

RESEARCH WRITING IN CHANGE: THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA.

ANNA MAURANEN
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

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THE MOBILE GLOBAL WORLD

- The rich world: business, academia, entertainment
- The poor world: emigration, immigration, asylum seeking
- Digital communication devices in everyone's pocket
 - > mobility and mobile communication permeate our lives
 - > Language mixing, multilingual practices
- English as the lingua franca



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LANGUAGE RESPONDS TO CHANGE

- Language contact a key factor in language change
- Periods of rapid social change and large-scale mobility associated with accelerated language change.
- Both conditions fulfilled and relevant to English as a Lingua Franca



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MOBILITY AND GLOBALITY

- ELF as the first **global** lingua franca – the language of globalisation
- **Mobility as a paradigm shift** in social sciences (Sheller & Urry 2006)
- ELF as a complex, second-order contact language between ‘similects’



ELF AS COMPLEX LANGUAGE CONTACT

- ELF is **second language use (SLU)**
- Distinct from learner language (LL) or second language acquisition (SLA)



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ELF AS COMPLEX LANGUAGE CONTACT⁽²⁾

- ELF much like dialect contact:
speakers of mutually comprehensible varieties
- The varieties, ‘lects’, (Finglish, Singlish, Chinglish, Dunglish...)
result from **parallel** cross-linguistic influence
- **‘similects’** (parallel lects):
parallel idiolects of speakers of a particular language background in
another language they have all learned



ELF AS COMPLEX LANGUAGE CONTACT⁽³⁾

Similects are the outcome of L2 learning. This connects ELF to SLA.

Similects are not dialects,

< dialects develop in interaction in (local) communities

Similects remain first-generation hybrids

- Do not diversify, develop dialects or sociolects...

- -> **ELF a second-order contact between similects**



CHANGING NOTIONS OF GOOD WRITING



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HVAET PE GARDE
na in searu dazum. heod cymnig
hyum se framon huda aþelungas elle
fre medon. of seold scepnig sceapen
hwaetum mone su maegum meodo secl
of tæh esode eopul syddan aqest pæp
fæ sceapf funden he hæf troppre se ba
peox undæ polenum peopid myndam þalu
od þ him æghpyle þaru ymb sitzen dia
of æ hion. made hyran scolde zomban
zyl dan þpæf zod cymnig. dan æfæra paf
æfæra cenned zæung in seardum þone zod
sende folce tofroppe fypor dæpfe on
zæit þhe æf dæuzon alde. lange
hpile him hæf lip færa puldæf. pæl derd
popold arie for zæp. beapule. paf. þpen e
bled pde spianz. seoldæ. cræpæ. seode
landum in. Spæ sealdæ. ma. seode
se pæcæn. pmonum pæh. zæ. dæ. impædæ

Hwæt! We Gardena
þeodcyninga,
hu ða æþelingas
Oft Scyld Scefing
monegum mægþum,
egsode eorlas.
feasceaft funden,
weox under wolcnum,
oðþæt him æghwylc
ofer hronrade
gomban gyldan.
Ðæm eafera wæs
geong in geardum,
folce to frofre;
þe hie ær drugon
lange hwile.
wuldres wealdend,

in geardagum,
þrym gefrunon,
ellen fremedon.
sceapena þreatum,
meodosetla ofteah,
Syððan ærest wearð
he þæs frofre gebad,
weorðmyndum þah,
þara ymbsittendra
hyran scolde,
þæt wæs god cuning!
æfter cenned,
þone god sende
fyrenðearfe ongeat
aldorlease
Him þæs lifes geat,
woroldare forgeaf:



Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury

Whan that aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the ram his halve cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(so priketh hem nature in hir corages);
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially from every shires ende
Of engelond to caunterbury they wende



THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET, Prince of Denmarke.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter Bernardo and Francisco two Centinels.

Bernardo.

Ho's there?

Fran. Nay answer me: Stand & vnfold
your selfe.

Bar. Long liue the King.
Fran. Bernardo?

Bar. He.

Fran. You come most carefully vpon your honre.

Bar. 'Tis now strook twelue, get thee to bed *Francisco.*
Fran. For this releefe much thanks: 'Tis bitter cold,
And I am sicke at heart.

Bar. Haue you had quiet Guard?

Fran. Not a Mouse stirring.

Bar. Well, goodnight. If you do meet *Horatio* and
Marcellus, the Riuals of my Watch, bid them make hast.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Fran. I thinke I heare them. Stand: who's there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And Leige-men to the Dane.

Fran. Giue you good night.

Mar. O farwel honest Soldier, who hath relieu'd you?

Fra. *Bernardo* ha's my place: giue you goodnight.
Exit Fran.

Mar. Holla *Bernardo.*

Bar. Say, what is *Horatio* there?

Hor. A peeces of him.

Bar. Welcome *Horatio*, welcome good *Marcellus.*

Mar. What, ha's this thing appear'd againe to night,

Bar. I haue seene nothing.

Mar. *Horatio* saies, 'tis but our Fantasie,
And will not let beleefe take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seene of vs,
Therefore I haue increas'd him along
With vs, to watch the minutes of this Night,
That if againe this Apparition come,
He may approue our eyes, and speake to it.

Hor. Tull, tull, 'twill not appeare.

Bar. Sit downe a while,

And let vs once againe assaile your eares,
That are so fortified against our Story,
What we two Nights haue seene.

Hor. Well, sit we downe,

And let vs heare *Bernardo* speake of this.

Bar. Last night of all,

When yond same Starre that's Westward from the Pole
Had made his course fullone that part of Heauen

Where now it burnes, *Marcellus* and my selfe,
The Bell then beating one.

Mar. Peace, breake thee of:

Enter the Ghost.

Looke where it comes againe.

Bar. In the same figure, like the King that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a Scholler; speake to it *Horatio.*

Bar. Lookes it not like the King? Marke it *Horatio.*

Hor. Most like: It harrowes me with feare & wonder

Bar. It would be spoke too.

Mar. Question it *Horatio.*

Hor. What art thou that vsurp'st this time of night,

Together with that Faire and Warlike forme

In which the Maiesty of buried Denmarke

Did sometimes march: By Heauen I charge thee speake.

Mar. It is offended.

Bar. See, it stalkes away.

Hor. Stay: speake; speake: I Charge thee, speake.

Exit the Ghost.

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Bar. How now *Horatio*? You tremble & look pale:

Is not this something more then Fantasie?

What thinke you on't?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this beleuee

Without the sensible and true auouch

Of mine owne eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the King?

Hor. As thou art to thy selfe,

Such was the very Armour he had on,

When th' Ambitious Norway combatted:

So frown'd he once, when in an angry parle

He smot the flegged Pollax on the Ice.

'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus twice before, and iust at this dead houre,

With Marciall stalke, hath he gone by our Watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work, I know not:

But in the grosse and scope of my Opinion,

This boades some strange eruption to our State.

Mar. Good now sit downe, & tell me he that knowes

Why this same strict and most obseruant Watch,

So nightly toyles the subiect of the Land,

And why such dayly Cast of Brazon Cannon

And Forraigne Mart for Implements of warre:

Why such impresse of Ship-wrights, whose fore Taske

Do's not diuide the Sunday from the weeke,

What might be toward, that this sweaty haft

Doth make the Night ioynt-Labourer with the day:

Who is't that can informe me?

Hor. That can I,

Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month--
Let me not think on't--Frailty, thy name is woman!--
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer--

PRIDE
AND
PREJUDICE:

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "SENSE AND SENSIBILITY."

VOL. I.

London:
PRINTED FOR T. EGERTON,
MILITARY LIBRARY, WHITEHALL.
1813.

“She has nothing, in short, to recommend her, but being an excellent walker. I shall never forget her appearance this morning. She really looked almost wild.”

"She did, indeed, Louisa. I could hardly keep my countenance. Very nonsensical to come at all! Why must she be scampering about the country, because her sister had a cold? Her hair, so untidy, so blowsy!"

"Yes, and her petticoat; I hope you saw her petticoat, six inches deep in mud, I am absolutely certain; and the gown which had been let down to hide it not doing its office."

"Your picture may be very exact, Louisa," said Bingley; "but this was all lost upon me. I thought Miss Elizabeth Bennet looked remarkably well when she came into the room this morning. Her dirty petticoat quite escaped my notice."

Excerpt From: Austen, Jane. "Pride and Prejudice."



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GEORGE PUTTENHAM (*THE ARTE OF ENGLISH POESIE* (1589))

Our maker therefore at these dayes shall not follow Piers plowman nor Gower nor Lydgate nor yet Chaucer, for their language is now out of vse with vs: neither shall he take the termes of Northern-men, such as they vse in dayly talke, whether they be noble men or gentlemen, or of their best clarkes all is a matter: nor in effect any speach vsed beyond the riuer of Trent, though no man can deny but that theirs is the purer English Saxon at this day, yet it is not so Courtly nor so currant as our Southerne English is, no more is the far Westerne mā's [man's] speach: ye shall therefore take the vsuall speach of the Court, and that of London and the shires lying about London within lx. myles, and not much aboue.



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Puttenham, a young poet in need of patronage, thus argues that the “best speech” is found in London and the Home Counties, more specifically at the Royal Court.



TEXT QUALITY BY OSTENSIVE DEFINITION

Defining what is 'good language' is not easy, especially if you cannot refer to a pre-existing standard, such as a **national reference variety** which was the case in 16th century English.

'Reference variety' ≈ the uncodified status of a focused set of norms in the speakers' minds before code fixation and prescription



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One possibility is to resort to ostensive definitions, and refer to **a group of speakers** who are the target.



Language use has **spontaneous norms** which arise from use, bottom up and **imposed norms** (aka standards), which are instituted top down.

Code fixation for a standard - best seen as a **continuous process** even where a national standard, i.e. fixed code exists

The idea of defining a linguistic ideal by pointing to a group of speakers comes from the 1500s, but then, like now, was highly divisive - among native speakers.



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Example: UK schools.

E.g. a case in the West Midlands, where the banned list of terms (transcriptions as in the original document) included:



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1. "They was" instead of "they were."
2. "I cor do that" instead of "I can't do that."
3. "Ya" instead of "you."
4. "Gonna" instead of "going to".
- 5 "Woz" instead of "was."
6. "I day" instead of "I didn't."
7. "I ain't" instead of "I haven't."
8. "Somefink" instead of "something."
9. "It wor me" instead of "it wasn't me."
10. "Ay?" instead of "pardon?"

(From Dixon 2013)



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grammar

pronunciation

social
appropriateness



AND FOREIGNERS?

Even untrained listeners attuned to spotting ‘foreign accents’

“a single prosodic feature associated with a low-status variety was enough to make listeners also hear what was in reality not there”:

intonation patterns were of a particular variety associated with immigrants, and listeners reported hearing grammatical ‘errors’ that were not, in fact, made.

(Bijvoet and Fraurud, 2011 in Cunningham forthc.)



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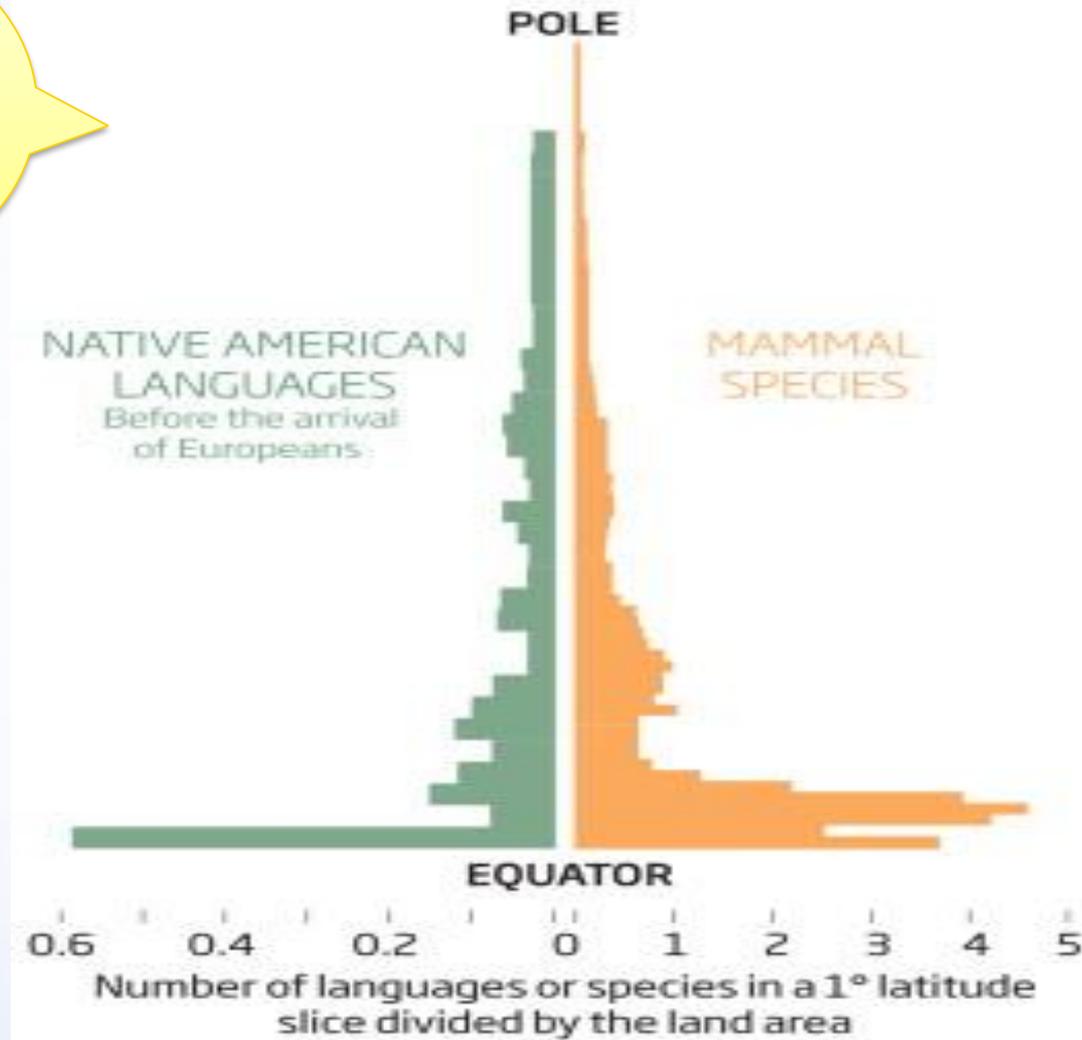
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Equatorial chatter

Languages seem to follow Rapoport's rule, which holds that species richness is greatest at the equator and declines towards the poles, as this chart for North America shows

Languages do not just unite, they also divide



FOR LINGUISTS, THE PREJUDICE NOT THERE?

”Corpora of ELF, e.g. VOICE (Seidlhofer 2004) or ELFA (Mauranen 2006), are new contenders on the scene, and raise the whole question of whether NSs’ language should any longer be regarded as the standard to aim at, as it has been unquestioningly considered in the past.”

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But the
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SPECIAL STATUS OF WRITING IN ACADEMIA

Educational achievement shown and assessed in written form

Research findings need to be inscribed in text before they count



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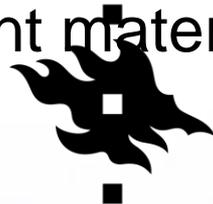
Change is in the air: over the last 10-15 years or so we have seen notable growth of **visual products** in student coursework and in visual research journals.



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Publication makes or breaks careers –
even though print material is getting
rarer



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WRITING: DISCOURSES OF STANDARDS

SELF (Studying in English as a Lingua Franca; University of Helsinki; 2008-2010) project:

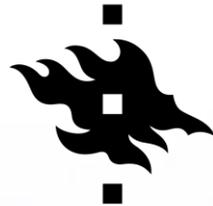
Ethnographic approach to speaking and writing in ELF

- teachers and students made more comments on written than spoken text
 - comments on writing more often concerned with correctness Hynninen (2012), > acceptability wider for speech than writing
- **Academic authorities also assumed linguistic authority** – over NSs (Hynninen 2016, Mauranen 2013)
- Similarly in university administration (Mortensen 2017; forthc)



ACADEMIC RESEARCH PUBLICATION

- Highly **regulated** domain,
for **research quality**
as well as **language**:
- Journals - 'texts checked by a native speaker'.
- Nevertheless, language revisers' comments can be trivial (Ventola & Mauranen 1991),
- counterproductive (Owen, 2011),
- or lead to shifts in the knowledge claims authors wish to make (Lillis & Curry, 2010).



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Fewer and fewer journals do it; awareness of the ill-advised gatekeeping is growing



Even where revisers' comments and suggestions are more helpful,

granting native speakers of **English** such authority position in **international publishing**

no longer reflects the needs of the contemporary world.

Two major problems:

- (1) **Operationalisation** of quality by **pointing** to the 'native speaker' (ostensive definition)
- (2) **Reifying** the notion of '**good text**'



FOUR MYTHS ABOUT 'GOOD WRITING'



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(1) “GOOD WRITING EQUALS GOOD THINKING”

British university teachers (not from language departments) talking about student writing:

“... can you divorce the organisation from the argument – no, if the paper is very disorganised then the writer hasn't understood the issue”

“... lucidity is a great virtue, textual presentation is important, I think it's a kind of mental discipline”

Text-level problems are taken to reveal cognitive capacities or working standards :

“foreigners on the whole make very short paragraphs, which indicates they haven't actually explored that particular point fully”.



(1) "GOOD WRITING EQUALS GOOD THINKING"

British university teachers (noting) student writing:

However, the same scientists and scholars wrote differently in their L1 and in L2 English (e.g. Mauranen 1993)

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(2) “GOOD GRAMMAR EQUALS GOOD WRITING”

The default assumption in language education and testing.

British university lecturers (not linguists) talk about grammatical correctness in foreign exchange students different terms: Grammatical errors forgiven

"... as long as you're getting your point across, it can be done rather roughly, with some hiccups etc, that would lose some degree of high marks, but what you say is more important than how you say it ... more mechanical skills like spelling and grammar, at this level I don't pay much attention... only if they lose meaning through bad grammar"



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Linguists appear to impose different standards on academic writing from non-linguists



(3) “YOU CAN TELL A GOOD TEXT WHEN YOU SEE ONE”

different perceptions of “good writing”:

- writing communities in different research fields
e.g. laboratory sciences vs philosophy , linguists vs. scientists
- different textual practices, e.g. amount of metadiscourse
- linguistic features with no obvious relation to the kind of research :
textual conventions that carry special social meanings within their writing communities.



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INTERNALISED CONVENTIONS: TEXTUAL ORGANISATION IN ELF SCIENCE ARTICLES

Socialisation into the research community manifest in the overall text patterns

CARS type basic pattern common (Swales 1990)

Many papers rhetorically relatively implicit, and seem based on a 'content logic'

Typical paragraph structuring:

start with prospective generalisations, then move on to specifications.

Specifications typically report previous research

Degree of standardness varies,

but relatively infrequent morphosyntactic non-standard features

apart from syntactic shortcuts and ignoring verb-noun agreement



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Laitinen (2018): on structural grounds, ELF is a variety among other varieties of English. It resembles World Englishes, but in written form, very close to the 'core' L1 Englishes.



WRITING REGULATION FROM JOURNALS: RESEARCH QUALITY IS PRIMARY

In 2012, *Cell* editorial:
editors and reviewers should not criticize non-native writers for their
grammar,
but look beyond language errors and evaluate the science



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Nonnative speakers of English can write effective manuscripts, despite errors of grammar, syntax, and usage, if the manuscripts are clear, simple, logical, and concise. (We note that native speakers of English sometimes write manuscripts exhibiting good grammar, yet filled with muddled and confusing logic.)

When possible, reviewers and editors of manuscripts should look beyond errors in grammar, syntax, and usage, and evaluate the science.

It is inappropriate to reject or harshly criticize manuscripts from nonnative speakers of English based on errors of grammar, syntax, or usage alone.

[...]

(Editorial of *Cell*, Drubin & Kellogg 2012)



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(4) “THE GOOD WRITER IS THE SOLO WRITER”

Times Higher Education Wednesday 3 July 2019:

RATES OF SOLO AUTHORSHIP SO LOW

Data editor Simon Baker [crunches the figures](#) and finds that **single-author publications** made up **21.4 per cent** of articles, reviews and conference papers indexed in Elsevier’s Scopus database in **2001**, a share that had almost halved **by 2017 to 10.8 per cent**.



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INTERNATIONAL CO-AUTHORSHIP

UK research papers with EU partners

2005-2014 almost 40%

2015 60%

(Royal Society, n.d.)

US research papers with partners from countries like South Korea, China, Japan, Brazil, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, France, Sweden and Spain.

2016 almost 40%

(NSF 2016)



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Collaborative writing and co-authorship are growing trends in research writing,

⇒ take it on board with student writing – even high stakes writing?

Cf also digital products:

- digital research journals
- students' science coursework or experiment reports, products that increasingly count as students' science reports.

All of these are **collaborative efforts**.



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EXPLICITNESS IS EFFECTIVE IN INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE

Metadiscourse in ELF PhD examiner's reports:

In addition *I, however, have some remarks*, both positive and negative, *which I present below*.

Philosophically I would like to comment on the statement which says...

It should also be noted that <NAME S3> had high quality... *It should be noted that* the review of Paper 4. appears somewhat vague...

This is not a very good scientific hypothesis, since the statement assumes the result I do not think this attitude sprinkles the thesis, *but I feel it is correct to underline that* an open mind is of great importance in science.

I am pleased to recommend that the doctoral candidate is granted permission to defend the dissertation.



WHO GETS PUBLISHED?

In 2011, most scientific publications in English:

US

China

UK

Germany

Japan

France

Canada

Fast risers: Brazil, India, South Korea
(expected to surpass France & Japan by 2021)

(Royal Society 2011 *Knowledge, Networks and Nations*)



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WHO PUBLISHES?

2018: Proportional share of the US in all research domains on the decline

In 2011, most scientific publications in English:

US

China

UK

Germany

Japan

France

Canada

Overtook the US in 2017, with the largest research paper output (Scientific American, January 2018)

India surpassed Japan in 2017 (Sci. Am 2018)

Fast risers: Brazil, India, South Korea (expected to surpass France & Japan by 2021)

(Royal Society 2011 *Knowledge, Networks and Nations*)



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Both authors and readers of academic texts are international
Increasingly also the gatekeepers: editors, reviewers...

Research science seems to approach the ideal of an “international community” ... this leads to the thesis that the nation-state plays a diminishing role in research science
(Franzmann, Jansen & Münte (2015))

It also means a **renegotiation of writing practices**

These are **social practices**, not just linguistic (cf. Mortensen forthc.)



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THE DIGITAL AGE

- Landscapes of writing have undergone major change:
 - Forms of **digital communication (blogs, wikis, tweets, electronic journals...)** have altered the practices and venues of public writing, and the gatekeeping activities around it.
 - Shifting boundaries of public and private spheres;
 - Linguistic borderlines less distinct;
 - Language mixing common, blurred boundaries of speech and writing
- => transforming print-based notions of genre, register and audiences



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Doing science in 'real time', in front of an audience

=> transformations of genre, register and audiences

Showing, not just telling.
Back to the 16th and 17th centuries - Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle?



DIALOGIC METADISOURSE

In ELF research blog comment threads

I would argue that this scenareo...

I have to say -- apart from it being always a useful...

Just to be clear, I don't mean to imply that string...

I absolutely agree with you that a language is more than...

Moreover, could you please substantiate the following statement

And what is this question supposed to mean?

@<NAME C2> *Just a quick response from my mobile:*

Dear <NAME C11>, *I would love to see something else than vacuous postmodern babbling in the text above, but I simply can't.*



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TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING IN ELF?

- Raising awareness of the socially contingent nature of ‘good writing’
- Most academics find themselves in multilingual environments, move skilfully and purposefully between languages, make informed choices about the languages they publish in, based on their perceptions of their field, their career prospects, or their individual preferences (e.g. Bocanegra 2014; McGrath 2014).

reproduce and regenerate practices in their fields:

Fields with a large proportion of EAL academics more relaxed and pragmatic in relation to ENL standards than where ENL speakers dominate (Gnutzmann & Rabe 2014).



Highlighting the importance of competence in the international research culture over lexico-grammatical native-likeness (*Cell* example)

By taking advantage of the digital age:

Collaborative writing

In secondary school classrooms (Grazzi)

In fanfiction (Franceschi)

In research blogs (McGrath)



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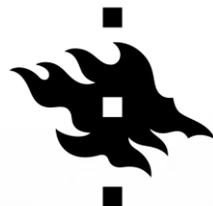
LINGUISTIC STANDARDS?

Effectiveness vs. convention

as a leading criterion of 'high standards' in language use

Replacing arbitrary conventions of (Standard English) correctness by **intercultural effectiveness**

likely to improve quality



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LINGUISTIC STANDARDS?

Effectiveness vs. convention
as a leading criterion of 'high standards' in language use

Replacing arbitrary conventions of (Standard English) correctness
by **intercultural effectiveness**

likely to improve quality

No evidence to
back up the belief
that correctness
improves
communicative
effectiveness
(Pitzl 2017)



SUCCESSFUL WRITING STRATEGIES

- **Explicitness**, both backgrounding and linguistic, for example metadiscourse
- **Main points** clear (research questions with answers)
- Sufficient **discussion** of findings
- Organization: **oriented to the audience** - a heterogeneous international readership



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COMMUNITY AND ELF

As scientific English adapts to the needs of contemporary scientific community, it reflects the international, dynamic, fast-moving nature of research communication today

⇒ Major changes in respect of academic English:

- < number of academics using ELF
- < changes in publication practices for a digitalised multi-modal academia
- < changing power relations in the world



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CONCLUSION: IS THERE A MATCH BETWEEN ELF AND 'A GOOD TEXT'?

YES!

Spontaneous norms vs. imposed norms (standards):

ELF- using scientists and scholars change English (spontaneous) norms relatively fast, even if standards follow more slowly



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The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features a base of various shades of blue, from light sky blue to deep navy. Overlaid on this are numerous splatters and blotches of a vibrant green, some of which are circular and resemble ink or paint. A prominent, thin, dark green line runs diagonally from the upper left towards the lower right. Another thicker, lighter green line runs horizontally across the lower third of the image. The overall texture is grainy and layered, suggesting a fabric or canvas-like surface. The text 'THANK YOU!' is centered in the middle of the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

THANK YOU!

THE WRELFA CORPUS

Written English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings

www.helsinki.fi/elfa

The first corpus of written ELF
Completed 2015; 1.7 million words of written ELF

Three parts:

- (1) PhD examiner's reports (from UH)
- (2) Research blogs (+ comments)
- (3) Academic research articles (< **SciELF** corpus, international collaboration)



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