LANGUAGE IN USE

Lexical Inventiveness and Conventionality in English as a Lingua Franca and English Translations

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What used to be known as English, as an international, global or world language is increasingly being described as ELF, or English as a lingua franca, which can be defined 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" (Seidlhofer 2011: 7). This definition is designed not to exclude native speakers of English. Of course ELF is an applied linguists' term; most users probably just think they are speaking English. It is assumed by most EFL researchers that the vast majority of (non-native) ELF users are not attempting to imitate the lexicogrammatical norms of any given native English speaking community. Certainly ELF, as used in Europe, tends to show various lexico-grammatical and phraseological differences from the main native English varieties. This article considers lexical inventiveness in ELF, as revealed by two major ELF corpora – ELFA and VOICE – and goes on to contrast this with the singular lack of inventiveness in the lexical choices found in many translations into English.[1]

The link between ELF and translation is – as Anna Mauranen has argued – that language contact and bilingual processing in general tend to lead to lexical simplification. This is found in both learner language and ELF, as well as in translation, in which a tendency to overuse core vocabulary and under-represent rarer words has been posited as a universal feature, or at least a very strong tendency. This results in many translations seeming stylistically rather "flat" (not to mention weary, stale and unprofitable). Mauranen (2012: 117) argues that "bilingual processing biases lexical choices towards the most frequent, presumably the most deeply entrenched, vocabulary. That translations show the same tendency means it is not just imperfect learning that is at stake." The difference between ELF and translation is that the vast majority of ELF speakers clearly have "less deeply entrenched memory representations" (p. 37) than translators working in their first languages, but their lexical simplification leads to lexical inventiveness.

Shaky entrenchment and fuzzy processing

ELF corpora show speakers using a smattering of words that are not found in native English. Some of these are borrowed from other languages. ELF speakers are by definition bi- or plurilingual; English is in contact with most of the world's languages; and there are a great many ELF speakers whose English is influenced by (and contains recognizable transfer features from) their L1s. Thus we should expect occasional manifestations of crosslinguistic interaction, including borrowing, collocational transfer, calques (literal translations of idioms and fixed expressions), code-switching, etc. (see MacKenzie 2012a). In line with François Grosjean's "bilingual or holistic view of

[1] ELFA is the English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings corpus, consisting of lectures, presentations, seminars, thesis defences and conference discussions recorded at the universities of Helsinki and Tampere in Finland; http://www.helsinki.fi/englanti/elfa/elfacorpus.VOICE is the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English; http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/.

bilingualism," which highlights "the coexistence and constant interaction of the languages" (2010: 75), we should expect bilinguals to "make interferences (ephemeral deviations due to the influence of the other deactivated language) even in the most monolingual of situations" (2008: 46). This results in both one-off (or nonce) borrowings, and more established loans from speakers' L1s.

More interestingly, we also find on-the-spot approximations of established English words, and one-off creations. These can be interpreted, depending on your point of view, as the consequence of imperfect learning, or of the shaky entrenchment and fuzzy processing to be expected in a second language (L2), or – alternatively – as tokens of verbal creativity. Examples of such approximate or deviant or creative words include *anniversity*, *curation*, *dictature*, *elevative*, *importancy*, *lightful*, *overbridging*, *removement*, *slowering*, and *womanist* in VOICE, and *addictation*, *assaultment*, *colonisators*, *controversiality*, *instable*, *interpretee*, *maximalise*, *plagiate*, *unuseful* and *visiblelise* in ELFA.

The negative account of such usages would be that they are quite simply errors, the result of the less than perfect language acquisition abilities of post-adolescents and adults, who prefer regularity and transparency to irregularity and opacity. This leads to reduction – there is less of a language as compared to the form in which it is spoken by native speakers (although lexical inventiveness counters this trend); admixture – L2 interference, interaction or transfer; and simplification – the regularization of irregularities, an increase in lexical and morphological transparency, a loss of redundancy, etc. (see, e.g., Trudgill 2011: 35, 67).

A more neutral account of such approximate usages is that they are an inevitable consequence of bilingual processing. Mauranen states that "the nature of processing is fuzzy in most areas of cognition, including speech perception and production" (2012: 41), and that "at the cognitive level, approximation is involuntary and results from realities of perception, memory, and access" (pp. 41-2). Furthermore, "a complex environment like ELF" – generally involving different speakers with different English usages in every single interaction – "seems to require stretching the tolerance of fuzziness wider than usual" (p. 42).

Thus contrary to the "usage-based" theory of language, according to which frequently encountered linguistic items become "entrenched" (Langacker 1987) or sedimented or routinized or automatized, and leave a neuronal trace that facilitates their re-occurrence, ELF shows signs of intermittent variation arising from regularization and simplification. For example, in ELFA, alongside many standard uses of irregular past tenses, we also find a number of regularized past tenses, including *binded*, *bringed*, *digged*, *drawed*, *feeled*, *felled down*, *fighted*, *heared*, *losed*, *meaned*, *striked*, *stucked* and *teached*, and not-quite-regularized past participles including *breaken*, *choosen*, *growned*, *sawn* (for *saw*) and *wonned*. These are used by speakers showing a high level of competence and fluency in English, who sometimes also use the standard form in the same or another speech-turn. Another simplification strategy found in ELF appears to be "use the negative prefix of your choice": ELFA and VOICE include, among others, *disbenefits*, *discrease*, *injust*, *inofficial*, *intransparency*, *uncapable*, *undirectly*, *unpossible*, *unrespect* and *unsecure*.

Many other non-standard words found in ELF corpora result from word formation processes that are widely attested in both native English and the New Englishes of Africa and Asia, as well as in the creation of false or pseudo-Anglicisms in many languages. These include affixation (prefixes and suffixes), compounding, blending, conversion, modification, and shortening of the base (backformation and truncations) (see Plag 2003). False Anglicisms are coinages that resemble English words, but which would not be recognized or understood by monolingual native speakers of English. Examples from French, German and Italian include new compounds of free morphemes, such as *autostop* (hitchhiking), *recordwoman* (record holder) and *skipass* (liftpass or ski-lift pass), ellipses of compounds (*basket* for basketball, *cocktail* for cocktail party), clippings of parts of words (*happy end*), analogies (*footing*, on the model of rowing, riding, etc., and following the widespread authentic Anglicism *football*), and semantic shifts or meaning extensions, such as the Italian *mister* for football coach or trainer, and *box* for lock-up garage. They can also be metaphorical shifts, such as the Italian *bomber* for a prolific goalscorer, and synecdochic or meronymic shifts, such as *flipper* for the game of pinball and a pinball machine (see Furiassi 2010; MacKenzie 2012b). Some of these false Anglicisms get transferred to ELF.

These processes can also be seen at work in the non-standard lexis found in ELFA. There are backformations, including *colonisators*, *introducted*, *presentate*, *registrate* and *standardisate*. There are truncations like *automously*, *categoration*, *decentralation*, *phenomen* and *significally*. Suffixation, conversion and modification, or what Mauranen (p. 126) calls the "extension of productive derivational principles beyond their conventional boundaries," can be seen in a large number of words, including the approximate or invented verbs *intersectioning*, *resoluting*, *satisfactionate*, *securiting* and *successing*; the nouns *analytism*, *assimilisation*, *chemics*, *competensity*, *controversiality*, *governmentality*, *interventing*, *methodics*, *militarians* and *paradigma*; and the non-standard adjectives and adverbs *deliminated*, *devaluarised*, *disturbant*, *emperious*, *femininised*, *homogenic*, *intentiously*, *methodologic*, *nationalisised*, *proletariatic*, *quitely*, *strategical* and *theoretitised*. As Mauranen (2012: 127) says, "Morphology tends to be potentially overproductive in natural languages. While convention and acquired preference keep it in check in stable language communities, its possibilities are liberally utilised by newcomers such as non-natives".

Although L1 interference (or interaction) is always a possible factor in the use of non-standard words, particularly in Europe where many languages share cognate lexis, L3 (or L4, etc.) interference is also possible. For example, while *phenomen* was said by a speaker of German (which has *Phänomen*), and *homogene* and *prognose* by a speaker of Finnish (which has *homogeeninin* and *prognoosi*), *instable* and *sportive* (athletic) used by German speakers, *synthetise* used by an Italian speaker, and *performant* (efficient, competitive) used by a Romanian speaker, could all be transfers from L3 French.

There are also a few non-standard words in ELFA which fill genuine semantic gaps, including the very useful pronoun *themself*, the noun *interpretee* (a person being interpreted), and the verb *visiblelise* (to make something visible to other people, which is not the same as *visualize*, which is to form a mental image), as in "… i liked very much the graphs that you have er er put inside so and they are very they visiblelise very nicely your arguments …" (ELFA UDEFD020).

Hearers rarely seem to converge with speakers by copying such non-standard forms. They very occasionally use a standard version of a non-standard form in the next speech-turn (an embedded correction), but corpus evidence suggests that ELF users are more inclined to let them pass (Firth 1996: 243), or indeed that they go unnoticed by both speakers and hearers. The immediate co-texts of non-standard words like those listed above, with what Mauranen calls their "simultaneous deviance and recognisability with respect to a standard form," show that they "were not repaired by the speakers as if slips of the tongue, and none caused any noticeable reactions in their extended contexts" (2012:103). None of them seemed to provoke any ripples or breakdowns in communication.

Hence taking processing shortcuts and resorting to approximate forms of the language – albeit forms which are reasonably close to target forms – is an efficient way of using limited resources economically. This endorsement of approximation obviously contrasts with the orthodox second language acquisition (SLA) position, which assumes that "lexical errors" should and will disappear as learners achieve greater familiarity with the target language (see, e.g., Winford 2003: 220). This does not always appear to be the case in ELF.

Lexical creativity?

Where Mauranen sees largely involuntary approximations resulting from a lack of firm entrenchment in long-term declarative memory, the ELF researchers in Vienna working on VOICE tend to see acts of creativity. For example, Pitzl *et al.* (2008) analyze "coinages" and lexical innovation in a sub-corpus of VOICE in relation to established word formation processes. They describe some of the coinages they find as filling permanent gaps in the lexicon – e.g. *forbiddenness* for "the state of being forbidden." They also argue that suffixes can be used not to change the word class of the base form but to *emphasize* the original class, to increase clarity, as in *increasement*, which is clearly a noun, whereas *increase* could be either a noun or a verb. Another example is *supportancy* instead of *support*. Similarly, *characteristical* and *linguistical* emphasize adjectivalness (*characteristic* and *linguistics* are nouns). Prefixes can also be changed – e.g. in the use of *unformal* rather than *informal* – in the aid of regularization and, consequently, clarity, as the *in-* prefix can also mean *in* or *into*.

Barbara Seidlhofer (2011: 120) describes such usages in ELF as "a different but not a deficient way of realizing the virtual language, or playing the English language game." Native English or the standard language "represents what has been encoded, but not what *can* be" (p. 117); "To be creative is to exploit the constitutive rules of the virtual language but to do so without fully adhering to established regulative conventions, quite simply because those conventions are not necessarily appropriate to communicative purpose" (p. 124).

Yet many of the words in VOICE that Pitzl *et al.* classify as "lexical innovations" and "coinages," as they are not found in the reference dictionary they used (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 7th edn*), are attested elsewhere (in the actual rather than the virtual language), as they readily concede (2008: 39). For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary* includes the following, with the dates of the first recorded uses: *conformal* 1647, *cosmopolitanism* 1828, *devaluated* 1898, *devotedness* 1668, *examinate* 1560, *forbiddenness* 1647, *importancy* 1540, *increasement* (*encreasement*) 1509, *non-transparent* 1849, *pronunciate* 1652, *re-enrol* 1789, *re-send* 1534, and *urbanistic* 1934. Of course the *OED* is a historical dictionary, and some of these words are wholly obsolete in native English, but others are still widely used. *Forbiddenness* does indeed fill a lexical gap, but it first filled it a long time ago. Then again, it may feel to individual speakers as if *forbiddenness* is being coined online and *ad hoc* each time it is used today, although it gets about 18,000 hits on Google (an unreliable statistic), compared with only one in the BNC (British National Corpus) and one in COCA (the Corpus of Contemporary American). But the fact that Pitzl *et al.* list *econometric* and *webmail* as "coinages" rather suggests that they should have used a larger reference dictionary.

Furthermore, Pitzl *et al.* prefer to describe what other analysts might consider simple performance errors, or instances of crosslinguistic interaction, as creative *ad hoc* coinages. For example, they analyze *manufacters*, *contination* and *diversication* in terms of deliberate reduction, rather than as examples of involuntary approximation due to a lack of entrenchment (or as production errors), and describe *re-emplace*, in "*… in two years the person who will re-emplace me …*," as a coinage "derived from the base word *place* via attaching two prefixes" (p. 34), before conceding that "another interpretation is possible" – the speaker is French and so might simply be borrowing (and slightly adapting) the French *remplacer*. Yes indeed. All in all, alternative analyses suggest that Pitzl *et al.* have rather fewer examples than they think that are clearly creative, on-the-spot nonce-formations (most of which have also been produced on-the-spot by many other people). Languages are indeed always forever emergent, but many supposed "innovations" in ELF are just as likely to be the unintended consequence of a lack of entrenchment through repetition. Moreover, given that hearers are always prospecting, making guesses about what is coming next, rather than listening carefully to each word, it is quite likely that many hearers fail to notice "creative coinages," especially those involving suffixes.

Yet non-standard lexis, whether it results from creativity or just fuzzy processing, does indeed enrich and enliven ELF, and for the corpus analyst it makes reading ELF transcripts a very different experience from that of reading translations. As already mentioned, because bilingual processing generally leads to lexical simplification, translators tend to rely on the most frequent words at the expense of rarer ones. Using some of the "virtual language" of ELF would certainly make many translations into English more *interesting*.

ELF and translation

By comparing large multilingual corpora of translated texts with untranslated language, various researchers have posited the existence of *universal features of translation* (or at the very least regularities or strong tendencies). These include tendencies towards explicitation, disambiguation and simplification, a strong preference for grammatical conventionality, a noticeable cleaning away of repetitions occurring in source texts, a tendency to over-represent typical features of the target language, so that they appear more frequently in translations than in original texts in the target language, and a tendency to under-represent rare or unique items in the target language (see Mauranen and Kujamäki 2004). A comparable list of the failings of translators is given by the French translator and theorist Antoine Berman (1985), who describes a "system of textual deformation that operates in every translation" (p. 278), and accuses translators of being culpable of twelve "deforming tendencies," namely rationalization, clarification, expansion, ennoblement, qualitative and quantitative impoverishment, and the destruction of rhythms, underlying networks of significations, linguistic patternings, vernacular networks, expressions and idioms, and superimposed languages.[2]

Quantitative impoverishment is essentially lexical loss – translations typically repeat some words and so contain fewer signifiers than the source text, as translators of many text types (including instrumental, operative, and expressive or literary ones) overuse the more frequent words in a language at the expense of less common ones.

Things are even worse in a pluricentric language like English. David Bellos (2011: 191) explains what happens to his French-English fiction translations. He writes the way he likes, although he has to "make choices in every paragraph about what variety of written English to use," because of the many small differences among the major native and nativized varieties of English. Then a copy editor makes his prose conform to the style appropriate to the publishing house's target audience, which is usually international. Consequently, a translation of fiction into English loses all "quirks of language that mark it as belonging to any geographical variety." You end up with "'English-*minus*' – ideally, a common center ground of the English language, stripped of vocabulary and turns of phrase that are not understood or understood in different ways" in different Anglophone countries.

This absence of any indication of origin is in many ways the contrary of English spoken as a lingua franca. In fact many ELF speakers do naturally what some translators labour to make fictional characters do – they speak (to native English ears) like

[2] Berman (1999: 60) later added a thirteenth tendency, *homogenization*, which results from the combined effects of the first six tendencies.

foreigners. The 18th century *encyclopédiste* Jean-Baptiste le Rond d'Alembert had a suggestion as to how foreignness should be represented in translation:

> The way foreigners speak [French] is the model for a good translation. The original should speak our language not with the superstitious caution we have for our native tongue, but with a noble freedom that allows features of one language to be borrowed in order to embellish another. Done in this way, a translation may possess all the qualities that make it commendable – a natural and easy manner, marked by the genius of the original alongside the added flavor of a homeland created by its foreign coloring. (D'Alembert 1763, translated and quoted by Bellos 2011: 45)

The parallels with ELF are evident: successful ELF speakers, with "a natural and easy manner" (designed to communicate successfully rather than comply with prescriptive norms) and "a noble freedom," embellish English with features from their L1s and the "virtual language" of English. ELF speakers today might sound to native English ears the way D'Alembert thought translated literary characters (and translations in general) should sound, back in the 18th century.

Bellos points out, however, that there are disadvantages to adding such a foreign colouring to a translation. Firstly, it would be, by definition, an addition to an entirely natural source text. Secondly, it only works if target language readers have some basic knowledge of the source language, allowing them to recognize non-standard morphology, lexis, syntax or spelling as being a representation of a particular language. To put it another way, "The project of writing translations that preserve in the way they sound some trace of the work's 'authentic foreignness' is really applicable only when the original is not very foreign at all" (p. 52).

Consequently a better recommendation to English translators – translating for native speakers rather than a target audience of ELF users – would simply be to resist the so-called universals or deforming tendencies of translation, and the lexical (and grammatical and phraseological) impoverishment and conventionality to which it gives rise. It really should not be the case that there is more lexical inventiveness to be found in an ELF corpus than in translations into Standard English. Translators do not in fact need to find "a different […] way of realizing the virtual language, or playing the English language game," as Seidlhofer (2011: 120) describes ELF speakers as doing; they merely need to use the full resources of the actual language, including rarer (and perhaps less well-entrenched) vocabulary and turns of phrase.

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Why Take an Interest in Research Blogging?[1]

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Blogs have only been with us for just under fifteen years, but in this short time they have established themselves as a permanent feature of digital life. Their functions have proliferated to cover a vast variety of topic areas in different domains – personal, factual, and fictional. It is the personal blog that seems to be the prototypical representative of its species in general awareness, and it has also attracted the most research. But other blog types may be equally important – and equally influential.

While many universities actively employ and encourage blogging, blogs remain a relative newcomer in the academic community, and have not found unconditional support. Universities tend to promote them as discussion fora on issues of university policy, but still leave them in the margins for more central roles in scientific activity. The scholarly community has been rather slow to warm to blogging (see, e.g. Parr 2012), although we also see pioneers eagerly embracing this medium of outreach. However, with digital publishing now mainstream, a widening debate on open access, and increasing awareness of the need to ensure public understanding of science, potentially effective web genres like blogs should be of central interest to academia. Moreover, research is the flagship of universities in the public eye – it is what rouses curiosity and invites confidence in universities as important agents working for the common good. The Eurobarometer on Scientific Research in the Media (from 2007: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_282_en.pdf) indicates that the

[1] This is based on my presentation "Edutainment, standards and hybridity: Should we take science blogs seriously?" at the ESSE 11 conference in Istanbul, Bogazici University, 4-8 September 2012. A full paper is forthcoming as Mauranen, A. 'Hybridism, edutainment, and doubt: science blogging finding its feet.' *Nordic Journal of English Studies.*

majority of Europeans would rather receive scientific information from scientists than journalists (52% vs. 14%, respectively). It is thus from us rather than journalists that people would like to hear about recent findings and interpretations, thereby undermining the convenient traditional division of labour. As information is now primarily sought over the web in any case, pressure on scientists and scholars gets stronger by the day.

Research into blogs has come up with typologies based on either content features (Blood 2000; Krishnamurthy 2002; Herring et al. 2004), or, less commonly, linguistic features (Grieve et al. 2011). A third blog typology, based on typified social action, was suggested by Miller and Shepherd (2009): the personal blog and the ‘public-affairs blog’. In sum, all analyses, despite their different points of departure, have in essence converged on two principal types: the ‘personal’ and the ‘thematic’. Clearly, it is the ‘thematic’ type that comes closest to blogging in the academic world.

Is the blog a genre?

Digital media have rekindled an interest in the study of genres, already a well-established field of discourse analysis. Researchers have asked what happens to genres when they migrate to the web and assume new shapes, and whether digital genres are really new, not just new guises for established ones (Bruns and Jacobs 2006; Giltrow and Stein 2009; Rowley-Jolivet and Campagna 2011). It might be more expedient to talk about several blog genres rather than one, or even an unlimited number, given that blogs keep expanding to new domains. Could the thematic blog be one genre? Or would some of its subcategories, say, the political blog, or the science blog, be genres in their own right?

An enquiry into the generic status of blogs could start with the social action they perform, which takes genre to be a type of social action recognised in a speech community or context (Miller 1984). Speech communities tend to show their recognition of genres in their naming practices. Undoubtedly ‘blog’ is a widely recognised name for a type of communicative action, even among non-bloggers. But what would be the ‘community’?

Miller and Shepherd (2004) talk about “self-organized communities that support blogging”. And what seems to happen is that certain blogs or interconnected blogs attract networks of like-minded people around them. People who actively follow and contribute to a particular blog or a set of related blogs form a kind of self-selected, possibly also self-organised, group.

However, the self-organised networks or groups around blogs are completely open, members can remain anonymous, and blogging does not seem to *arise* out of these communities. Blogs in this interpretation would hardly count as genres in Swales’s (1990) sense of belonging to, or being possessions of, their discourse communities – rather, if we accept that a group of regular followers of a blog constitute a community of some kind, then the relationship would be the reverse: it is the genre that determines the community (as suggested in Mauranen 1993). This puts priority on the notion of ‘context’ or ‘situation’ stressed in Miller (1984), as a more suitable point of departure for an amorphous network bundle such as the Internet. The web is unmistakably a communicative context, even if not a community. Within that context, ‘blog’ is an identifiable and well-recognised name for a type of communicative activity. This implies that social contexts spawn communities around them rather than being necessarily embedded in the activities of pre-existing communities. Seen in this way, the intuitive solution that the blog is a genre also seems to work.

The question remains whether there is one genre or many. Despite sharing a generic name, the communicative ambitions of blogs can take different directions, as suggested by the typologies discussed above. Miller and Shepherd (2009) identify the personal blog and the public-affairs blog as separate genres, based on essentially situational concerns. In the end, whether we call the blog a genre or a supergenre or genre cluster consisting of separate genres is a matter of the analyst's decision – in folk terms, 'blog' is the prototypical genre name, and all the other types discussed here result from applying the analyst's perspective.

Where are blogs rooted?

A large family tree for blog genres was presented in Miller and Shepherd (2004), with the major branches of (1) filtering and directory services, (2) commentary, and (3) journal and diary. The last one seems weakly connected to the research blog, but the filtering and directory services (such as the clipping service and the edited anthology), together with commentaries (the pamphlet, the editorial, and the opinion column) seem relevant.

The filtering service was also the original blog function identified by Blood (2000) in the very early days of blogging, and it clearly constitutes a major blog function: the point is not to 'make information available', because the information is already there. Rather, it is to do information management work, in effect to sort out information that is relevant for a given purpose from that which is not, a task of growing importance in a world where the volume of new information appears overwhelming. It is thereby also a major source of influence, and possibly power. The other important ancestral branch is the commentary – which is manifest not only in blogs themselves, although they typically provide commentaries of recent science news or findings, but in the further comments they beget. In this respect, the great-great-grandchildren have reached far beyond their ancestors, as open and free commentary has become the landmark of web activity.

To the ancestral genres that Miller and Shepard identify, I would like to add one that is specifically relevant to the science blog, and that is the conference paper. It has essentially the overall structure of a blog: it starts off with a presentation, followed by discussion. Blog moderators act as chairpersons of a kind – if not giving out speaking turns, nevertheless monitoring the direction of the discussion.

The most obvious ancestor to the science blog might appear the popular science article. However, I am deliberately excluding it from this discussion, which is seeking to pinpoint the functions and uses of blogs from the active researcher's viewpoint.

What do bloggers say?

If we do not solely want to rely on the analyst's perspective, it is a good idea to look at bloggers' own comments on relevant issues of blogging. How research blogs talk about research blogging? One might imagine that with blogs an already familiar genre, they would not contain much in the way of self-commentary. But as it turns out, science blog discussions talked a good deal about both blogging and science in 2011-2012.

I followed two well-known scientific controversies and media events in the last few years, one in theoretical physics (Tommasso Dorigo's blog "A Quantum Diaries' Survivor", in Science 2.0), the other in microbiology (Rosie Redfield's "RRResearch"). The former was concerned with the search for the Higgs Boson, engaging in lengthy disputes around its existence. The latter was concerned with arsenic-consuming bacteria, a widely publicised piece of science news, based on a paper published in *Science* in 2010. Both blogs are kept by researcher scientists involved with the empirical work themselves, and they write about their own and related research in their field. Neither are therefore representatives of more conventional science journalism, where professional journalists do the reporting. Both are carried out in English, with the principal blogger a non-native speaker in one case, and a native in the other.

The relationship between blogs and science gives rise to warm controversies. Two discussion camps can readily be discerned, one that might be termed 'traditionalist', and the other 'pioneer'. The core of the messages from the traditionalists could be summed up as 'blogs are not real science': essentially the view is that scientific issues should not be addressed on platforms like blogs, which are not serious enough. Bloggers aspiring to publish science should instead resort to mainstream routes for publication, go through peer review and address the proper audience for their findings and questions, in other words other scientists.

In contrast, the opposing, 'pioneer' view holds that 'blogs are at the heart of science'. These commentators point out that free criticism is a core part of what science is about, and that getting new results out fast and making them widely known is in everybody's interest. The recently discussed flaws of peer reviewing were also brought in, and the need for the general public to know.

Commentators and bloggers from both camps thus showed high level of genre awareness: whether they were for or against blogging as a form of research writing, they certainly manifested a clear sense of what blogs are. Moreover, many also showed sensitivity to finer divisions, making references to the 'typical science blog' and differentiating a serious blogger from 'some anonymous physicist blogging'. The question where to draw the line between journalism and blogging was also raised. In this way, writers in the blogosphere were discerning subtle divisions within not only blogs, but even within science blogs. The commentators themselves are thus keen to participate in delineating genres – a further indication that genres are constructed in discourse, not in a pre-existing community.

What is new about the research blog?

Despite its long and respectable ancestry, blogging also brings about new practices. In an intriguing way, doing science by blogging realises some of the ideals upheld in 17th century debates around the foundation of the Royal Society and rising experimentalism (Shapin and Schaffer 1985), with its ensuing modes of scientific rhetoric (Gotti 1996; Gross et al. 2002). Blogs involve the collective witness, a group of experts or lay spectators who observe the experiment with their own eyes and are thereby able to agree on what constitutes Boyle's "matters of fact" (Shapin and Schaffer 1985:22). In the example below, the reporting seems to simulate the kind of eye-witness experience that was sought by early experimentalists like Boyle with collective observation: groups saw experiments performed and were thereby convinced of the veracity of the results. Clearly, the Internet community is not physically present at the experiment, but the usual gap between the actual experiment and the published report is much narrowed. Accompanying video material adds to the sense of participation in many cases.

> [...] Do we need to also consider contaminants that might have banded at a specific density in the gradient? The centrifugation is powerful enough to cause the heavy Cs+ ions to move down in the tube, might it also affect the distribution of other ions? What does Wikipedia say? (Ah, the correct term is 'isopycnic centrifugation'.) Nothing about other ions. CsCl gradients have typically been used to separate DNAs with different base compositions from each other (e.g. nuclear DNA from mitochondrial or plastid DNA); I don't know if anyone ever used them to separate DNA from soluble contaminants. **Bottom line:** If the LC-MS data shows arsenic in the DNA, we can polish up these DNA

purification steps. If it doesn't, we won't need to bother. (Redfield: RRResearch, January 01, 2012)

One of the 'knowledge-producing technologies' Shapin and Schaffer (1985) talked about was the literary technology, by means of which experimental events were made known to those not directly witnessing them. Here we can see the Web as a technology that enables the development of a hybrid between the actual live performance of an experiment on the one hand and writing it up on the other, with the inevitable distance of the latter from the demonstration. What is specific to the Internet is that the audiences are potentially enormous, and not restricted to a locality, like eye-witnesses, or to a community of experts as in the case of research articles. Equally importantly, the audiences are not confined to the role of spectators: one of the signature features of the digital medium is open commentary, and this genuinely new. Audiences are not only permitted to observe, but also invited to comment, ask questions, express doubt, criticise, and make suggestions. Assessment is not confined to peers.

Conclusion

In sum, this brief exploration into the world of blogs has suggested that we need to reconsider the relationship between community and context in order to settle the question of the blog as a genre: the new medium does alter the terms of determining genre. It is the context that seems to create genres, and communities emerge around them. The concept of the genre-regulating, pre-existing community does not apply to web-based genres.

Blogs have introduced new practices in academic language and academic reporting: they show researchers' comments on their procedures, reflections, and intentions, together with reports of what went wrong or did not work. The practice of involving audiences in open commentary means that unknown, heterogeneous, and varied audiences may participate in co-constructing research debates. This may not always be a blessing (Blanchard 2011), but it provides a new opportunity of direct involvement for anyone who is so inclined.

PS Are you already a blogger? Ray Carey from my research group keeps a blog on our activities (http://elfaproject.wordpress.com/) – take a look!

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Counting the Linguistic Riches of Europe

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The Language Rich Europe project ran from 2010 to early 2013 under the direction of the British Council and of Babylon, the Centre for Studies of the Multicultural Society at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. It was partially funded by the European Commission, with sponsorship from Rosetta Stone, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press; the last-mentioned has published the final report resulting from the project in over 20 languages. This book, entitled in English *Language Rich Europe: Trends in Policies and Practices for Multilingualism in Europe* and edited by Guus Extra and Kutlay Yağmur, has also appeared on a multilingual interactive website (http://www.language-rich.eu/). Another important output of the project is a report summarizing the findings and proposing plans of action; this report was presented in March 2013 to the European Commission and the Council of Europe, who will use it – we hope – to review their multilingualism policies. In each of the participating countries and regions, data were collected using a questionnaire that aimed to test how well European intergovernmental agreements had been implemented. My own involvement concerned Portugal, where I supervised the administration of the questionnaire by ILTEC, the Institute of Theoretical and Computational Linguistics in Lisbon, and wrote the descriptive chapter. The analysis of the data provided by the various countries and regions was carried out by the aforementioned Babylon Centre.

The study covers 15 member countries of the European Union – Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom – as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland and Ukraine. In Spain, additional research was carried out in Catalonia and the Basque Country, and in the UK, the research covered England, Scotland, Wales and

Northern Ireland separately, just as individual attention was given to Friesland in the Netherlands. The purpose of the project was to promote the exchange of views on language policies and practices in Europe with a focus on the use and learning of languages in daily life. All the members of the consortium, after completing data collection, went on to organize a series of national or regional meetings and workshops to discuss the results in detail with a wide range of stakeholders.

The project is not only multinational but also multidimensional, since it covers national and foreign languages, regional or minority (R/M) languages and – unusually for a survey of this nature – the languages of migrants. This reflects the project's overall goals, to promote linguistic policies and practices in all areas of society, to encourage inclusion and social cohesion and to stimulate authorities to support the languages of all citizens. The use of the various languages was investigated in several social contexts: in schools and other educational sectors, in public services and public spaces, in the media and in four different types of business (supermarkets, construction companies, hotels and banks). What has emerged is a rounded picture of the multilingualism that characterizes present-day European societies and of the plurilingualism of the many individuals who juggle multiple languages in everyday life: the language(s) of the home, the language(s) of school, the language(s) of work, etc. We wanted to know to what degree the policies pursued in the various European countries reflect their citizens' multilingualism, to what extent countries have applied the Three Languages Formula enshrined as a consensus in several pan-European treaties and more generally whether the various participating countries have taken steps to ensure that we are rearing a future generation of polyglots. We also were anxious to find out if decision-makers have already put in place measures to reward those professionals that have equipped themselves with communication skills in several languages and who thereby are able to act as mediators in the worlds of culture and business.

Even though as many as 69 vocational training institutions and 65 universities responded to the survey, 63 cities provided data on public services and some 484 companies completed the questionnaire, the research results cannot claim to be more than indicative. However, the main objective of the project was not to contribute to sociolinguistic research in our continent (although nothing of this scale has ever been attempted before), but rather to create an international network of people prepared to discuss how we in the future can take full advantage of the linguistic richness of Europe for the benefit of one and all. Hence the statement of the following three specific objectives: first, to facilitate the circulation of good practices conducive to intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through education and language learning; second, to promote European cooperation in the development of policies and practices that encompass several educational sectors and society at large; and third, to increase the visibility of the recommendations made by the European Union and the Council of Europe to promote language learning and linguistic diversity in Europe.

Any attempt to summarize the results of a project of this scope is doomed to oversimplify and distort; the interested reader should therefore consult the above-mentioned final report for chapter and verse. Nevertheless, there are a number of key findings that deserve attention. In terms of legal provisions, for example, we discovered that almost all the countries and regions have laws on national and R/M languages, but that the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages has been ratified by only 11 of the 18 countries. Only 6 of the 24 countries and regions have legislated on migrant languages; the languages of migrants are systematically less well recognized, less protected and less promoted than R/M languages. As for censuses, we found out that some countries have no mechanisms for collecting data on language use. Where relevant questions are asked, there are large discrepancies: more than half pose a question on the language(s) spoken at home (as is recommended by specialists), while others still ask about the 'main language' or 'mother tongue'.

The survey covers all levels of education in detail. There are even results about exposure to different language types at the pre-primary level. In primary schools, all the countries and regions studied provide support to newcomers in learning the national language, and most have implemented the EU recommendation to introduce a foreign language at primary school, although there are significant differences in the age at which this commences. Where language courses in the heritage language are offered to migrants at primary level, this is often dependent on funding from the country of origin. At secondary school, foreign languages are taught everywhere, of course, but with significant differences in the number of compulsory languages, the choice of languages available, the assessment of proficiency, the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and application of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to either students or teachers. R/M languages are actively used at secondary schools in 19 of the 24 countries and regions, while only eight responded positively to questions about the treatment of migrant languages. R/M languages are quite generally used for CLIL purposes, but foreign languages only rarely. Although language teachers are well qualified and skilled in their profession, there are only limited funds available to support visits to countries where the languages taught are spoken. Some countries are suffering from a serious shortage of language teachers, while in others there is more supply than demand. Institutions of vocational training generally offer courses in the national language, some include R/M languages and very few devote any attention to immigrant languages. As for universities, all offer courses in and on the national language, and the majority allow the use of other languages, where this is appropriate. As a result of increased mobility of staff and students, English has become the second language of many universities throughout Europe, and even where the national language is used for lecturing, it is often English-language textbooks that are prescribed. Most of the universities ensure that at least four foreign languages are available to students and have developed a language policy geared to attracting foreign students. Student mobility is encouraged, but only 10 of the 65 universities surveyed have made it obligatory.

Moving away from the world of education, we found that the majority of countries provide some radio and television broadcasts in languages other than the national tongue. Subtitling of films and foreign television programmes is practised in some 50% of our sample, with the other half using dubbing. The availability of foreign language newspapers was tested using the technique of linguistic landscaping. All the countries surveyed promote the use of sign language in the media, with a few exceptions. Our investigation of public services and spaces asked which languages appeared in communication with the users of those services and spaces. Only 10 of the 63 cities surveyed had no multilingual policy in this regard, and as many as 23 included language skills in their employees' job descriptions. The sectors where multilingualism is most practised are tourism, immigration and integration, while theatre and political debates are predominantly monolingual; educational services, too, unfortunately tend to be available in the national language only.

The project's investigation of business addressed companies' general linguistic strategies as well as their internal policies and their external communication, to see whether they attached importance to training their employees in languages and to identify the different languages used to communicate with customers and to promote products. About a quarter of the 484 companies surveyed have a language strategy and some 50% explicitly include language skills in their recruitment policy. However, 70% of the companies interviewed do not register the language skills of their employees and very little use is made of EU programmes for learning languages. No more than 11% that reward employees for their linguistic prowess, and few companies had ever entered into partnership with the education sector for language training purposes.

What has the project revealed about the role of English in contemporary Europe? The data from the various countries and regions confirm the dominant position of English in all levels of education, in the media, in public services and in business throughout the continent of Europe. To some extent, the continent and the UK have both reached a tacit consensus that 'English is enough', excusing UK citizens from acquiring any foreign languages at all and exempting continental Europeans from learning any other foreign language than English. The downward effect upon the use of other languages for international communication is predictable (and has often been charted). This is the cause of some embarrassment to European policy-makers, who have even been known to avoid mention of the E-word, preferring such circumlocutions as "a foreign language with high international prestige". After all, European policy, with an eye to stimulating an inclusive sense of European identity, has promoted the Three Languages Formula, which for a monolingual country implies the national language plus one foreign language (usually read: English) plus one other. The Language Rich Europe survey has shown that this formula has been put into practice only in a minority of the countries and regions examined; among these, some are inherently bilingual, e.g. Catalonia, Friesland and the Basque Country, so that it is enough to learn, yet again, English as the third language. Bilingual Wales concentrates on Welsh and English, largely disregarding further languages.

Nevertheless, there is concern in some countries about the effect this development has been having. In Switzerland, the fact that the educational sector of part of German-speaking Switzerland has chosen English over the national language French has given rise to a great deal of criticism, and the Swiss national languages Rhaeto-Romanic and Italian are now barely represented in school settings or in public life outside their own territories. In Denmark and the Netherlands, where the ability to communicate in English (to a sufficient level) has already attained the status of a 'driving licence', a kind of presupposition of social activity, academics and businesspeople alike are bemoaning the falling numbers of students of other languages. In the UK, too, we find that modern language provision in the Scottish further education sector is "on the verge of total collapse", to quote the report. The effects on business suggest avoidance behaviour that makes no commercial sense: "Scottish employers tend to circumvent ... language skill needs by exporting only to Anglophone countries"; no wonder that employers' organisations such as the CBI, but also the pan-European High Level Group on Multilingualism, have highlighted the importance of language competence for competitiveness in the global economy.

Yet the impoverishment is not only commercial. The implications for the multiplicity of languages and cultures in Europe are clear. In the Netherlands, where universities are increasingly offering their Master's and PhD courses in English, worries have arisen about the survival of Dutch as a language of science and scholarship and about the effect that the limited proficiency in English of students and (in particular!) their teachers is having on the quality of the education on offer. To some, it may seem ironic that the British Council, which since its foundation in 1934 has been enabling and conducting the learning of English worldwide, should have been directing the Language Rich Europe project. Nevertheless, the Council, together with its partner institutions, is also committed to supporting intercultural dialogue and diversity in Europe and in this project has aligned itself strongly with the European Union and the Council of Europe in their efforts to maintain and strengthen Europe's linguistic riches.