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On the emergence of *Euro-English* as a potential European variety of English – attitudes and interpretations[1]

The question whether the appropriation of English by non-native speakers in Continental Europe is giving rise to a potential European variety of English has not yet been resolved. In a study based on three main criteria (expansion of function, nativization of form, and institutionalization of norms), Mollin (2006) rejected the hypothesis of Euro-English as a variety in its own right, arguing that if Euro English did exist, it would first materialize amongst academics "because other speakers do not use English as often with other Europeans" (2006: 163). However, young mobile Europeans seem to fall into the same category and therefore might act as an 'engine' in the emergence of this potential variety. In order to examine this hypothesis, Mollin's study was partially replicated focusing on a questionnaire survey with about 60 Erasmus students from 25 European countries (all studying in Pécs, Hungary, but within a variety of academic disciplines), detailing their attitudes towards English in general, towards Euro-English, and towards certain structures that have been proposed to be characteristic for this potential variety in the literature (e.g. the omission of the third person singular *-s*). As an addi-

[1] The present paper is an adapted version of my BA thesis, submitted to the University of Marburg under the title "Zur Herausbildung des 'Euro-English' als kontinentaleuropäische Variante des Englischen." I wish to thank my supervisors Erich Poppe and Jürg Fleischer as well as Horst Simon, Tanja Ackermann, Eva Valcheva, Bjarne Ørsnes, Ferdinand von Mengden, Dustin Heestand and the participants of the "Conference on Multilungualism in Europe 3" (Pécs/Osijek), June 2011 and the Toolkit meeting "Comparing Lingua Franca – Esperanto – Lingua Receptiva" (Amsterdam), July 2011 for their helpful comments and discussions.

tion to the original study it seeks to find out if comparable or different results can be yielded.

Key words: Euro-English; Erasmus community; nativization; questionnaire; attitudes.

1. Introduction

It is part of the EU's multilingualism policy to encourage all citizens to learn and speak more languages, in order to improve mutual understanding and communication. Sing (2004: 1) regards multilingualism "as a form of empowerment, which, however, includes the appropriation of English to a degree that may eventually give rise to a European variety of English."

Being the most important language of wider communication, English has made its way to all corners of the world, thereby developing a number of new 'non-native' varieties (e.g. Indian English, Nigerian English), which share some characteristics of British or American English, but which also present some differences when compared to traditional native varieties.

Back in 1981, Ferguson (1992: xvi–xvii) already noticed that

> English is widely used on the European continent as an international language. Frequently conferences are conducted in English (and their proceedings published in English) when only a few of the participants are native speakers. At such conferences the English spoken often shows features at variance with the English of England but shared by the other speakers. Continental meanings of *eventual* and *actual,* continental uses of tenses, calques on French formulas of conference procedure, various details of pronunciation, and dozens of other features mark the English as an emerging continental norm. Native speakers attending the conference may find themselves using some of these features as the verbal interaction takes place.

This paper seeks to ascertain whether the appropriation of English in Continental Europe has given rise to a variety one might want to call EURO-ENGLISH.[2]

[2] Carstensen (1986: 832) was the first to use this term: "The English these people use is also a kind of Euro-English, and it is obvious that it will be rather different from the real present-day English usage that was its original model."

For this purpose, a study conducted by Mollin (2006) was replicated in part, focusing on a questionnaire survey with about 60 Erasmus students from 25 European countries, detailing their attitudes towards English in general and towards certain structures that have been proposed to be characteristic for a potential Euro-English in the literature. In hypothesizing that young mobile Europeans (who are assumed to use English more often with each other than other Europeans) might act as an 'engine' in the development of this potential variety, this study can be regarded as a complement to Mollin's. Before we turn to the results, it first needs to be defined what Euro-English is or might be.

2. Definition(s)[3]

McArthur (2002: 160) employs a very broad definition in stating that

> [t]he safest basis to work on would appear to be that 'Euro-English' – if the term proves viable – is the English of all the EU countries except the UK and Ireland. Such a Euro-English is not however by any means homogeneous, and the major distinction is in effect, at present time, between north and south.

In contrast Mollin (2006: 5) understands it more narrowly "to refer to a potential independent variety of English in Europe." What she means by this is a nativized and institutionalized variety that can be assigned legitimate ESL-(English as a Second Language-) variety[4] status. In this sense a NEW ENGLISH is thus the result of nativization and institutionalization.[5]

[3] Modiano (2009: 223) distinguishes between three conceptualizations of Euro-Englishes (standards for English language teaching, the role of English in the EU and English used in mainland Europe as a lingua franca). The present paper will deal with the latter.

[4] Cf. Quirk's et al. (1973) tripartite model of English and Kachru's (1985) model of the three concentric circles.

[5] Modiano (2007: 529) maintains that the development of Euro-English cannot be compared to the development of other New Englishes in postcolonial settings. "Europeans have a written tradition going back centuries, have maintained high levels of written proficiency among the population as a whole for some time, and have extensive access to education at all levels. In many former colonial contexts, many indigenous languages were solely spoken mediums of communication, and even today, literacy levels are lower than in the West." Nonetheless, for better comparability, this study will employ Mollin's criteria.

Kachru (1992b: 235) defines nativization[6] as "the linguistic readjustment a language undergoes when it is used by members of another speech community in distinctive sociocultural contexts and language contact situations" (cf. Mollin 2006: 33). In the European context "such nativization, or 'Europeanization', involves a variety of linguistic processes at formal, contextual, and discoursal levels, e.g., functional allocation, lexicalization, or semantic extension and restriction" (Berns 1995: 6).

Institutionalized varieties can be defined as generally accepted nativized varieties by the speech community. They already have some ontological status and are used in a number of functions and domains (Kachru 1992a: 55–56). Various authors have presented characteristics of institutionalization; which have been categorized systematically for the first time by Mollin (2006: 45–52). She compiled a catalogue of criteria – based on three main requirements: expansion of function, nativization of form, and institutionalization of norms – to legitimate ESL-variety status, forming the basis for her study and thus also the present one:

Table 1. Criteria for ESL-status (Mollin 2006: 52).

FUNCTION	Extensive bilingualism
	Use in the domain of education
	Use in the domain of administration
	Use in the media
	Use as a contact code
	Use in creative writing
FORM	Extended register and style range
	Distinctive lexicon, phonology, syntax, discourse style
	Characteristics must be communal, not idiosyncratic
	New features must be systematic
ATTITUDE	No gap between performance model and behavior
	Acceptance of the local variety and its label
	Beginning codification and official recognition of the variety

[6] Note that this is not a conceptualization in the sense of Holm (2004: 7, 98) but more along the lines of Selinker's (1992) Interlanguage theory.

The present paper will deal only briefly with the function and form aspects – for a detailed discussion see Forche (2010). The emphasis will be on the analysis of attitudes.

3. The functions of English in Europe

When it comes to (extensive) bilingualism with English, which Mollin (2006: 65) conceptualizes as "the ability to conduct conversations in English, while the interpretation of 'widespread' is variable, but certainly demands that a majority of the population in question be competent […] in English", the Eurobarometer data from 2006[7] show that 38 percent of EU citizens have sufficient skills in English to hold a conversation (European Commission 2006a: 12).[8] Even though there are differences in competence, "English is clearly the most commonly used language in the EU with over a half of the respondents (51 percent) speaking it either as their mother tongue or as a foreign language." (European Commission 2006b: 4). Thus, one cannot speak of a small elite of language users. Moreover, there is a "substantial intergenerational shift in the use of English" (Graddol 2001: 49) demonstrating that in the younger generation an increasing number of people become English-bilingual. Most countries have shown a rise in the last five years – which the following figure (taken from Graddol 2006: 93) illustrates.

A number of studies (especially Ammon 2010, 2002, 1994, Eurodyce-Netz 2008, Berns 2007, Hilgendorf 2007, Dollerup 1996, Loonen 1996) show that Philippson (1992: 6) is right in saying that

> English has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine and computers; in research, books, periodicals and software; in transnational business, trade, shipping and aviation;[9] in diplomacy and international organizations; in mass media entertainment, new agencies and journalism; in youth culture and sport; in education systems, as the most widely learned foreign language […]. This non-exhaustive list of domains in which English has a dominant, though not of course exclusive, place is indicative of the *functional load* carried by English.

[7] Mollin (2006) uses the Eurobarometer data from 2001.

[8] It should be noted that this result is based solely on self-evaluations. For a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of self-evaluations of language competence cf. Mollin (2006: 65-66) and Graddol (2001: 49) and especially for measurement problems cf. Long (2005: 306).

[9] A domain that Mollin (2006) did not to mention, but that is probably important.

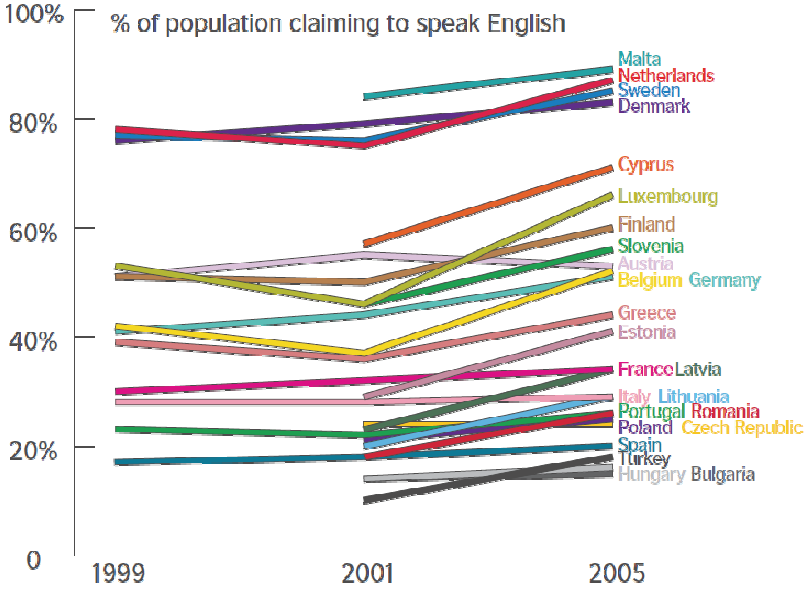

Fig. 1. Ranking of European countries according to the percentage of their population being competent English speakers displaying recent trends as shown in Eurobarometer data.

Mollin (2006: 85–87) claims that most of these functions are not Europe-specific and that especially works in the domain of creativity would rather address an international audience. I do not think they necessarily need to be aimed at Europeans only, since the two are not mutually exclusive. But even if we want to be that restrictive, there are media – e.g. a lifestyle magazine called *Europe and Me*[10] – that even claim to use a specific European English.

4. The form of English in Europe

Instead of giving a detailed research overview of Euro-English[11] or conducting a corpus study,[12] this section presents a listing of features that have been suggest-

[10] See http://www.europeandme.eu/. For specific reasons why the magazine is published in (a European) English see http://www.europeandme.eu/3brain/149-do-you-speak-european.

[11] For a detailed research overview on Euro-English see Mollin (2006: 4–13) and Forche (2010: 5–9).

[12] In order to find evidence of the formal independence of Euro-English Mollin (2006: 88–157) compiled a 400,000-word EE-CORPUS which comprises 240,000 words transcribed from spoken language and 160,000 from written text. However the spoken language is taken

ed to be characteristic for Euro-English in the literature – irrespective of their validity. The ones discussed in the attitude study (section 5. below) are highlighted in bold.

4.1. *Lexis*

- "terms which are peculiar to the European experience and which are not generally understood by users of English living in other parts of the world." (Modiano 2001: 13–14)

(1) *euro*, *Euro zone*, *Euro area* (Modiano 2001: 13–14)

(2) *Member States* (instead of *state*, *country*, *nation), internal market* (instead of *domestic market*) (Modiano 2001: 13–14)

(3) *Berlaymont*, *Eurosceptic, four freedoms, Maastricht*, *Schengen* (Modiano 2003: 233, Simigné Fenyő 2003: 61)

- new creations and (pseudo-)calques:

(4) *handy, fitness, dancing* (Murray 2003: 151)

(5) *hop over* 'refrain from doing sth.' < schwed. *hoppa over* (Modiano 2001: 14)

(6) *to be blue eyed* 'to be naïve and easily fooled' < schwed. *blåögd* (Modiano 2003: 39)

(7) *to salt* 'overcharge' < schwed. *at salta* (Modiano 2003: 39)

- shifts in meaning

(8) *actual* 'current', *eventual* 'possible' (Ferguson 1992: xvii, Berns 1995: 6)
(9) **conflation of *possibility* and *opportunity*** (Mollin 2006: 110–114)

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from public discussions and briefings in official EU contexts (from the European Commission's online audio archive, press conferences and briefings). These sources can hardly be regarded as prototypical for the general European citizen, as EU officials are likely to speak more formally, avoiding language which others may find non-standard.

(10) conflation of *apparently* and *obviously* (McClusky 2002: 42)

(11) *transmit, foresee* (Seymour 2002: 26-27)

- extended use of common verbs (Seidlhofer 2004: 220)
- fixed phrases

(12) *we were five people present*

I am coming from Sweden (Modiano 2001: 14)

(13) ***I know him for a long time**, if there would have been ... , the situation gets worse* (Murray 2003: 151) *on the other side* (Mollin 2006: 120–121)

- ***already* used as a focus particle** (Wild 2004; Mollin 2006: 114–115)
- abbreviations and blendings

(14) *EURATOM, EIB*, *EMU*, *eurocrat* (Simigné Fenyő 2003: 62)

4.2. *Phonology*

- no /θ/ or /ð/ phoneme (Jenkins 2001: 17–18)
- realization of labial-velar approximant /w/ as [v] (Décsy 1993: 14)
- no palatalization of /n/ and /t/ (Décsy 1993: 14)
- regionally different vowel inventories (esp. in vowel quality) (Jenkins 2001: 18)
- fixing of the accent on the first syllable (Décsy 1993: 14)
- clearer patterns of articulation (esp. in unstressed syllables) (Décsy 1993: 14, Crystal 1999: 15)
- slower rate of speech (Crystal 1999: 15)
- increasingly syllable-timed rhythm (Crystal 1999: 15)

4.3. *Morphosyntax*

- productive prefix (confix) *euro-* (Crystal 1999: 15, Simigné Fenyő 2003: 61)

- lexeme *euro* with idiosyncratic morphology: "not capitalized and no *s* for the plural" (Modiano 2001: 13)
- verbs
  - **omission of the third person singular *-s*** (Breiteneder 2005: 11–12, Seidlhofer 2001: 16, Décsy 1993: 14)
  - **conflation of simple past and present perfect** (Décsy 1993: 15, James 2000: 35)
  - **conflation of continuous- and non-continuous-aspect** (James 2000: 35, Modiano 2003: 39)
  - **loss of gerund** (Seidlhofer 2001: 16, Melchers & Shaw 2003: 190)
  - regularization of irregular verbs (Décsy 1993: 15)
  - decrease of prepositional and phrasal verbs (James 2000: 35)
  - loss of *do*-support (Décsy 1993: 15, Mollin 2006: 134)
- nouns
  - **underuse or overuse of articles** (Seidlhofer 2001: 16; Modiano 2003: 39; Sand 2004: 290–291)
  - regular plural marker *-s* for all nouns (Décsy 1993: 14)
  - **plural marker-*s* with non-count nouns** (Crystal 2003: 155)
  - ***of*-genitive with animate referent** (Murray 2003: 157)
  - **interchangeability of relative pronouns *who* and *which*** (Seidlhofer 2001: 16)
  - use of demonstrative *this* with both singular and plural nouns (Seidlhofer 2005: R92)
- omission of adverb marker *-ly* (James 2000: 35)
- ***isn't it?* as universal question tag** (Seidlhofer 2001: 16)
- simplified sentence structure (James 2000: 35; Crystal 1999: 15; Décsy 1993: 14–15)

5. Attitudes towards English in Europe

Only looking at the linguistic form of English in Europe does not suffice for a full understanding of the phenomenon; speakers' attitudes[13] towards the English around them must also be considered. The main goal of this study is to find evi-

[13] Mollin (2006: 158) notes: "It is clear that attitude is a complex psychological construct with emotional, cognitive and behavioural components, which are difficult to measure. In the present study, all we can measure is the expression of attitudes, either directly, or through behaviour, for which the term 'attitude' will nevertheless serve as shorthand."

dence with regard to the institutionalization of Euro-English. The attitudes of speakers toward the English they speak, and towards the English that is spoken around them, will be measured.

In her study Mollin (2006: 195–196) concludes:[14]

> To sum up, the analysis of responses demonstrated that the respondents largely cling to native-speaker standards, both openly in the attitude statements as well as indirectly in the acceptability tests. … [T]here is … a gap between norm and behavior: most Europeans claim to be aiming for a native variety, but accept some deviations from this standard. The solution lies in a certain lack of awareness of native norms, which also makes a deviation an error. … [T]he conclusion that we can draw is that English remains a foreign language in Europe. … Attitudes among Europeans … prevent an institutionalization of Euro-English.

She bases her findings on the responses of 435 university lecturers and researchers (mean age 43 years) from all over Europe, arguing that if Euro English did exist, it would first materialize amongst such a group "because other speakers do not use English as often with other Europeans" (Mollin 2006: 163). However, they may also be seen as a small, highly educated elite, who might be striving for a perfectly standard English in their scientific publications. Thus, it will be interesting to see if a different yet similar informant group would show the same results. Modiano (2007: 531) points out that, "[e]xploring responses of individuals between the ages of 15 and 25 would have been more revealing, because young people today are learning English more as a second language while older generations in Europe negotiated English from a foreign language perspective." This seems especially true in connection with mobility programs like Erasmus, where English is often used as the primary contact code.[15] The following quote (taken from Melchers & Shaw 2003: 186) from a Spanish student in Sweden describing a colleague suggests that such a development may be conceivable.

[14] For previous research on attitudes toward Euro English see Sing (2004) and Murray (2003). For attitudes toward English as a lingua franca (amongst Erasmus students as well) see Jenkins (2009, 2007). For attitudes towards the English spoken in individual European nations there is a great deal of literature; see, for example, Edwards (2010) for the Netherlands, Hilgendorf (2007) for Germany, and Petzold and Berns (2000) for Hungary.

[15] Note that this could be context-depended for a country of a lesser learned language. Erasmus students in e.g. Germany or France will probably speak German or French with each other.

> [T]hough here in Sweden he practices English every day, he practices it mainly with Erasmus students. People who are in his same linguistic situation. These students could speak better or worse, but they are not the better sample to follow. But since they speak different languages from him, they are not making gross Spanish mistakes. He will develop a kind of Euro-English.

For this reason, the present study of production goals and attitudes seeks to replicate the original one as closely as possible – with a different informant group, namely Erasmus students.

5.1. *Questionnaire Design and Administration*

For best comparability between the studies the same questionnaire as in Mollin (2006) was used, which is actually based on a study done by Murray (2003).[16] For a detailed discussion of the questionnaire's design see Mollin (2006: 161–167).

In order to test indirectly which variety of English the Erasmus students strive for, the questionnaire includes a series of sentences (containing supposedly typical features of Euro-English) that the respondents were asked to judge as either acceptable or unacceptable. Seven distractors (sentences considered to be correct in Standard English) were included, which gives us the following list of sentences (here with their Standard English equivalent):[17]

[16] For the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires, as well as for the reasons for use in this case, see Mollin (2006: 161–162).

[17] A pilot study was conducted in advance with British and American native speakers, who rated the distractors as correct, and corrected the Euro-English sentences (Mollin 2006: 165). Note that it is difficult to use intuition as a basis for the recognition of norms, for there is great deal of variability and disagreement among native speakers. Moreover according to Modiano (2007: 526), Mollin "assumes BrE to be the standard for the English language," and accordingly uses BrE native speakers to define various English norms, which is too narrow an approach and should be adapted. However for purposes of comparability the present study is conducted as it was in Mollin's.

Table 2. Test sentences in the questionnaire (Mollin 2006: 165).

	TEST SENTENCES	STANDARD ENGLISH VERSION
1.	Could I borrow your pen, please?	-
2.	Do you know where she live?	Do you know where she lives?
3.	He was elected in 1999, isn't it?	He was elected in 1999, wasn't he?
4.	What are your subjects at university? I'm studying History and Maths.	I study History and Maths.
5.	I need more informations on this topic.	I need more information on this topic.
6.	She came home the day before yesterday.	-
7.	I know him since ten years.	I have known him for ten years.
8.	I look forward to see you at the party.	I look forward to seeing you at the party.
9.	I'll go to shopping centre tomorrow.	I'll go to the shopping centre tomorrow.
10.	If you want to go, I'll come with you.	-
11.	It's unlikely that we will be able to continue like this.	-
12.	Last October I had the possibility to attend a workshop.	Last October I had the opportunity to attend a workshop.
13.	Already in 1999 they introduced 'English for Kids' courses.	They introduced 'English for Kids' courses as early as 1999.
14.	She insisted on going out for dinner.	-
15.	That Mercedes is the car of my dentist.	The Mercedes is my dentist's car.
16.	That's the woman which I met at the pub.	That's the woman I met at the pub.
17.	The teacher was busy to mark essays.	The teacher was busy marking essays.
18.	There has not been much progress yet.	-
19.	The laboratory had all the latest equipments.	The laboratory had all the latest equipment.
20.	You were supposed to have arrived here ten minutes ago.	-

The second part of the questionnaire elicited the sociolinguistic variables, self-perceived proficiency, reasons for learning English and (probably most importantly) the respondents' target variety in producing English.

The third part consists of a series of Likert-type scales[18] asking some general beliefs and attitudes regarding English.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the selected target group of the present study are university students participating in the EU funded 'LLP-ERASMUS'

[18] Respondents were asked to specify their level of agreement or disagreement on a symmetric (typically 5 level) agree-disagree scale for a series of statements.

program to spend one or two semesters abroad. At many institutions the presence of Erasmus students prompts professors to switch to a language common to all – which is often English (Berns 2007: 28). Often special courses are held only for Erasmus students. Even in their free time they use English as a contact code – especially in Hungary there seems to be little motivation among foreign students to learn Hungarian, which is supposed to be very difficult to acquire. Consequently, they spend their time almost exclusively among themselves creating their own 'Erasmus Language Community' with English as a contact code.[19] In this scenario Erasmus students might act as an 'engine' in the development of a potential Euro-English.

The questionnaire was distributed with the kind help of the Erasmus coordinators at the University of Pécs via e-mail to approximately 120 Erasmus students studying in Pécs during the summer term of 2010.[20] 59 questionnaires were returned.

It is obvious that this is not a large sample and the results are not representative. Moreover, it can be assumed that the questionnaire was more likely to be filled in by people who have an interest in the English language; therefore the analysis might be biased in the direction of more competent speakers (self-selection). Thus, the conclusions of this study must not be read, necessarily, as a definitive contrast to earlier studies of Euro-English, but rather as some probable tendencies in the study of the possible development of a distinct Euro-English.

5.2. *The informants and target variety*

The following table shows the absolute numbers of responses from speakers according to their mother tongues (L1) and their proportion within the sample:[21]

[19] Anecdotal evidence: the author's personal Erasmus experience and comments in e-mails by the informants.

[20] For at detailed discussion (including advantages and disadvantages) of the administration see Forche (2010: 28).

[21] For response rates for each sampled country see Forche (2010: 29).

Table 3. Mother tongues of the respondents.

LANGUAGE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
German	7	11.9 percent
French	6	10.2 percent
Hungarian	6	10.2 percent
Polish	5	8.5 percent
Croatian	4	6.8 percent
Turkish	4	6.8 percent
Italian	3	5.1 percent
Czech	3	5.1 percent
Finnish	2	3.4 percent
Dutch	2	3.4 percent
Russian	2	3.4 percent
Swedish	2	3.4 percent
Slovak	2	3.4 percent
Spanish	2	3.4 percent
Bulgarian	1	1.7 percent
Estonian	1	1.7 percent
Greek	1	1.7 percent
Latvian	1	1.7 percent
Lithuanian	1	1.7 percent
Luxembourgish	1	1.7 percent
Portuguese	1	1.7 percent
Romanian	1	1.7 percent
Slovenian	1	1.7 percent

The average age is 23.5 years. The distribution among the different fields of study is well balanced. No correlation between subject and language competence could be recognized.

As might have been predicted, a majority of the respondents (57.6 percent) rated their own English competency as "fairly good".[22] Only 16.9 percent evaluated their English as near-native, "maybe for reasons of modesty or because respondents indeed perceive a difference between their own English and that of a native speaker" as Mollin (2006: 171) speculates in her study.[23] The proportion

[22] It should again be noted that this sample is quite likely a self-selection of competent English speakers.

[23] For example, the Luxemburgish informant in the present study, although he made almost no mistakes, claimed only to have "fairly good" English competency. Note again that this comprises self-assessment data, of which the categories themselves are vague and subjective.

of respondents who answered "I can make myself understood" is slightly greater than this, at 23.7 percent. Only one informant claimed "I can't always make myself understood."

The fact that three quarters of respondents ranked their English-language competence at least "fairly good" strengthens the assumptions that the target population is capable of forming a new variety of English, if they were to be inclined against the ELT-(English Language Teaching-) standard.

The core question is of course what the production goals of Europeans who use English extensively and competently are. While the acceptability test tries to tap this question indirectly, the second part of the questionnaire also directly asked "Which kind of English are you trying to approximate?"[24] The results are shown in the following figure:

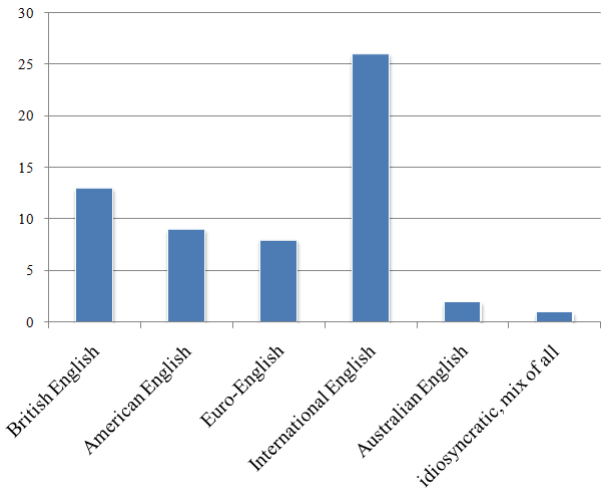

Fig.2. Target varieties as named by respondents.

The distribution shows a relative majority (44.1 percent) of Erasmus students aiming for an INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH.[25] The classic teaching variety of Eng-

[24] Note that the subjects had no access to labels or definitions of them; the options given were "English as it is spoken in England", "English as it is spoken in the USA", "English as it is spoken in mainland Europe", "English as it is spoken in international communication" and an open option. Mollin (2006: 174–176) only inferred the following labels which, for the sake of comparability, will be used here as well.

[25] McArthur (1998: 301) defines International English as "[t]he English language, usually in its standard form, either when used, taught, and studied as a lingua franca throughout the

lish in Europe – British English – was chosen by only 22 percent of the respondents which shows an obvious contrast to Mollin's (2006: 174–175) results with a clear majority of 56.52 percent choosing British English as target variety.[26] There seems to be a shift away from the ELT-standard. Yet only 13.6 percent of the Erasmus students aim for a specifically European variety of English. As Mollin (2006: 176) would conclude this does not seem to

> … give evidence for the legitimacy of the label of 'Euro-English', since the competent Continental European speakers of English do not openly claim to be aiming for a European standard. Nevertheless, it needs to be kept in mind that frequently speakers of New Englishes, especially in the beginnings of the institutionalization phase, retain negative attitudes towards the developing standard and still claim to be speakers of the native standard.

Analyzing the acceptability tests will show whether the Erasmus students would at least unintentionally use and accept Euro-English.

5.3. *Acceptability test*

The purpose of the acceptability test is "to reflect the norm of English that respondents follow, the standard in their mind" (Mollin 2006: 165) by judging a series of sentences as either acceptable or unacceptable.[27] If a respondent judges a sentence as non-acceptable – while giving a correct alternative according to native standard – one can reason that s/he (at least in the case of this particular feature) follows a native norm. However, this does not mean in a reverse conclusion that if an informant judges a sentence acceptable this complies with the

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world, or when taken as a whole and used in contrast with American English, British English, South African English etc." For a discussion whether this variety exists at all cf. Crystal (1999) und McArthur (2002: 439–451). McKay (2002: 132) provides a rather didactical definition: "International English is used by native speakers of English and bilingual users of English for cross-cultural communication. International English can be used both in a local sense between speakers of diverse cultures and languages within one country and in a global sense between speaker from different countries."

[26] For motivations /reasons why the informants learn English see Forche (2010: 31–32).

[27] It should be kept in mind that the informants were given no further instructions other than "Please read the following sentences and indicate whether they are acceptable English. When you find a sentence to be wrong, please give the correct version." They had no information about the situative and communicative context (written vs. spoken, formal vs. informal, etc.) they were judging.

(potentially Euro-English) norm in his/her head; s/he may just have been inattentive[28] or usually aims for a native standard but does not know the correct form (Mollin 2006: 165–166). Another latent problem of such error detection tests is that respondents tend to become over-attentive; they by all means want to spot the mistake (which they might have overlooked in other contexts), which may even lead to errors being 'recognized' that are none.

A further problem constitutes the "confusion between linguistic norm and behavior" (Kachru 1992a: 56). This gap can only be measured by asking speakers whether they judge the feature of their own variety to be 'good English' or 'acceptable'. If they denounce a certain form the gap is obvious. If, however, they deem their own usage to be good but are told that this is not line with a particular native standard, they might want to change their judgement. This problem will be solved by connecting acceptability judgments to self-described competence levels and statements on the target variety (Mollin 2006: 159).

5.3.1. *Omission of the third person singular* -s

Almost 95 percent of the respondents judged the sentence "Do you know where she live" unacceptable, which indicates that the omission of the third person singular *-s* is not a feature of Euro-English – if it existed.[29] Correlations with speakers' competence show that those who judge this sentence acceptable have a generally high mistake rate; the feature should be viewed as a learner's mistake.

5.3.2. isn't it *as universal question tag*

There was general agreement that the question tag in the sentence "He was elected in 1999, isn't it?" needed to be changed in order to make it acceptable; close to 60 percent of the informants gave the correct version. Only 15 percent of the respondents judged the supposed universal tag question *isn't it* as ac-

[28] Sometimes only one letter is affected, e.g. *equipments* instead of *equipment*.

[29] It is interesting that 12.5 percent of those who judged the sentence unacceptable changed it to "Do you know where does she live". Even though this is not a correct solution, it includes marking for third person. However this solution raises the question if a new subclause pattern is developing in a potential Euro-English.

ceptable. These and other non-standard corrections are shown in the following figure:

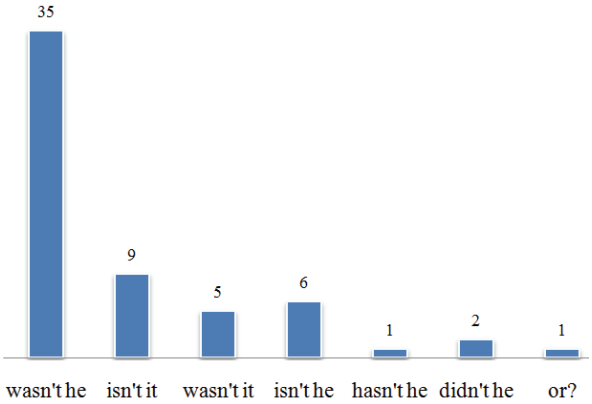

Fig. 3. Question tags given by the respondents.

Correlations with self-ascribed competence and production goals show that the less competent speakers feel, the more likely they are to accept *isn't it*, and to produce other incorrect solutions. If they are aiming for a standard variety, they are more likely to propose *wasn't he*. Again, one cannot speak of a Euro-English characteristic.

5.3.3. *Aspect*

Two of the test sentences deal with the potential simplification of the aspectual system.

The use of progressive versus non-progressive was tested by the short fictive dialogue "What are your subjects at university? – I'm studying History and Maths." which "was chosen so that the context made it clear that the action of studying in this case is a habitual action of some duration, thus requiring the simple present" (Mollin 2006: 189). However, only four Erasmus students corrected this sentence accordingly.[30] In fact, with 93.2 percent this is the most ac-

[30] Those few proponents belong into the group of very competent speakers, thus probably contradicting Mollin's (2006: 189–190) findings: "we find […] that self-perceived competence does not seem to be a factor influencing the acceptability judgement. […] [T]hose speakers who judge their English to be less competent generally are the ones whose languages seem to give them an advantage in this case."

cepted sentence,[31] which could indicate that the area of aspect is changing[32] (or just very difficult to acquire for non-native speakers).

A problem that many learners of English struggle with is "the use of the present perfect to express duration that began in the past and still have [sic!] relevance at the present time" (Mollin 2006: 187). The test sentence "I know him since ten years." contains even two deviations from the native standard, thus differing combinations of solutions have been provided. 28.8 percent gave an entirely correct solution, changing tense from present simple to present perfect and *since* to *for*. 30.5 percent changed the adverb, but kept present or changed it to simple past; 16.9 percent did the opposite.[33] Only 16.9 percent of the respondents judged the sentence completely acceptable. A correlation between acceptance rates and competence shows that the speakers who ranked themselves the most competent are more likely to make both corrections, whereas the less competent speakers are prone to more than one deviation:

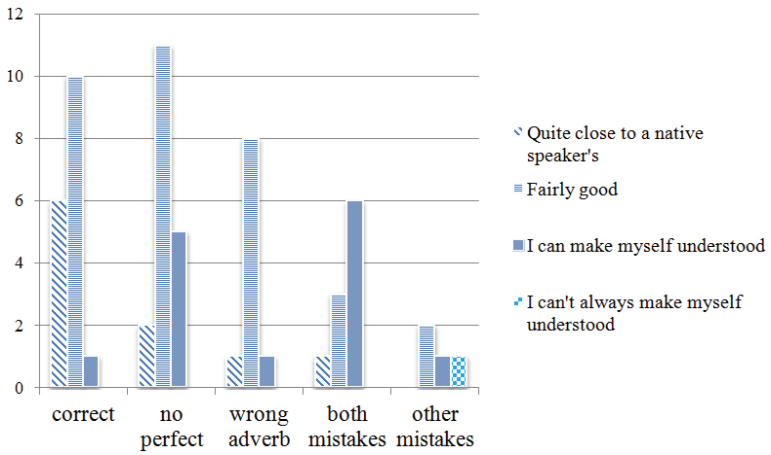

Fig. 4. Proportions of respondents per competence category who provided correct or incorrect solutions to test item 7.

The influence of competence seems obvious. Moreover, the variety of deviations suggests that there is much insecurity in the use of perfective aspect, which gives reason to assume that one is dealing with learners' mistakes.

[31] Excluding the distractors.

[32] Leech et al. (2009: 118–143) show that there has been a significant expansion of the progressive in contemporary Standard British and American English in general.

[33] The remaining 6.8 percent of the Erasmus students made entirely different mistakes.

Still, the fact that almost 50 percent of respondents[34] are not using present perfect (contrary to Mollin's [2005: 187–188] findings) substantiates the hypothesis that in a potential Euro-English there would be only one tense expressing past and that the aspect system will be simplified – especially in the light of the acceptance rate of the previous feature.

5.3.4. *Plural marker*-s *with non-count nouns*

The questionnaire contained two sentences testing whether non-count nouns would take the plural marker -*s*: "I need more informations on this topic." and "The laboratory had all the latest equipments." Interestingly the results show different tendencies: while the acceptance rate for *informations* lies at only 18.6 percent, three quarters of the respondents judged *equipments* acceptable. With *informations* a correlation with competence is fairly obvious, however for *equipments* this is not the case (contrary to Mollin 2006: 181–182):

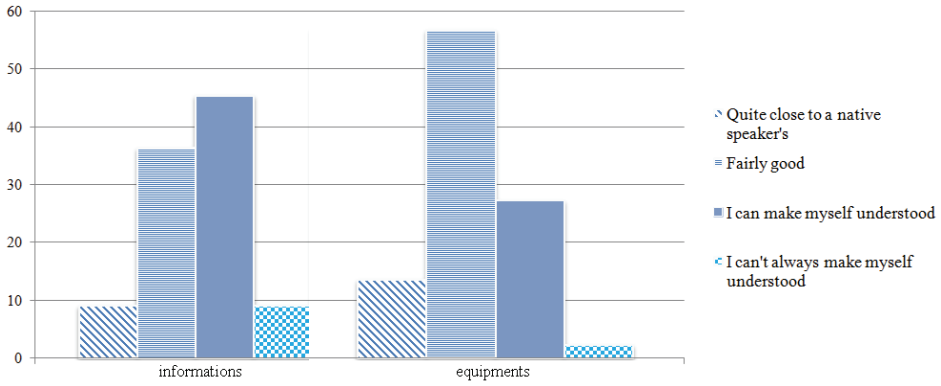

Fig. 5. Proportions of respondents per competence category who accepted the forms *informations* and *equipments*.

A possible explanation might be that *information* is better known for not taking the plural than *equipment*, since it is a more frequent word. This distribution again argues against the hypothesis that the feature is one of an institutionalized Euro-English standard.

[34] Those who judged the sentence acceptable and those who didn't change the tense to present perfect added together.

5.3.5. *Complementation after preposition* to *and adjective*

Euro-English is assumed to be marked by complementation patterns different from the standard norm. The acceptability test contains two items testing this assumption: "I look forward to see you at the party." and "The teacher was busy to mark papers." where both the preposition *to*[35] and the adjective *busy* require a gerund (*seeing*, *marking*) as a complement in the native standard.

54.2 percent of the Erasmus students judged the first sentence acceptable; the second one even more so, at 59.3 percent.[36] In both cases correlations with competence levels show that the most competent group makes hardly any mistakes; the two least competent groups make more. Respondents belonging to the "fairly good" group are quite equally distributed, which is why connecting the answers to the variety chosen as target proves to be interesting: while only few Erasmus students aiming for British English or American English would accept these sentences, the proportion among supporters of Euro-English is comparatively high. For this reason and their relatively high acceptance rates *busy to* + infinitive and *look forward to* + infinitive seem to be candidates for features of Euro-English.

5.3.6. *Use of articles*

In the sentence "I'll go to shopping centre tomorrow" the definite article *the* (or the indefinite article *a*) is missing. In this way the alleged underuse of articles in Euro-English is tested. Interestingly, the frequencies of acceptance and non-acceptance distribute equally (30 vs. 29 respondents).[37] Neither a correlation with competence nor target variety provides an instructive answer.[38]

Here, looking at the different mother tongues is very insightful: similarly to Mollin's (2006: 183) findings all six Polish informants judged the bare (i.e.

[35] The preposition *to* could be misjudged/reanalysed as an infinitive marker.

[36] This distribution stands in contrast to Mollin's (2006: 185) findings: "Comparing the proportion of respondents who think *busy to mark* is acceptable to those who accept *looking forward to see you*, it emerges that the latter is far greater, probably reflecting the specific problem with the preposition to mis-analysed as an infinitive marker."

[37] In Mollin (2006: 183) the ratio is 77.91 percent non-acceptable vs. 19.95 percent acceptable.

[38] Although the majority of the near-native-group gave a correct solution, the same applies to the "I can make myself understood" group.

'articleless') noun phrase acceptable. Generally the collective acceptance rates for speakers of native tongues that don't have articles are very high. Thus, one might concur with Mollin's (2006: 183) conclusion that it "becomes apparent that acceptance of the missing article is clearly related to mother tongue and even language family so that it may be regarded an interference phenomenon, i.e. of not knowing any better."[39] However, the sample size of the present study is too small to validate or refute this finding.

5.3.7. *Conflation of* possibility *and* opportunity

The sentence "Last October I had the possibility to attend a workshop." tests whether *possibility* becomes synonymous with *opportunity*.

The majority (89.8 percent) of the respondents judged the sentence acceptable.[40] Whereas Mollin (2006: 180) detects a correlation with competence, this is not the case with the Erasmus students; those who corrected the sentence according to the standard norm spread over the different competence groups equally. Furthermore it is noteworthy that all informants favoring a European variety of English find this feature acceptable. Thus, a shift of meaning (semantic widening) of *possibility* seems to be a good candidate for a Euro-English feature. However, Mollin (2006: 180) objects:

> In the pilot study of the test that ten native speakers completed, five respondents, i.e. 50 percent, also found the sentence to be entirely acceptable. Thus semantic overlap between the two words possibility and opportunity may not be exclusive to Euro-English at all, but may indeed form part of native-speaker varieties just the same.

Consequently, (testing) the feature itself is not conclusive.

[39] Note that mother tongue interferences typically lead to innovations which are – if they become systematic – a source for nativization.

[40] It is 79.81 percent in Mollin's (2006: 180) study. Contrary to her findings all Erasmus students who judged the sentence unacceptable chose *opportunity* as a better alternative. Mollin's informants also suggested *chance*, *occasion* or *I was able to* ....

5.3.8. Already *as a focus particle*

The question of whether the use of the temporal adverb *already* as a focus particle putting the emphasis on an earlier date is accepted was tested by "Already in 1999 they introduced 'English for Kids' courses." Furthermore the word order seems a little uncommon in Standard English. The latter was changed by 32.2 percent of the respondents; *already* in this function was accepted by a remarkable 91.5 percent of the Erasmus students.[41] Due to the large number of acceptances no noticeable correlations could be made out. Although Mollin (2006: 181) assumes the use of *already* as a focus particle to be a widespread mistake that nobody is aware of, the striking number of acceptance votes (in the present study as well as in the original) indicates that the feature is likely to be a probable candidate for a potential Euro-English.[42]

5.3.9. of-*genitive with animate referent*

The test sentence "That Mercedes is the car of my dentist." seeks to determine whether in a potential Euro-English the analytical *of*-genitive construction can be used with an animate referent. 61 percent of the respondents judged it acceptable. As opposed to Mollin (2006: 187) no significant correlations with competence could be recognized; the correct versions (according to the standard norm) spread equally across all competence levels. The only conspicuity is, again, that all Erasmus students that aim for a European variety of English as their target language accept this sentence. It should be considered as well that

> [n]ative speakers […] will prefer the synthetic to the analytic genitive construction in this case, but may not consider the provided version as really incorrect. Nevertheless, if European speakers all preferred the *of*-construction, we could […]

[41] Those who corrected the sentence used (in equal parts) either *as early as* or simply dropped *already* entirely. *Even* doesn't seem to be a correct version according to standard norm, yet since the informant dismissed *already* as a focus particle I classified the sentence as not acceptable.

[42] However, this may be a process of ongoing language change (grammaticalization) that is not exclusive to an alleged Euro-English. Anecdotal evidence: native speakers of American English told me that they might not use this construction themselves, but that they find it absolutely acceptable when others use it.

speak of a Euro-English innovation in terms of characteristic frequencies […]. (Mollin 2006: 187)

5.3.10. *Interchangeability of relative pronouns* who *and* which

"That's the woman which I met at the pub." seems wrong from a standard point of view, since animate nouns can only be relativized by the relative pronouns *who* or *whom*; further options could also be *that* or a 'zero relative' pronoun. All these solutions were actually given by respondents, as shown in the following figure:

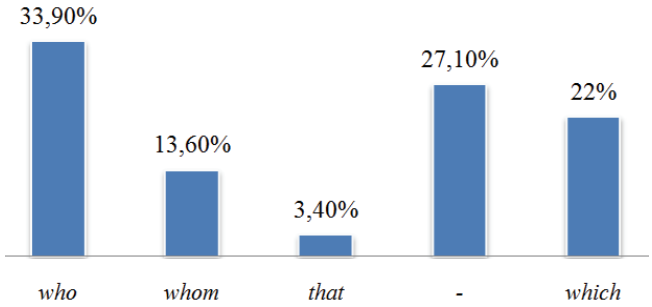

Fig. 6. Proportions of relative pronouns given by the respondents.

Only 22 percent of the Erasmus students judge the sentence acceptable. In this case, then, there is a good proportion of Europeans who know the native construction(s) and do not seem to be willing to accept a deviation from it.

5.4. *Summary*

At first glance, it seems that a variety of features suggested to be characteristic for Euro-English in the literature was judged acceptable. However, one needs to be careful with these figures. Especially in correlation with the informants' (own assessment of) competence it seems likely that in most cases this constitutes only an accumulation of learners' mistakes. Even if Erasmus students use those suggested features in ad-hoc situations, at least in contexts in which they pay attention to their language usage, they (want to) stick to the native standard.

However, simplifications in the area of aspect (and the resulting conflation of tenses expressing past), new patterns of complementation, and the use of *already* as a focus particle seem promising candidates for a potential Euro-English. This becomes particularly evident when the acceptability rates are summarized in the following table:

Table 4. Ranking of test items according to the proportion of respondents who accepted the Euro-English feature.

	TEST SENTENCES	„ACCEPTABLE" VOTES
4.	What are your subjects at university? – I'm studying History and Maths.	93.2 percent
13.	Already in 1999 they introduced 'English for Kids' courses.	91.5 percent
12.	Last October I had the possibility to attend a workshop.	89.8 percent
19.	The laboratory had all the latest equipments.	74.6 percent
15.	That Mercedes is the car of my dentist.	61.0 percent
17.	The teacher was busy to mark essays.	59.3 percent
8.	I look forward to see you at the party.	54.2 percent
9.	I'll go to shopping centre tomorrow.	50.8 percent
3.	He was elected in 1999. isn't it?	39.0 percent
16.	That's the woman which I met at the pub.	22.0 percent
5.	I need more informations on this topic.	18.6 percent
2.	Do you know where she live?	5.1 percent
7.	I know him since ten years.	(16.9 percent)

Especially the ranking of the first three sentences constitutes a noticable parallel to Mollin's (2006: 191) study. Generally the acceptability rates in this study are much higher than in Mollin's,[43] an observation which may support Graddol's (2001: 49) suggested "substantial intergenerational shift in the use of English" and thus the hypothesis that a younger generation acts as an 'engine' in the potential emergence of Euro-English. The question whether this variety as a whole or English in general is openly accepted will be dealt with in the next section.

[43] Due to the sample group being considerably smaller those rates may be less significant.

5.5. *General attitudes towards English*

The analysis of the Likert-scales shows that almost all respondents regard English as useful for communication.[44] Whereas Mollin's (2006: 177) results for the statements "I am not bothered about mistakes that other learners of English make as long as I understand what they want to say" and "Schools should teach English not as the native speakers speak it but for efficient international communication" are equally distributed, the Erasmus students mostly agree (81.3 percent and 57.6 percent).

Even though the Erasmus students appreciate the value of English as a universal lingua franca – half of them agree with the statement that "English doesn't belong to the native speakers any more, but to anybody who uses it" – a third however perceive it as a threat to other languages. This may be the reason why 18.6 percent of the respondents reject the notion that everyone in Europe should learn English in order to facilitate communication. Moreover, 74.6 percent[45] of the respondents regard their respective native languages as more important than English. For this reason one can agree with Mollin (2006: 177–178) that English in Europe is only a "lingua franca that complements the language repertoire, but it is not perceived by Continental Europeans as a substitute for their own languages."

6. Conclusions and outlook

Based on Mollin's (2006) catalogue of criteria (expansion of function, nativization of form, and institutionalization of norms) the present study tried to detect whether Continental Europe is developing its own endonormative variety of English and what role Erasmus students might play in that process. EU statistical data show that the English spoken in Europe is characterized by a widespread distribution of domains, and is spoken by more than half of the European population. This naturally suggests that an endogenous European variety of English might be developing; many of the features suggested to be characteristic of

[44] For a detailed analysis (also in correlation with other variables) see Forche (2010: 39–40).

[45] This figure is lower than in Mollin's (2006: 177) findings (83.14 percent) which may indicate that younger people do regard English rather as a "second language while older generations in Europe negotiated English from a foreign language perspective." (Modiano 2007:531)

Euro-English, however, could be identified as learners' mistakes, in correlation with the varying competences of the speakers. Although there do seem to be some contingent nativization tendencies (e.g. *already* as a focus particle), the questioned Erasmus students seemed to adhere to standardized norms – at least in cases where they were paying conscious attention to their language use.

Nevertheless, the questionnaire study yielded very similar results as Mollin (2006) (and the data can thus be seen as a complement to her study), but principally with a greater acceptance of the suggested Euro-features among the Erasmus students, which could be an indicator that, as Modiano (2009: 234) suggests, a younger generation, because of their interest in English, might accelerate the development of a potential Euro-English more than Mollin's test group of academics. However, only a tentative judgment can be made on the state of institutionalization or the status of British or American Standard English vs. Euro-English.[46] There is a dichotomy between openly stated attitudes towards deviations from the standard norm (which seem to prevent institutionalization) and the informants' own linguistic behavior (in a test situation). English does not seem be a language these young Europeans identify with, but rather one that they use for pragmatic reasons only.

In light of these observations, it seems that Euro-English does not currently exist as an independent variety, but that – taking into account generally high acceptability rates, the acceptance of an International English and thus the appreciation of English as a decontextualized lingua franca – future institutionalization may be possible under the influence of young mobile Europeans. However, given the size and the scope of this study further claims would be speculative. The question whether this sample really reflects the attitudes and viewpoints of the whole European society remains.

A more comprehensive study, containing larger, multi-layered samples (e.g. with Erasmus students studying in different places and setting), would provide comparable results or more information on whether a Euro-English is indeed developing on its own. Besides the aforementioned disadvantages of the questionnaire used, it was only possible to examine a selection of morpho-syntactical phenomena in this study. No conclusions could be drawn about pronunciation, and only limited conclusions were possible about the lexicon of Erasmus students. One idea for future research would be to form a European subcorpus of

[46] But then again such a questionnaire may not be the perfect means to make judgments like this.

the VOICE corpus[47] to identify a 'European Core.' Generally, a more qualitative approach should be taken. Ideally, recordings should be made of ad-hoc situations as well as of interviews designed to induce particular grammatical constructions, as well as to elicit subjects' opinions about English.

Furthermore, the introduction of a possibly normative Euro-English which does not give preference to any native speaker (thus facilitating certain fields of activity [e.g. translation] and fostering a European identity) and implications for its teaching might be considered. For Erasmus students daily demonstrate that trans-cultural contact and intercultural learning is possible through English, even when it deviates from the (existing) standard.

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[47] The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English is a collection of spoken ELF interactions, i.e. English used for communication between speakers from different first-language backgrounds. See http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/page/index.php.

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O RAZVOJU EURO-ENGLESKOG KAO EUROPSKE VARIJANTE ENGLESKOG JEZIKA – STAVOVI I TUMAČENJA

Još uvijek nije ponuđen odgovor na pitanje da li engleski jezik kojeg koriste ne-izvorni govornici u kontinentalnoj Europi vodi do stvaranja potencijalne europske varijante engleskog. U istraživanju koje se temelji na tri glavna kriterija (širenje funkcije, nativizacija forme, institucionalizacija normi), Mollin (2006) je odbacio hipotezu o euro-engleskom kao zasebnoj varijanti, zastupajući tezu da kad bi euro-engleski postojao, prvo bi se materijalizirao među sveučilišnim profesorima i znanstvenicima "jer drugi govornici ne koriste engleski tako često s drugim Europljanima" (2006: 163). Međutim, mladi mobilni Europljani mogu se također svrstati u istu kategoriju i stoga mogu biti "motor" koji pokreće nastanak ove moguće varijan-

te. Kako bismo istražili tu hipotezu, studija koju je proveo Mollin je dijelom replicirana i provedena putem upitnika sa 60 Erasmus studenata iz 25 europskih zemalja (svi su bili na razmjeni u Pečuhu u Mađarskoj, no na različitim studijima), u kojem su istraženi njihovi stavovi prema engleskom jeziku, prema euro-engleskom, i prema određenim strukturama koje su u literature navedene kao tipične za ovu varijantu (npr. ispuštanje nastavka *–s* u trećem licu jednine prezenta). Ova studija također ima za cilj utvrditi jesu li dobiveni usporedivi ili različiti rezultati.

Ključne riječi: euro-engleski; Erasmus studenti; nativizacija; upitnik; stavovi.