presuppose a native-like accent (Levis 2005: 370). Notably, this principle allocates different degrees of importance to different aspects of pronunciation, according to their impact on a person's intelligibility.

Intelligibility has been widely considered to be a suitable target in pronunciation teaching for the average language learner for quite some time now. But what do we actually mean when talking about intelligibility in pronunciation teaching? Clearly, there are different degrees of intelligibility, ranging from being merely understood, to accented, yet clear and easily comprehensible speech. A notion that has gained a lot of attention in this respect is the one of 'comfortable intelligibility' put forward by Abercrombie as early as 1949 (referred to in Rogerson-Revell 2005: 9), by which he means "a pronunciation which can be understood with little or no conscious effort on the part of the listener" (Abercrombie 1991 [1956]: 93). This concept was taken up by Kenworthy (1987: 3-4), who stresses the benefits of pronunciation being **comfortably** intelligible by pointing out that if the understanding of a speaker's pronunciation requires too much effort, the listeners might "reach [their] threshold of tolerance" and feel annoyed or even angry.

Despite the wide acceptance of intelligibility as a sensible goal in pronunciation teaching among language teachers and scholars alike, the intelligibility principle frequently does not find application in actual teaching practice. In some cases, the reason for this may be excessive ambition or a lack of knowledge about recent research findings in English pronunciation teaching on the part of language teachers, who consequently think that they must aim for nothing less than native-like pronunciation in their teaching. Yet, an even more important reason seems to be that many ELT professionals simply do not know how to help their students achieve intelligibility in pronunciation, i.e. which features of pronunciation they should give priority in their teaching. Arguably, this makes the identification of those aspects of pronunciation that are most essential to speaker intelligibility "the most pressing issue in L2 pronunciation research" (Field 2005: 399). Although numerous studies have been conducted in order to shed light on this issue, scholars have been unable to agree on a set of criteria for intelligible English pronunciation on which English language teachers should base their teaching. This has to do with the fact that English is used by various different types of speakers around the world (and not only by a single NS 'target language group', as is so often forgotten), all of whom might perceive different aspects of pronunciation as important for intelligibility. A set of intelligibility criteria for pronunciation teaching that aims to prepare learners for global communication would have to take into account as many of these different groups of speakers as possible. Yet, intelligibility itself is already an extremely complex issue, and even more so the greater and more heterogeneous the linguistic community used as a reference point, which makes research into international intelligibility in English a very difficult and time-consuming endeavour.

Given the complexities of this topic, I will postpone the discussion of the concept of intelligibly and the findings in this field of enquiry to a later section (see section 2.5.), and now move on to discussing another crucial notion in pronunciation teaching: the teaching model.

2.3.2. Models in English pronunciation teaching

When we speak of 'models' in pronunciation teaching, we essentially mean points of reference established for the learner to refer and orient to. Models have a crucial didactic function in pronunciation teaching, and it is generally accepted that learners will need some model towards which they can work.

One question that has been subject to much discussion in the field of English phonetics and English language pedagogy is which accent(s) should be used as a model in English pronunciation teaching. In order to approach a solution to this problem, it is important to first of all recognize that there is no definite answer to the question of which accent would be most appropriate to serve as a model for learners of English in general. As noted earlier in this thesis, what kind of English should be adopted as a teaching model will always depend on the language learners concerned, i.e. their pedagogic and professional needs as well as their personal preferences (which may or may not be influenced by the larger educational, social or socio-economic context). For the teaching of English in an ESL country such as India, for example, the most appropriate pronunciation model might be constituted by a local accent of English rather than a NS standard variety, for it is the former, and not the latter, which is perceived as 'accentless' in these contexts (whereas the British standard accent, Received Pronunciation, is often perceived as alien and artificial (Rajadurai 2007a: 91)). In contrast, for people immigrating to the US who intend to integrate into the US American society, General American might be an appropriate model to work towards.

One major problem of English pronunciation teaching is that in practice, the actual teaching context is often hardly considered when choices as to the goals and models of teaching English pronunciation are made. As Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994a: 2.7) note:

> […] when we speak, write or think about pronunciation we tend to over-generalize, ignoring that different socio-psychological, motivational etc. conditions apply in different language learning situations. The overgeneralisation tends into the direction of the 'ideal L2 learner' who only wants to communicate with native speakers and wants to identify with the target language community.

Yet, as Kachru observed already in the early 1990ies, it is a commonly held yet wrong belief that English is nowadays learnt in ESL and EFL territories to primarily interact with native speakers of the language (Kachru 1992: 357-359). This makes the use of NS pronunciation models in ELT in the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle more than questionable. Nevertheless, the most widely used models in English pronunciation teaching are still all based on what Setter and Jenkins (2005) term 'older varieties of English (OVEs)', i.e. native English varieties such as British or American English. For example, Received Pronunciation (RP) is still frequently used as a teaching model in former British colonies and protectorates (Setter & Jenkins 2005: 2), despite the fact that local pronunciation norms have emerged in these areas and many of these Outer Circle varieties have already gained the status of a 'nativized variety' of English. Setter and Jenkins therefore lament that

> [t]his approach to the selection of a model is intuitive rather than empirical, and
> can be based on socio-cultural or market-driven choices. OVEs are regarded as
> 'proper English', and any local variety is simply not good enough.
> (Setter & Jenkins 2005: 2)

The situation is similar if not worse in the Expanding Circle, where an additional difficulty is constituted by the fact that NNS English varieties such as Austrian or Spanish English are generally not accorded the same status of legitimacy as ESL varieties: Expanding Circle speakers are generally expected to orient themselves towards NS norms, for they are considered to speak English as a **foreign** language (cf. section 1.5.), whereas the ELF perspective is usually overlooked altogether.

The prevalence of OVEs as models in English pronunciation teaching is further encouraged by the fact that many language teachers lack the appropriate education and information base or the professional freedom to make informed alternative choices in their teaching. In numerous teaching contexts, teachers see themselves restricted by curricula that have been established by policy makers who are ignorant of the numerous issues involved in language teaching and learning or who fail to recognize the immense socio-linguistic developments that have happened in the past decades in the English-speaking world. It seems hardly surprising, then, that RP and General American (GA) are still the predominant models in English pronunciation teaching and that their legitimacy is hardly called into question by the majority of English language teachers around the world. There are, however, a number of reasons that make both these accents problematic models for pronunciation teaching, not only from an ELF (or ESL) perspective but also within an EFL approach to English pronunciation teaching (see the following section).

Traditional pronunciation models evaluated: the problems of RP and GA

Let me begin with the arguments usually cited in favour of the use of standard NS accents such as RP and GA as models in English pronunciation teaching. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, for a long time the basic assumption in English pronunciation teaching was that learners were essentially to be prepared for NS-NNS communication, and that consequently, it would be most sensible to help them approximate so-called 'native speaker competence' as closely as possible. If learners are to be taught a NS English accent, this should of course be an accent that is likely to be advantageous for them, i.e. an accent which makes people associate qualities like competence, education and intelligence. Thus, standard accents with social prestige such as RP and GA were the obvious choice. Hughes, Trudgill and Watt (2005: 3), for example, argue in favour of the use of RP as a teaching model by pointing to its high social prestige:

> No doubt learners want to learn, and teachers to teach, what has long been perceived to be the 'best accent'. Among a substantial proportion of British people, because they tend to associate the accent with the high social status, wealth and power of its speakers, RP is usually considered the best, the clearest, and even the most 'beautiful' accent.

Yet, as we will see later, RP does not enjoy this kind of acknowledgement amongst all speakers of British English, but seems to evoke negative associations such as snobbishness and affectation amongst a considerable number of people in the UK, and also GA has some problematic connotations attached to it (see below).

A further often-cited advantage of prestige accents like RP and GA is that they are usually perceived as "more geographically neutral" (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 5-6). What is more, they are also often regarded as being particularly intelligible within the national borders of a country due to their distribution via national radio and television broadcasts (e.g. Hughes, Trudgill & Watt 2005: 3). This argument does not necessarily hold for ELF communication, however, where a number of features of both GA and RP have been suspected to threaten intelligibility (Jenkins 2000). This makes the use of GA and RP in teaching contexts where learners should be prepared for ELF rather than EFL interactions somewhat problematic.

What is more, an ever growing number of British scholars are critical of using RP in English pronunciation teaching, and numerous reasons have been put forward against its use as a teaching model. Jenkins (2000: 14-15) lists the following:

- *RP speakers are a tiny minority:* Genuine RP is spoken by not even 3% of the entire British population; the majority of educated Britons instead make use of 'modified RP', a type of RP including traces of regional accents (Crystal 1995). The actual chance of learners ever having to communicate with an RP speaker is therefore extremely small, making RP speakers the 'phantom speakers of English' (Daniels 1995).

- *RP is a difficult accent for foreign learners*: There are a number of regional accents that would be easier to acquire than RP, as regards both the level of production and reception. A further difficulty for learners is constituted by the fact that RP pronunciation often differs considerably from English orthography.[20]

- *RP is (somewhat) old-fashioned:* RP has undergone a number of changes in the past decades, leading to clearly identifiable differences between the pronunciation of younger and older speakers (such as the substitution of /ɔː/ for /ʊə/, the phenomenon of 'happy-tensing' or the use of the allophone [ɔʊ] for /əʊ/ before dark /l/). Learners might thus end up with an archaic pronunciation, especially because teaching materials are not always updated to feature these developments. In fact, Jenkins (2000: 18) remarks at a later point that RP is nowadays largely regarded as outmoded.

What might be added to this list is the fact that attitudes towards RP amongst English native speakers themselves are by no means exclusively positive. As Przedlacka (2005: 26) observes, the use of RP signifies for some people a claim to a higher social status and can make them perceive a speaker as sounding conceited and unnatural. Speaking with an RP accent might therefore be considered inept in certain social contexts, and may therefore actually constitute a social disadvantage for a speaker (Gimson 2001: 79). Negative attitudes towards RP have been found in particular amongst members of the younger generation, as the accent is regarded as connected to 'the Establishment' (Gimson 1989: 86). A mini-survey conducted by Coggle (1993: 85, referred to in Przedlacka 2005: 26) supports these findings, showing that students tend to associate primarily negative qualities such as 'formal', 'cold', 'over-precise' and 'stiff' with a conservative RP accent. According to Hughes, Trudgill and Watt (2005: 4), similar attitudes are to be found amongst numerous speakers of regional accents, to whom "all RP speech, however conservative,[21] sounds affected", especially if their

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[20] Arguably, this is true of many other accents of English as well. Scottish and Irish accents, however, have a closer relationship with English orthography than RP, which makes them more suitable models for English pronunciation teaching in this respect (Roach 2009: 5).

[21] As explained by the authors at a later point in their book (see Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2005: 40-41), there are a number of sub-varieties of RP, some of which are regarded as more conservative than others. Gimson

own accent differs considerably from the RP sound system. What is more, Lindsey (2014) argues that RP is perceived by native speakers of English in general (i.e. not only within British society) as "the quintessential sound of an old social elite", and observes that RP-type accents are, hence, often employed as a marker of villainy in Anglophone popular culture.

As for General American, there seem to be similar problems as with RP, although they are, arguably, less pronounced in some respects. Like RP, the GA sound system lacks a clear relationship with English orthography, although the fact that post-vocalic /r/ is realised in GA can be considered a clear advantage of this accent: firstly because in this respect, GA corresponds closer to English spelling than RP does, thereby easing perception for the listener; and secondly because GA consequently lacks the three centring diphthongs /eə/, /ɪə/ and /ʊə/ (which occur in RP when there is a post-vocalic, silent /r/ in spelling), which reduces the number of diphthongs to be acquired from eight to five. Yet, the obligatory realization of post-vocalic /r/ is in fact a two-edged sword and might not only be considered an advantage, as learners of English for whom the production of the English /r/ phoneme is difficult might appreciate a pronunciation model that requires them to pronounce fewer /r/-sounds.[22] A further potential difficulty of GA is that /l/ is pronounced as dark [ɫ] in all phonological contexts (Cruttenden 2014: 88). Similarly to the realization of /r/, this might be regarded as both an advantage and a disadvantage: on the one hand, there is no need to distinguish between two kinds of 'l' (as is the case in RP), yet on the other hand, learners who have difficulty producing [ɫ] might find it easier to learn an accent where they do not have to do so wherever /l/ occurs. Moreover, there are certain features of GA that do not necessarily ease perception for listeners, such as the use of /ɑː/ in words like 'hot' or 'pot' or the apparent elision of /t/ in the cluster <nt> before an unstressed syllable (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin 1996: 65), which causes the word <winter> to become homophonous with <winner>. Especially the use of a voiced alveolar tap [ɾ] for /t/ in certain (mostly intervocalic) contexts might make GA less intelligible, as this bears the danger of confusing /t/ with /d/

(1989), for example, distinguishes between 'conservative RP' (used by older speakers and members of certain professions and social strata), 'general RP' (the most neutral variety of the three) and 'advanced RP' (spoken by the younger generation). In the latest edition of *Gimson's pronunciation of English,* Cruttenden presents the notion of 'Conspicuous General British' (General British being an alternative term for RP), which is basically the equivalent to Gimson's 'conservative RP', being "a really 'posh' variety limited now mainly to some elderly people" (2014: 78). He contrasts this with 'Modern RP', a more contemporary variety of RP, and 'Regional RP' (or 'Regional General British'), which is an RP accent containing a number of regional features (ibid.).

[22] One of my former students in fact opted for the 'British English' PPOCS 1 class for this very reason. Personally, I also find it a great relief not having to pronounce /r/ everywhere it occurs in spelling. Yet, this might be explained by my L1 background, as in Austrian German, post-vocalic /r/ is 'silent' too, or simply by my personal fondness for non-rhotic accents.

(yet, it certainly simplifies production). An area of perceptive and productive difficulty that is common to both RP and GA are weak forms (Jenkins 2000: 15). It is noteworthy that they are – contrary to popular belief – not a feature of all native accents of English (ibid.)

One clear advantage of GA is that, in contrast to RP, it does not seem to create any negative associations such as affectation or exaggerated formality (Brown 1991 in Jenkins 2000: 17). This is easily explicable as in contrast to RP, which tends to be associated with the British upper class, GA is commonly considered a middle-class accent (Pennington 1996: 14). Yet, it does not seem to comprise all kinds of members of the US-American middle class. Unlike RP, GA is more easily defined by the process of negation rather than by actually identifying its origin in a geographical region or social class:[23]

> People find it easier to specify what is *not* standard than what is; in a sense, the standard of popular perception is what is left behind when all the non-standard varieties spoken by disparaged persons such as Valley Girls, Hillbillies, Southerners, New Yorkers, African Americans, Asians, Mexican Americans, Cubans and Puerto Ricans are set aside. (Milroy 1999: 174, [original emphasis])

Jenkins (2000: 204) concludes from Milroy's observation that "RP has links with classism […], while GA is linked to racism". Obviously, neither of this is in any way desirable for a pronunciation model.

Another argument that is often put forward in favour of GA is that, unlike RP, it seems to be spoken by a great number of people. Prator and Robinett (1972: x) hold that it "may be heard, with slight variations, from Ohio through the Middle West and on to the Pacific Coast" and Wells (1982, 1: 118) claims GA to be spoken by as many as two thirds of the American population, albeit insisting that there is considerable (rather than 'slight') variation to be found within this accent. However, its dispersion seems to have decreased significantly over the past decades, with speakers now making up only about a third of the US and the Canadian population combined (Jenkins 2000: 204). Still, it seems that the proportion of GA speakers is evidently much higher than the one of RP speakers, and that learners are thus much more likely to actually encounter the accent, especially through the US media that disseminates GA to countries all over the world (Brown 1991: 34). Or are they? Preston (2005) seriously questions not merely the dispersion of GA but its actual existence by arguing that the latter is a mere fiction perpetuated through textbooks by American linguists. According to him,

> [t]here is no such thing [as General American English] – not for pragmatics, grammar, lexicon, or pronunciation. (2005: 37)

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[23] See also Wolfram and Schilling-Estes' (2006: 395) definition of GA.

Focusing on pronunciation, Preston shows that the *Northern Cities Vowel Shift* and the *Southern Vowel Shift* led to a much greater phonological diversity in the speech of younger American speakers than was the case two generations ago, causing their speech to differ considerably from the GA vowel system. He further demonstrates that this kind of phonological variation is not limited to the American East Coast, which is often presented as the area exhibiting the greatest linguistic diversity in the US, but equally applies to Western areas. Drawing on his findings generated by an earlier study in which participants were asked to identify dialect areas on blank maps of the US (cf. Preston 1996), Preston concludes that the myth of GA is rooted in linguistic stereotypes about 'normal' or 'correct' speech rather than linguistic facts, thus being "a by-product of regional and […] ethnic prejudices" (2005: 54). Obviously enough, Preston is therefore critical of the use of GA as a model in English pronunciation teaching. Thus, there is a similar problem with the use of GA as a pronunciation model as is the case with RP, in the sense that learners are in fact extremely unlikely to ever encounter speakers of the accent they have been trained in, and that its use perpetuates stereotypical ideas about linguistic correctness and 'good' pronunciation.

As has become evident through my discussion in this section, both GA and RP have problems attached to them that make their use as models for English pronunciation teaching controversial, both from an ELF and an EFL perspective. A further problem which is not restricted to GA or RP but which applies to the use of any accent of English as a teaching model is that, if a strictly normative approach to teaching pronunciation is adopted, learners may be prevented from expressing their social and personal identities through their accents. Unfortunately, many language teachers mistake model accents such as GA and RP for a linguistic norm which learners must try to imitate as closely as possible. That is, instead of thinking of an accent as a *reference model*, they think of it as an *achievement model* which learners should strive to attain. Such an approach to pronunciation teaching echoes the nativeness principle discussed in the previous section and seems problematic for two reasons: first, as pointed out earlier, expecting learners to modify their accent so as to completely correspond to a particular NS model accent has proven to be an unrealistic goal for the majority of learners, creating frustration on the part of both teachers and learners. Secondly, such an approach disregards the significant role played by identity in L2 pronunciation acquisition and its impact on learners' motivation and ability to modify their pronunciation in a foreign language (cf. 2.3.1.).

In the next section, we will have a closer look at the relationship between pronunciation (and language in general) and identity, as a better understanding of the way in which people project

their identities via language may help us to find an approach to English pronunciation teaching that acknowledges the learners' right to express their identities via their accent.

2.4. Pronunciation and the expression of identity

People use language for a number of different purposes. Over the years, linguists have postulated different sets of language functions, for example the famous functions of language by Roman Jakobson (1960) or the 7 language functions by M.A.K. Halliday (1975). Obviously enough, some language functions appear in particular frameworks whilst being omitted from others. There is neither space nor the need to provide a detailed account of the different functional frameworks in linguistics here. For the purpose of the discussion in this section, it seems sufficient to refer to the classification of language functions provided by Kirkpatrick (2007), who distinguishes between three major functions of language: communication, identity, and culture (2007: 10). The first is perhaps the most obvious one: clearly, people use language in order to communicate with each another. Furthermore, we also use language in order to express our personal and social identities. This is possible because of the social meaning attached to particular linguistic forms which people internalize when acquiring their native language (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 5). Thus, when using language, we inevitably convey aspects of our personality and our social origin. This seems to be particularly true for pronunciation, as it is the area of a person's speech the characteristics (and possibly idiosyncrasies) of which are most easily perceptible. As Canagarajah observes, pronunciation is

> perhaps the linguistic feature most open to judgment. As a surface structure phenomenon that is most noticeable, one's accent easily evokes people's biases. (Canagarajah 2005: 365)

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above statement: first, that our pronunciation has a crucial impact on how we are perceived by others. This might explain the strong feelings which many native speakers seem to have towards accented speech (see section 2.1.), and it is a fact that many people exhibit either particularly negative or positive attitudes towards particular regional, social and foreign accents.[24] Secondly, we can therefore assume that adjustments and choices as regards our accent will permit us to create the public self-image

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[24] For an overview of studies investigating attitudes towards regional NS English accents and attitudes towards NNS English accents respectively, see Jenkins (2007: 78-81 & 81-83).

we would like to possess in a particular social context. In other words, our accent permits us to express different aspects of our identity. As Setter and Jenkins observe:

> Pronunciation seems to be particularly bound up with identity. Our accents are an expression of who we are or aspire to be, of how we want to be seen by others, of the social communities with which we identify or seek membership, and of whom we admire or ostracise. (2005: 5)

The concept of identity itself is not a straightforward one, and has been subject to discussion in the writings of numerous psychologists and cultural theorists. One point that was increasingly addressed in these writings is the way in which identity constitutes an intrinsically heterogeneous concept, being characterized by internal fragmentation and subject to constant change (cf. Hall 1996: 4). Identities are therefore always multiple rather than singular, not unified, but constantly transforming and therefore necessarily unstable (ibid.). Our way of speaking, in particular our pronunciation, mirrors the different 'fragments' of our identity, such as the age group or social class we belong to or with which we want to show solidarity. Rogerson-Revell (2005: 3-4) distinguishes two main types of identity about which pronunciation essentially conveys information: personal identity and group identity. Thus, on the one hand, our accent makes us 'unique', as it is possible to recognize individuals by their accent, but on the other hand, it also signals membership of or solidarity with a particular community (Seidlhofer 2001b: 58; Walker 2010a: 13). Whereas personal identity seems to be essentially linked to a person's voice quality, group identity has to do with the way we identify with different geographic or social groups of people (Rogerson-Revell 3-4), such as the social class we belong to, or a particular ethnic, national or cultural community.

What is crucial to note is that our personal and social identities are not only reflected in our L1 pronunciation, but equally so when speaking a foreign language (cf. Setter & Jenkins 2005: 1 & 5, and section 2.3.1. of this thesis). Unfortunately, the relationship between pronunciation or language in general and a learner's personal and social identities is frequently neglected in ELT, or has simply been denied, especially with regard to English teaching and learning in the Expanding Circle. Andreasson (1994: 401-402), for example, claims that

> [i]n the Expanding Circle […] the ideal goal is to imitate the native speaker of the standard language as closely as possible. Speaking English is *simply not related to cultural identity*. It is rather an exponent of one's academic and language learning abilities. [my emphasis]

Personally, I have frequently encountered different views on this matter amongst Expanding Circle speakers of varying language levels, and there is a number of scholars who would seem to disagree profoundly with this opinion, especially with regard to pronunciation (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b, Daniels 1995, Jenkins 2000, Jenkins & Setter 2005, to name but a few; cf. also Guiora's and Schumann's theory of L2 pronunciation acquisition discussed in section 2.2.). Taking a more general (i.e. a non-pronunciation-specific) point of view, Widdowson (1982: 12) argues that human language and identity are essentially inseparable from each other:

> [A]s a language becomes [...] a self-signalling system which has no need of human agency, except as a means of transmission, it ceases to function as a natural language. As soon as the human factor intrudes, the language grows, changes, varies, becomes subject to the identifying need of speakers to express their own identity.

Thus, any form of human language, regardless of whether it is spoken as a native, a foreign, or a second language or as a lingua franca, will inevitably also function as an expression of its speakers' identities. It seems curious indeed how Andreasson could arrive at the conclusion that users of English in Expanding Circle countries (as opposed to those in the Outer Circle) would not wish to express their cultural identity when speaking English. Of course, it is true that Expanding Circle countries did not have to face the same socio-political challenges as Outer Circle countries did in their struggle for autonomy, where speakers might indeed feel an increased need to digress from the linguistic norms of the 'old colonizing power' in order to emphasize their political independence via their use of language (cf. Andreasson 1994: 402). But this does not entail that speakers in the Expanding Circle will not wish to express their cultural identity in English **at all**. What is more, Andreasson clearly overlooks that certain Expanding Circle countries, such as France or Spain, also have a history with English-speaking countries that involves power struggles and issues of cultural identity, and that especially in Europe, with its many different nations that all insist on their particular national identity and their political legitimacy, the extent to which people may wish to express their national and cultural identity in English should certainly not be underestimated. In this sense, Andreasson's reasoning that only Outer Circle speakers will feel the need to emphasize national and cultural identity in English seems short-sighted.

Finally, it is worth noting that research on learner attitudes towards the goals of pronunciation teaching has confirmed that the expression of one's identity in English may indeed be of importance to a considerable number of learners of English in the Expanding Circle. Jenkins

(2000: 16) reports on a study by Porter and Garvin (1989) which found that a majority of the L2 speakers investigated preferred keeping some features of their L1 accent rather than acquiring RP. A number of Finish learners interviewed by Tergujeff (2013) reported that it was no problem for them to be identifiable as a foreigner by their accent, and one of them even explicitly stated that he would not want to sound like a native speaker, but wants to be recognized as a Finn (Tergujeff 2013: 84). For pronunciation teaching, then, it is important to keep in mind that a person's accent is closely bound up with their personal and social image, and that some learners of English, regardless of whether they learn English as a second or as a foreign language, might in fact want to preserve their L1 accent to some extent, in order to emphasize their cultural and national identity. Amongst adolescent learners, another factor that intrudes in L2 pronunciation learning is the social pressure experienced by peer groups. As Daniels argues, "the maintaining of a foreign accent saves an adolescent from being taken for the (English) teacher's pet" (Daniels 1995: 6, cited in Walker 2010a: 13). Especially adolescent learners might thus be reluctant to modify their pronunciation towards a NS accent, because they feel the need "to retain their self-respect or to gain the approval of their peers" (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 7).

Unfortunately, some approaches to pronunciation teaching, such as those based on the nativeness principle, disregard the delicate relationship between accent, identity, and a person's self-image. These approaches are thus only effective with certain types of learners (namely those who genuinely identify with the NS community), whereas others are highly disadvantaged and, it might be argued, practically bound to fail. Clearly, if we want to find an approach to teaching English pronunciation that is equally efficient with all or at least most language learners, we have to find a way to give learners the possibility to express their identities through their accents, while at the same time assuring that they attain a certain level of intelligibility in pronunciation in order for communication to be successful. A model of language use that seems useful in this respect is the 'communication-identity continuum' by Kirkpatrick (2007), which I will describe in the following section.

The communication-identity continuum

We have established above that people project their personal and social identities via their pronunciation, and that their accents are, therefore, inevitably going to vary according to their geographic, ethnic, and social origin. Yet, there is not only variation in pronunciation (and other areas of language) between different groups of people ('inter-speaker variation'). The

speech of any individual themselves varies according to the social context they find themselves in and the purpose of using language that comes with the latter ('intra-speaker variation'). In the following, we will have a look at a model that explains the most important parameters at work with regard to this type of language variation. As pointed out above, we can broadly distinguish between three main functions of language (communication, identity and culture). In order to emphasize one of these functions, people make use of different language varieties and registers, and occasionally, these language functions may be competing with each other (Kirkpatrick 2007: 10). Two of the three above functions are in fact frequently in such a relationship of opposition: communication and identity. If our primary intention is to communicate as effectively as possible, we want our speech to be particularly intelligible, and may thus deliberately refrain from using certain linguistic features that make our speech characteristic of a particular group of people in favour of features that we know to be widely understood. As Kirkpatrick observes,

> [t]he communicative function will often require the diminishing of the identity function. Conversely, when identity is the primary function of language use, the variety chosen by the speaker may not be intelligible to speakers outside that particular group. (Kirkpatrick 2007: 10-11)

Kirkpatrick concludes that we essentially keep moving along a functional continuum when using language, the extremes of which are constituted by an emphasis on either the communicative function of language or the expression of identity. The point at which a speaker finds him-/herself on this continuum will trigger the use of a particular linguistic variety (see Fig. 1.).
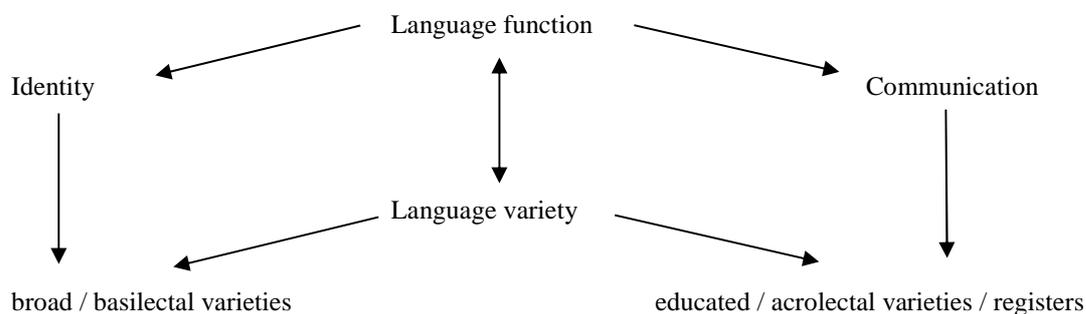
Figure 1 The identity-communication continuum (Kirkpatrick 2007: 12)

As can be seen in the above figure, Kirkpatrick associates more standard or educated varieties with increased intelligibility (and, hence, more effective communication), whereas he assumes broad, informal varieties or registers relating to a particular profession or social class to be particularly apt to signal identity (Kirkpatrick 2007: 11). Which language function is going to

be emphasized in a particular communicative act depends, according to Kirkpatrick (ibid.), on two major factors: the number of people involved and their relationship to each other. In situations where the number of people involved is high and the relationship between the interlocutors is one of social distance, the communicative function of language is likely to outweigh the identity function. Conversely, if people are few and socially close, the identity function will prevail. In a nutshell, the main function of any communicative act will largely depend on the social context speakers find themselves in, and they will adapt their speech accordingly.

The communication-identity continuum described by Kirkpatrick does not only apply to L1 language use, but also to L2 language use in all its forms, be it, with regard to English, ESL, EFL or ELF. Yet, it must be noted that the repertoire of linguistic varieties available to the average Expanding Circle speaker might be considerably smaller than the one of most native speakers and ESL speakers. This is of course an oversimplification of the issue, as there are EFL speakers of many different proficiency levels, some of whom are aware and capable of switching between formal and informal registers in English, and thus do not only have a single English variety at their disposal. In contrast to numerous EFL speakers, ESL speakers usually have a localized and a (more) standard variety of English at hand in order to emphasize either their cultural identities or communicative efficiency. The latter is usually not imperilled if ESL speakers communicate with other speakers within their linguistic community, but might be so when communicating with Inner Circle speakers or speakers of other ESL or EFL varieties. Speakers in the Expanding Circle, however, often do not possess a comparable linguistic repertoire, and might therefore primarily express their cultural identities by retaining a certain number of features of their L1 in their pronunciation. Similarly to the model by Kirkpatrick given above, it is thinkable that users of English in the Expanding Circle might thus move along an accent continuum ranging from a completely intelligible[25] pronunciation to a pronunciation that mirrors their cultural, social and personal identities, therefore being less easily understandable as it contains more features of a speaker's L1 (see Figure 2). As in Kirkpatrick's model, the choice of accent would depend on the given social context: a scientist giving a formal talk to an international audience will probably pay more attention to the degree of intelligibility of their speech, as their primary intention is to communicate their findings to as many members of the audience as possible.

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[25] As intelligibility is always relative, depending on a number of different factors (cf. section 2.5.1.), 'completely intelligible' is here to be understood as being easily intelligible to one's specific interlocutor(s) in a particular situation.

The identity function of language is clearly secondary in this context, as the primary purpose of using language is not the speaker's need for self-expression, but the exchange of information. In contrast, in the context of an informal gathering of friends, speakers may feel much more at ease to 'be themselves' and will thus exhibit a greater need for self-expression, which will be reflected in their speech as well. Also, the danger of communication breakdown is less serious in such conditions, as the listeners are likely to be familiar with the particular characteristics of an individual's pronunciation and their way of speaking in general. Even if communication problems should arise, the situation can easily be resolved by means of asking for repetition or clarification, as here, the interlocutors have the chance to collaborate in the co-construction of meaning.

Language function

Identity   Communication

Language variety

accentedness (= degree of foreign accent)   highly intelligible pronunciation

number of L1 features
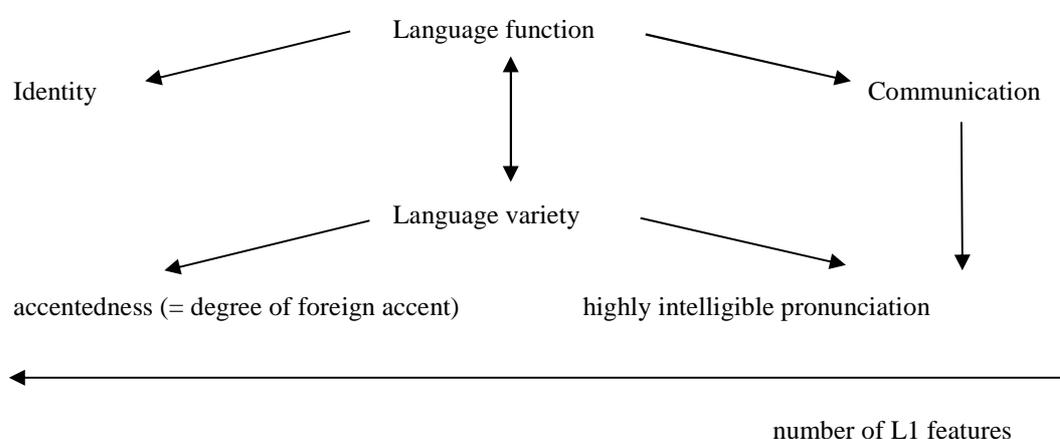
Figure 2 The identity-communication continuum with regard to L2 pronunciation

The above model is of course somewhat of an oversimplification, as in reality, an increase in accentedness does not necessarily entail an equivalent decrease in intelligibility (Rajadurai 2007a: 92). Yet, it seems to have a valuable implication for pronunciation teaching: if we assume that non-native speakers of English might, in certain situations, quite appropriately make use of a stronger foreign accent to emphasize their personal and cultural identities, this sheds a whole new light on current pronunciation teaching practices, in particular the widespread concept of *accent reduction*. The goal of pronunciation teaching has traditionally been assumed to be to reduce a learner's accent as far as possible and, ultimately, to make them lose their foreign accent entirely. This, as we have seen in this section (as well as in some previous sections of this thesis), is problematic in terms of issues of identity and furthermore makes learners appear as "subjects for speech pathology" (Jenkins 2004b: 115).[26]

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[26] A perfect example of this view on L2 pronunciation learning is an article by Czyżak, Stasiak & Szpyra-Kozłowska (2008) titled "English pronunciation clinic: the case of low phonetic achievers", in which the authors

But what if, instead of trying to make students 'get rid of' their foreign pronunciation, we aim at extending their accent repertoire? In an attempt to move away from the Anglo-centric world-view and place stronger emphasis on the perspective of 'English-knowing bilinguals', Pakir (1999: 110) suggests the notion of *accent addition* rather than *accent reduction*.[27] One immediate advantage of this notion is that, in contrast to accent reduction, the concept of accent addition permits those learners who do not exhibit the same kind of integrative or assimilative motivation as learners who genuinely desire to attain a native-like L2 accent and those learners who (have to) accept that they will not be able to reach native-like proficiency in pronunciation to perceive the pronunciation learning process as less of a (cultural) imposition. What is more, in contrast to the 'deficit perspective' of accent reduction, the notion of accent addition offers a more positive view on accented speech, and my thus prevent the development of preconceived ideas and negative attitudes towards other foreign accents.[28] The occurrence of L1 features in an individual's pronunciation is not per se regarded as undesirable or problematic, as the choice of accent depends on the communicative intention of a speaker and the particular situational context. In connection with this, it seems necessary to reconsider the legitimacy of the notion of 'correctness' in pronunciation teaching. An alternative and probably more useful concept in this respect appears to be the one of 'appropriacy' of pronunciation (Seidlhofer 2001b). Seidlhofer (ibid.) connects this notion to an earlier proposal made by herself and Dalton (1994a) for a new understanding of the concept of a 'model' for pronunciation teaching, which takes account of the reality of natural human communication. If varieties such as RP or GA are used as models, they argue, they are essentially used

> as points for reference and models for guidance. We decide to approximate to them more or less according to the demands of a specific situation or a specific purpose. In other words, a model is always connected to language in use, and is therefore variable. Pronunciation models are pedagogic means to achieve the end of effective communication for specific learners. Ideas of correctness do not really apply – a pronunciation is simply more or less appropriate to a specific use of language. (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994a: 2.7)

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metaphorically call the research subjects 'patients' and use words such as 'diagnosis', 'treatment' and 'therapy' to label the different steps of the pronunciation training developed for their research project.

[27] This is also the approach used by Jennifer Jenkins in her pedagogic proposal for teaching the pronunciation of ELF, which I shall present in section 2.5.2.

The notion of accent addition was also promoted by Dr. Olle Kjellin in a paper published the same year as Pakir's work (both 1999).

[28] Which is clearly undesirable for, as Rajadurai (2007a: 90) points out, "[a]ny bias or judgmental attitude on the part of the listener could act as a formidable barrier to intelligibility" (see also section 2.5.1.).

Dalton and Seidlhofer contrast the notion of 'model' with the one of 'norm', which, it seems, is how model accents usually end up being used in English pronunciation teaching due to the prevalence of the idea of correctness (rather than appropriacy) of pronunciation:

> [I]f we treat RP and/or General American as a norm, we connect them strongly with ideas of correctness. The norm is invariable and has to be imitated independently of any considerations of language use. The aim, however unrealistic, is 100% attainment of the norm, which is regarded as an end in itself. (ibid.)

What might be a sensible idea, then, is to make use of a chosen model accent as a reference point for guiding our learners in their learning process while, at the same time, making them aware that this model is not to be regarded as a 'norm' to which they have to fully conform in all communicative contexts. Instead, the model accent is to be understood as a valuable addition to the learners' linguistic repertoire which, as already stated above, they "can approximate more or less closely, depending on the needs of the specific situation" (Seidlhofer 2001b: 60).

In the balancing act of finding equilibrium between intelligibility in pronunciation and expressing one's personal and social identity, another crucial factor is the type of interlocutors with which L2 speakers of English will be communicating (Pakir 1999: 110). Clearly, the degree of intelligibility of an accent cannot be determined per se, but will depend on factors such as the linguistic proficiency and receptive ability of the listeners, their L1 background, and their familiarity with and attitudes towards the accent in question (cf. section 2.5.). Thus, whereas an accent may be perfectly intelligible to some listeners, it might be difficult to understand, or even unintelligible, to others. It seems that the key to success in the process of balancing intelligibility and identity in L2 pronunciation might lie in a speaker's ability to accommodate their pronunciation to the given social context as well as to the communicative needs of their interlocutors. This seems to be particularly true for ELF interactions, where phonological accommodation has been found to play a crucial role for successful communication (Jenkins 2000: 66). Phonological accommodation can thus certainly be considered a skill worth cultivating amongst L2 learners, especially if they are likely to take part in ELF encounters in their future lives.

A further question that suggests itself in connection with the identity-intelligibility equilibrium in L2 pronunciation is which features of English pronunciation should receive special attention in English pronunciation teaching as opposed to those which may remain open to the learners' personal preferences to express aspects of their identities. In other words,

it must be determined which features of pronunciation prove to be particularly important for international intelligibility and should therefore be incorporated in the learners' phonological repertoire as soon as possible, and which features seem to be of less relevance and may only be of interest to those learners that aspire to the acquisition of a native-like accent. Hence, what is needed is research into the intelligibility of native and non-native accents of English, the results of which might help pronunciation teachers to meaningfully structure their teaching by setting achievable, sensible goals for their learners, both in the long and in the short run. Yet, as we shall see in the next section, intelligibility is not an absolute concept but a relative one, and the factors involved in the process of reaching intelligibility are multiple and seem interconnected with each other in a complex way. This makes the investigation of intelligibility an extremely difficult endeavour. Fortunately, some useful and methodologically solid investigations have been undertaken in the domain of English as a lingua franca, which I will consider in section 2.5.2. Before that, however, I will provide a brief overview of the main areas of concern in the investigation of intelligibility.

2.5. The question of intelligibility

2.5.1. The notion of intelligibility

Although intelligibility is a crucial notion in pronunciation teaching, there is no clear consensus amongst scholars as to how intelligibility should actually be defined. Consequently, the term is used to refer to a number of different concepts,[29] and especially the terms 'intelligibility' and 'comprehensibility' are often used synonymously (Smith & Nelson 1985, referred to in Field 2005: 400). Within the World Englishes paradigm, one notion of intelligibility that has widely gained acceptance is the tripartite framework by Smith (1992; see also Smith and Nelson 1985). Smith distinguishes between

- o *intelligibility* (the ability to recognize words and utterances),

- o *comprehensibility* (the ability to understand the meaning of words and utterances, i.e., in Austin's (1962) terms, their locutionary meaning)

- o and *interpretability* (the ability to understand the meaning **behind** words and utterances, i.e. their illocutionary force).

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[29] For a summary and historical overview see Nelson (2008).

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Pronunciation is probably most strongly linked to the level of intelligibility, for, as noted earlier, it constitutes the conceptual basis of higher linguistic units (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 2; cf. section 2.1.), i.e. it is the recognition of the acoustic make-up of words and phrases (such as their segments and their stress and intonation pattern) that will make it possible for the listener to identify them as discrete, meaningful units in the stream of speech. Smith (1992: 76) views these three categories as forming a continuum of understanding, on which intelligibility constitutes the lowest and interpretability the highest pole. His hypotheses were confirmed in a study conducted in 1992, which showed that intelligibility was more easily attained than comprehensibility or interpretability. Smith therefore concluded that "[b]eing able to do well with one does not ensure that one will do well with the others" (1992: 88).

There is one important point that needs further consideration here. As indicated in the previous section, intelligibility is a relative category, meaning that its degree cannot be measured per se, but only with regard to a particular linguistic community, or even individual listeners. Thus, what might constitute intelligible pronunciation to speakers of a particular language variety might not necessarily do so for speakers of a different one, or even for another speaker of the same variety, as intelligibility is affected by a number of other factors apart from linguistic ones (see below). This is also why intelligibility between two linguistic communities can sometimes be non-reciprocal, as illustrated by the work of Wolff (1966), in the sense that speakers of variety A might (claim to) understand speakers of variety B, but not vice-versa. Even if there were general agreement amongst ELT professionals that English pronunciation teaching should essentially aim at making learners intelligible, the question remains which type of speaker should be taken as a reference point for intelligibility. With regard to the teaching of most foreign languages, the answer to this question will probably be the language's native speakers, as they will be the kind of interlocutors with whom learners will essentially have to communicate in their later lives. However, English is different from most other languages, as it is nowadays not only used as a foreign language, but first and foremost as an international lingua franca: as mentioned earlier, estimates have been made that the majority of exchanges in English nowadays take place between non-native speakers of the language, and learners of English in Outer and Expanding Circle countries are in fact more likely to use the language to communicate with other non-native speakers rather than with native speakers of the language. Thus, it seems highly questionable why English pronunciation teaching in the Outer and Expanding Circles should persist in orientating its goals and models primarily on NS-NNS interaction, as in these contexts, successful

communication with native speakers **only** cannot be considered an adequate goal for learning and teaching English anymore.

Yet, the goal of learning English has traditionally been assumed to be able to communicate with native speakers of the language. Consequently, research on the intelligibility of L2 accents has predominantly been carried out with native speakers of English as recipients in mind, often with monolingual NS judges evaluating the degree of intelligibility of a foreign accent (Rajadurai 2007: 94). The reason for the persistence of this approach to studying intelligibility probably lies in the existence of certain ideologies which view native speakers as the 'guardians' of the English language (cf. section 1.1. and 1.2.), and which consequently only accord Inner Circle speakers the ability and right to judge the acceptability of a speech sample in English. Yet, as Rajadurai (2007a: 94) argues, the claim that only native speakers of English should be capable of assessing the level of intelligibility of English speech does not hold in the light of the fact that English is used successfully by non-native speakers as both an international and intranational lingua franca. This echoes Widdowson's (1994) view on the irrelevance of NS judgements and linguistic norms as regards the development of English as an **international** language (see section 1.1.). Thus, in order to investigate intelligibility in ELF and ESL communication, speech samples will have to be evaluated by NNS (and not NS) judges, and results obtained in studies where intelligibility was measured in reference to NS norms do not have the same kind of validity for ELF and ESL contexts.

A further problem and consequence of the native-speakerist ideologies surrounding the scientific study of speech intelligibility is that intelligibility has often been regarded as

> a one-way process in which non-native speakers are striving to make themselves understood by native speakers whose prerogative it was to decide what is intelligible and what is not. (Bamgbose 1998: 10)

Similarly, Lindemann (2002: 419) observes that impressions of non-native speech as being unintelligible often stem from the idea that only the speaker is responsible for whether a communicative act will be successful or not. Yet, in their influential framework on intelligibility, Smith and Nelson (1985: 333, cited in Rajadurai 2007a: 91) stress the interactional nature of the notion of intelligibility, asserting that intelligibility falls neither exclusively within the speaker's nor the listener's responsibility. Bamgbose too argues that

> [i]n a communicative act which involves a speaker and an addressee, both participants contribute to the speech act and its interpretation, and part of this contribution is making an allowance for the accent and peculiarities of the other person's speech. (Bamgbose 1998: 11)

Unfortunately, many studies in the field of intelligibility fail to acknowledge both the active role of the listener as well as the importance of speaker accommodation for intelligibility, and instead regard intelligibility as a matter of linguistic accuracy (Rajadurai 2007a: 90-91). Such studies therefore also often fail to take into consideration that speech is always context-specific, and that speaker performance as well as listener reaction will vary according to the different contextual parameters such as setting, topic, and the nature of the interlocutors involved (Rajadurai 2007a: 90). It seems highly questionable indeed whether the intelligibility of an accent in real-life communication can be determined through experimental studies which have participants listen to and transcribe decontextualized word lists. Yet, such and similar methodological shortcomings are not at all uncommon in intelligibility studies, and Jenkins (2007: 85) hence calls for the need to create "research contexts [that are] naturalistic settings in which participants interact with each other".

A further point worth considering in the investigation of intelligibility is the role played by attitudes towards a particular accent in connection with its perceived degree of intelligibility. As Rajadurai (2007a: 90) observes, a number of studies such as those conducted by Eisenstein and Verdi (1985), Lippi-Green (1997) or Rubin (1992) show that negative attitudes or prejudice against an accent or speakers thereof on the part of the listener can constitute a powerful obstacle to intelligibility. She concludes that

> pronouncements of poor intelligibility may be the result rather than the cause of negative social-psychological attitudes. (2007: 92)

This is also illustrated by the phenomenon of 'non-reciprocal' intelligibility described by Wolff in 1966: Nembe and Kalabari are two varieties spoken in the Eastern Niger Delta which, on the basis of their linguistic similarity, could be classified as dialects of the same language. The Nembe, who are impoverished and politically powerless, acknowledge being able to understand Kalabari due to the linguistic proximity of the two varieties. The wealthy Kalabari, however, claim to be unable to understand the speech of their inferior 'country cousins', affirming that Nembe was a different language. Clearly, the impact of a listener's biases and attitudes on their perception of an accent's intelligibility must not be underestimated. Jenkins (2007: 83) thus stresses the need for examining intelligibility hand in hand with language attitudes.

As mentioned above, the majority of studies in intelligibility have been carried out in order to determine the degree of intelligibility of NNS accents to native speaker listeners. The most fundamental insight gained from these investigations was that it is the departure from NS

norms on the suprasegmental level that most impedes understanding for native speakers of English (Setter & Jenkins 2005: 5). But what about ELF communication, which, as we have seen earlier, constitutes the type of English which non-native learners are nowadays most likely to come in contact with? Although scientific interest in intelligibility in NNS-NNS communication has increased over the past decade, the amount of evidence is still relatively small compared to the great number of studies on NS-NNS interactions. The probably most influential research conducted in this field is Jenkins' (2000) work on the phonology of ELF (back then referred to as EIL), which resulted in the compilation of the Lingua Franca Core.

2.5.2.   Intelligibility in ELF: The Lingua Franca Core

Jenkins' (2000) research on intelligibility in ELF talk was based on a corpus of naturally occurring, spoken interactions amongst foreign learners of English with differing L1s. All of them were "of upper-intermediate to low advanced level as recognized by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES)" (2000: 87). Thus, in contrast to numerous other studies, Jenkins was able to investigate the way in which non-native speakers of English collaborated in the meaning-making process, and the fact that her study relied on naturally occurring human speech certainly increases the degree of reliability of her findings as opposed to those obtained in artificial settings where speakers and listeners are unable to interact and negotiate meaning.

One of the most interesting of Jenkins' findings is certainly that, in contrast to NS-NNS interactions, it is phonological deviation on the segmental and not the suprasegmental level which is crucial for successful ELF communication: virtually all instances of communication breakdown in Jenkins' data that involved pronunciation were due to replacement of English sounds by L1 substitutions (Jenkins 2000: 87-88). Jenkins attributed the importance of the segmental level for intelligibility in ELF to the fact that speakers of lower proficiency levels exhibit a tendency to use bottom-up rather than top-down processing, thus relying heavily on the acoustic signal (see also section 2.1.).

Based on her findings, Jenkins devised a pedagogical 'core' of phonological features which a learner of English should master in order to achieve intelligibility in ELF communication: the Lingua Franca Core (LFC). The latter includes the following items (not in order of priority):

1 The consonantal inventory with the following provisos:
- rhotic [ɻ] rather than other varieties of /r/
- intervocalic /t/ rather than [ɾ]
- most substitutions of /θ/ and /ð/, and [ɫ] permissible
- close approximations to core consonant sounds generally permissible
- certain approximations not permissible (i.e. where there is a risk that they will be heard as a different consonant sound from that intended)

2 Phonetic requirements:
- aspiration following the fortis plosives /p/, /t/, and /k/
- fortis/lenis differential effect on preceding vowel length

3 Consonant clusters:
- initial clusters not simplified
- medial and final clusters simplified only according to L1 rules of elision

4 Vowel sounds:
- maintenance of vowel length contrasts
- L2 regional qualities permissible if consistent, but /ɜː/ to be preserved

5 Nuclear stress production and placement and division of speech stream into word groups.

<div align="right">(Jenkins 2000: 159)</div>

Jenkins recommends the realization of /r/ in post-vocalic position as is the case in GA but not in RP, since this reduces the number of diphthongs to be acquired from 8 to 5. What is more, she assumes that this variant will be easier for learners to master both productively and receptively, as in this way, the relationship between English orthography and pronunciation is more straightforward. It is for exactly the same reason that she opted for the RP variant with regard to the pronunciation of intervocalic /t/, which is generally realized as voiced alveolar tap [ɾ] in GA but as [t] in RP. A further reason for not including the allophone [ɾ] in the LFC is that, being phonetically similar to /d/, it "has the potential to cause confusion" in ELF talk (Jenkins 2000: 140).

Considering the above list, one immediately notices the absence of certain other features that commonly form part of English pronunciation courses, such as vowel qualities, weak forms or the (in)famous th-sounds. As the latter did not prove to be essential for mutual intelligibility

in ELF according to Jenkins' data, those features were labelled 'non-core'. The non-core features include:

- The th-sounds /θ/ and /ð/.

- Vowel qualities (except for /ɜ:/).

- Weak forms. Those are designated non-core because, according to Jenkins, weak forms might in fact be counterproductive rather than helpful to intelligibility in ELF.[30]

- Word stress. Although not essential for intelligibility in ELF, Jenkins recommends the teaching of some general guidelines, as well as how to correctly recognize word stress in a dictionary, due to the potential impact of incorrectly placed word stress for nuclear stress and phoneme recognition.

- Stress-timed rhythm.

- Pitch movement on the nucleus.

- Other features of connected speech, such as elision, assimilation, catenation and linking. Jenkins argues against the teaching of the production (but not the reception) of these features, as she considers it more important for successful ELF communication to facilitate the listener's perception rather than ensuring ease of production for the speaker.

According to Jenkins, phonological L1 transfer is only to be considered as an error with regard to core features; in the case of non-core features, however, L1 transfer can be regarded as acceptable phonological L2 variation (Jenkins 2000: 27, 158-160). This accords non-native speakers "the same sociolinguistic rights as those enjoyed by L1 speakers" (Jenkins 2005b: 147), allowing them to express their L1 identity via their accent. It also permits teachers to focus on a limited set of items that have proved crucial to intelligibility in ELF rather than trying to eliminate all traces of a learner's L1 accent in English. Jenkins thus suggests thinking of pronunciation teaching for ELF in terms of *accent addition* rather than *accent reduction* (cf. section 2.4. of this thesis), as the goal of pronunciation teaching for ELF is to **add** certain features to a learner's receptive and productive accent repertoire, and not to reduce a learner's L1 accent as far as possible (Jenkins 2000: 160, 2000: 208-212).

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[30] What is more, the situation seems to be similar in ENL (cf. Jenkins 2000: 146-147).

Another important finding of Jenkins was the significance of phonological accommodation for successful communication in ELF interactions. She therefore stresses the need to teach accommodation skills besides making learners incorporate the core features of the LFC in their productive accent repertoire (Jenkins 2000: 210; see also Jenkins 2005b: 150), especially because accommodation, despite its communicative efficiency, seems to be the exception rather than the norm in NNS-NNS interaction (Jenkins 2000: 180-182).

'Fine-tuning' the LFC

It has to be noted that the LFC is not to be regarded as definitive, but as an "ongoing empirical description of how non-native speakers achieve mutual intelligibility" (Walker 2010a: 44). The need for further empirical research "to confirm (or not) the detailed claims of the LFC" has been emphasized by Jenkins (2000: 235) herself. Some of her claims have indeed already been confirmed by other studies: Deterding and Kirkpatrick's (2006) study on ASEAN ELF, Rajadurai's (2006) investigation into Malaysian English and experimental research by Osimk (2009) all found that /θ/ and /ð/ are not essential for intelligibility in ELF interactions, although the three studies differed in their findings with regard to the intelligibility of different substitutions for the dental fricatives (for a summary, see Walker 2010a: 43). Osimk's and Rajadurai's research also confirmed the importance of aspiration of /p/, /t/, /k/ for intelligibility in ELF settings. Yet, both studies could not justify the inclusion of rhoticity in the LFC.

Another area of interest with regard to the 'fine-tuning' of the LFC is the impact of certain local pronunciation issues on international intelligibility (Walker 2010a: 44). Rajadurai argued that the excessive use of glottal stops, a characteristic of Malaysian English, might impede intelligibility in ELF contexts because of its "detrimental shortening effect on the preceding vowel" (2006: 55). She suggests that avoidance of glottal stops might therefore constitute an additional requirement for Malaysian speakers intending to engage in ELF interactions. In this sense, research into the effect of the features of a typical Austrian accent on international intelligibility would certainly be of great interest for English teaching in Austria, as this may permit to find out about additional requirements for Austrian speakers to attain intelligibility in ELF.

The LFC as an alternative model for English pronunciation teaching?

Jenkins' suggestion of using the LFC as an alternative goal in English pronunciation teaching has triggered reactions of various kinds: whereas some, such as Robin Walker, enthusiastically welcomed it as a more realistic, 'feasible' approach to English pronunciation teaching than the (still widespread) nativeness principle, others rejected it as a patronizing set of rules that restricts learners from aspiring to the acquisition of a NS accent (see for example Scheuer 2005 or Sobkowiak 2005). Yet, it seems that opponents of the LFC have frequently simply misunderstood what the latter is actually about, and Jenkins as well as other researchers in the field (e.g. Keys & Walker 2002) have subsequently attempted to clarify some widespread misconceptions of the LFC. One common misconception of Jenkins' proposal is that pronunciation teaching for all learners of English – regardless of the particular teaching context and the learners' purpose of learning the language – should centre on the LFC. Jenkins never suggested any such a thing in her work of 2000 (cf. 2000: 161, see also Jenkins 2002: 101), and has denied this interpretation of the LFC in numerous later publications (2004a: 36, 2005a: 203, 2005b: 147f., 2006b: 36, 2007: 26).[31] Another widespread fallacy is that the LFC should be used as an invariable norm, i.e. a strict and unadaptable model for imitation in English pronunciation teaching. Apart from the fact that such an idea would go against the very concept of ELF itself (cf. the discussion in the second part of section 1.3.), Jenkins made it clear right from the start that she did not intend the LFC to be taken as a model for imitation, but as an approach that allows for variety in L2 pronunciation (Jenkins 2000: 131; see also Jenkins 2005b: 147 & 151, 2006b: 36). The non-core features of the LFC provide space for phonological variation in NNS English, and Jenkins affirms that due to the accommodation component of her proposal, speakers might even adapt core features according to a particular communicative situation (Jenkins 2007: 25-26).

In connection with the misunderstanding of the LFC as an invariable norm for teaching, it is often falsely assumed that learners should not be allowed to go beyond the acquisition of the core items of the LFC or strive for a native-like accent in English. Again, this is not and never has been Jenkins' opinion. Her only proviso would be that those learners who want to speak with a NS accent in English should also incorporate the LFC components into their

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[31] Seidlhofer (2006: 48) tried to counteract the same misconception with regard to the teaching of ELF in general, stating that "[i]t is up to learners and users of English to decide which kind of English they need and want."

communicative repertoire, so as to "equip themselves for international communication" (Jenkins 2000: 161).

In sum, the LFC is to be understood as a pedagogical core of features crucial to intelligibility in ELF rather than a monolithic model for English pronunciation teaching. As it leaves room for L2 variation in English pronunciation, it is both compatible with the expression of L2 speakers' identity through their accents and with the maintenance of mutual intelligibility between interlocutors in international settings. Jenkins' approach might thus constitute the answer to the question of how to help learners achieve equilibrium between identity and intelligibility in English pronunciation. The exact way in which the LFC should be used in English pronunciation teaching – whether as a primary goal, an additional goal or a preliminary goal on the way to greater phonological versatility – depends entirely on the particular teaching context and the type(s) of learners concerned. How the LFC might be used in English pronunciation teaching at university level as part of a language competence programme for English language students and future teachers of English will be the topic of chapter 4 (see especially section 4.2.2.). Obviously, this is precisely the teaching context of the Vienna English Department, as one of the main aspirations of this thesis is to examine whether the current pronunciation teaching practices there could possibly be improved by considering the findings and suggestions of ELF research for English pronunciation teaching. This, however, necessitates a profound analysis of the status quo in the first place, which is what I will do in the next chapter.

3. Pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department

3.1. PPOCS 1: A course for pronunciation learning

At the Vienna English Department, Bachelor as well as teaching degree students obligatorily take a pronunciation course after about 4-5 semesters of studying English. This course is called 'Practical phonetics and oral communication skills 1', and is generally referred to as PPOCS 1. Whereas the follow up-course ('PPOCS 2') focuses more strongly on general speaking skills (such as giving formal oral presentations or participating in a discussion), PPOCS 1 is essentially concerned with (practical) English phonetics. It is assumed that students taking PPOCS 1 are familiar with the basic concepts of phonetics and phonology as well as the sound systems of RP and GA from the introductory lecture in English linguistics, which they have to pass before taking the course.[32] Students can choose between classes taking either RP or General American as teaching models. In case a student has features of a non-standard regional NS accent in their pronunciation which were naturally acquired, e.g. through a stay abroad, they will usually be allowed to preserve them.

The course aim analysed

The original intention behind PPOCS 1 as it was developed by the English literature scholar Prof. Otto Rauchbauer in the late 1960s was to provide teaching degree students of English with a course that would enable them to largely 'eliminate' their L1 accents in English (cf. Rauchbauer 1976: 17). This is hardly surprising as back then, English language teaching was exclusively considered from an EFL perspective, i.e. the orientation to NS norms within both secondary and tertiary education was virtually unquestionable. However, when considering the current course aims of PPOCS 1, it becomes clear that not much has changed since back then – despite the ever growing significance of ELF in the world. I will take a closer look at the aims of PPOCS 1 in the following, both as they are stated in the course curriculum and as they appear when considering the course content, the teaching methods employed, and the way students are assessed at the end of the course.

In the course curriculum (2013: 2), the three primary aims of the PPOCS module (i.e. both PPOCS 1 and 2) are stated as follows:

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[32] Additional prerequisites for PPOCS 1 for both teaching degree and BA students include the *Integrated Language and Study Skills* (ILSS) module, which consists of two language skills classes focusing on academic reading and writing skills, and other introductory lectures in English studies (cf. the curricula of the teaching degree and the BA degree, both published in 2011).

To speak fluently and effectively with a consistent, natural-sounding standard or regional pronunciation in various forms of interaction and production at C1 or C2 level

To have expert knowledge of the characteristics of spoken language

To have practical analytical skills, e.g. for monitoring own speech and for error analysis in the speech of others

One important point that immediately becomes apparent when having a look at the above criteria is that linguistic proficiency is still defined in relation to (acknowledged) standard or regional English varieties. This is even more evident when having a look at the more detailed description of the objectives of PPOCS 1 (see Appendix, table 1), which state that students must acquire an accent that should be "recognisable as approximating one of the main varieties of English (e.g. British and American)" (PPOCS curriculum 2013: 2). The latter also show that PPOCS 1 is not only concerned with productive pronunciation skills, but that the course is also supposed to instil numerous analytical and discourse format-specific skills as well as a number of (socio-)linguistic competences. Especially the latter might be of particular interest here, for, as we have seen in section 2.4., pronunciation is an area of language that is closely linked to issues of identity and to the way people are socially perceived within a particular community. The 'sociolinguistic competences' listed in the course curriculum of PPOCS 1 include:

Sociolinguistic: Students…

know the features of Austrian English

are familiar with the distinguishing characteristics of British and American English

are familiar with significant ongoing pronunciation changes.

(PPOCS curriculum 2013: 2-3)

What the above set of competences clearly lacks is any kind of consideration of the issues that I have discussed in section 2.4.: that pronunciation is a means of expressing our personal and social identities and that it is, therefore, inevitably going to vary amongst different groups of speakers as well as within an individual according to the given social context. Variation in NNS English is equally insufficiently addressed (with Austrian English being the only non-native English variety that is regarded as being of any interest), and the ELF perspective on English pronunciation teaching as well as the issue of international intelligibility are overlooked altogether (also in the remaining part of the course objectives – cf. table 1 in the appendix). The only kind of variation that is addressed is diachronic variation in the accent selected as a teaching model (i.e. either RP or GA), and the major features of and differences

between this accent and Austrian English. All these considerations are – as far as I as a student who did the course herself not so long ago can remember – happening from a prescriptive point of view: in contrast to Jenkins (2000: 27; cf. section 2.5.2. of this thesis), features of a typical Austrian English accent are not considered as regional L2 variation, but presented as undesirable deviations from the NS norm that students should strive to eliminate from their pronunciation. What is more, hardly any time is allocated to reflection on issues of social or personal identity on the part of students. In fact, the above mentioned 'socio-linguistic' considerations as well as any other theoretical input appear to be intended to facilitate the process of accent reduction rather than to provide students with a basis for critical reflection. Thus, the primary course aim of PPOCS 1 still seems to be to help/make students lose their (Austrian) accent as far as possible and to become more 'native-like' in one of the two standard English accents. Genuine sociolinguistic competences (such as a knowledge of the social aspects of pronunciation or the ability to demonstrate context-sensitivity as a language user) do not form part of the course content.

The strong emphasis on the development of native-like pronunciation is also reflected in the course syllabus of PPOCS 1 (see table 2), which shows that content-wise, PPOCS 1 is largely concerned with the sound system of the variety which students opted for as a teaching model.

Table 2 Syllabus of PPOCS 1 (PPOCS curriculum 2013: 10-11)[33]

1	Introduction, major pitfalls, theory (description of sound system), administration	8	Consonants, fortis-lenis, plosives, s/z, intonation, turn taking, emphasising
2	Back vowels, tone units	9	Fricatives, presentations skills
3	Central vowels, weak forms	10	Affricates
4	Front vowels, linking, chunking	11	Theory test
5	Diphthongs 1, stress	12	Presentations
6	Diphthongs 2	13	Revision
7	Semivowels, w-v	14	Oral exams

The weekly two-hour sessions of the course usually start with a short revision of the theoretical aspects of the topic in question, which provides the basis for the practical exercises that are to follow – after all, the course is intended to "provide[] ample opportunity for practice" (PPOCS curriculum 2013: 5). In order to do so, PPOCS 1 additionally comprises a

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[33] The exact sequence in which the elements given in table 2 are taught may vary slightly between American and British English PPOCS 1 classes (ibid).

compulsory two-hour language laboratory class taught by a student tutor,[34] which is intended to provide students with further pronunciation exercises, feedback and practice. Thus, the evidently strong focus of PPOCS 1 on accent training is not only mirrored in the course syllabus, but also in the teaching methodologies used. I would like to emphasize here that I do not want to criticize the fact that PPOCS 1 requires students to do pronunciation training, which I regard as an invaluable part of any pronunciation course that aims at improving learners' productive pronunciation skills. It should also be noted that the extensive practical component of PPOCS 1 imposes considerable financial costs on the Vienna English Department, and that the financial and pedagogical efforts on the part of the Vienna English Department and the academic staff responsible for the course to provide students with a high-level training in English pronunciation certainly need to be acknowledged. What I do want to criticize, though, is the fact that PPOCS 1 disregards some very important issues in English pronunciation teaching such as the changing goals of ELT in the light of ELF, or the relationship between accent and social or cultural identity, a discussion of which would be of special importance to teaching degree students at the Vienna English Department. That is, what I call for is a more critical and reflective approach to English pronunciation teaching rather than the current, fairly prescriptive approach adopted in PPOCS 1, which requires students to unreflectingly attempt to modify their accents towards one of the 'main varieties' of English as far as possible.

That PPOCS 1 is prescriptive rather than reflective becomes especially apparent when considering the way in which students are assessed at the end of the academic term. Assessment consists of two distinct parts: a theory component and a practical exam. There is also an obligatory in-class mini-presentation (3-5 minutes), but which does not form part of the students' final grade. To prove their theoretical knowledge of English phonetics and phonology, students have to submit a portfolio containing phonetic transcription exercises and open questions on English phonetics and sit a theory test at the end of the semester (all of which focus on the phonetic aspects of the accent that students chose as a teaching model). This, however, makes up only 25% of their final mark. The remaining 75% are determined in a final oral exam, which lasts about 15 minutes and which consists of 3 parts:

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[34] I myself have worked as a language lab tutor for PPOCS 1 'British English' for several semesters.

- informal conversation
- prepared talk (e.g. on the reading text chosen by the student)
- reading a prepared text chosen by the students (about 1 page)

(PPOCS curriculum 2013: 5)

The students' oral production in this exam is assessed by two different lecturers, who, as can be seen when having a look at the assessment grid[35] (table 3, page 70), are essentially concerned with judging the students' pronunciation in comparison to a "particular variety". This fairly vague phrasing allows for the acceptance of non-standard regional NS accents that some students might have acquired due to a stay abroad. For the majority of students, however, the term 'variety' will refer to the chosen model, i.e. either RP or GA. Thus, the major basis for assessment is constituted by a student's oral performance in which they are supposed to demonstrate their ability to approximate to the prescribed model as far as possible.

Each of the three analytical categories in the grid makes up for one third of a student's grade, and each of them is concerned with a distinct aspect of pronunciation: the segmental level and the suprasegmental level, and the category 'appropriateness', by which is meant the way in which pronunciation is adjusted to the specific discourse format the student is currently engaged in (e.g. the ability to read a text engagingly).[36] The naturalness component of this latter category is related to whether a student has been able to improve their pronunciation in such a way that they are able to speak in a fairly effortless, naturally sounding manner (as opposed to 'wooden', inappropriately slow and/or monosyllabic speech).

What is also evident from the grid on page 70 is that students are expected to have reached a fairly advanced level in English pronunciation by the end of PPOCS 1: both accuracy and consistency as well as a certain degree of naturalness of pronunciation are called for in order to pass the course, and students may only display insecurity in the production of a small number of features. This corresponds to the required proficiency level as stated in the course aims of the PPOCS module (see above), i.e. a C1 to C2 level in pronunciation, which arguably can loosely be described as 'near-native' pronunciation.

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[35] It must be mentioned that at the moment of writing this thesis, the above assessment criteria are still a 'work in progress'. That is, they are currently only applied on a trial basis by certain PPOCS 1 lecturers, and may still have to be further elaborated in the future.

[36] This assessment criterion seems problematic for certain reasons which I will discuss in more detail in section 4.2.2.

Table 3 Assessment grid for PPOCS 1 (PPOCS curriculum 2013: 6)[37]

	Sehr gut [Austrian A-grade]	*Befriedigend* [Austrian C-grade]	*Genügend* [Austrian D-grade]
CONTROLS OF SEGMENTALS: Consistency and accuracy of segmentals	Consistent, accurate, and effortless production of the segmental features of a particular variety.	Generally maintains consistent and accurate production of the salient segmental features of a particular variety, such as fortis/lenis distinction and vowel length; does not impose strain on the listener.	Generally maintains consistent and accurate production of the salient segmental features of a particular variety, such as fortis/lenis distinction and vowel length; does not impose strain on the listener, although the production of a small number of sounds is noticeably unstable.
CONTROL OF SUPRASEGMENTALS: Consistency and accuracy of suprasegmentals	Consistent, accurate, and effortless production of the suprasegmental features of a particular variety, especially assimilation, elision, and characteristic intonation patterns.	Generally maintains consistent and accurate production of the salient suprasegmental features of a particular variety, such as basic linking, sentence stress/weak forms, chunking, and word stress; does not impose strain on the listener.	Generally maintains consistent and accurate production of the salient suprasegmental features of a particular variety, such as basic linking, sentence stress/weak forms, chunking, and word stress; does not impose strain on the listener, although the production of a small number of features is noticeably unstable.
APPROPRIATENESS[38]	Consistently maintains naturalness and appropriateness of pronunciation in all three of the tasks, even while attention is otherwise engaged. Shows ability to read text engagingly, respond to the examiner effortlessly, and to present a text effectively. Able to use pronunciation to convey finer shades of meaning.	Generally maintains naturalness and appropriateness of pronunciation in all three of the tasks. Shows ability to read the text meaningfully, to respond to the examiner adequately, and to present a text clearly.	Generally maintains naturalness and appropriateness of pronunciation in most of the tasks. Shows ability to read the text meaningfully, to respond to the examiner adequately, and to present a text clearly.

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[37] No descriptions were given for the Austrian B-grade ('Gut') and the failing grade ('Nichtgenügend'). The reason for this might be that the above assessment criteria have only been recently developed and are not yet fully refined.

[38] I am grateful to Mag. Amy Bruno-Linder for taking the time to describe and explain this particular assessment criterion to me in more detail.

With the above analysis of the course syllabus, the teaching methods employed and the nature of assessment used in PPOCS 1, I tried to show that the primary objective of the course still is the acquisition of a near-native accent in English and the 'elimination' of students' L2 accents as far as possible. It is for exactly this reason that PPOCS 1 has been subject to controversy for at least fifteen years now. One climax in the lively debate around PPOCS 1 is certainly the exchange between Daniel Spichtinger and Julia Hüttner and Sophie Kidd of 2000, which centred on the growing significance of English as an international language in connection with the adherence of PPOCS 1 to NS pronunciation norms. As many of the issues touched upon in this exchange directly relate to the topic of this thesis, I will now discuss the most important arguments put forward by both parties in the course of this debate.

3.2. … which is subject to controversy

Of the various controversies that have surrounded PPOCS 1 for quite some time now, the most extensively discussed ones are certainly over its rather ambitious course aim and its fairly prescriptive NS approach to pronunciation teaching. Debates amongst students about these issues are not uncommon, and students have occasionally been observed to get quite worked up about PPOCS 1, especially since it is the only course with a final oral exam at the Vienna English Department, which might contribute to the general feeling of anxiety that seems to surround the course.

Coming from a 'World Englishes' perspective, Daniel Spichtinger suggested in an article published in *Vienna English Working Papers* (VIEWS) in 2000 to revise the course (back then still referred to as 'Sprechpraktikum') by adopting international intelligibility rather than near-native speaker competence as a goal.[39] It seems that it was precisely the latter – the requirement of reaching almost native-like proficiency in English pronunciation within one term – that bothered Spichtinger particularly about PPOCS 1: in his article, he criticized the course aim for being

> […] unrealistic, unnecessary and psychologically damaging. [...] It is unrealistic because with the time and resources available only very limited progress can be

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[39] It has to be noted that at the time when Spichtinger's article was published, the course aim of PPOCS 1 was stated as "[to] become as native-like as possible, taking either standard British or standard American as the model" (KOVO 2000/01: 29, quoted in Spichtinger 2000: 71). Yet, reaching a C1 to C2 level in English pronunciation (which is what is required today in order to pass the course) can, arguably, be regarded as being more or less equivalent to this. The only difference to the earlier course aim, then, seems to be that according to the current curriculum, also regional accents of English – and not only the prestige accents RP and GA – are accepted in PPOCS 1 (although they are, in contrast to RP and GA, not actively trained in the course).

made. It is unnecessary because the ability to ape a native speaker seems a doubtful achievement at best. Should students not rather be encouraged to find their own identity in English? The current practice may be psychologically damaging to students because of the sense of insecurity or even failure it breeds. (Spichtinger 2000: 71)

Of course, this drastic criticism did not remain uncommented on the part of the academic staff responsible for the course. Julia Hüttner and Sophie Kidd responded to Spichtinger's article in the subsequent issue of VIEWS, presenting their view on Spichtinger's criticism and suggestions. I will now consider the most important issues debated in their exchange a bit more closely, as many of them prove relevant for my call for a rethinking of PPOCS 1.

Is PPOCS 1 psychologically damaging?

As for Spichtinger's reproach that the aim of PPOCS 1 was unrealistic and 'breeding failure', Hüttner and Kidd (2000: 77) argued that this was evidently not the case as the clear majority of students (about 70 % at the time) passed the course. Interestingly, the failure rate in PPOCS 1 has considerably decreased over the past decade, with only about 16.6 %[40] of students failing the course in recent semesters. Thus, it seems that the course aim of PPOCS 1, however ambitious it may appear at first sight, is in fact not that unattainable for most students. Yet, I would argue that this is not necessarily the way in which many students **experience** the course. This is also indicated by the results of Müller (2012: 101), who found that 29 % of students taking the class slightly, moderately, or strongly disagreed that they can reach the course requirements within the given time. Müller conducted his survey in SS 2012, which exhibits a failure rate of merely 14.4. %. This shows that at least in SS 2012, there was a clear mismatch between the attainability of the course aim and the level of confidence which students displayed towards the latter, which is a trend I was able to observe amongst my own students in other semesters (and amongst my colleagues when taking the class myself).

It thus seems safe to state that generally, the level of pressure experienced by students in PPOCS 1 seems to be rather high, which is why Spichtinger views the course as being 'psychologically damaging'. Let us consider this (admittedly rather dramatic) claim a bit more closely. Hüttner and Kidd, for their part, do not seem to take this reproach seriously, in the

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[40] This is the mean percentage of failures of the last 5 semesters (i.e. WS 2011/12 to WS 2013/14), which fluctuates between 9.9 % and 25.6 % per cent.

I am grateful to Mag. Iris Vukovics, who, on behalf of the director of studies of the Vienna English Department, obtained and summarized the above data for this thesis.

sense that they suspect it to be "only hear-say, [which] was included as a criticism only in order to add effect" (2000: 77). Yet, I personally see a grain of truth in Spichtinger's criticism. Clearly, there appears to be a certain type of student at our department who is dissatisfied with PPOCS 1 in its current form and who experiences the course as somewhat agonizing (and I am not referring to the lazy type of student who regards any kind of intellectual effort as such). Evidence of the dissatisfaction experienced by a number of students with regard to PPOCS 1 is constituted by a couple of groups on the social network *StudiVZ* that were founded to help students cope with their negative experiences made in PPOCS 1. One of them, titled "Nur Leute, die PPOCS [1] wiederholen, sind RICHTIG cool!" is intended to cheer up and provide comfort for students who have failed the class by adopting a humours perspective on things. The group description reads as follows:

> Die wahren Anglisten beschäftigen sich lieber mindestens zwei Semester mit den Practical Phonetics! (http://tinyurl.com/lkwmdac, 24.4. 2014)

Another one of them, titled "PPOCS [1] – ein trauma furs leben ☹" seems to mirror more closely the state of mind which Spichtinger was probably referring to when formulating his criticism on PPOCS 1:

> a lovely support group for all those who suffered from the lunacy of practical phonetics and oral communication skills (PPOCS). life will never be the same again! welcome :) (http://tinyurl.com/mnp28nr, 24.4.2014)

It is of course impossible to assess in how far PPOCS 1 constituted an actual psychological trauma for the students who founded and at one point belonged to this social-network group, but it seems safe to assume that PPOCS 1 was indeed a largely unpleasant experience for them. What the above group description illustrates as well is that, sadly, PPOCS 1 seems to have spoilt the entire subject of practical phonetics for certain students: note that the word 'lunacy' has been employed, indicating a feeling of total rejection and disdain for the subject itself. Thus, rather than possessing an increased level of confidence due to the knowledge and skills which PPOCS 1 is supposed to instil, what some (though not the majority of) students are left with is a feeling of inadequacy, failure, and rejection. Negative experiences like the above are even more problematic when shared by students who intend to become English language teachers, as they may consequently lack the confidence and motivation to later teach pronunciation themselves, therefore neglecting this aspect of language in their future teaching altogether. Clearly, such feelings of inadequacy and insecurity cannot be what the Vienna English Department wants to develop among their students (for both moral and professional reasons), and I would argue that instead of denying the evident existence of certain problems

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with PPOCS 1, we should attempt to find ways in order to counteract the undesirable 'side effects' of the course which I have just described.[41]

In order to do so, it seems worth examining what exactly might cause the negative feelings described above in the first place. Similar to Spichtinger, I too suspect the rather ambitious course aim to be a potential source of problems. This issue is closely linked to another shortcoming of PPOCS 1 in its current form, which is that students with completely different proficiency levels in English pronunciation and with different kinds of motives for pronunciation learning are lumped together in one and the same course. Thus, there is a number of students who seem to take great pleasure in doing PPOCS 1, namely usually those who are (more or less) easily capable of attaining the course aim of reaching near-native English pronunciation within a single semester, and who genuinely desire to acquire a native-like accent in English. Others, however, are clearly over-challenged, and might simply not want to sound like a native speaker of RP or GA. Such students often experience the course as extremely stressful, sometimes even developing a strong level of anxiety, and might, therefore, indeed perceive the course as a great psychological burden.

What is more, many students for whom the course aim initially seems difficult to attain often tend to think of themselves as 'failures' even if they manage to pass the course in the end: obviously, it is difficult to perceive oneself as a successful learner if a semester of intensive practice (and, very often, great personal development) is rewarded by a mediocre grade whilst others seem to succeed with much less effort, for whatever reason. Two factors add to the extent of frustration that such students might experience in this respect: first, that pronunciation is closely bound up with a person's self-image, and that a feeling of inadequacy with regard to this linguistic area is therefore inevitably going to be more painful than with regard to other areas of language. And secondly that PPOCS 1 is for many, and I dare say for the majority of our students, the only occasion where their pronunciation will be evaluated and assessed in the form of a grade by expert raters. This kind of authoritative judgment of a 'one-off' performance is likely to have a great impact on how students perceive their pronunciation (and, as a consequence, how they perceive themselves): if the only feedback with academic authority which a student has and probably ever will receive on their

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[41] I should make it clear once again that these feelings are not to be found amongst all students at the Vienna English Department. Of course, I am well aware, and do not want to deny, that many students take great pleasure in doing PPOCS 1 in its current form – I myself have been such a student, and I have been tutoring students enthusiastically taking the class for as long as I have been working as a language lab tutor. Yet, what I have seen as well – among my own students as well as among my colleagues when taking the class myself – are the partly ambivalent, partly entirely negative feelings developed by some students towards pronunciation learning during PPOCS 1.

pronunciation is of a fairly negative nature, their self-confidence is likely to be considerably damaged. Especially for weaker students, it might therefore be of great benefit to rethink the current course aim and replace it with a more attainable learning goal, in order to avoid frustration and the experience of failure on the part of these students and, as a further consequence, to prevent the development of the above described attitude of total rejection of practical phonetics on their part.

The issue of identity

A further point addressed by Spichtinger in his criticisms on PPOCS 1 was that students should be encouraged to find their own identity in English rather than being trained to 'ape' a native speaker. Hüttner and Kidd responded to this criticism as follows:

> A more general issue that needs to be raised is that Spichtinger seems to think that [PPOCS 1] uses RP or General American as a norm, when in fact they are used as models or reference points. Naturally, students are not expected to become native-like in the course of one semester in their second year of studies. Indeed, they are encouraged to find their own English accent in the course of their studies – ideally by spending a longer period of time in an English-speaking country.
> (Hüttner & Kidd 2000: 76)

I cannot fully agree with Hüttner and Kidd's view here. While it is indeed true that the Vienna English Department encourages its students to apply for an Erasmus or Joint-Study scholarship in order to experience the English language in a native-speaking environment and to gain insights into the academia of other countries, no active encouragement is made for students to find 'their own English accent' during their studies – especially not when it comes to the department's pronunciation programme. It seems curious to me that Hüttner and Kidd claim that RP and GA were only used as teaching models rather than as pronunciation norms in PPOCS 1 when the practical part of the course is entirely concerned with making students 'get rid' of their Austrian accents as much as possible, with an exam awaiting them at the end of the semester where they are expected to demonstrate that they have succeeded in precisely that. What is more, as I criticized earlier, neither the situational character of any linguistic norm nor the distinction between norm and model are ever made an issue in PPOCS 1. In my view, rather than encouraging students to 'find their own accent in English', PPOCS 1 actively **dis**courages students from doing so, as any deviation from either the RP or the GA norm is usually penalized for being an 'error' (e.g. in the form of a lower grade at the final exam), especially if the latter occurs in the form of L1 transfer. Whereas other regional NS

accents are accepted in PPOCS 1 according to the course curriculum, students are not actively encouraged to play with them or try them out (and many students probably refrain from doing so of their own accord as they are well aware that straying too far from the norm might result in a lower grade at the end of the semester). Only those students who already exhibit certain regional features in their pronunciation that were naturally acquired (e.g. due to a stay abroad) are generally encouraged by their lecturers to preserve those features. Thus, one major point of potential improvement of PPOCS 1 is certainly the way in which error and proficiency are currently defined, alongside with the space provided to students to express their national and cultural identities through their accents. Clearly, the normative way in which RP and GA are currently used in PPOCS 1 (pace Hüttner and Kidd) must be reconsidered in the light of the momentous socio-linguistic developments that have taken place in the English-speaking world during the past decades. My suggestions for a more modern and pedagogically more valuable approach to pronunciation teaching for PPOCS 1 that takes account of these developments will be presented in chapter 4.

International vs. NS pronunciation models within the Austrian educational context

Hüttner and Kidd also commented on Spichtinger's suggestion to adopt international intelligibility rather than near-nativeness as course aim for PPOCS 1. Although they acknowledge the significance of English as a global language, Hüttner and Kidd doubt that this type of English will be the most important one in the future professional lives of students at the Vienna English Department (2000: 75). They especially stress this point with regard to the department's teaching degree students, reminding the reader that a (near-)native command of English is generally favoured in the professional domain of education (ibid.; this echoes the ideology of native-speakerism discussed in section 1.2.). They then go on to quote the Austrian curriculum for secondary schools valid at that time, which stated the goal for speaking English as follows:

> der möglichst freie und sichere Gebrauch der Sprache im Mündlichen. Dies bedeutet:
>
> - die Beherrschung von Aussprache und Intonation in einer Weise, die in Annäherung an die Sprache von native speakers problemfreie Verständigung gewährleistet.
>
> [using oral language as freely and effortlessly as possible. This means:
>
> - mastery of pronunciation and intonation in approximation to native speaker speech to the extent that communication will not be impeded.]

> (*Lehrplan AHS Oberstufe* 1989: 651 [my translation], quoted in Hüttner & Kidd 2000: 75-76)[42]

Consequently, they conclude that

> […] despite a focus on communicative competence, the model of native speaker English persists in the current school curricula. This might of course change in time, but while this remains so, we believe it would be irresponsible to teach our students according to different models of pronunciation.
> (Hüttner & Kidd 2000: 76)

Admittedly, in the light of the Austrian school policies in place at that time, Hüttner and Kidd's criticism of Spichtinger's suggestion seems quite reasonable. Let us now consider their argument with regard to the current educational context. The Austrian curriculum for secondary schools has been revised in 2000 and 2004 so as to take the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* into account. The detailed description on what and how to structure English pronunciation teaching in lower secondary school found in the curriculum of 1996 had already vanished by the time Hüttner and Kidd's article was published (cf. *Schullehrpläne* 1996: 59 & *Lehrplan AHS Unterstufe* 2000). Only four years later, the description of the ultimate target of English pronunciation teaching in the Austrian school curriculum was modified as follows:

> Lautwahrnehmung, Aussprache und Intonation sind in dem Maße zu schulen, wie sie eine in der Zielsprache angemessene Verständigung gewährleisten. Eine Annäherung der Aussprache an die Standardaussprache ist zwar wünschenswert, darf jedoch nicht zur Überforderung der Schülerinnen und Schüler führen.
>
> [Sound perception, pronunciation and intonation are to be trained to the extent that they ensure acceptable communication in the target language. An approximation of pronunciation to the standard accent is desirable, but must not overstrain pupils.]
>
> (Lehrplan AHS Oberstufe 2004, [my translation])

Admittedly, the above learning target of the Austrian school curriculum of 2004 differs only marginally from the one used by Hüttner and Kidd as an argument against Spichtinger's proposed changes to PPOCS 1. Although the direct reference to NS norms in the Austrian school curriculum has disappeared and been replaced by the somewhat vague term 'Zielsprache' (target language), standard NS accents (which presumably is meant here with 'Standardaussprache') still constitute the official point of reference for English pronunciation

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[42] Curiously, the curriculum quoted by Hüttner and Kidd is not the one valid at the time of writing (i.e. the one published in 1996), but the version dating from 1989. The information on the teaching of English pronunciation is, however, identical in both these versions (cf. *Schullehrpläne* 1996: 201).

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teaching at Austrian schools. But even so, does this mean that future teachers of English must speak with a native-like accent themselves, and hence, that teaching degree students must receive pronunciation training to the extent that they attain (near-)nativeness in English pronunciation? First, it must be noted that there is a difference between speaking with a particular accent and knowing **about** the features of an accent and how to help learners practice and acquire the latter. As Jenkins observes:

> In EFL classrooms […] 'NS' teachers are more likely than 'NNS' teachers to be able to provide the pronunciation models that learners wish to hear, assuming, of course, that teachers have within their own repertoire the individual learner's preferred target accent. However, this is not to say that 'NS' teachers are necessarily better placed to instruct learners in how to acquire these accents, particularly for productive (as opposed to receptive) use. Unless 'NS' teachers have sufficient familiarity with their learners' L1 pronunciation systems as well as a sound knowledge of articulatory phonetics (and although some do, the majority do not), they will be able to inform but not instruct: to do little more than model their own accent and hope that acquisition will follow by some mysterious magic process. (Jenkins 2000: 221).

Thus, teaching English pronunciation is in fact not so much a matter of speaking with a native-like accent oneself, but of exposing learners to the model accent in whatever way while at the same time explicitly instructing them how to produce the (most important) features of the accent in question.

There now remains the question of how NNS teachers (and NS teachers speaking with a non-standard accent) can expose learners to the model accents to be acquired without speaking with such an accent themselves. In connection with this, it must be noted that it is simply wrong to assume that phonological input in the language classroom is nowadays exclusively dependant on the language teacher's accent alone: In contrast to some decades ago, the English produced by teachers does not constitute the only, and, I dare say, in many cases not even the primary source of linguistic input for learners of English in Austrian schools, who often experience the language in many different forms via a number of media (such as online videos, English-speaking songs on the radio or the internet and English speaking TV channels) in their spare time. In addition to the acoustic input that is nowadays available through many different forms of English-speaking media for use in the English language classroom, the World Wide Web offers a huge number of resources for exposing learners to different varieties of English. Some of them have been specifically developed for pronunciation learning and teaching and are thus not only explicitly aimed at non-native learners of English, but feature the standard accents RP and GA. The fact that NS norms

persist as teachings models (i.e. as points of reference) in Austrian school curricula does therefore not necessitate that future English teachers have to speak with a native-like accent themselves – especially because the learning target given in the Austrian school curriculum is a proficiency level in English pronunciation that enables learners to communicate adequately in the target language, but not a native-like English pronunciation. This does not mean that there should not be a certain minimum requirement with regard to English pronunciation that has to be achieved by Austrian NNS teachers of English in the course of their education. Obviously, it would be peculiar to require learners to achieve a certain level with regard to English pronunciation when the latter has not even been achieved by their own teacher, and it seems clear that a language teacher will have to be more proficient in English pronunciation than the average learner that they will be teaching. Rather, it means that the necessary pronunciation level to be attained by NNS teachers of English in Austria might be constituted by something other than a close approximation to a standard NS accent. That is, language teachers need a certain level of implicit, 'procedural' knowledge of the language they are teaching, which "underlies the ability to communicate fluently and confidently in an L2" (Ellis 2005: 214).[43] But in addition, they need a number of other skills as well, skills that enable them to help learners develop the procedural knowledge that they themselves already possess. In order to do so, teachers need to acquire 'declarative', explicit knowledge of the language, and a number of other pedagogic and didactic skills – rather than an amount of procedural knowledge that would be comparable to the one held by native speakers of English.

There is yet one important issue to be commented on in connection with the Vienna English Department's 'responsibility' for English language teacher education. It is crucial to note that the way in which the Austrian school curriculum presents the learning targets for ELT in Austria is highly questionable in itself, as it is based on the obsolete assumption that English is a subject like any other foreign language. The passage from the Austrian curriculum for secondary schools cited earlier is not only prescriptive for the teaching of English, but is taken from the part of the curriculum on the first and second foreign living languages taught in secondary schools (whatever they may be), and therefore intended to be applicable to the teaching of any other foreign language as well. The reasons for this is that the current Austrian school curriculum is oriented towards the *Common European Framework of References* (CEFR), which does not differentiate between different foreign languages, neither

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[43] For the distinction between procedural and declarative knowledge, see further Ellis (2005: 214-215).

in terms of (socio-)linguistic nor methodological considerations, and generally adopts a 'foreign language' perspective (cf. section 1.5.) with regard to the teaching of **all** foreign languages. Yet, as indicated earlier, the subject of English must be treated differently from other foreign language subjects in the Austrian school context, since – in contrast to most other foreign languages – the type of interactions that Austrian (and other European) learners of English are most likely to take part in are in fact ELF encounters, and not NS-NNS interactions. In this sense, the CEFR clearly fails to recognize the importance of ELF for the teaching of English in Europe, for the latter

> would seem to be incompatible with the adoption of a framework for all modern languages. (Seidlhofer 2012: 77)

Seidlhofer (ibid.) therefore calls for the questioning of "the general relevance that [the CEFR] is currently attributed in language education policy".

Thus, due to its adherence to the CEFR, the current Austrian curriculum for secondary schools clearly overlooks the special role of English as a global lingua franca, and it is therefore hardly surprising that the teaching objectives of English pronunciation teaching are still defined in reference to NS norms. This is highly problematic insofar as the linguistic reality that awaits Austrian students beyond the language classroom is obviously a very different one than the one they are currently prepared for. In this sense, it seems that a rethinking of the use of NS norms (or 'models', as Hüttner and Kidd have it) in pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department for educating and training prospective teachers of English would in fact not be irresponsible, but most valuable. This can be justified as follows: first, as I have argued above, even if standard NS accents persist as points of reference in the Austrian school curriculum, this does not mean that Austrian teachers have to achieve near-nativeness in pronunciation themselves, as an abundant number of resources is nowadays available that enable language teachers to expose students to various English varieties and practice English pronunciation without teachers speaking with a NS accent themselves. Secondly, by adopting an approach to pronunciation teaching that allows students to take a critical view of the prevalence of prestige NS accents as norms/models in ELT, the Vienna English Department would contribute to paving the way for a more up-to-date approach to English pronunciation teaching (and to English language teaching in general) that takes account of the significance of ELF for learners of English in Europe. This would be of utmost importance, since

> [t]he major obstacle to the modernizing of English pronunciation teaching in recent years has been the failure to *educate* teachers. That is, to provide them with the facts which will enable them to make informed decisions in their selection of pronunciation models, as opposed to *training* them to reproduce unquestioningly a restricted range of techniques in order to promote all aspects of a single model, in whatever teaching context they should find themselves. (Jenkins 2000: 199 [original emphasis])

Jenkins makes a very important point here: that it is insufficient to equip future teachers of English with linguistic competence without providing them with a thorough education about the complexities that surround English pronunciation teaching in today's globalized world. Yet, this is exactly what currently happens at the Vienna English Department (which is what I tried to illustrate in section 3.1.). By challenging rather than maintaining traditional pronunciation teaching practices in English language teacher education (such as the prevalence of NS pronunciation norms), the Vienna English Department would not act irresponsibly, but demonstrate an immense sense of responsibility for the English language teaching profession in Austria. Such an approach would neither make it impossible for future language teachers to stick to the pronunciation models which the Austrian school curriculum (rather loosely) prescribes, nor would it urge them to 'teach ELF',[44] as many critics unwarrantedly fear. In contrast, it would simply permit them to acquire the knowledge necessary to adapt their teaching to the needs and wants of their learners and the respective socio-linguistic and educational context, i.e. to become what Widdowson (2003: 13) terms 'reflective practitioners'.[45]

Hüttner and Kidd might regard it as a matter of responsibility to teach future English teachers according to the pronunciation models referred to in the Austrian curriculum (a proposition which might in fact not be that incompatible with a less prescriptive approach to pronunciation teaching than is currently the case in PPOCS 1, as its exact realisation depends entirely on how one interprets the term 'model'). I, however, regard it as a matter of responsibility to educate our students about the implications of ELF for English pronunciation teaching: for – contrary to Hüttner and Kidd's assumption – it is the pronunciation criteria of ELF (and not ENL or EFL) which are most significant for learners of English in Europe and

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[44] 'Teaching ELF' would be a nonsensical suggestion anyways, since ELF is not a single, monolithic variety of English that can be pinned down in terms of its formal characteristics (cf. section 1.3.).

[45] The term 'reflective practitioner' was first introduced by Schön (1983), and is used by Widdowson (2003) to refer to language teachers that are able to critically reflect on, theorize about and abstract from teaching practice and adapt their teaching accordingly.

For a discussion of the importance of theoretical expertise for language teachers see Widdowson (2003, chapter 1).

thus crucial to know for the Vienna English Department's teaching degree students. Note, however, that this is not to say that the approach I have in mind for pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department will preclude students who want to sound more like a native speaker from aiming at a NS target.

The question of employability

Hüttner and Kidd also seem to be particularly worried about the professional success of the Vienna English Department's graduates if language teaching at the department would orient itself towards the (pronunciation) norms of non-native English varieties:

> As regards the use of English as an international language as a teaching model, […] we feel that this would be appropriate only in re-analysis of teaching models used at school or at university departments and in other tertiary education settings where English is *not* the major subject. Within teacher training settings and English departments, the language skills of graduates will – at least for reasons of employability – still have to be based on native speaker models. (Hüttner& Kidd 2000: 77-78 [original emphasis])

I agree with Hüttner and Kidd's point with regard to the teaching of written language skills as well as grammatical and lexical competence, for the simple fact that graduates of English language and literature at university level will commonly be expected to have mastered so-called 'Standard English'[46] in these areas. However, I cannot agree with them as regards the teaching of English pronunciation, due to the special and delicate relationship of an individual's accent with their personal, social and cultural identity, which leads some people to genuinely need to preserve traces of their L1 accents in their pronunciation. What is more, 'Standard English' can, in fact, not even be associated with a particular English accent, but "is essentially a written variety" (Widdowson1994: 380). A number of scholars insist that the main NS accents of English such as GA or RP are, therefore, merely social prestige accents, but not genuine 'standard accents' in the sense that they would be linked to actual standard English varieties that are grammatically and lexically defined. Trudgill, for example, points out that

> [t]here is one thing about Standard English on which most linguists, or at least British linguists, do appear to be agreed and that is that Standard English has nothing to do with pronunciation. (1999: 118)

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[46] For a critical discussion of the notion of Standard English and other 'convenient fictions' in English linguistics, see Seidlhofer (2011: 70-74).

Similarly, Jenkins makes clear that

> Standard English (or, more accurately, Englishes) can be spoken in any regional accent. In other words, despite the popular misconception, standard accents have nothing to do with Standard English […]. (Jenkins 2000: 203)

Thus, while mastery of Standard English as a written variety (i.e. Standard English grammar, lexis and spelling) is most certainly going to be a skill that will be expected from graduates of our department in their future professional lives, I highly doubt mastery of a native-like English accent to be a competence required for employment in academia in the field of English studies. In the domain of English language teaching, the situation is a bit more complex, as here, the hierarchical dichotomy between non-native and native speakers seems to be particularly strong, with 'native-like' language proficiency generally being valued over the special qualities of NNS teachers (cf. section 1.2.). Yet, the situation seems to be much less serious in Austria, which is where the vast majority of our teaching degree students will pursue their professional career: personally, I have known many successful Austrian English teachers whose accents were far from native-like, let alone conformed to one of the major NS model accents. Indeed, it appears to me that when it comes to employability as an English teacher within the Austrian educational system, a teacher's accent is of hardly any interest. In fact, it seems that the last (and often only) time that the pronunciation of (future) Austrian English teacher is thoroughly examined and/or evaluated is in the course of a pronunciation class at university, which, it must be mentioned, is not even offered or compulsory for teaching degree students at some Austrian universities.[47]

Thus, not being capable of speaking English with a native-like accent does not seem to constitute the serious professional disadvantage which Hüttner and Kidd suspect it to be. I therefore propose that PPOCS 1 should instead focus on the development of skills and competences which might be of true value to our students in their later professional lives.

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[47] Müller (2012: 45-46) provides a summary of how pronunciation teaching is managed at other universities in Austria: whereas teaching degree students are obliged to pass a pronunciation class at the University of Graz and the University of Klagenfurt, the University of Salzburg's pronunciation course is not compulsory for teaching degree students, and the University of Innsbruck does not even provide a course explicitly dedicated to pronunciation.

Student preferences and attitudes towards the teaching models used

As mentioned in section 2.2., the learners' personal preferences for and attitudes towards the accents used as a teaching model are commonly considered to play a crucial role in successful L2 pronunciation learning. In connection with this issue, Hüttner and Kidd point to a study conducted by Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit (1997), which investigated the attitudes of students at the Vienna English Department towards RP, GA and English with an Austrian accent. Although this study seems to have little validity for today as it dates back about 17 years, it nevertheless seems interesting to take a closer look at it and the conclusions that Hüttner and Kidd drew from it. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit's study revealed that students exhibited more positive attitudes towards native English accents (in particular RP) than to their own local variety of English (i.e. Austrian English). Hüttner and Kidd (2000: 76) therefore conclude that "introducing non-native models would find little acceptance among our student population […]". Yet, this conclusion is clearly based on a false assumption: while it is true that positive attitudes towards NS accents seem to constitute a precondition for learners to develop an integrative motive for pronunciation learning, such attitudes will not inevitably result in the development of integrativeness in a learner. Smit and Dalton seem to share this opinion and, in a later publication where they review the results of the above study, note that

> […] only a positive attitude can lead to INTEGRATIVENESS […]. This does not mean, however, that such a positive attitude is already the same as integrativeness, i.e. the willingness to acquire such an accent oneself, and correspondingly, take on the accompanying identity. (Smit & Dalton 2000: 239 [original emphasis])

It is therefore wrong to assume that the results of Dalton, Kaltenböck and Smit's study of 1997 would indicate that students at the Vienna English Department would reject alternative, NNS models of pronunciation. In contrast to Hüttner and Kidd, the authors of the study themselves concluded that positive attitudes alone cannot account for successful EFL pronunciation learning, and that further research will be needed which "will have to incorporate more deeply-seated socio-psychological factors connected to questions of 'self' and identification with the target group" (1997: 126).

What is worth noting too is that the results obtained by Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit (1997) indicated that the positive attitudes towards native English accents amongst students at the Vienna English Department might be largely due to stereotypical and native-speakerist ideas transmitted to them through their English lessons at school rather than through genuine identification with the different types of speakers presented to them.

Participants in the study were asked to provide information as to the amount of time they had already spent in an English speaking environment. From the information obtained, Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit were able to divide the test population into four subgroups: students who had spent less than a month in an English-speaking country and, therefore, had had practically "no chance to experience English in one of its native environments" (1997: 120), whom they labeled 'None'. Notably, this group made up almost half of the study's population. The second and third group were constituted by students who had spent more than a month in Great Britain or the USA (labelled 'GB' and 'USA', respectively) and the fourth group was made up of students who had spent a longer period of time in *both* Great Britain and the USA ('GB&USA'). Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit found that the students belonging to the latter three groups exhibited more differentiated attitudes towards the accents presented to them than the 'None'-group. For example, each of these groups tended to rate their respective model of pronunciation positively; their attitudes towards the respective outgroup model, however, were not as straightforward, depending on whether levels of solidarity or perceived social status were rated (cf. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit 1997: 125). The 'None'-group, on the other hand, did not differentiate between the different accents presented to them with regard to solidarity levels and social status: this group rated the RP speaker highest on both these scales, followed by the other native accents (modified RP and General American), the Austrian American speaker (who, it must be noted, had hardly any foreign accent at all) and the Austrian BE speaker. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit (1997: 126) therefore concluded that

> [w]hile the None group voiced the stereotypes perpetuated in Austrian classrooms – RP as most prestigious, followed by other native and finally non-native accents in all circumstances – the other groups differentiated their preferences according to, first, the dimensions of social status and solidarity and, second, in- and out group status of the respective accents. In other words, the respondents who have gained personal experience in English-speaking countries revealed more individualized, situation-specific attitudes than the rather rigid stereotypes of the EFL learners who have not had this kind of exposure.

Thus, it seems that the attitudes of students towards the NS and NNS accents presented to them in Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit (1997) were, to a considerable extent, acquired through the dominant native-speakerist discourse in ELT that places native English accents, in particular RP, above foreign accented speech in terms of social status and desirability. This shows that conclusions as regards the appropriacy of a NS accent as a teaching model on the basis of attitudinal studies should be treated with caution, not only because positive attitudes towards NS accents must not be equated with integrative motivation, but also because such

studies might not reflect genuine personal attitudes, but reproduced beliefs that learners acquired through the dominant native-speakerist ideology prevailing in ELT.[48]

Conclusion

This chapter took a closer look at the current pronunciation teaching practices at the Vienna English Department. On the positive side, the Vienna English Department makes considerable financial and pedagogic efforts to provide students with an extensive training in English phonetics. Yet, the department's pronunciation programme also has a number of weaknesses. On the basis of my discussion in the previous sections, the main points of criticism can be summarized as follows:

- the level that students are expected to attain with regard to their productive pronunciation skills, alongside with the psychological pressure the course seems to exert on a considerable part of the student population (which, in turn, seems to lead some students to reject the subject of practical phonetics altogether).

- the lack of consideration of the delicate relationship between pronunciation and a speaker's personal, social and cultural identity, which is neither reflected in the teaching goal nor the course content.

- the lack of consideration of the increasing importance of ELF as opposed to the decreasing significance of ENL/EFL for Austrian learners of English (and learners in the Expanding Circle in general).

- in general, the course's fairly unreflective approach to pronunciation teaching, alongside with the absence of a proper educational component that would enable future teachers of English to make well-informed choices in their later professional lives (rather than merely training them to reproduce a NS model the appropriacy of which is increasingly questioned anyway (cf. section 2.3.2.)).

The question, then, is how the above issues could possibly be resolved in order to modernize and improve pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department. How this might be done will be the topic of the next chapter.

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[48] This seems to be true for the studies by Janicka, Kul and Weckwerth (2005) and Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005).

4.   An overhaul of pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department

In the previous section, I identified some points of improvement of PPOCS 1, one of the most important issues being that the course does currently not respond to the transformed needs of learners of English in a globalized world. In this part of my thesis, I present a few suggestions as to how PPOCS 1 could be revised in order to take account of the momentous socio-linguistic developments that the English speaking world has seen in the past decades and the new linguistic and communicative skills that speakers of English must consequently have at their disposal.

Some preliminary remarks

It should be noted that my suggestions are very tentative and that I cannot fully assure their practicability at this point, as I am in a position where I am aware of some, yet probably not of all of the temporal, financial and practical constraints affecting PPOCS 1. Since I do sincerely hope that at least some of my recommendations will find their way into PPOCS 1 at some point, their feasibility has, however, been one of my major concerns when attempting to redesign the course. This is why all my suggestions affect the course content and assessment procedures, but do not require a modification of the basic course structure, such as the organization of PPOCS 1 into a two-hour class accompanied by a two-hour language laboratory tutorial. The costs of PPOCS 1 as revised by me would thus not exceed those of PPOCS 1 in its current form, which would facilitate the process of implementing (some of) my suggestions if this should ever be desired.

Another point worth clarifying relates to the role of pronunciation training in PPOCS 1. One point of criticism of PPOCS 1 mentioned repeatedly in the previous section is the fact that the course strongly focuses on pronunciation training in order to make students 'reduce' their L1 accent in English as far as possible. In order to avoid misunderstandings, I would like to emphasize once again that I do not disapprove of the practical component of PPOCS 1 as such. Pronunciation training is undeniably a vital component of any pronunciation course, as it would obviously make little sense to teach students about the importance of pronunciation for successful communication while not giving them the possibility to work on and improve their own pronunciation in English. Not only would this significantly decrease the impact of the course's intended message that pronunciation does, in fact, matter. Perhaps more importantly, students of virtually any proficiency level can profit immensely from pronunciation training. For some, the latter will be vital in order to be able to speak with a

(more) intelligible accent in English in various different contexts. Other, more advanced students will probably gladly take up the opportunity to 'perfect' their pronunciation and extend their productive accent repertoire to include an ENL variant. It has thus always been out of the question for me that pronunciation training in PPOCS 1 should be abandoned.[49] Yet, the practical component of PPOCS 1 will have to be modified in accordance with the new aims of the course which I will present below, and possibly may have to be slightly reduced in favour of the educational component of the course, which, as I have pointed out repeatedly in section 3, is in urgent need of amplification (and modification) in order to provide students with a more reflective approach to pronunciation learning. I suggest that the aims of PPOCS 1 in its updated form will be quite different from the ones of PPOCS 1 in its current form, which seem problematic for pedagogical as well as socio-psychological reasons. It is to these aims that I will now turn.

New aims for a new era

The unprecedented rise of English to a global lingua franca calls for the start of a new era of ELT in which NS lingua-cultural norms increasingly lose their immediate relevance for most learners of English, including our own students at the Vienna English Department. What is more, the vast majority of teaching degree students at our department (who constitute the clear majority of the student population in PPOCS 1)[50] will be teaching English in Austria and thus in an Expanding Circle context where ELF is particularly widespread. It therefore seems sensible to re-think pronunciation teaching at our department in reference to ELF requirements instead of NS prestige accents spoken by fewer and fewer people, also because such an approach would solve some of the problems which I addressed in section 3.2. (see the list of benefits of an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching below). ELF pronunciation criteria should thus become a primary concern in PPOCS 1, whereas NS pronunciation models should only serve as a pedagogic point of reference, as close imitation of them can be regarded as secondary for the linguistic and communicative skills that students are to develop to be able to communicate successfully in ELF. I hence suggest that the course aims of

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[49] It seems important to emphasize this as my criticism on PPOCS 1 in its current form might be misinterpreted as criticism on pronunciation training as such.

[50] In the past 5 semesters (i.e. from WS 2011/12 to WS 2013/14), over 70 % of the students enrolled in PPOCS 1 were studying to become teachers of English.

Again, I want to express my thanks to Mag. Iris Vukovics, who provided me with the above information.

PPOCS 1 might be modified as shown in table 4.[51] The current course aims of the PPOCS module as described in the PPOCS curriculum (2013: 2) are given in the right-hand column for comparison.[52]

Table 4 Tentative course aims for PPOCS 1 in comparison to current course aims of the PPOCS module

Tentative course aims for PPOCS 1	Current course aims of the PPOCS module
To achieve the linguistic and communicative skills that will enable students to speak with an intelligible pronunciation in ELF contexts in various forms of interaction and production	To speak fluently and effectively with a consistent, natural-sounding standard or regional pronunciation in various forms of interaction and production at C1 or C2 level
To have expert knowledge of the socio-psychological dimension of English pronunciation and its implications for pronunciation teaching To have expert knowledge of the socio-linguistic dimension of English pronunciation and its implications for intelligibility	To have expert knowledge of the characteristics of spoken language
To have practical analytical skills, e.g. for monitoring own speech and for error analysis in the speech of others	To have practical analytical skills, e.g. for monitoring own speech and for error analysis in the speech of others

Only the last point has been taken over from the original set of aims of the PPOCS module. The second and the third of the new course aims relate to the educational component of PPOCS 1 and mirror my concern for increasing students' awareness and knowledge of a number of crucial issues in English pronunciation teaching. The knowledge gained with regard to these topics should help students to become more competent, well-informed language users and (in the case of teaching degree students) English language teachers.

Perhaps the most striking difference to the original set of course aims is that the course goal as regards students' productive skills is no longer defined in reference to the CEFR, and hence primarily NS norms, but in reference to the pronunciation criteria of ELF. This shift in focus is justified by the fact that prioritizing an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching brings with it numerous benefits for pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department, yet without precluding students from aiming at a NS target if they wish (see the second part of

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[51] A more elaborated list containing my suggested course objectives for PPOCS 1 (analogous to the one in the PPOCS curriculum of 2013) can be found in the appendix (table 2).

[52] Unfortunately, I cannot provide a list containing the current course aims of PPOCS 1 only for comparison (instead the ones of PPOCS 1 & 2 combined), as no such list is included in the course curriculum of the PPOCS module. There is, however, a list containing the course objectives – cf. footnote 3 on this page.

section 4.2.1. and section 4.2.2. for more details). These benefits can be summarized as follows (see also Walker 2010a: 61-69):

- *International intelligibility:* Due to its primary focus on intelligibility (as opposed to nativeness), an ELF approach supports students in the acquisition of pronunciation and communicative skills that will enable them to communicate successfully on the international stage (which is not true of pronunciation teaching that aims to equip learners with a native-like accent or prepare them for interactions with native-speakers only). In contrast to the approach currently used in PPOCS 1, an ELF approach thus takes account of the growing need of most Austrian learners of English to be **internationally** intelligible rather than to speak with a native-like BE or AE accent.

- *Identity:* As mentioned above, an ELF approach privileges the criterion of international intelligibility over the one of nativeness and regional distinctiveness in pronunciation: phonetic or phonological features of NS accents that only function as in-group markers but that do not contribute to intelligibility in ELF contexts are open to personal preference, which allows students to retain features of their L1 in their pronunciation if they wish. An ELF approach thus permits learners to express their social, cultural and national identities through their accents.

- *Positive view of L2 variation*: This point is closely linked to the previous one. As an ELF approach only regards those features of a speaker's pronunciation as problematic that on the basis of empirical research would be expected to have a negative impact on international intelligibility, it permits learners to see L2 variation and their own L1 accent in English in a more positive light. This allows less advanced learners for whom nativeness in pronunciation seems virtually unachievable and learners who (unconsciously) desire to preserve their L1 accent in English to perceive themselves as successful learners rather than as 'failed native speakers'. A positive view of accented (as opposed to unintelligible) non-native English is also likely to increase the students' receptive abilities in international communication, as intelligibility is not exclusively a matter of linguistic competence (both as regards the listener and the speaker), but also of "the right attitude and an appreciation of diversity" (Rajadurai 2007b: 102). A positive outlook on phonological L2 variation is certainly also of benefit to teaching degree students of English, as it will prevent them from developing an attitude of frustration towards the performance of their future pupils,

for whom the acquisition of 'error-free', native-like pronunciation is even more unlikely than for many students at the Vienna English Department.

- *Achievability:* Again, this point is closely linked to the previous one. As stated above, not all instances of L1 transfer are regarded as pronunciation errors within an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching, but only those that have been found to inhibit intelligibility in ELF context. An ELF approach can thus significantly decrease the workload for students compared to traditional approaches to pronunciation teaching that aim at making learners acquire a native-like accent. In contrast to native-like pronunciation, the goal of international intelligibility is far more achievable for most learners of English (including students at the Vienna English Department). The psychological pressure experienced by some students during PPOCS 1 is therefore likely to decrease and may even disappear altogether if an ELF approach is adopted in PPOCS 1. An ELF approach is also more likely to instil a sense of achievement and confidence amongst students at our department, which, as shown in section 3.2., is a quality that PPOCS 1 currently seems to lack.

Given the new aims of PPOCS 1 which I proposed at the beginning of this section, it seems obvious that both the educational as well as the practical component of the course will have to undergo some changes so that students in PPOCS 1 will be provided with the appropriate instruction and practice opportunities to attain these new goals. In the following two sections, we will have a closer look at my suggestions for these modifications. Part A (section 4.1.) is dedicated to the revision of the educational (theoretical) component of the course. Part B (section 4.2.) contains my proposal for how the practical component of PPOCS 1 could be modified so as to help students acquire the pronunciation skills necessary to communicate successfully on the international stage.

4.1. Part A: Revising the educational component of PPOCS 1

There are three reasons why the educational component of PPOCS 1 is in urgent need of amplification and modification: First, as pointed out by Jenkins on numerous occasions (1998a:42, 1998b: 125, 2000: 199, 2005b: 150), if English pronunciation teaching is to adapt to the changing needs of learners of English in a globalized world, it is necessary to equip future teachers not only with linguistic skills, but also with a sound knowledge of the socio-psychological dimensions of L2 pronunciation learning and the sociolinguistics of accent

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variation, in particular in connection with ELF. Clearly, if teaching degree students at our department are to later take account of ELF in their own teaching and make informed decisions as to the models, methods and goals they use for teaching English pronunciation, we must provide them with an education that will enable them to do precisely that. However, teaching degree students are not the only ones to benefit from being educated about the sociolinguistics and the social psychology of L2 pronunciation in English. Both teaching degree and BA students at the Vienna English Department are learners of English themselves, and will need to be informed about the sociolinguistic facts of English pronunciation so as to be able to make an informed choice about their personal learning goals for pronunciation (Walker 2010a: 72). For example, they will have to know about the different roles of English in the world (ENL, ESL, ELF) in order to understand that there are many useful and acceptable ways of speaking English other than in adherence to national standard varieties. The third reason why the educational component of PPOCS 1 needs to be extended relates to the notion of intelligibility. As we saw in section 2.5.2., intelligibility does not only lie within the responsibility of the speaker, but is interactional in nature. Moreover, intelligibility is not dependant on linguistic factors only, but can be considerably affected by listener attitudes. The majority of students at the Vienna English Department will probably be oblivious to these facts, which makes it crucial to raise awareness amongst them of the real nature of intelligibility, and in particular of their responsibility as listeners to try to accommodate receptively to their interlocutors if necessary. Students should also be encouraged to keep an 'open mind' towards accent variation and try to identify and question personal prejudices towards different types of accents which they might have. This will enable students to become highly reflective language users who are able to collaborate more efficiently with their interlocutors to achieve mutual intelligibility in various contexts of interaction.

In this section, I suggest a number of topic clusters which should be covered in PPOCS 1 in order to equip students at the Vienna English Department with the expert knowledge described earlier in the new course aims of PPOCS 1. Many of these topics are also mentioned in other publications that stress the need to educate learners and teachers alike about current issues in English pronunciation teaching, especially in connection with ELF (see in particular Jenkins 1998a: 44-45, Jenkins 2000: 202-212, Jenkins 2005b: 150-153 and Walker 2010a: 72-76). The ways in which these topics could be integrated in actual classroom practice will vary. This could be done in the form of reading assignments, class discussions, or written reflections produced by the students, or any combination of these. Also a revised version of the 'PPOCS-folio' (a portfolio with theoretical questions and exercises which

students have to fill out and hand in at the end of the semester) would constitute an excellent opportunity to make students reflect on the topics below. Of course, these topics could also form part of the PPOCS 1 theory test that commonly takes place towards the end of the term, in order to test students' understanding of the various issues discussed throughout the course.

Topic cluster I: Pronunciation & identity

Students should be aware of the following points:

- *Identity and phonological inter-speaker variation*: Besides making natural human communication possible, pronunciation acts as "an expression of who we are or aspire to be, of how we want to be seen by others, of the social communities with which we identify or seek membership, and of whom we admire or ostracise" (Setter & Jenkins 2005: 5). This is true for both L1 and L2 pronunciation, and (as we have seen in section 2.4.) results in phonological variation amongst different groups of people: speaking with a particular accent (both when speaking a foreign or our native language) signals that we identify with a particular social group. Our accent is thus inextricably linked with our identity, and as a consequence, L2 pronunciation learning is not merely a matter of linguistic correctness, but is linked to issues of identity in a complex way.

- *The role of identity in L2 pronunciation learning*: Given the close link between accent and identity, some people experience having to reduce their L1 accent in a foreign language as a threat to their identity or as an obligation to reject their own 'self' in favour of another one (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 7, Walker 2010a: 13). Of course, this is not true for all learners, some of whom enjoy discovering and playing with their new L2 'self'. Such learners usually have, at least from a psychological point of view, no problem with giving up features of their L1 pronunciation and may strive for a native-like accent in English. Others, however, albeit often on a subconscious level (Ur 1996: 52), simply do not want to sound exactly like a native speaker, which is an equally legitimate position that should be recognized by teachers and other language users alike.

  The delicate relationship between accent and an individual's identity and sense of self-worth is especially important to know about for teaching degree students, so as to be able to take account of it in their own teaching. If a teacher is oblivious to the fact that some learners might simply not want to lose all traces of their L1 accent in a

second language for fear of losing part of their identity, then they will inevitably conceive of such learners as failures who, for some reason, 'simply don't manage', or who are too lazy to work on their accent in English.

- *Accents & attitudes*: Given the status of pronunciation as a powerful social marker, a particular accent (no matter whether native or non-native) can evoke prejudices or even negative attitudes on the part of some people, for they may associate it with certain (negative) qualities which they consider typical of speakers of the accent in question. As Cauldwell (2014) puts it: "for every accent there exists, there's somewhere a group – or groups of people – who react badly to it". Such attitudes, however,

> may be personal, and are more often based on feeling than rational arguments […] [and] may also be based on social prejudices and stereotypes (Walker 2010a: 75).

Thus, it is of course wrong to think of an accent as being linguistically superior over another one, as "no accent, native or non-native, is inherently better than any other" (Derwing & Munro 2009: 476) – including standard accents such as RP and GA.

In connection with the topic of accents and attitudes, the social connotations of the teaching models most commonly used in English pronunciation teaching, RP and GA, must necessarily be addressed in PPOCS 1 (see section 2.3.2.), as well as the problematic nature of the notion of standard accent itself (cf. Jenkins 2005b: 150-151 and the discussion in section 3.2. of this thesis). In brief, students should know that contrary to popular opinion, RP and GA are not universally valid standard accents, but accents with overt social prestige that, due to some particular connotations, will not be considered appropriate in every social context.

- *Accents & attitudes in ELT*: Students' attention should also be drawn to the fact that foreign accents have been stigmatized in ELT for a very long time as mere examples of erroneous learner productions, but that, being an indicator of a person's national and/or cultural identity, they are nowadays increasingly regarded as legitimate L2 varieties of English. Students must also be made aware that there is in fact nothing wrong with speaking with a foreign accent, as long as a speaker remains intelligible to their interlocutor(s) in a particular communicative act. In fact, a foreign accent can sometimes even be of benefit, for example if an accent is associated with positive qualities such as sophistication, as is the case with many European accents (Derwing & Munro 2009: 485).

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After having introduced students to the topics of this cluster, it seems a sensible idea to encourage them to reflect on their own relationship with their accent, both in their L1 and in English. The following questions might serve as a basis for a first reflection:

- Do students themselves exhibit prejudicial attitudes towards certain types of accents, both in their L1 and in English? What do they think of a person who speaks with a regional/social/foreign accent?

- What do they think of the issue of identity in L2 pronunciation learning? Does it affect their personal goals for English pronunciation? If not, is it understandable to them that it might do so for others?

Topic cluster II: Pronunciation and intelligibility

In connection with topic cluster I, I argued for educating students about the socio-psychological aspects of pronunciation so as to make them aware that modifying one's pronunciation can signify a loss of identity for some people. Yet, students must not misunderstand this information as a license not to work on their pronunciation at all. It is therefore equally important to remind students that pronunciation learning is an important aspect of increasing one's linguistic proficiency, as pronunciation has an important communicative function (cf. section 2.1.), especially in ELF. In connection with the topic of intelligibility and pronunciation, students should be aware of the following points (most of which I have already touched upon in section 2.5.1.):

- *Aiming for 'comfortable intelligibility':*[53] While pronunciation will to some extent always be up to a speaker's personal preferences, it is also important to ensure that one's pronunciation "does not put an unnecessary barrier between you and your listener" (Brazil 1994: 2). That is, we should aim at speaking with an accent in English that we feel comfortable with, but at the same time, we have to ensure that our pronunciation remains intelligible to our interlocutors in a specific communicative act.

- *Intelligibility as a relative category*: "Accent is in the ear of the beholder as much as it is in the mouth of the speaker" (Moyer 2013: 102). This is not only true for an accent's degree of attractiveness (to which Moyer alludes here), but equally applies to its degree of intelligibility. The degree of intelligibility of an accent can thus not be

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[53] I am borrowing here the term coined by Abercrombie in 1949 (see further section 2.3.1. of this thesis).

determined per se, but is dependent on several parameters that characterise a communicative situation, such as the nature of the interlocutors involved, the listener's familiarity with the accent in question, or the latter's language attitudes (see Rajadurai 2007: 95, and section 2.5.1 of this thesis). Students must understand that intelligibility is thus always **relative**, and that in a globalised world, the skill to accommodate one's pronunciation to the receptive needs of one's interlocutors is of higher value than speaking with a monolithic (native-like) accent (Jenkins 2006a: 174).

- *Intelligibility as an interactive process*: Given the fact that intelligibility depends on both speaker and listener factors (see above), it can be considered "a dynamic notion – a negotiated process, rather than a purely fixed product" (Rajadurai 2007: 95). It is thus not only the speaker that is responsible for intelligibility, but also the listener, who must **try** to (and learn to) understand rather than place the entire communicative burden on the speaker. This applies not only to NNS-NNS communication, but also to NS-NNS interactions.

- *Accentedness vs. intelligibility*: Contrary to popular opinion, accentedness does not equal unintelligibility – that is, there is no direct correspondence between the degree of accentedness and the degree of intelligibility of a person's pronunciation (Rajadurai 2007: 92). Students should understand that not all pronunciation features are equally important to intelligibility in all contexts, but might simply function as 'membershipping devices' that signify a person's identification with a particular social or cultural group. Conversely, nativeness in pronunciation does not equal intelligibility, especially in English as a lingua franca communication. Speaking with a particular NS accent is more intelligible only in contexts where this accent is used on a regular basis and language users are hence highly familiar with the accent in question.

Topic cluster III: The sociolinguistic facts – introducing ELF

Although the concept of ELF is mentioned briefly in the introductory lecture in English linguistics which students at the Vienna English Department have to pass before taking PPOCS 1, chances are that most of them will at this stage still be largely unaware of its immediate relevance for them as language users and future language teachers. It will thus be important to explain to students why an ELF approach was adopted in PPOCS 1, and to provide them with a short introduction to ELF (both the phenomenon and research into it) and

how it differs from other types of English. The most important points about which students should be informed are the following:

- *Basic introduction to ELF and other roles of English*: As a revision of what students have learnt in their introductory lecture to English linguistics, Kachru's model of the three 'concentric' circles of English should be recapitulated, with students understanding the difference between ENL, ESL and ELF and ELF (Walker 2010a: 74 provides a useful table that students could be asked to fill out). Importantly, students must understand that the role which English plays in a particular context does not depend so much on the geographical context, but on the type of interlocutors involved, i.e. "on who is speaking to who, rather than where English is being used" (Walker 2010a: 74).

  Students' attention should also be drawn to the current importance of ELF for all speakers of English around the world and in particular for those in the Expanding Circle (and hence Austrian learners of English), where it is the most widespread use of English. Teaching degree students should begin to understand that even if they are personally more interested in ENL varieties (which is absolutely legitimate in itself), the immediate relevance of ELF for their future pupils requires them to inform themselves about the phenomenon of ELF and to in some way take account of it in their future teaching.

- *ELF vs. EFL*: Students should be informed about the basic differences between an ELF and an EFL perspective as discussed in section 1.5.: instead of imitating and adopting NS norms and making a bid for membership of the English NS community, accomplished ELF speakers adapt them to suit their communicative purpose (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 17-19). Students should know that from an ELF perspective, not every departure from a pronunciation NS model is to be viewed as an error, as performances are not measured against a NS standard, but evaluated in terms of their intelligibility for other non-native speakers of English.

  It will be important to stress that both these perspectives are legitimate, and that which one of them is to be regarded as more appropriate will always depend on the purpose and the context of learning English. Teaching degree students should be reminded that ELT in Austria has until now strongly focused on teaching EFL, but that in view of the global relevance of ELF and its increasing relevance to most Austrian learners of

English, it seems high time to integrate an ELF perspective into the Austrian English classroom as well.

It will also be important to communicate to students aspiring to native-like proficiency in English pronunciation that nobody will want to prevent or discourage them from doing so if this is what they genuinely want. If we regard an individual's pronunciation as being also a matter of personal preferences that are linked to issues of social, cultural and, as we shall see later, professional identity in a complex way, we should regard any choice a student makes as to their personal learning goals as legitimate, including native-like English pronunciation – provided it has been an **informed** choice. The point is not to talk students out of striving for native-like proficiency in English pronunciation, but to inform them about alternative options for learning goals in English pronunciation of which many of them might be entirely unaware.

In order to enable students to make precisely that – an informed choice – they should subsequently be encouraged to reflect on which perspective mirrors their personal relationship to the English language most accurately, especially with regard to pronunciation learning: is it important for them to signal a bid for membership of the NS community via their accent? In which contexts do students (plan to) use English, and for what purpose? Is the majority of their English-speaking interlocutors (going to be) native or non-native?

- *The role of pronunciation in ELF*: Students should be informed that pronunciation has been found to play a crucial role for communicative success in ELF, and that pronunciation learning should hence occupy a special place in ELT if we aim at preparing students for ELF interactions. It might be important to remind students here that, contrary to what one might expect, a native-like RP or GA accent is no guarantee for successful NNS-NNS communication.

Obviously enough, students will have to be introduced to the LFC, i.e. they should know which pronunciation features are crucial to intelligibility in ELF, and that they are expected to have acquired these features by the end of the semester (see section 4.2. for more details). They should also know which features of RP and GA do not form part of the LFC and that the latter are open to their personal preference, i.e. students can either orient themselves towards a NS model with respect to these sounds if their goal is a native-like pronunciation in English, or not if they wish to retain some

features that point to their L1 identity in their pronunciation. In addition, students should know which features of NS models are potentially harmful to international intelligibility. At this point, it will be important to communicate to students that this does not mean that should not be allowed to acquire a native-like accent in English if this is what they truly want. However, they must keep in mind which features of the accent they are aiming for can be a threat to intelligibility in ELF interactions, and must develop the ability to modify their pronunciation accordingly if they notice that the use of these features poses an unnecessary strain on their listener or even severely inhibits their understanding. Phonological accommodation skills should generally be encouraged among all students taking PPOCS 1, and not only those that wish to depart from the suggestions of the LFC in favour of a NS accent (cf. my suggestions for this in section 4.2.2). One crucial step towards attaining this goal will be to make students aware of the value of phonological accommodation skills in a globalized world, and of the variable character of pronunciation in general (see the next topic).

Topic cluster IV: Intra-speaker variation in pronunciation – appropriacy and accommodation

Building on the knowledge acquired when dealing with the topics listed in the previous clusters, students should subsequently be introduced to the topic of phonological **intra**-speaker variation. By educating students about the points below, we would help them to become more competent, context-sensitive language users and thereby prepare them more adequately for the linguistic reality which they are going to face.

- *The variable character of pronunciation*: Most importantly, students must be made aware that a speaker's pronunciation naturally varies according to the given social context and the specific purpose for which language is used. Variation in pronunciation, no matter whether it occurs within an individual or amongst different groups of people (in the form of inter-speaker variation) is nothing bad, but an entirely natural phenomenon. In fact, "phonological variation is the rule rather than the exception" (Jenkins 1998a: 44).

- *The 'communication-identity continuum'*: Students should receive a brief introduction to Kirkpatrick's 'communication-identity continuum' (2007, cf. section 2.4. of this thesis) and its implications for pronunciation. They should understand that in some contexts, communicative efficiency will be more important than expressing one's

identity via one's pronunciation, which ideally will lead speakers to pay greater attention to the degree of intelligibility of their pronunciation.

- *Variation according to social context*: Students should be reminded that their pronunciation creates a particular image of them, and that they can learn to adjust their pronunciation, and thereby the way they are perceived by others, according to the social context they find themselves in. Clearly, a speaker will want to be perceived in a different way when giving a formal talk in front of an unknown audience than in an informal gathering with friends. In this respect, accents can be compared to clothing: in some social contexts, a speaker might consider it important to "dress for success" (Zurinskas 2010), therefore employing a more prestigious linguistic variety. Yet, as Selman (2010) and Walker (2010b) point out, it is also important that our 'clothes' feel comfortable and that they 'fit' us. An individual's accent will thus always depend to some extent on their personal and social identity, even in contexts in which the person in question might not want to reveal everything about themselves immediately.

- *Variation according to type of interlocutors: the importance of phonological accommodation:* As pointed out under topic II (p. 95-96), different types of interlocutors will perceive different types of English accents as more or less easily intelligible, depending on their familiarity with and attitudes towards the type of accent in question and their L1 background. While it is impossible for us as speakers to influence any of these parameters in a particular communicative act, we can nevertheless try to accommodate our pronunciation to our interlocutor's receptive needs. Students must be made aware of the fact that in some situations, the only possibility to prevent or resolve communication breakdown might be to adjust their pronunciation in the direction of a more widely known variety, and that they must develop productive phonological accommodation skills that will allow them to do exactly that. As intelligibility is, however, not a one-way process that is solely the responsibility of the speaker, the listener too should try to accommodate to their interlocutor's accent if necessary – not productively, but **receptively**. The development of receptive accommodation skills is thus equally important for students.

- *Appropriacy vs. 'correctness', model vs. norm*: This point is of particular relevance to teaching degree students in PPOCS 1. In order to show how the issue of phonological intra-speaker variation might be taken up in English language pedagogy, students should be introduced to the concept of 'appropriacy' of pronunciation (Seidlhofer

2001b: 60) as opposed to the normative notion of 'correctness', and to the distinction between 'model' and 'norm' by Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994a) (cf. section 2.4.). That is, students should be made aware that it is not always useful to talk about pronunciation learning in terms of correctness and linguistic norms. They should also be informed that models such as RP and GA can be useful reference points for learning and teaching English pronunciation, but that they do not represent the only acceptable kind of pronunciation there is. As Cauldwell (2014) aptly states, "[a] reference model is not 'the truth' or 'the right way' but a reference point around which many flavourings are possible". Strictly adhering to a particular NS pronunciation model is not only unnecessary and/or inappropriate in a number of different contexts, but may, at worst, even be harmful to successful communication when interlocutors are unfamiliar with it.

4.2. Part B: Revising the practical component of PPOCS 1

Until now, pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department has focused on the acquisition of an accent in English which is "recognisable as approximating one of the main varieties of English" (PPOCS curriculum 2013: 2). As a consequence, a considerable part of instruction is currently dedicated to making students acquire pronunciation features that work as so-called 'membershipping devices' for either the British or the US-American community, i.e. features that are characteristic of the accent used as a teaching model. For example, the production of /r/ in post-vocalic position is treated as correct in PPOCS 1 for AE, but as an 'error' in those where RP is the chosen teaching model. Another example is the production of /t/ as [ɾ] in intervocalic position, which is presented as obligatory to students taking the AE PPOCS 1 course, but as undesirable to students taking a BE class, who are expected to pronounce /t/ as [t] in these positions. Similarly, the vowel in words like <goat> should be pronounced as [oʊ] in GA PPOCS 1 classes, whereas students taking a BE PPOCS 1 class are asked to pronounce this diphthong as [əʊ]. In both classes, the respective 'outgroup' variant is treated as 'incorrect'. In brief, any digression from the chosen model accent is treated as an error, and a considerable amount of time and effort is spent not only on making students lose their foreign accent in English as far as possible in order to become more intelligible to NSs, but to make them acquire a **particular**, regionally defined NS accent that should be clearly recognisable as such. This approach seems problematic for a number of reasons: first, it requires a considerable workload from students, some of whom therefore experience

PPOCS 1 (and, as a further consequence, pronunciation learning as such) as utterly frustrating. Second, it suggests that both phonological L1 and L2 variation are problematic rather than a natural and extremely widespread phenomenon.[54] Third, such a normative approach is clearly counterproductive to the process of students finding their own identity in English, as it treats RP and GA as norms rather than as teaching models. I, on the other hand, suggest an approach to pronunciation teaching for PPOCS 1 that privileges the criterion of intelligibility over the one of nativeness and regional distinctiveness in pronunciation, and that shifts the focus of the course from NS pronunciation norms to ELF requirements. Adopting an ELF approach in PPOCS 1 solves all of the above problems (see also the discussion of the advantages of such an approach at the beginning of section 4), as it allows for L2 variation in pronunciation and presents students with a much more achievable goal for pronunciation learning.

As stated in the introduction to section 4, I suggest that the new course goal of PPOCS 1 as regards students' productive pronunciation skills be defined as the acquisition of pronunciation skills that will enable students to communicate successfully in ELF. In more practical terms, this means that by the end of the semester, students

    a) should have mastered the LFC, and

    b) should have acquired some basic phonological accommodation skills.

As a consequence, 'mixing' RP and GA would no longer be considered an error in PPOCS 1, as would L1 features that do not pose a threat to intelligibility in ELF contexts.

It is important to note that only because the course goal as regards productive skills is – in addition to the acquisition of phonological accommodation skills – defined as the mastery of the LFC, this does not mean that students in PPOCS 1 should not be allowed or encouraged to go beyond the LFC and receive pedagogical support in doing so (see further section 4.2.2.). It simply means that the mastery of the LFC will constitute an important minimal requirement for students to pass the course and that the LFC should hence become the major focus of pronunciation training in PPOCS 1.

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[54] Mixing features of British and American accents, which is currently viewed as undesirable in PPOCS 1, is in fact typical of the so-called 'Mid-Atlantic' accent (also referred to as 'Transatlantic pronunciation'). Originally developed for "mutual intelligibility across the Atlantic", it has long been used by American and Canadian actors for performing Shakespeare plays and other British works, and can be heard in numerous American movies from the 1930s and 1940s (LaBouff 2007: 241-242). Although its use has decreased over the years, being fluent in the Mid-Atlantic dialect is still a valuable asset for singers today, as "[i]n North America, it is often the requested pronunciation by many conductors and directors for vocal works that are not specifically of North American origin" (LaBouff 2007: 242).

In this part of my thesis, I discuss how the practical component of PPOCS 1 could be modified so as to provide students with the optimum pronunciation training in order to attain the above learning targets within the given time frame. Before going into more detail as to how this might be done, I will shortly discuss a topic that has an immediate impact on this matter: the learners themselves.

4.2.1. Exploring the learners' perspective: what do students at our department need and want?

One concern that is frequently put forward by opponents of an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching is that most learners will not want to aim for anything less than a native-like accent. The most recent study addressing this and similar questions with regard to the student population of the Vienna English Department was conducted by Albert Müller in 2012. Investigating learner needs and factors of motivation of PPOCS 1 students, Müller carried out a survey amongst 127 PPOCS 1 students in the summer term of 2012. When being asked to indicate their agreement with the statement 'I want to sound like a native speaker of English', a clear majority (64 %) of students 'strongly agreed' with it, whereas the rest moderately or slightly agreed (28%) or disagreed (7 %) (Müller 2012: 99). Müller hence concluded that

> [t]he question of accent change and identity loss, raised in linguistic publications over the last decades, does not seem to be of great importance to the students here at the Vienna English Department. (Müller 2012: 74)

While I do not want to deny that a considerable number of students at the Vienna English Department wholeheartedly desire to acquire a native-like accent in English (some of whom I have taught myself in the British English language laboratory), I am nevertheless critical of Müller's findings and conclusion for a number of reasons: First, like numerous other studies that came to the above (or a similar) conclusion (e.g. Janicka, Kul & Weckwerth 2005 or Waniek-Klimczak & Klimczak 2005), Müller's study was conducted without making learners aware of alternative, meaningful learning goals for English pronunciation. If the only desirable goal with which students are, and always have been, presented is a native-like accent, then it is hardly surprising that a large majority of them will claim to aim for nativeness in English pronunciation. That learners are yet likely to display opinions other than the above once they are made aware of alternative options in English pronunciation learning was demonstrated by Simon Coles (2002, referred to in Walker 2010a: 61). Coles provided his Japanese students with information about the different learning goals of EFL and ELF,

respectively. He then found students to be 'pleasantly surprised' in view of the fact that NS English was not the only choice available to them (ibid.). Walker, who reports having made similar experiences in Spain with learners and non-native teachers of English alike, hence concludes:

> What learners aim for in terms of pronunciation will also be strongly influenced by what their teachers offer them. […] Overall, as learners become more and more aware of the role of English as a Lingua Franca, and of the validity of the LFC as a pronunciation goal, their preference for native-speaker accents diminishes. However, until awareness of ELF is more widespread, most learners of English will assume that the only meaningful goal is native-like pronunciation.
> (Walker 2010a: 61)

The obvious conclusion from this is that we do not only have to give students a formal choice as to their personal learning goals for English pronunciation, but that we have to provide them with the background knowledge that will enable them to make an **informed** choice about what kind of pronunciation may suit them best. It is exactly for this reason that I advocated education about and awareness-raising of the sociolinguistic reality and the socio-psychological dimension of English pronunciation to be made an integral part of PPOCS 1 (see my suggestions in section 4.1.).

The second reasons why I am sceptical of the validity of Müller's findings is that stating that one wants to sound like a native speaker and actually doing so are two different things. Remiszewski (2005: 298-299) illustrates this point very clearly by analysing that

> […] it is one thing to say one would like to sound like a native speaker, and it is quite another to say one wants to do *all it takes* to sound like a native speaker. The fact that, given a magic wand, people would definitely prefer A to B does not mean that they would equally readily want to sacrifice all the time, energy, money and other resources necessary to achieve A in real life. [original emphasis]

In other words, it is easy to unreflectingly tick an option on a questionnaire that mirrors the current dominant belief in the ELT community while actually being unaware of its implications. What is more, it must not be forgotten that the relationship of accent and identity is a complex one, which is why some speakers display very ambivalent attitudes towards their own pronunciation and the accent which they would like to learn or speak with. Walker (2010a: 15) reports three cases in which L2 speakers of English stated that they would enjoy being taken for a (British) native speaker due to their pronunciation while at the same time displaying positive attitudes towards their own L1 accents. Two of them finally agreed that in fact they would not want to lose their L1 accents in English, for the latter are "something really of the identity of the person" (ibid.). It seems probable that similar attitudes might exist

amongst students at the Vienna English Department. This assumption is confirmed by my own experience as a language lab tutor, which has shown me that although some students **claim** that they want to speak with a NS accent, they seem to hesitate when being asked to imitate NS pronunciation with regard to aspects of their pronunciation that touch more directly upon their personal way of speaking, such as intonation.[55] Some of my former students even experienced the production of certain sounds in particular words as feeling 'funny' or 'weird', probably because they were unfamiliar with the RP pronunciation of the item in question, which thus felt somewhat unnatural to them. One very extreme case was a rather timid student who reported feeling 'weird' when having to aspirate her plosives, as this pronunciation felt very harsh and exaggerated to her. My personal teaching experience as a PPOCS 1 tutor thus also contradicts Müller's assumption that issues of identity would not play a role in pronunciation learning for students at the Vienna English Department.

The third reason why Müller's conclusion seems unwarranted to me is connected to prospective teacher's preconceived ideas about what is desirable for an English language teacher. With regard to a couple of questions that all relate to the nativeness criterion in English pronunciation teaching, Müller (2012: 82-83) found a statistically significant difference between the answers of BA students and those studying to become teachers of English. First, future teachers tended to believe more strongly than BA students that having a 'good' pronunciation would be beneficial to their professional career (what 'good' is supposed to mean here was not specified in Müller's questionnaire and was thus open to the students' personal interpretation). Second, and perhaps even more interestingly, Müller found that the wish to sound like a native speaker seems to be much more common amongst teaching degree students than amongst BA students, which he interprets as "an indicator of the strong wish of student teachers to act as a phonetic role model in the future" (2012: 83). What we can observe here is a further dimension of teaching degree students' identity possibly coming into play, namely their sense of professional identity as future language teachers. In order to understand how the latter affects their personal goals for English pronunciation, it is crucial to take a closer look at the dominant professional discourse in which the students' professional identities were formed. As we saw earlier in this thesis, the professional discourse on ELT is strongly characterized by the ideologies of native-speakerism and Standard English ideology (cf. section 1.2. and 1.4.), both of which highly

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[55] Intonation seems to be particularly strongly linked to a person's personality. Barnes (1988: 17, quoted in Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994b: 76) reports to have had similar issues when teaching intonation, stating that some of his students experienced the practice of intonation as if "a change in their personalities was being attempted".

value 'native-like' language proficiency in English teachers and view any kind of L2 features in a person's pronunciation as an error. As a consequence, many NNS teachers seem to suffer from an inferiority complex as regards their own competence for pronunciation teaching, often citing their own NNS accent as the major cause for their perceived inadequacy (see for example Léon Meis 2000 and Walker 1999, both cited in Murphy 2014: 260). It seems to them that the only possibility to assert their legitimacy as English pronunciation teachers is the acquisition of a native-like accent in English, and if they fail to attain this level – which is what happens to most NNS teachers of English – they feel not competent enough to teach English pronunciation.[56] What Müller's results show is thus not necessarily that most student teachers at our department genuinely desire to sound like a native-speaker of English because they identify with the NS community. Rather, they might indicate that many teaching degree students at the Vienna English Department **think** that they want – or that they should want – to sound like a native speaker, since they believe that only a native-like accent will make them a capable pronunciation teacher. Dörnyei (2005: 105) provides a useful concept in this respect, which is the one of a language learner's *Ought-to L2 Self*. This concept refers to "the attributes one believes one *ought to* possess" (ibid.) and, being connected to a person's sense of responsibility or duty, "may bear little resemblance to desires or wishes" (Dörnyei 2005: 100). With teaching degree students' Ought-to L2 Selves having developed in an educational environment where so-called 'NS competence' is highly favoured in language teachers and where foreign accents in English are generally resented, most if not the majority of their Ought-to L2 Selves will probably be an ideal L2 learner who has attained native-like proficiency in English pronunciation. Yet, the students' Ought-to L2 Selves do not necessarily correspond to their real selves or mirror their real pronunciation preferences, as they are linked to what teaching degree students consider to be their profession's standards, to which they should try to live up. What many teaching degree students thus might face is a conflict between their professional identity on the one hand and their social, cultural and personal identities on the other. This might explain the ambivalent attitudes towards NS pronunciation that I found amongst some of my former students which I described above. Since a native-like accent in English is neither a realistic goal for most NNS teachers of English, nor a necessary prerequisite to teach English pronunciation effectively (especially from an ELF, but also from

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[56] This is particularly ironic in view of the fact that, due to the rise of ELF, NS pronunciation norms are nowadays largely losing their immediate relevance for English pronunciation teaching, with NS teachers' status as 'ideal' pronunciation teachers being increasingly challenged. Jenkins (2000: 226), for example, regards NNS fluent bilingual teachers of English as the more appropriate pronunciation models for ELF, as they are more "realistic, i.e. attainable in a practical sense" and "more appropriate socio-linguistically and socio-psychologically".

an EFL perspective), it seems important to help students overcome their identity conflict by helping them to perceive their professional identity as English teachers in such a way that it ceases to oppose other fundamental facets of their identity. For that to happen, students will have to be informed that NNS teachers' perceived lack of competence to teach English pronunciation is but a misconception. As Murphy (2014: 260) states:

> […] for NNES teacher identities to flourish it is crucial that once reasonable degrees of spoken proficiency and professional training have been attained, their pronunciation abilities should be supported, respected, and welcomed at the table of pronunciation teaching.

Thus, the key to helping teaching degree students at our department assert their professional identity as English pronunciation teachers lies in educating them about their ability to teach English pronunciation effectively without speaking with a native-like accent in English. Students should also be made aware that having a 'good' pronunciation does not yet make one a good pronunciation teacher, as in addition to a 'reasonable degree of spoken proficiency' (as Murphy puts it), pronunciation teachers need professional knowledge that will enable them to teach pronunciation in an adequate way. Relying exclusively on one's own pronunciation – however 'good' it may be – and waiting that students will eventually 'pick it up' is not an effective pronunciation teaching strategy.

Summing up, there are numerous reasons to assume that the number of students at the Vienna English Department who experience English pronunciation learning as linked to issues of identity may be considerably higher than indicated by Müller's (2012) results. I am therefore convinced that more students than one would initially expect might prefer alternative approaches to pronunciation learning to the approach currently used in PPOCS 1 based on the nativeness principle. However, I am well aware that there will always be a considerable number of students in PPOCS 1 who will want to acquire a native-like accent in English, even after having been informed about alternative options. This is of course a completely legitimate position, and I am entirely with Jenkins (2002: 101) who affirms that

> […] it will be important not to patronise those learners who, having heard the arguments, still wish to work towards the goal of a native-speaker accent, by telling them they have no need to do so.

Walker (2010a: 45) makes a similar, equally important point by stating that "[i]f learners are clear about wanting [to sound like a native speaker], then it is our job to help them". One of my major concerns in redesigning the practical component of PPOCS 1 has thus been to find ways of providing different types of learners – including those that want to attain nativeness

in English pronunciation – with the pedagogical support they need to achieve their personal learning goals. The next section contains my suggestions for ways of how this might be done.

Handling the heterogeneity

The suggested modifications for the practical component of PPOCS 1 which I will present in section 4.2.2. are based on my conviction that it is important to provide students at the Vienna English Department with more freedom to act upon their pronunciation preferences, and that once we present them with more options as to meaningful learning goals for English pronunciation, it will be much easier for many of them to find out which type of accent suits them best. They are also based on the assumption that students in PPOCS 1 will differ with regard to

a) their ambitions, kind of motivation and preferences for English pronunciation learning
b) the proficiency level they have been able to attain in English pronunciation by the time they take PPOCS 1.

This assumption is founded on my personal experience as a PPOCS 1 tutor, which has taught me that the student population at the Vienna English Department tends to be fairly heterogeneous with regard to the two criteria above. As a matter of fact, the knowledge and competence gaps between individual students in my own language laboratory classes were often huge: whilst I have experienced students who had a nearly native-like English accent already upon entering the course, other of my former students were struggling with the production of almost all aspects of the RP sound system that typically pose problems for Austrian learners of English. These competence gaps amongst students repeated themselves every semester I taught practical English phonetics at the Vienna English Department, and many of my tutor colleagues reported having similar issues in their own language lab groups.

At the moment, the practical component of PPOCS 1 privileges advanced students who aim for a native-like accent in English, as its structure and content are designed to help students attain nativeness in either RP or GA within a single semester. Less advanced students for whom this goal is difficult (or virtually impossible) to attain within the given time frame and students who feel imposed on by having to lose all traces of their L1 in their pronunciation are yet somewhat disadvantaged, as their specific learner needs and preferences are not taken into account. The difficult challenge in redesigning the practical component of PPOCS 1 is to find an approach to pronunciation teaching that disadvantages neither advanced students who also

genuinely desire to acquire a native-like pronunciation in English nor those who want to express their cultural identity via their accent or who are simply overwhelmed by the work-load of PPOCS 1 in its current form. In addition, a stronger focus on the pronunciation skills crucial to intelligibility in ELF will be required, so as to help students acquire the skills necessary for participating successfully in international communication, and to enable teaching degree students to later promote these skills amongst their own pupils. Satisfying all these demands might seem a complicated and difficult endeavour at first that will inevitably come to the detriment of those students who want to attain a native-like accent. Yet, one major advantage of pronunciation teaching that focuses on the LFC (and thus on ELF) is that all the pronunciation features that are being trained will also be needed by students who intend to acquire a NS accent in English. This means that

> [e]ven when a learner's goal is a NS accent, nothing in the LFC is 'unnecessary' or constitutes an 'obstacle' for the learner. That is to say, nothing needs 'unlearning'. (Walker 2008: 9)

In this way, the LFC constitutes "a very good foundation for *all* learners" (Walker 2010a: 46 [my emphasis]), including those students who decide that the ELF perspective on pronunciation learning is not for them.

One point that needs further consideration, however, is how students who have already mastered (most of) the LFC and who wish to work on other aspects of English pronunciation as well could receive the pedagogic support they need and want in PPOCS 1. This problem is not restricted to an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching, but has been an issue in PPOCS 1 in its current form as well, where (advanced) students were observed to be bored in the language laboratory when having to work through exercises for sounds they were already able to produce effortlessly. An excellent solution to this problem has been proposed by two of my former tutor colleagues, Derek Vollans and Albert Müller, who were in charge of the revision of the American English language laboratory for PPOCS 1. Besides the new practice materials which they exclusively designed for this purpose (see Vollans & Müller 2013), they suggested organizing the language laboratory into a three-phase structure: a 'review' phase, in which the sounds that were the topic of the previous lab session are briefly revised; a 'core' phase in which new sounds (i.e. those that are the topic of the respective lab session) are practiced; and an individual practice phase, which – after having finished the exercises of the 'core' – allows students to work with extra material and focus on their personal favourites and pitfalls. A similar structure has been used in the BE language lab during the past semesters, where students would be given access to additional practice material which they could use for

practicing personal 'problem sounds' after having worked through the exercises on the sounds that were the focus of the respective lab session. Organizing the language laboratory as suggested by Vollans and Müller (2013) thus makes it possible to individualize pronunciation training in PPOCS 1, allowing students to go beyond the LFC and work on non-core features in the individual practice phase of the language laboratory if they wish.

As regards individualization of pronunciation training, yet another question arises: wouldn't it be more sensible to divide students into separate groups with different levels of difficulty and goals for pronunciation learning right from the start? The problem is that with regard to PPOCS 1, such a division seems practically unfeasible due to organizational reasons, as students would have to be allocated to a specific group on the basis of their personal goals and their proficiency level in English pronunciation before classes even start. Yet, most students will probably not be quite clear about their personal learning goals for English pronunciation **before** entering the course (and they certainly would not have been able to make an informed choice about them). What is more, their proficiency level in English pronunciation would have to be determined before they can be allocated to a particular course group, which, if it is to be done in a reliable way, would cost a lot of time and effort.

Let us briefly consider the way in which students are currently grouped in PPOCS 1, namely into BE and AE classes. This kind of group division is based on the assumption that students should aim for a recognisable BE or AE accent in English. Yet, with the focus of PPOCS 1 shifting from NS pronunciation norms to ELF communication, the question arises whether this division actually still makes sense. Perhaps surprisingly, I recommend maintaining the BE/AE division and hence the use of either RP or GA as a model accent in PPOCS 1, for the simple reasons that this will allow for more individualization in pronunciation training. If we want to give students who aim for a NS accent in English the pedagogical support they need to attain this goal, we have to provide them with access to a NS model. Fortunately enough, the use of a NS model is also compatible with an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching, provided the NS accent in question is indeed used as a model, i.e. a pedagogical point of reference. This means that as long as students are not led to believe that they must strictly imitate the chosen model in all its aspects, using RP or GA as models in PPOCS 1 with an ELF approach is perfectly acceptable (see also Walker 2010a: 53-54). What will be necessary, though, is to explain to students which aspects of the chosen model are important to intelligibility in ELF, which of them are open to their personal preference, and which of them are harmful to intelligibility in ELF and should thus be avoided when interacting with other NNS speakers. In this way, students who want to acquire a native-like accent are not left

without a NS model, while those who prefer to speak with their L1 accent in English can focus on the aspects of the model accent that are important to international intelligibility and are free in how to produce other items.

4.2.2.　　　Updating the practical component of PPOCS 1

In the previous section, I explored ways of how to offer different types of learners in PPOCS 1 the pedagogic support they need in order to attain their personal learning goals. In this section, we will have a closer look at my suggestions for updating the practical component of PPOCS 1, with regard to which the consideration of different learner needs and preferences for English pronunciation teaching was also of great importance to me.

Contrary to what one might expect, an ELF approach does not call for a fundamental overhaul of current pronunciation teaching techniques. As Walker (2010a: 71) observes: "teaching pronunciation for ELF is primarily about re-thinking goals and re-defining error, as opposed to modifying classroom practice". Thus, although the aims and objectives of PPOCS 1 with a focus on ELF are quite different from the ones of PPOCS 1 in its current form, classroom practice would probably only have to change marginally to accommodate them: most techniques commonly employed in English pronunciation teaching, such as minimal pairs or drills, can equally be used for an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching. The most important differences to traditional approaches is that pronunciation training focuses on the acquisition of the LFC (see the section 'Revising the course syllabus'), and that additional emphasis is placed on the development of phonological accommodation skills (see 'Promoting phonological accommodation skills'). In addition, as the above quote by Walker makes clear, goals and errors are defined differently than in traditional approaches to pronunciation teaching, which necessitates a modification of the current assessment criteria of PPOCS 1 as well as the kind of feedback students receive on their pronunciation.

Revising the course syllabus: prioritizing the features crucial to intelligibility in ELF

In the introductory passage to section 4.2., I defined the primary course aim of PPOCS 1 with an ELF focus as regards students' productive pronunciation skills as

a) the mastery of the LFC components
b) the acquisition of basic phonological accommodation skills.

Students will thus have to be able to produce all elements of the LFC in a way that can be regarded as acceptable in ELF communication in a fairly effortless way[57] by the end of the semester. It follows that the LFC will have to be given priority in the practical component of PPOCS 1 (i.e. the class time dedicated to pronunciation practice and the language laboratory), so as to ensure that students will be able to acquire all LFC components within the given time. One simple way of doing so is to rearrange the order in which the different features of RP and GA are currently taught in PPOCS 1 so that the LFC components can be discussed and practised right at the beginning of the course before moving on to features that are less important for intelligibility in ELF contexts.

Until now, the practical component of PPOCS 1 has taken particular account of the typical problem areas of Austrian learners of English (cf. Kaltenböck & Seidlhofer 1993). I recommend that this focus on Austrian learners' 'problem sounds' be maintained, as the vast majority of learners in PPOCS 1 are indeed L1 speakers of Austrian German. According to Berger (2010: 107-110), Austrian learners' typical pitfalls with regard to the LFC include:

- aspiration of /p/, /t/, /k/ in word-initial positions
- the production of /b/, /d/, /g/ and /z/ in word-final position
- vowel length: lengthening of a vowel before a lenis consonant and shortening of a vowel before a fortis consonant.
- /ɜ:/: Austrian learners tend to substitute this sound with the diphthong /øə/ (Kaltenböck & Seidlhofer 1993: 16).
- /s/ vs. /z/: Austrian speakers tend to devoice /z/ and not distinguish between the two phonemes in German, and thus also in English.
- /ʃ/ vs. /ʒ/ and /tʃ/ vs. /dʒ/: both /ʒ/and /dʒ/ do not exist in Austrian German and are hence commonly replaced with their voiceless counterparts.
- /v/ vs. /w/: /w/ does not exist in German and is thus often replaced by German /v/; conversely, some learners replace English /v/ with /w/ due to overgeneralization.[58]
- /r/: whereas most German approximations to /r/ seem acceptable in ELF, Berger recommends discouraging the use of the uvular fricative [ʁ].

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[57] Being able to produce a particular feature fairly effortlessly is, as we shall see later, crucial to developing productive phonological accommodation skills.

[58] Some learners might also produce English /v/ more like a German /v/, which is different in quality (see further Kaltenböck & Seidlhofer 1993: 17). Yet, Jenkins' proposal for pronunciation teaching does not require learners to imitate the exact NS quality of sounds (2000: 143), so this does not seem to be a problem for ELF communication.

It follows that the above features should be the first ones to be discussed and practiced in PPOCS 1, as they a) form part of the LFC and b) commonly pose problems for Austrian learners of English. Thus, instead of working on features in the order currently used in BE and AE language laboratories (see table 3 in the appendix), I propose reorganizing the course syllabus to arrive at an order similar to the one in table 5.

Table 5 Tentative syllabus for the PPOCS 1 labs with a focus on the LFC

Week	PPOCS 1 BE	PPOCS 1 AE
1	Introduction, aspiration of /p/, /t/, /k/ in word-initial positions	Introduction, aspiration of /p/, /t/, /k/ in word-initial positions
2	/b/, /d/, /g/ and /z/ in word-final position, pre-lenis lengthening & pre-fortis clipping	/b/, /d/, /g/ and /z/ in word-final position, pre-lenis lengthening & pre-fortis clipping
3	/r/, chunking, nuclear stress placement	/r/, chunking, nuclear stress placement
4	/s/ vs. /z/ (+ revision of pre-lenis lengthening & pre-fortis clipping), /ɜ:(r)/	/s/ vs. /z/ (+ revision of pre-lenis lengthening & pre-fortis clipping), /ɝ/,
5	/ʃ/ vs. /ʒ/ & /tʃ/ vs. /dʒ/ (+ revision pre-lenis lengthening & pre-fortis clipping)	/ʃ/ vs. /ʒ/ & /tʃ/ vs. /dʒ/ (+ revision pre-lenis lengthening & pre-fortis clipping)
6	/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/	/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/
7	vowel length contrasts I (i:/ɪ & u:/ʊ, /ɑ/ vs. /ʌ/)	vowel length contrasts I (i:/ɪ & u:/ʊ, /ɑ/ vs. /ʌ/)
8	vowel length contrasts II (/ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /əʊ/), intonation	diphthongs, intonation
9	Individualized practice (/θ/ vs. /ð/)	Individualized practice (/θ/ vs. /ð/)
10	Individualized practice (/æ/ vs. /e/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/)	Individualized practice (/æ/ vs. /e/)
11	Individualized practice (/eə/ & /ɪə/, [l] vs. [ɫ])	Individualized practice ([ɫ])
12-14	Individualized practice	Individualized practice

According to the above table (which is, of course, only a tentative draft of what a revised version of the PPOCS 1 syllabus could look like), the first features to receive attention in PPOCS 1 are elements of the LFC which Austrian learners might find especially difficult to master (weeks 1-6), followed by elements of the LFC that usually constitute less of a problem to Austrian learners (weeks 7 & 8). In the last weeks of the semester, students can focus exclusively on their personal 'problem sounds' or, if they wish, work on sounds that are not important for intelligibility in ELF but that form part of the chosen model accent. If students do not want to acquire these features (because they want to preserve their L1 accent with regard to these features or because they are not yet advanced enough to focus on non-core

items as well), they, of course, do not have to do so, and instead can use their time for further practice of the LFC features. However, it might be of benefit to all students to know about the distinguishing characteristics of these sounds and listen to the sound contrasts in the language laboratory, in order to incorporate these sounds into their receptive accent repertoire.

As can be seen in the above table, there are a few differences between the syllabus which I suggest for PPOCS 1 BE and the one which I suggest for the AE course. The two syllabi are almost identical, but differ with regard to the long central vowel (which is pronounced /ɜ:/ in RP but has a rhotic colour in GA), and some features that students are free to work on during the individualized practice sessions of the language laboratory. Being aware of the fact that the PPOCS 1 lab sessions are often organized into practice units (e.g. /æ/ vs. /e /), I took a closer look at the current syllabi and tried to preserve these practice units as far as possible. For example, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /əʊ/ currently constitutes one practice unit in the BE language laboratory, which was preserved in the new syllabus in session II on vowel length contrasts. The AE language laboratory did not have an equivalent practice unit, but one focusing on diphthongs, which equally fit the topic of vowel length contrasts, and hence was allocated to the same session (week 8). Some differences between the suggested BE and AE syllabus are thus simply due to the absence of identical practice units in the current syllabi. Other differences between the two syllabi are caused by differences between the sound systems of RP and GA. The diphthong system of RP is more complex than the one of GA, which does not include the RP diphthongs /eə/ and /ɪə/. In addition, /l/ is generally pronounced as dark [ɫ] in GA, while RP distinguishes between clear [l] and dark [ɫ]. Obviously, this lead to the inclusion of /eə/ and /ɪə/ and the clear l vs. dark l contrast in the syllabus of the BE language laboratory, while only [ɫ] was included in the syllabus of the AE language laboratory.

It will be noted that the above syllabi do not contain a number non-core features of ENL pronunciation that are suspected to be detrimental to intelligibility in ELF, namely weak forms and weak syllables, linking, assimilation, elision, as well as non-rhoticity and the intervocalic flap (cf. Jenkins 2000: 139-140, 146-149). Until now, these features have been given considerable attention in PPOCS 1, with weak forms, for example, being amongst the first features to be trained in both the BE and AE language laboratory. As I would not want to deny students who want to acquire a NS accent in English the possibility to work on these features, I suggest that the exercises for these features be made available to students for practice during the 'individual practice phase' of the language laboratory. Students must be reminded, however, that the above features, especially if used excessively, can be a threat to intelligibility in ELF, possibly causing serious communication problems, and that if they want

to acquire them, they will have to keep in mind that they might have to accommodate phonologically to their interlocutor when noticing that the use of these features causes comprehension problems. What is more, I do not consider it a problem to introduce students to these features on a theoretical level, or to make them listen to these features for the purpose of mastering them receptively (which, in fact, was part of Jenkins's proposal for pronunciation teaching for ELF: see Jenkins 2000: 210). Yet, I strongly suggest that students should no longer be asked to produce these features if they personally see no need for doing so, as these features are at best unnecessary for successful ELF communication and at worst harmful to intelligibility.

Feedback

In PPOCS 1, students receive feedback on their pronunciation on a regular basis from both their PPOCS 1 teacher and their language lab tutor. In order to give them an impression of their 'status quo', students have a pronunciation check-up at the beginning and in the middle of the semester, for which they are required to record a text or read it face-to-face to their teacher. They subsequently receive feedback on their performance with regard to every aspect of the RP or the GA sound system, and are expected to work on all features which they produce differently from the respective teaching model, in order to eventually attain the course aim of speaking with a recognisable RP or GA accent.

If the course aim of PPOCS 1 as regards productive pronunciation skills is, besides the acquisition of phonological accommodation skills, defined as the mastery of the LFC, does this mean that students should only receive feedback with regard to their production of this limited set of features? Clearly, my answer to this question has to be no. If we want to give students the possibility to decide for themselves in how far they want to approximate a particular NS model,[59] we have to explain to them which aspects of their pronunciation differ from the chosen model accent in what way. The crucial point is to make students aware that not every deviation from RP or GA is to be viewed as problematic or as a learner error. Feedback on student performances in PPOCS 1 would thus not be intended to pressure

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[59] Students might indicate at the beginning of the semester what their personal goals for pronunciation learning are. Yet, this decision will most probably not be definite. Some might question and reconsider their personal goals after having learnt more about ELF and the socio-linguistic and socio-psychological aspects of English pronunciation. Others might go through a longer process of reflection, and many might in fact need years to find out which type of accent suits them best. In this sense, PPOCS 1 can provide students with the education and the feedback needed to **become aware** of their own pronunciation preferences and to finally **act upon** them (e.g. by incorporating certain NS features into their pronunciation, or not).

students into modifying their pronunciation towards RP or GA as far as possible. Instead, it would simply serve as a means to make students aware of the nature of their own pronunciation, in terms of its degree of intelligibility in ELF and in terms of the expectations and impressions it might create amongst other people (due to those pronunciation features that do not necessarily pose a problem to comprehension, but that function as social or cultural in-group markers). In other words, feedback is essentially intended to

- help students become more intelligible by making them aware of their shortcomings as regards the LFC components,
- give students the choice to either preserve their L1 accent with regard to (some of) the non-core features of the LFC or to try to add (some of) the non-core features to their productive accent repertoire by using a NS model for guidance.

Obviously enough, it will hence be important to clearly emphasize the difference between core features and non-core features in PPOCS 1 right from the beginning of the course, so that students instantly know which pronunciation features they are expected to have mastered by the end of the semester (and why), and which are open to personal preference. An excellent opportunity to place an additional emphasis on the different status of core and non-core features for intelligibility in ELF and for evaluation at the final oral exam is constituted by the feedback sheets which students commonly receive after their initial and their mid-term check-up in order to guide their learning process.[60] These feedback sheets usually consist of a table containing the complete set of either RP or GA segments as well as a number of other (mostly suprasegmental) categories, on which lecturers circle all features on which a student needs to work (see table 6, p. 117). Table 7 (p. 117) shows a tentative feedback sheet that has been redesigned to display the organization of aspects of English pronunciation into core features and non-core features.

Another thing that is crucial to know for students is what kinds of production of the core features can be deemed acceptable, both in ELF communication and at the final exam. Students will thus have to be informed that approximations of sounds are generally permissible if the intended sound is still recognisable as such, but that certain substitutions are not acceptable (e.g [ʁ] for /r/, or [w] for /v/). More detailed information as to which kind of approximations are acceptable with regard to a particular sound (see Walker 2010a: 29-35 for

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[60] Not all PPOCS 1 lecturers make use of feedback-sheets when giving students feedback on their pronunciation. Yet, I recommend the use of feedback-sheets in all PPOCS 1 classes, as they provide students with a structured overview of their strengths and weaknesses and as, in contrast to oral feedback, they are a more permanent learning tool that can be used for later reference as well.

Table 6 Example of a feedback-sheet for PPOCS 1 British English (summer semester 2014)

Check-up: Name: Date:				
p/b	θ ð	z	r link r	fortis – lenis
t/d	w v	ʒ	pvr	quantities
k/g	ʧ ʤ	l ɫ	ŋ	weak forms
iː ɪ	ɑː ʌ	ɪə	eɪ eɪə	voice
æ e	ɔː ɒ	eə	aɪ aɪə	əʊ əʊə
uː ʊ	ɜː ə	ʊə	ɔɪ ɔɪə	aʊ aʊə
intelligibility:	stress – emphasis:	intonation:	word attack skills:	regional variations:
comments:				

Table 7 Example of a tentative feedback sheet for a BE PPOCS 1 class that has been redesigned to highlight the difference between core and non-core features.

Check-up:
Name:
Date:

Lingua Franca Core features (will be assessed):

p/b	s z	ʃ ʒ	l	pausing (chunking)
t/d	w v	r pvr	ŋ	nuclear stress pl.
k/g	ʧ ʤ	ɜː	intervocalic[t]	consonant clusters
Vowel quantity: iː/ɪ uː/ʊ	ɔː/ɒ ɑː/ʌ	length of diphthongs:	pre-lenis lengthening, pre-fortis clipping	consistent vowel quality

Non-core features (not assessed):

θ ð	ɫ			
Vowel quality: æ e iː ɪ ɑː ʌ	ɔː ɒ uː ʊ	eə ʊə ɪə	aɪ aɪə ɔɪ ɔɪə eɪ eɪə	əʊ əʊə aʊ aʊə
stress – emphasis	intonation			

Non-core features that may threaten intelligibility in ELF:

weak forms	elision assimilation coalescence	linking		

Comments:

an overview) can be given when discussing and practising individual sounds in class and in the language laboratory. When giving individual students feedback on the degree of acceptability of a particular production, it is important to consider the kind of feedback the student in question is hoping to receive: is he/she trying to acquire a NS accent, in which case he/she will want to know whether their production was accurate enough to be considered native-like? Or does the student in question want to know whether their production fulfils the requirements of the LFC? By enquiring about students' personal goals for PPOCS 1 and for English pronunciation in general, teachers and language lab tutors alike might be able to individualize their feedback in such a way that the pedagogic needs of different types of learners in PPOCS 1 can be satisfied. In case of doubt, it will always be possible to simply **explain** to a student by which standards their production of a particular sound was acceptable or not.

Promoting phonological accommodation skills

The new course aims which I have suggested for PPOCS 1 do not define attainment of the learning target in terms of the acquisition of a particular accent, but in terms of the acquisition of pronunciation **skills** that will enable students to achieve intelligibility in ELF communication. One type of communicative skill that was found to be of particular importance for successful ELF interactions (Jenkins 2000) and which, therefore, "should form an important part of any ELF pronunciation syllabus" (Jenkins 2005b: 150) are phonological accommodation skills. If PPOCS 1 is to prepare students for ELF communication, then the teaching of phonological accommodation skills will have to become an integral part of the course content.

It is crucial to note that phonological convergence in ELF differs in one important aspect from phonological convergence in NS-NS interactions: while native speakers usually converge towards the speech of their interlocutor, ELF speakers tend to adjust their pronunciation towards the target sound rather than towards the sound produced by their interlocutor (Jenkins 2005b: 148). With regard to her own data, Jenkins observes that

> [e]ven when the conditions are ideal, accommodation in the traditional sense (i.e. speakers converging on their interlocutors' pronunciations) rarely occurs. In so far as [non-bilingual English speakers] share a common purpose, it is to get closer to each other in terms of the L2. They do not want to acquire one another's pronunciation errors and as long as their motivation for accommodating to their interlocutor remains purely that of communicative efficiency, they seem to have

some sort of inbuilt mechanism (conscious or subconscious) which safeguards against this outcome. (Jenkins 2000: 181)

Jenkins (2000: 182) suspects this so-called 'in-built mechanism' to be linked to her subject's inability to replicate their interlocutor's productions (i.e. their 'lack of repertoire') and to their 'psychological resistance' to acquire another foreign accent in English. Be that as it may, Jenkins' (2000) data demonstrates that the fear of many language teachers that the encouragement of phonological accommodation in NNS-NNS interactions will inevitably lead to learners acquiring each other's 'errors' appears to be unwarranted.

The crucial question is, then, how phonological accommodation skills can be promoted amongst students in PPOCS 1. A useful first step seems to be to consider the necessary prerequisites for phonological accommodation to take place in NNS-NNS talk. Jenkins found that ELF speakers attempted to accommodate their pronunciation towards their interlocutor's needs if the following conditions applied:

1.) the adjustment was in their phonological/phonetic repertoire
2.) there was no processing overload (e.g. a concurrent problem with grammar and vocabulary),
3.) the successful completion of the task demanded that the interlocutor understand,
4.) the speaker perceived a particular L1 transfer as a threat to intelligibility.

(Jenkins 2005b: 149)

Points 1 and 2 indicate the need to help students incorporate the LFC components into their accent repertoire to such an extent that they will be able to make use of them fairly effortlessly (i.e. even when they are not able to focus exclusively on their pronunciation). Point 3 illustrates the importance for ELF speakers to develop their sensitivity to the communicative context in which they find themselves in, in the sense that they should pay particular attention to the degree of intelligibility of their pronunciation if the primary purpose of interaction is communication (rather than social exchange). This echoes Kirkpatrick's (2007) communication-identity continuum (see section 2.4.), to which students should be introduced as I suggested in section 4.1. Point 4 illustrates the benefit of knowing which features of one's pronunciation constitute a potential threat to intelligibility in ELF contexts, as this allows a speaker to focus on them in situations where communicative efficiency will be of particular importance. All these qualities – being able to produce the target sound effortlessly, being sensitive to the context and purpose of interaction, and knowing which features constitute a potential threat to intelligibility in ELF – can be acquired by students

during PPOCS 1 if the course is to be revised according to my suggestions in section 4.1. and in this section (i.e. 4.2.2.).

I also mentioned earlier that in order to promote accommodation skills amongst students, students will have to be informed about the fact that in a globalized world, phonological accommodation skills are of higher value than speaking with a monolithic (native-like) accent (Jenkins 2006a: 174). Another quality worth cultivating amongst students is sensitivity towards listener reactions that might indicate comprehension problems, as it is not always easily predictable which features of one's accent might inhibit intelligibility for a certain type of listener. A good example of a speaker acting upon her receiver's reaction to her pronunciation is provided by Jenkins (2000: 82), who reports an incident of a Japanese speaker who, upon noticing her Swiss-German interlocutor frown when she pronounced grey as [gleɪ], corrected her pronunciation to [gɹeɪ]. A further step towards increasing students' productive accommodation skills might thus be to increase their awareness of both verbal and non-verbal listener cues that might point to comprehension difficulties on part of the receiver.[61]

As regards receptive phonological accommodation in ELF, the necessary preconditions basically boil down to the following three criteria (adapted from Jenkins 2000: 183):

1. prior exposure to the interlocutor's accent and to phonological L2 variation in English as such, leading to a 'tolerance of difference'
2. the right listener attitudes: a motivation to understand and no fear of 'error acquisition'
3. the linguistic and emotional ability to indicate comprehension difficulties.

I will first discuss points 2 and 3. A listener's degree of motivation to understand will always depend on the purpose of interaction (i.e. how 'vital' it is to understand one's interlocutor in a particular situation), and can thus not be directly influenced by classroom teaching. The only thing a teacher might be able to do in this respect is to make students aware that they should always **try** to understand their interlocutor instead of placing the entire communicative burden on them. Topic cluster II, which deals with the interactive nature of intelligibility, has been designed to inform students about this and similar facts. Similarly, the concern of some students that they might acquire the 'errors' of other L2 speakers by accommodating receptively to their pronunciation can easily by allayed by raising students' awareness that this is an unwarranted fear. However, encouraging students to signal their comprehension

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[61] The importance of encouraging communicative strategies amongst learners (such as the above) is also emphasized by Seidlhofer (2011, ch. 8; see p. 198 in particular).

difficulties to their interlocutor can be a delicate matter. This has to do with the fact that, due to the close relationship of pronunciation and identity, negative feedback on one's pronunciation can easily cause a loss of face on the part of the speaker, which seems to be the reason why many of Jenkins' subjects refrained from indicating their non-comprehension to their interlocutor:

> […] many of my subjects found one another's pronunciation difficult to understand, but a number were not prepared to mention the fact in their interlocutor's presence, and either wrote about it on their questionnaire or told me in private. In this case, their concerns probably relate to the issue of identity, and the fact that – as these subjects were aware from personal experience – one's identity is very closely bound up with one's L1 accent in L2. (Jenkins 2000: 185)

As a solution to this problem, Jenkins (ibid.) suggests to make learners aware of the usefulness of indicating comprehension problems to one's interlocutor, who will otherwise be unable to accommodate their production to their listener's needs. Yet, it will also be necessary to remind students that such kind of feedback should always be given in a careful, polite manner and to provide them with adequate linguistic models if necessary (Jenkins 2000: 185). In addition, learners could be given tasks that **force** them to ask for clarification if they do not understand, such as classic information-gap activities (Seidlhofer, personal communication). Such activities, however, are only useful for practising phonological accommodation skills in multilingual classrooms, as we shall see below.

I will now return to the first point of the list above, which highlights the need for exposing learners to a wide variety of L2 accents in English, which has been emphasized by Jenkins on various occasions (1998a: 45, 1998b: 125, 2000: 184, 2002: 100, 2004b: 116, 2005b: 150). Yet, PPOCS 1 has always had a strong focus on productive pronunciation skills. As much as I agree with Jenkins' view on the value of exposing learners to a wide range of L2 accents, I recommend that the focus on production in PPOCS 1 be maintained. The reason for this decision is that PPOCS 1 is the only course of both the Vienna English Department's BA programme and teaching degree programme that deals with productive pronunciation skills, which students have very little opportunity to improve without the pedagogical guidance and detailed feedback of a pronunciation teacher. I thus recommend focussing on the productive aspects of phonological accommodation in PPOCS 1, and suggest that the enhancement of students' receptive accent repertoires be left to the responsibility of students themselves. This means that students will have to be encouraged to work independently on their receptive accent repertoire throughout their studies in order to increase their tolerance of phonological deviations. In order to support students in their independent learning process, a list of suitable

activities and internet resources for self-study could be provided in PPOCS 1.[62] In addition, teaching degree students will have to be made aware that exposure to a variety of different L2 accents in English will be equally important to their future pupils if the latter are to communicate successfully on the international stage.

Apart from equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for phonological accommodation to take place, it is important to provide students with actual practice opportunities for phonological accommodation. Walker (2010a: 89-92) provides an overview of a number of different teaching activities that can be used to improve and practice productive phonological accommodation skills in the English pronunciation classroom, such as dictation and a variety of communication activities. The latter are particularly valuable in this respect, as they constitute "effective, natural ways of developing [phonological accommodation] skills" (Walker 2010a: 92). The problem is that, as Walker (ibid.) admits himself, all these activities will only work in multilingual pronunciation classrooms, where learners come from a variety of different L1 backgrounds. The student population in PPOCS 1 is, however, largely monolingual, with the vast majority of students being L1 speakers of Austrian German. In contrast to learners in multilingual classroom, learners in monolingual classrooms will not need to correct their pronunciation towards more target-like forms to become more comprehensible to their classmates, but instead tend to converge on their L1 accent for reasons of identity and solidarity (Jenkins 2000: 192). This means that instead of reinforcing their command of the LFC components, accommodation activities like the ones described above will lead learners in monolingual classes to depart more and more from the LFC (Walker 2010a: 92-93). As an initial solution to this problem, Walker (2010a: 93-94) recommends the use of recordings: focusing on a limited number of items of the LFC that have been covered in previous course sessions, students practice a text for recording. During the recording, students work in small groups, offering feedback on their colleagues' production of the sounds to focus on. This enables students to make conscious, immediate corrections to their pronunciation, thereby practising accommodating their speech to their interlocutor's receptive needs. Besides being an opportunity for students to practise phonological accommodation and to enhance their command of the LFC, an additional advantage of this kind of activity is that it fosters practical analytical skills. This is of

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[62] For some valuable suggestions see Walker (2010a: 94-96). The kind of self-study which students will probably enjoy the most and which should hence be recommended to them most immediately is to watch English-speaking series featuring characters with different accents (such as the Indian astrophysicist Rajesh Koothrappali in *The Big Bang Theory*). Interviews with celebrities speaking with an intelligible foreign accent in English might constitute an equally enjoyable sort of input for students.

particular benefit to teaching degree students, who will have to analyse pronunciation errors in the speech of their future pupils so as to be able to help them improve their pronunciation skills.

Assessment

The final section of this chapter of my thesis is dedicated to the evaluation of the current assessment criteria for PPOCS 1 (see table 3, section 3.1.) in order to find out in how far they are applicable to an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching.

One key notion in the current assessment criteria for PPOCS 1 is accuracy of pronunciation. Notably, an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching does not require learners to imitate the NS quality of the LFC components (Jenkins 2000: 143), and regards a number of different approximations as sufficient. Exact vowel quality does not even form part of the LFC, with the exception of /ɜː/, in which case "a good approximation of the native-speaker quality" is necessary (Walker 2010a: 34). This is because, apart from /ɜː/, native-like accuracy of pronunciation is simply not necessary for successful ELF communication. The criterion of 'accuracy' is thus of little use for assessment in PPOCS 1 with an ELF focus. As an alternative, I suggest to assess student productions in terms of their 'acceptability'.

Another modification to the current assessment criteria that will be necessary if PPOCS 1 is to shift its focus from NS accents to ELF interactions relates to the three analytical categories currently used in order to evaluate a student's pronunciation: 'control of segmentals', 'control of suprasegmentals' and 'appropriateness'. As the LFC predominantly includes segments and hardly any suprasegmentals, a separation into two analytical categories that receive equal weight in grading seems inappropriate. I therefore suggest merging these two categories into a single one labelled 'control of LFC components'.

The last category, 'appropriateness', needs further analysis before evaluating its applicability for ELF pronunciation. At first glance, this category seems equivalent to the notion of 'appropriacy' proposed by Seidlhofer (2001b), which relates to the idea that pronunciation should be evaluated in terms of its appropriacy for "a specific situation or a specific purpose" (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994a: 27). Yet, in contrast to 'appropriacy', 'appropriateness' seems to be understood as the kind of context-sensitivity and sensitivity to specific discourse formats that (educated) native-speakers of English might possess. For example, one criterion for students to obtain a 'Sehr gut' in this category is that they are able to present their text in a

way that engages the reader and to use pronunciation to "convey finder shades of meaning" (PPOCS curriculum 2013: 6). Personally, this reminds me more of the tasks of a trained actor than a student of English, although I do not want to deny that using language in an engaging way is a skill worth cultivating amongst future teachers of English and English language specialists. What I find problematic, though, is that here, an entire assessment category is dedicated to a skill that only very advanced students will be able to master and that, moreover, does not seem to receive much attention in current classroom practice in PPOCS 1, which is primarily concerned with the segments and the basics of the suprasegmental system of RP and GA. As regards the applicability of this notion within an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching, there is not much left to say: obviously, being able to use pronunciation in such a way requires advanced pronunciation skills which would go well beyond the objectives of a pronunciation course that aims to make students attain intelligibility in ELF contexts. The notion of 'appropriateness' thus seems to be inapplicable for assessing oral performances in PPOCS 1 with an ELF orientation.

Another criterion used in the current assessment of PPOCS 1 is 'naturalness' of pronunciation. Naturalness is grouped together with 'appropriateness', but, in contrast to the latter notion, does not seem to be directly related to NS norms. If this were the case, then the category would be inappropriate for assessment in PPOCS 1 with an ELF focus, as NS norms have no immediate relevance for ELF. Yet, it seems that 'naturalness' is simply to be understood as "the quality of having truly mastered the segmental and suprasegmental aspects to an extent that they are really a part of the student's pronunciation" (Bruno-Lindner 2014, personal communication by e-mail), also if, as it says in the assessment criteria, "[the learner's] attention is otherwise engaged". If 'naturalness' is defined as the ease with which students are able to produce the LFC components (or acceptable approximations thereof), then this category is indeed applicable to assessment within an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching, as ideally, students should eventually be able to make use of the LFC components in various forms of interaction and production without their fluency being all too negatively impacted by it. Moreover, as we saw in the previous section, effortless command of the LFC components constitutes a necessary prerequisite for the development of productive accommodation skills. I thus suggest maintaining 'naturalness' as an assessment criterion for PPOCS 1, albeit I recommend limiting its weight for a student's grade to 25 %, with the control of the LFC components making up the remaining 75 %.

Table 8 (p. 125) constitutes a tentative revised version of the assessment grid for the PPOCS 1 final oral exam that incorporates the modifications suggested above. This table might serve as

a starting point for further discussion as to how the assessment criteria of PPOCS 1 could be revised in line with an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching.

Table 8 Tentative suggestion for a revised version of the PPOCS 1 assessment grid

	Sehr gut [Austrian A-grade]	*Befriedigend* Austrian C-grade]	*Genügend* [Austrian D-grade]
CONTROL OF LFC COMPONENTS: Consistency and acceptability of segmentals & suprasegmentals	Consistent and acceptable production of all LFC components.	Generally maintains consistent and acceptable production of most LFC components.	Generally maintains consistent and acceptable production of most LFC components, such as fortis/lenis distinction and vowel length; does not impose strain on the listener, although the production of a small number of sounds is noticeably unstable.
'NATURALNESS' (ease of pronunciation)	Consistently maintains naturalness of pronunciation in all three of the tasks, even while attention is otherwise engaged.	Generally maintains naturalness of pronunciation in all three of the tasks.	Generally maintains naturalness of pronunciation in most of the tasks.

Another important point that needs to be discussed in this section relates to the LFC itself. The LFC includes two recommendations with regard to two particular phonemes in English that might prove problematic when it comes to evaluating a student's pronunciation. These two phonemes are /t/, which, according to the LFC, should be pronounced as [t] rather than [ɾ] in intervocalic position, and /r/, which the LFC recommends to be pronounced in post-vocalic position rather than omitting it. The problem is that besides having the potential to affect intelligibility negatively in ELF (Jenkins 2000: 140), non-rhoticity and intervocalic [ɾ] act as powerful sociolinguistic markers: being an integral feature of GA, the tapped intervocalic t is commonly associated with American English, although it can also be heard in some varieties of English in the Southern hemisphere, in Southern Irish accents as well as in casual British English (Wells 1982: 250; Gimson 2001: 164). The reason why t-tapping (also referred to as 't-voicing' or 't-flapping') is thought to be typical of American English is probably that it is not as consistently used by British (and Southern hemisphere) speakers as it is by American speakers.[63] Non-rhoticity, on the other hand, is associated with British rather than American English (although some British accents, such as Scottish or South-West accents, are rhotic as

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[63] In fact, in British English, "the exact phonetic and stylistic conditions for t-voicing are not fully known and remain largely uninvestigated […]" (Hannisdal 2006: 115).

well; cf. Hughes, Trudgill & Watt 2005: 63-64). By strictly adhering to the recommendations of the LFC with regard to /t/ and /r/ in PPOCS 1, students who want to acquire a native-like RP or GA accent would thus be prevented from attaining their personal learning goal. What is more, students who might not even want to sound exactly like a native speaker of RP or GA, but who simply want to express their affiliation with British or American culture would in this way be restricted in their freedom to express themselves via their pronunciation. I thus recommend assigning a special status to both post-vocalic r and intervocalic t for assessment in PPOCS 1, in the sense that digression from the LFC with regard to these two features should not constitute a reason to grade a student down at the final exam. Students may hence use the RP variant for post-vocalic r or the GA variant for intervocalic t in PPOCS 1 if they prefer, yet only if they fulfil the following conditions:

- The student in question must have a reasonable argument for wanting to use the non-LFC variant, such as a strong preference for a variety of English of which this feature is considered typical.

- Students who opt for using a non-LFC variant in their 'default' pronunciation must nevertheless incorporate the LFC variant in their accent repertoire, so as to be able to use it if this should prove necessary in a particular communicative act. Thus, a student who wishes to speak with a recognisable RP accent should nevertheless practice to pronounce /r/ in post-vocalic position in order to be able to accommodate to an interlocutor for whom non-rhoticity proves to be a barrier to understanding. The same applies to students who opt for the pronunciation of /t/ as [ɾ] where [ɾ] is used in GA: they should also be able to use the LFC variant [t] in these contexts if this proves necessary.

By demanding students to incorporate the LFC variant of the above items into their accent repertoire, the recommendations of the LFC as regards /r/ and /t/ would be taken account of without imposing an accent on students that may differ from their personal learning goal. In order to determine whether students who opted to make use of a non-LFC variant have actually managed to acquire the respective LFC variant as well, students could be presented with a short accommodation task at the final exam: after having gained a good impression of a student's 'default' pronunciation, examiners could introduce the accommodation task by simulating comprehension problems which require students to adjust their pronunciation towards the LFC. Ideally, students should be able to keep the conversation going while incorporating the required feature into their pronunciation without their fluency decreasing to

an unacceptable level. It also seems an interesting idea to generally introduce an accommodation task for all students at the PPOCS 1 final exam which tests the students' sensitivity to listener cues for non-comprehension and their ability to react upon them.

Apart from non-rhoticity and intervocalic t-tapping, there are a number of other features of NS accents that are suspected to have a negative impact on intelligibility in ELF contexts. These include vowel reduction (such as in weak forms and weak syllables) and certain features of connected speech, such as elision, assimilation and coalescence (Walker 2010a: 41-43). Again, the question arises how the above features should be treated at the final exam, as students who want to acquire a native-like accent in English will actually want to incorporate them in their pronunciation (and some students might already have acquired them by the beginning of the course, for example after having spent some time in an ENL country). An additional problem is that, in contrast to most ELF speakers (Jenkins 2000: 148), some students at the Vienna English Department might in fact occasionally use faster speech rates, which will make it necessary for them to use assimilatory processes such as linking, assimilation or elision. The teaching and assessment of the above features of connected speech is thus truly a delicate matter: on the one hand, it is important to communicate to students that the use of these features might bring problems with it in ELF interactions, yet on the other hand, one must not create the impression amongst students that these features are to be regarded as pronunciation errors. I cannot offer a straightforward solution to this difficult issue, but only make some very tentative suggestions as to how it might be handled. As with intervocalic t and post-vocalic r, the point should be made that the appropriacy of these features depends on the type of interlocutor and the specific socio-linguistic context which students find themselves in. The use of weak forms, for example, is highly appropriate in communication with native speakers of English, as it facilitates comprehension for them, yet many ELF speakers might find them difficult to understand. This highlights the importance of educating students about the sociolinguistic aspects of English pronunciation and intelligibility as suggested in section 4.1. With regard to the assessment of the above-mentioned features, I offer two tentative solutions: the first one is that these features simply remain unassessed. Personally, I do not see a problem in students using them as long as they are aware of the fact that these features have the potential to cause comprehension problems in ELF and are willing to accommodate to their interlocutor's needs if necessary. Alternatively, students could be presented with an accommodation exercise at the final exam similar to the one I suggested with regard to non-rhoticity and intervocalic t, which requires

them to reduce their use of weak forms and connected speech phenomena as far as seems necessary.

Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to explore the implications of English as a lingua franca for English pronunciation teaching and find ways of updating the pronunciation course of the Vienna English Department accordingly.

My discussion of key concepts relevant to this thesis in chapter 1 indicated that the relevance of ELF for users of English across all three of Kachru's circles and for learners of English in the Expanding Circles in particular continues to be overlooked in both academia and ELT, with ELF being refused acknowledgement as a use of English in its own right. The main reason for this seems to lie in the prevalence of the ideologies of native-speakerism and Standard English ideology in the academic and the professional discourse of ELT, according to which all non-native speakers, regardless of the context and purpose of learning English, should orient towards native speaker norms, thus perpetuating the idea of native speakers as ideal language teachers.

Chapter 2 provided an overview and discussion of key issues in English pronunciation teaching. My discussion highlighted in particular issues of identity in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation and the complex nature of intelligibility, which is, besides native-like pronunciation, one of the two major goals commonly aimed at in English pronunciation teaching. Intelligibility can be regarded as a more appropriate goal for many learners as it is not only more achievable than native-ness in pronunciation but also provides learners with the possibility to retain features of their L1 in their pronunciation and thereby express their cultural identity via their accent. The problem is, however, that intelligibility is intrinsically relative, depending on the type of interlocutors, the context of interaction and a number of other factors. Aiming at intelligibility in pronunciation teaching thus means aiming at intelligibility with regard to a particular speech community (e.g. being intelligible to US-American native speakers of English). Who this community should be must be decided in reference to the type of interlocutors with whom learners are most likely to communicate in the future.

In chapter 3 of this thesis, I took a closer look at the course for English pronunciation at the Vienna English Department ('Practical phonetics and oral communication skills 1'). While the department's considerable pedagogic and financial efforts to provide students with high-level training in English pronunciation certainly need to be acknowledged, PPOCS 1 does have a number of weak points, many of which have led to controversies about the course in the past. One of these is certainly the way in which the course fails to respond to the

momentous changes that have taken place in the socio-linguistic landscape of the English language in recent decades, which call for a fundamental rethinking of the aims and objectives of English pronunciation teaching. Others have been the ambitious course aim of attaining a near-native accent in English within one semester of training, which leads some students to experience PPOCS 1 as frustrating and stressful, and the prescriptive approach to English pronunciation teaching of the course, which leaves virtually no space for critical reflection on NS norms and discourages students from expressing their L1 identity through their accent.

In chapter 4, I presented my suggestions for an overhaul of PPOCS 1, paying particular attention to those aspects of the course that have been identified as problematic in section 3. First, I suggested that the primary course aim of PPOCS 1 with regard to productive skills should be defined as pronunciation skills that will enable students to attain intelligibility in international communication, as ELF interactions are the type of English with which the majority of students at the Vienna English Department are most likely to be confronted in the future. In more concrete terms, students should have mastered the Lingua Franca Core by the end of the semester and should have acquired some basic phonological accommodation skills, both of which are important prerequisites for international intelligibility (Jenkins 2000). These two goals are not only more achievable for students at our department than the acquisition of a near-native RP or GA accent, but they have the additional benefits of providing students with enough 'space' to retain their L1 identity in their accent if they wish, and of offering a more positive view of phonological L2 variation.

I also proposed that the educational (theoretical) component of PPOCS 1 be dedicated to educating students about crucial issues in English pronunciation, such as the socio-psychological and socio-linguistic aspects of English pronunciation and the complex nature of intelligibility. This education can help students become more context-sensitive, accomplished language users on the international stage, and to dispel some of the native-speakerist and Standard ideologist misconceptions about English pronunciation teaching they might have, thus enabling them to make informed choices as to their personal learning goals for English pronunciation.

As regards the practical component of PPOCS 1, I argued that this should focus on the acquisition of the skills set out in the new course aims of PPOCS 1, i.e. the acquisition of the Lingua Franca Core and of phonological accommodation skills. This, however, does not mean that students who aim for a NS accent in English should be discouraged from doing so or be denied pedagogical support. I therefore suggested a number of ways how the learner needs of

students who want to acquire a native-like pronunciation in English can be satisfied in PPOCS 1 even if the course focuses more strongly on the pronunciation criteria of ELF than the ones of ENL.

My suggestions for revising PPOCS 1 are of course not without their limitations. First, their implementation might be impeded by practical constraints of which I myself may not be aware at the moment. Second, I proposed to focus pronunciation training on the LFC, which itself is still work in progress and might therefore undergo some revision in the future to incorporate new research findings made in the field of international intelligibility. Research into the intelligibility of certain features of Austrian English in ELF contexts that currently do not form part of the LFC would certainly be of great interest in this respect.

Whether or not (some of) my suggestions will be considered for implementation will also depend on the acceptance of my proposals on the part of the staff responsible for this course, some of whom, I hope, may be convinced of their value by the arguments put forward in this thesis. As mentioned earlier, my suggestions are all very tentative, and should be seen as a starting point for further discussion and not as definite instructions for how things should be done. In this sense, I hope that this thesis will help (re-)open the floor for a constructive debate on how PPOCS 1 could be re-thought and revised in order to take account of both the socio-psychological dimension of L2 pronunciation learning and the transformed communicative needs of users of English in a globalized world.

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Appendix

Table 1 Objectives of PPOCS 1 (PPOCS curriculum 2013: 2-3)

Competences
Linguistic: Students…   - have detailed knowledge of segmental and suprasegmental phonetics of English and are able to apply the relevant phonetic concepts in practice (e.g. identify nucleus and nuclear tones)   - are familiar with general conventions of transcription and the IPA
Sociolinguistic: Students…   - know the features of Austrian English   - are familiar with the distinguishing characteristics of British and American English   - are familiar with significant ongoing pronunciation changes

General productive and analytical skills:
Students…   - can speak fluently and comprehensibly with a consistent accent that is recognisable as approximating one of the main varieties of English (e.g. British and American)   - can identify and apply various intonation patterns (nucleus, tone, etc.) in spoken discourse   - can monitor and correct their own production and that of others   - can interact successfully in conversation   - can generally identify major NS and some NNS accents   - can apply learning skills effectively for ongoing improvement   - can read from transcription and use IPA symbols

Discourse Formats and format-specific skills
Students have knowledge of and are able to carry out/participate in the following discourse formats: *Reading of texts* (factual texts, dialogues, prose, poetry) This involves: - reading texts meaningfully   - chunking/phrasing, using appropriate intonation, pausing   - giving emphasis with the voice   - using appropriate tempo   *Mini-Presentations* (short informal presentation) This involves: planning and delivering a presentation   - structuring: using transitional words and expressions,   - creating an introduction & concluding a talk   - emphasising ideas   - responding to questions   - using the voice effectively   *Informal Conversations* (dialogues, small talk) This involves: - introducing yourself and others   - striking up a conversation & keeping a conversation going   - listening actively to someone speaking and responding appropriately

Table 2 Tentative revised objectives of PPOCS 1

Competences
Linguistic: Students…
- have knowledge of the communicative function of pronunciation and basic concepts related to it (intelligibility, phonological accommodation)   - have advanced knowledge of segmental and suprasegmental phonetics of English, in particular with regard to the LFC components   - are familiar with general conventions of transcription and the IPA
Sociolinguistic: Students…
- are familiar with the difference between ENL, ESL, ELF and EFL   - have knowledge of the socio-psychological dimension of pronunciation, in particular of the role of identity in the process of L2 pronunciation learning   - have knowledge of the socio-linguistic dimension of pronunciation, in particular with regard to inter- and intraspeaker variation and how the latter are linked to issues of intelligibility
General productive and analytical skills:
Students…
- can speak fluently with an accent that contains all LFC components   - can apply basic phonological accommodation skills   - can monitor and correct their own production and that of others   - can interact successfully in conversation   - can apply learning skills effectively for ongoing improvement   - can read from transcription and use IPA symbols

Table 3 Approximate current syllabus of BE and AE PPOCS 1 language laboratories

Week	PPOCS 1 BE	PPOCS 1 AE
1	Introduction, awareness raising	Introduction, voicing (s/z, t/d/, f/v, k/g, ʃ/ʒ, tʃ/dʒ)
2	/ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /əʊ/	Vowel length (i:/ɪ & u:/ʊ) and word stress
3	/ɜ:/, /ɑ:/, weak forms and weak syllables	/e/ vs. /æ/, sentence stress and weak forms (1)
4	/i:/ vs. /ɪ/, /æ/ vs. /e/ and vs. /ʌ/; sentence stress	/ɑ/ vs. /ʌ/, sentence stress and weak forms (2)
5	/p/ vs. /b/, /t/ vs. /d/, /k/ vs. /g/ (+ effect on vowel length)	/v/ vs. /w/, chunking and linking
6	/s/ vs. /z/: effect on vowel length; /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/	/ɝ/, /r/ vs. /l/, text reading
7	/v/ vs. /w/ and vs. /f/; word linking, sentence stress; chunking	allophones of plosives (flaps, nasal flaps, and aspiration), intonation (1)
8	/θ/ and /ð/ vs. /s/ & /z/ and vs. /t/ & /d/; chunking; sentence stress	diphthongs, assimilation and elision
9	/eə/, /ɪə/, /s/ vs. /z/; assimilation, intonation	/θ/ and /ð/, intonation (2)
10	/tʃ/ vs. /dʒ/ vs. /ʒ/; /n/ vs. /ŋ/; sentence stress, word stress	text reading, preparation of exam text, individual practice of personal 'pitfalls'
11	[l] vs. [ɫ]	As in previous week
12-14	text reading, preparation of exam text	As in previous week

Abstract

The unprecedented global spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and its relevance to users across all three of Kachru's Circles has serious implications for the teaching and learning of English. Intelligible pronunciation has been found to be the most crucial linguistic requirement for communicative success in ELF interactions (Jenkins 2000), and it follows logically that if learners are to be prepared adequately for participating in ELF communication, pronunciation is to occupy a special place in English language teaching. Empirical research has shown that, contrary to popular belief, adherence to native speaker norms is no guarantee for successful ELF communication, which requires different skills on the part of the interlocutors. Yet, pronunciation teaching at the Vienna English Department still focuses on the acquisition of prestige native speaker accents with diminishing numbers of speakers rather than the acquisition of pronunciation skills that would better enable students to attain international intelligibility. In addition, the Vienna English Department's pronunciation programme has been criticized in the past for its ambitious course aim (which is the attainment of a native-like accent in English) and for failing to take proper account of the socio-psychological dimension of L2 pronunciation learning, in particular the need of some learners to express their L1 identity via their accent. This thesis investigates ways of how the pronunciation course of the Vienna English Department ('Practical phonetics and oral communication skills 1', commonly referred to as 'PPOCS 1') could be improved and updated in line with the new communicative and linguistic skills that speakers of English must have at their disposal in a globalized world. These skills include a sound knowledge of the socio-linguistic and the socio-psychological dimension of English pronunciation, the mastery of pronunciation features which, on the basis of empirical research, have been found to be crucial for communicative success in international communication, as well as phonological accommodation skills. I suggest ways of how the focus of PPOCS 1 could be shifted to the acquisition of this set of skills while at the same time taking account of different learner preferences and needs with regard to English pronunciation teaching, such as the expression of one's cultural identity via pronunciation, or the wish to attain a native-like accent.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung (Abstract)

Die beispiellose globale Verbreitung von English als lingua franca (ELF) und die Relevanz dieses Phänomens für non-native und native speaker des Englischen auf der ganzen Welt hat bedeutsame Implikationen für den englischen Fremdsprachenunterricht. Die Forschung von Jenkins (2000) identifizierte verständliche Aussprache als wichtigste Voraussetzung für erfolgreiche Kommunikation in ELF. Daraus folgt, dass Aussprache einen besonderen Platz im englischen Fremdsprachenunterricht einzunehmen hat, wenn Lerner adäquat auf ELF-Interaktionen vorbereitet werden sollen. Die Ergebnisse empirischer Forschung haben gezeigt, dass, entgegen dem allgemeinen Glauben, ein striktes Festhalten an den Sprachnormen von native speakern kein Garant für erfolgreiche ELF-Kommunikation ist, da diese andere Kompetenzen seitens der Gesprächsteilnehmer erfordert. Der Ausspracheunterricht am Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität Wien konzentriert sich jedoch noch immer auf den Erwerb von prestigeträchtigen native speaker Akzenten, deren Sprecherzahlen stetig sinken, anstatt den Erwerb von sprachlichen Kompetenzen zu fördern, die internationale Verständlichkeit leichter ermöglichen würden. Auch wurde der Ausspracheunterricht am Wiener Institut für Anglistik in der Vergangenheit bereits für sein anspruchsvolles Lernziel kritisiert, welches im Erwerb eines ‚native-like accent' besteht, sowie für die Tatsache, dass sozio-psychologische Aspekte des Ausspracheerwerbs (insbesondere das Bedürfnis einiger Lernender, ihre kulturelle Identität über ihre Aussprache auszudrücken) weitgehend unberücksichtigt bleiben. Diese Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit dem Aussprachekurs des Instituts für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität Wien ('Practical phonetics and oral communication skills 1', kurz 'PPOCS 1'), und untersucht Möglichkeiten, diesen im Hinblick auf die kommunikativen und sprachlichen Fertigkeiten, deren Sprecher des Englischen in einer globalisierten Welt bedürfen, zu überarbeiten und zu modernisieren. Diese Fertigkeiten bestehen in der Fachkenntnis der soziolinguistischen und soziopsychologischen Aspekte englischer Aussprache, der Beherrschung jener Aussprachemerkmale, die laut den Ergebnissen empirischer Forschung als wesentlich für internationale Verständlichkeit eingestuft werden können, sowie in phonologischer Anpassungsfähigkeit (‚phonological accommodation skills') in produktiver und rezeptiver Hinsicht. Diese Arbeit präsentiert Möglichkeiten, wie der Fokus von PPOCS 1 auf den Erwerb der oben genannten Fertigkeiten gerichtet werden könnte, ohne die Präferenzen und pädagogischen Bedürfnisse verschiedener Arten von Lernern aus den Augen zu verlieren (wie beispielsweise das Bedürfnis des Ausdrucks der kulturellen Identität durch den eigenen Akzent, oder der Wunsch, einen ‚native-like accent' zu erwerben).

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WS 2011 – WS 2014	Tutorin für *Introduction to the Study of Language 1* (Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität Wien)
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WS 2010 & SS 2011	Tutorin für *Introduction to the Study of Language 2* (Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität Wien)

Auszeichnungen

| 2011 | *Student Award* für herausragende akademische Leistungen, verliehen durch das Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität Wien |
| 2008 – 2013 | Leistungsstipendium der Universität Wien für die Studienjahre 2008/2009, 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2011/2012 & 2012/2013 |

Vorträge/Präsentationen

| November 2012 | "You know wha[tˬ] I'm saying: T-voicing in English as a lingua franca" (*5. Österreichische Studierendenkonferenz der Linguistik*) |
| September 2014 | "Implications of English as a lingua franca for pronunciation teaching in teacher education" (Posterpräsentation, Konferenz für *Pronunciation in second language learning and teaching*, University of California (Santa Barbara, CA)) |