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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Right on time, we are happy to present you with the latest issue of VIEWS and we are pleased to start off the first issue of 2003 with more pages than you saw from us in 2002. Please rest assured that we have managed to restore the *quantity* levels without any loss in *quality*. If you'd like to check for yourself, you can access all VIEWS articles, including those from the current issue, free of charge at www.univie.ac.at/Anglistik/views.htm.

The current issue demonstrates once more that our strongest research interest lies in historical and applied linguistics. The first article (by Dalton-Puffer) takes a look at the use of directives in Austrian high-school settings where English is the medium of instruction. Her article does not only implicitly challenge the beliefs and hopes of those educational politicians who tend to think that once content is taught in a foreign language, all language skills will be picked up more or less 'on the go', but also brings back most amusing memories of one's own teacher-pupil interaction. The second contribution (by Dollinger) goes back in time, examining late 18th-century Canadian data for features of word-initial capitalization. What is usually considered the hobby-horse of self-appointed language experts is used here to provide some evidence for the linguistic conservatism usually referred to as 'colonial lag'. That classroom recordings of the type which Dalton-Puffer has obtained would also be most useful for historical research, is self-evident, if elusive so that the early Canadian teacher's directives on 'how to write' words will remain the subject of speculation. This historical background would provide a brilliant test scenario for the new pragmatic framework presented in the third contribution (by Kopytko). His article not only puts forth ten points on 'what is wrong with modern accounts of context', but also suggests a remedy. Without giving too much away, let us say only so much that Kopytko's *Relational Pragmatics* is 'non-Cartesian', gradient, and pancontextual. The fourth contribution (by Smit and Verhoef) takes us back to hard data, which is in their case from contemporary South Africa. Their report of a pilot study is concerned with the interrelation of teachers' language attitudes to and assessment of Black South African English. Among other things, Smit and Verhoef produce evidence that teachers have begun to identify their students' learner language as expressions of their 'own' variety of English. This might make us witnesses of a new phase of language awareness in South Africa. We hope we've whetted your appetite for what is to follow in these pages.

Let us then, before closing, say a word about the VIEWS principle. Discussion and comment is and has always been a substantial part of VIEWS, some may even argue the *sine qua non*. As a result, you, our dear and faithful readers, have seen the one or other mini-discussion in print format. Responses to the last issue by new readers from several corners of the globe have shown us that 'going internet' was a timely decision. The four articles in this number also raise interesting points that may call for comment and we are looking forward to receiving your VIEWS.

THE EDITORS

Telling each other to do things in class: directives in content and language integrated classrooms

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1. Introduction

This article reports initial results from a larger project aimed at characterizing language use in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) situations in Austria. The term CLIL is used here to refer to classrooms where a foreign language, in this case English, is the medium of teaching and learning in non-language subjects. This educational practice has been gaining ground in Europe in recent years and its underlying rationale relies heavily on the notion that knowledge of language is gained from participating in actual communicative events. In most general terms, then, the entire project is an inquiry into how this particular kind of communicative event can be characterized with regard to parameters pertaining to all three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual (Halliday 1994).

In this contribution I will focus on one specific aspect of interpersonal discourse management, namely directive speech acts and how they are realized in classroom interaction. Directives invite examination for two reasons: they are typical face-threatening acts and should therefore allow observation of the workings of discourse modification and mitigation strategies, in short 'politeness' in the conventional sense. And secondly, they are frequent kinds of speech acts in classroom interaction.

A word is in order here about terminology. In terms of Searle's taxonomy of speech acts, directives are speech acts which impose some kind of action on the hearer. Instances of such speech acts are commands, orders, advice, requests, warnings etc. (Searle 1969; Mey 2001: 119-124). All these utterances represent "attempts on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to perform some kind of action or cessation of action" (Ellis 1992: 5) but it is quite difficult to establish a terminological distinction between the different kinds

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of directives that goes beyond their general lexical meaning. On the one hand, it is said that what makes a request a request and a command a command are the general conditions of interaction whereas their specific realization is then a matter of choice, for instance in terms of directness.[1] In reality, however, the conditions and realisations are impossible to tease apart. This may explain why, in the pragmatics literature, the term *request* is frequently used as an umbrella term and quasi-synonym of *directive* (e.g. Ellis 1992; House and Kasper 1989b). In some instances in the present text this practice is also observed, mainly for stylistic reasons.

As this study deals with speech acts in foreign language data, research on interlanguage pragmatics is of particular relevance for it. All of the studies reviewed appear to suggest that realizations of directives in CLIL classroom discourse are likely to be rather limited not only in terms of who gets to utter them but also in terms of the linguistic choices used to encode them. After a brief presentation of the analytical framework used and its theoretical and methodological background, the main focus will be on a description of how directives are actually realized in a sample of upper secondary CLIL classrooms in Austria. It turns out that some of the predictions derivable from the descriptive model are not borne out by the data.

2. Directives and politeness in the classroom: literature review

In an early study, Lörscher & Schulze (1988) look at issues of politeness in the discourse of foreign language classrooms in Germany. They base their analysis on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, the implication being that realizations of speech acts which are indirect and off record are more polite than those which are direct and bald on record. Lörscher and Schulze find the latter to be heavily dominant in the EFL classrooms they investigate (though it is never mentioned just how many classrooms they look at) and they consequently conclude that there is a general lack of politeness.

An acquisitional view is taken by R. Ellis (1992) in his study of two learners' requests. In this longitudinal developmental study of naturalistic classroom discourse, Ellis looks at over 400 requests produced by two child learners of English as a second language over a period of 15 and 21 months. Ellis considers it crucial that "the opportunity to communicate a varied set of illo-

[1] E.g. Widdowson personal communication April 2003.

cutionary acts may be important for successful L2 acquisition" (1992: 20). This, it turns out, is also the limiting condition on the acquisition process reported in Ellis's study: while both learners progressed in their acquisition of English requests, neither of them developed the full range of request types or a broad linguistic repertoire for their realization. Ellis attributes this to the kinds of communicative needs which arose in the school setting, and to the fact that the classroom offers little opportunity to perform requests that place a heavy imposition on a socially distant addressee.

One study which looks specifically at teachers' directives in foreign language classrooms is reported by Falsgraf and Majors (1995). The authors examine directives as indices of student-teacher status relationships, finding significant differences between Japanese (both as a foreign and as a native language) and English as a medium of instruction. Teacher directives in those elementary classrooms where Japanese was the medium of instruction were significantly more direct than in the English medium ones. They conclude that the high level of directness reflects the status differential between students and teachers but also characterizes the relationship between teacher and young students as close and informal (cf. Kasper 2001: 38).

A situational context which closely resembles the one investigated in the present study is examined by Nikula (2002). Her study looks for indicators of pragmatic awareness in the classroom language of two Finnish teachers teaching an EFL lesson and a "maths through the medium of English" lesson. In other words, this is also a study of CLIL classroom language in a European context. Although her analysis does not focus specifically on directives, these speech acts figure prominently in the study since here as in other classrooms teachers simply tend to ask students "to do things in class" (Nikula 2002). Furthermore, Nikula finds that no matter how large (L1) or small (L2) the modifier repertoire, modifiers are simply not very much in use in these classrooms. Most of the directives and other teacher utterances in her data are direct and Nikula describes them as "abrupt". In section 4 it will be shown that the Austrian data parallel some, but not all of Nikula's Finnish findings. I regard this as an indicator that the influence of L1 discourse culture on the production and acquisition of target language speech acts should not be underestimated. In how far the Finnish teachers' non-use of modifying elements can be unequivocally interpreted as a lack of pragmatic awareness, depends very much on how much one wishes to buy into politeness theory à la Brown and Levinson (cf. the parallel conclusions arrived at by Lörscher and Schulze 1988). It is possible that pragmatic awareness in a concrete situation might well rest in the non-use of modifying elements rather than vice versa.

3. A framework for analysis: Theoretical and methodological background

Confronted with the highly complex data which naturalistic classroom discourse represents, it is necessary to adopt or adapt a framework for their analysis. Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1978; 1987) has played a significant role in researching interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics. It has been rightly criticized on various accounts (for overviews see Meier 1995; Trosborg 1995: 28-29) and the discipline is currently reconsidering the basic theoretical issues in the light of more comprehensive frameworks of social interaction (e.g. cross-cultural communication) (Meier 2003) However, the discussion has not reached a stage where ready operationalisations are at hand. It therefore seems justifiable to me to use concepts and operationalisations developed by or on the basis of Brown and Levinson's theory for the purpose of data analysis, even though it cannot be expected that they will give a satisfactory explanation for all the phenomena observed.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), social interaction is conditioned by three important parameters: the distribution of social power, the degree of social distance, and the degree of imposition a particular pragmatic act is thought to have on the recipient. These three factors (power (P), distance (D), the individual ranking of the particular imposition (R)) play a central role in co-determining which kind of politeness strategy and thereby what degree of (in)directness a speaker will use in a given situation (cf. Brown and Levinson 1978: 81). In other words, speakers are thought to use the formal resources of language (tenses, modals, lexical phrases etc.) to achieve different degrees of (in)directness in order to symbolically represent the constraints which the P-D-R parameters impose on their behaviour.

With regard to English language directives, previous research has provided inventories of linguistic resources (external and internal request modification) and has categorized them in terms of how much (in)directness they convey (cf. Trosborg 1995, House and Kasper 1981, 1987; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; and Faerch and Kasper 1989). For reasons of space I reserve the details for the descriptive section.[2]

The basic notion, then, is the following: based on their judgement of the parameters Power, Distance and Imposition, speakers choose a particular directness level with its concomitant linguistic realization. Once this has been

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2 For a full discussion of the analytic framework see Dalton-Puffer (2003).

accomplished, the speaker can then choose softeners or intensifiers from a repertoire of internal and external request modification strategies in order to fine-tune the politeness value of this specific directive.

A serious problem in this undertaking is of course that it operates on the assumption of form-function continuity. That is, the analyst assumes that (all other things being equal) every time a certain form is observed, it will have the same function as the times before. This is only an assumption but a useful one and the problem it creates is one we will have to live with.

4. Formulating hypotheses

In order to sharpen the focus for data analysis, one may use the Brown/Levinson model to formulate some expectations. Given the research reported in section 2 there is little to dissuade one from believing that the classrooms in this study will show the same characteristics as the other classrooms investigated: the overwhelming number of directive speech-acts will come from the teachers and their realization is expected to lie on the "direct" end of the directness scale with little additional discourse modification.

Making more specific reference to the power-distance-imposition parameters of the Brown/Levinson model of politeness the following predictions can be formulated:

a. **power**: the interlocutors represent a hierarchy differential, occupying different status positions within the institution. Since most directives are uttered by the [+power] participants, this will create a tendency for directives to be more rather than less direct.
b. **distance**: the interlocutors are usually familiars. They have frequently known each other for several years, meeting regularly approximately twice per week. This is a constellation which favors more direct strategies and disfavors the use of heavy discourse modification.
c. **imposition**: the transfer of information is the socially sanctioned purpose of the institution, which is "school". Therefore requests which are in support of this institutional goal represent low imposition by definition. This likewise disfavors use of discourse modification and indirectness.

As we can see, all three factors converge in one direction: directives in CLIL classroom discourse are likely direct, and will evidence little discourse modification. If this hypothesis is supported by the data, this means that there is a severe limitation on the kind of requesting behavior which can be learned in

and from these classrooms, passively or actively. Hall even suggests that the conditions under which discourse progresses in the classroom is so different from non-educational contexts that "extended participation in such a practice could facilitate the development of L2 interactional *in*competence" (Hall 1995: 55).

5. Data analysis

5.1 The Study

The data analyzed for this article were recorded in secondary schools in Austria in the 2001/2002 academic year. They are part of a larger body of naturalistic classroom data comprising a total of 42 CLIL lessons from lower and upper secondary schools (students aged 11-19). The lessons were audio-recorded in the presence of the researcher, who also took field-notes. Additional lessons were observed without making audio-recordings. The examples in this article are taken from the transcripts of six upper secondary lessons, where English was used as the medium of learning for subjects other than "English as a Foreign Language". The six lessons represent the subjects of history, music, tourism management, business studies, and accounting and were taught by six different teachers (male and female). The age of the students ranges from 16-19 years. Except for one teacher, all participants are non-native speakers of English; most have Austrian German as their L1. For some students Austrian German is their second language. The teachers vary in their formal English background; some have a university degree in English Studies, others hold degrees in other subjects.

It was decided to focus on upper secondary data because the student population represented in the larger data-set spans ages 11-19, that is from late childhood via adolescence to young adulthood. Since the interactional status accorded to people in society changes considerably over this period and has a direct impact on the issues studied here, it was decided to narrow the focus to late adolescence.

Classrooms are a prototypical one-*vs*.-many participant situation, combining a clear hierarchical difference between participants with an uneven distribution of speaking rights. These classrooms are no exception and the over-

whelming majority of directives are consequently uttered by the teachers.[3] In the following I will therefore concentrate on teacher directives with occasional observations on the requesting behavior of students.

5.2 Trading information

In the analysis of the present data it turned out that the question of what is requested by and from the interactants, i.e. "object of the request", is a non-negligible factor. In this I follow Halliday's key distinctions in interpersonal communication between *giving* or *demanding* either *goods and services* or *information.* (Halliday 1994: 354f). As far as I am aware pragmatics has made no systematic distinction between different kinds of request objects (demands for physical vs. verbal action) on the superordinate theoretical level. Rather, it is thought that within a given social situation the different objects of requests will take on a differential value with regard to, for instance, the degree of imposition and consequent face-threat accorded to them by the interactants. And it has therefore not given them a separate role in the interplay of factors which determine the realization of speech acts.

In the educational context we are studying here, we may assume that 'curricular content' is a kind of good which has central status within the institution different from other symbolic or physical goods. After all, schools are concerned with the transfer of information unlike most other institutions. Thus, from the point of view of the teacher as its representative, offering curricular content and demanding information about the students' states of mind regarding elements of curricular content are those speech functions which are completely sanctioned by her/his institutional role. It is thus not surprising that demands for information appear in the data in their canonical form as questions. The examples (1) give a small sample of such familiar teacher questions from the current data.

(1) Classroom examples of "demand for information"

and why were they called colonies?

yes, what does inherit mean?

what kind of city do you know about in the east of America.

what is it in german.

how could you measure energy use.

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3 No exact quantification of teacher vs. students requests has been undertaken as the additional insight gained did not warrant the effort required.

what did the trenches remind you of.

In the institutional game of information transfer, then, questions are strongly associated with the core purpose of teaching and learning, which seems to bestow upon them a quality of being 'unmarked' and officially sanctioned types of utterances. This may explain why students mainly either respond to teacher questions or pose questions themselves. What is intriguing is that the format of question is chosen also if the student has other interactive aims altogether. Interestingly, such occasions are frequently flagged by the occurrence of external modification, more specifically the occurrence of so-called preparators (cf. Table 2, p.14). In example (3), for instance, the teacher has been keeping the topic on the financial rights and obligations in marriages in ancient Athens, while the student question in line 4 actually steers the talk towards the legal possibilities for divorce.

(2)

1	T	((dowry)) this is the money that goes to the ... husband ... a:nd the husband administers it, yeah? he can do with it what he likes, but in case of divorce? (pause) the money goes back to
2	S	the father
3	T	and iffah the father has meanwhile died, it goes to the brother or even the eldest son, whoever is the guardian of the woman, ... yeah?
4	S	i have a question: could the wife ahm ah the woman say she w- she wants to be divorced?

In the following example the student's purpose is even further removed from being a "demand for information".

(3)

1	Sm	ich wollte was fragen (I wanted to ask something)
2	TG	ja bitte (yes please)
3	Sm	**da is ein widerspruchh**, dass er zuerst sagt ah das is eben nich also das is- für gutheissen kann, dass die rockmusik in den 60er jahren in das musikalische theater einbricht und dann meint er, dass man nicht herumexperimentiert. ich mein ich denke wenn die rockmusik neu ist, ist das schon irgendwie rumexperimentieren. (there's a contradiction. that he says at first ah it is not err it is – (he) cant accept that rock-music makes inroads into the musical in the 1960s, and then he says that people don't experiment. i mean i think if rock music is new, that

is experimenting of sorts.)

Example (3) may look like a prefaced question but turns out to be a statement. Presumably this format is chosen by the student because posing questions is the officially sanctioned speech act for students during the instructional part of the lesson. It supports his bid for a turn (conventionally done by non-linguistic signs like raising a hand); also, the student may consider it less risky to announce a question rather than a contradiction (cf. Simpson 2003).

5.3 Trading goods and services

Although the institutional core of formal education is conceived of as the transmission and/or co-construction of knowledge, the lesson as the central speech event where the official purpose of the institution is being enacted also consists of parts where the "knowledge business" is physically and verbally facilitated through regulative behavior (cf. Ellis 1992, Christie 2000). These are the instances where requests for *goods and services* come into play. In the scheme proposed by Halliday (1994: 354f) the canonical realization of this speech function are commands expressed by the imperative. Contrary to demands for information, however, where canonical realizations (i.e. questions) are heavily dominant, classroom requests for anything other than curricular content exhibit a wide variety of realizations. In order to view the matter more systematically, the realization types found in the data have been mapped onto a scale of directness (cf. Trosborg 1995: 205).

Table 1. Austrian CLIL data mapped onto the request directness scale

Strategy		CLIL example
I.	Indirect Request	
	1 Hints (mild)	*i am not really good prepared for*
II.	Conventionally indirect (Hearer based conditions)	
	2 Ability	*can you pass them round for us?*
	Willingness	*would you like to continue?*
	Permission	*can i go to the toilet?*
	3 Suggestory formulae	*xxx* n.a.(How about lending me your car?)
III.	Conventionally indirect (Speaker based conditions)	
	4 Wishes	*what i would like you to do later is....*
	5 Desires/Needs	*i want you to write a little heading.*
IV.	Direct requests	
	6 Obligation	*you must return it according to your catalog number.*
	7 Performatives	*xxx n.a* (I ask you to lend me your car)
	8 Imperatives	*think about that question.*
	Elliptical phrases	*Daniel, Andreas.*

It can be seen that the directive realizations found in the data span the entire spectrum of the directness scale from most direct to most indirect. Note that two cells in the table lack examples from the current data. These cells concern the strategies "performatives" and "suggestory" formulae. The absence of performatives may very well not be an idiosyncrasy of the present data. Elllis (1992: 19), too, found no performatives or hedged performatives in his naturalistic classroom data. He surmises that they may be rare in naturalistic settings and the present data support his view. Similar results are reported by Koester (2002), who finds that performatives are strongly dispreferred in her corpus of workplace interaction. In unequal encounters such direct strategies were used only in critical situations when dominant speakers wished to assert their authority and therefore were rare occurrences overall.

Incorporating quantitative considerations into the interpretation of Table 1 one makes the startling discovery that it is actually quite difficult to find examples of direct teacher requests (category IV). The following is an **exhaustive list** of direct teacher requests (i.e. commands) for goods or services in six upper secondary CLIL lessons (seven classroom hours):

(4) Direct teacher requests in six CLIL lessons

1	T5	okay. now i think it's too late. **sit down**, you will continue next lesson.
1	T1	**think** about that question for 30 seconds
1	T3	okay ... **go on** .. that's all clear anyway.
1	T11	**you must** return it according to your catalog number, so that you're not in trouble
1	T11	**keep** this very carefully, we need it later on.
1	T32	david, axel[4]. ((elliptic for 'be quiet'))

That is to say that during seven classroom hours these teachers go bald on record with a request only six times.

The vast majority of teacher requests use indirectness strategies which, according to the framework of analysis employed, are unexpected given the teachers' hierarchical position and social role. Here are some examples of the most common and hence **typical** teacher directives in the data.

(5) Typical teacher directives in Austrian CLIL data

1	T1	so **can you** do that **please**. can you take out these sheets of paper

4 Participants' names have been anonymized.

1	T3	the Acropolis .. andah you are going to get .. the same .. picture ah as a photo-copy
2	Sf	thanks ... i need two
3	T3	yeah .. okay .. **maybe** .. silvia **could** pass it (?) around
4		((rustling and handing on of papers))
5	T3	**can you** pass them round **for us**
1	T3	**let's** look at the social structure
1	T3	and **i want you** to write a **little** heading ‚legal status of women' ...and tell me what you think ...**yeah**?
1	T3	yeah. **can you** stop it. **could you** please read now.
1	T5	at the beginning. very good. **would you like** to do it please?
1	T5	markus **could you please** be silent
1	T5	would you like to continue?
1	T11	**could you please** have a look at the new books now
1	T11	**can you please** turn to your neighbour
1		what **i would like** you to do later is ah.. **try to** imagine you meet someone who doesn't know the book
1	T11	**let's** have a look at the economy first
1	T11	good, **could you** think about three factors that changed for women dramatically in this period
1		((it's recap time at the start of the lesson))
2	T35	okay. so...**could anybody please just quickly** tell me the three ratios we are talking about
1	T35	**would** you **please** continue, martina
1	T35	anna, **would** you **please**...
1	T35	okay, **could** you interpret the numbers?
1	T35	so **could** you repeat richard
1	T32	**i'd like to** start with ah **some kind of** a brainstorming activity today (....) but first of all **let's** have reports on these different topics
1	T32	**may i** ask a question in between?
1	T32	**have you got** a piece of chalk somewhere?
1	T32	**could you** give us an idea of the location. i don't know wether all of us are so familiar with...
1	T32	okay then well **let's** have one of the other reports
1	T32	**may i** interrupt you?

It is obvious that teacher directives in these classrooms typically exhibit linguistic strategies classified as "conventionally indirect" in terms of the directness scale employed. Both, speaker-based and hearer-based conditions are represented, with a clear majority being hearer-based, i.e. the more indirect, conditions. Later in this section the formal aspects of directive realization will be discussed further but first attention needs to be turned to the use of modification strategies.

From the presumably exhaustive taxonomy (for English) of internal and external modification given by Trosborg (1995: 209-219), only a limited number of options are actually realized in the present data. The external modification types evidenced in the data are assembled in Table 2.

Table 2. External modification types occurring in Austrian CLIL data

Strategy	Example/Explanation
disarmers	make requestee favorably disposed towards requester
hesitation	*erm, ahm ....*
give supportive reasons	if request seems justified, then H probably more willing to comply.
preparators	preparing the discursive ground for the request by openly announcing it

This list of modification types, it should be pointed out, reflects a very small number of tokens in the data. The six lessons yield three examples by teachers and two by students (the latter both realized in German). As an explanation for the rarity of external modification I suggest looking at its function in interaction. External modification serves the purpose of opening up the discourse space in order to enter into an interaction with someone with whom one has not been interacting immediately before. The classroom rarely requires this strategy because essentially once the lesson has started, the discourse is considered opened.

One example of an externally modified teacher request comes from a lesson where textbooks were handed out for the whole school-year in the understanding that the students were to return their personal copy to the school at the end of the year.

(6)

1		((handing out textbooks at beginning of term; it is the start of the lesson))
2	T11	manuela, i have special challenge for you, could you start from number fourteen please because i think i have.....

It seems that the somewhat tiresome administrative procedure combined with the 'imposition' that the students take responsibility for keeping track of their books, prompted the teacher to put in extra linguistic "work" (by using a

preparator and giving a supportive reason) towards getting the students to co-operate.

The last aspect of teacher request realization to be discussed within the present framework is internal modification. Table 3 provides an overview of the types of modifiers evidenced by the present data.

Table 3. Internal modification types occurring in Austrian CLIL data

syntactic downgraders	
question instead of statement	can you pass this round?
past tense/conditional	could/would you pass this round?
lexical/phrasal downgraders	
politeness marker	please
downtoners, minimizers	just, quite, quickly, little
hedges	kind of, sort of

Comparing this to the full list of choices available in English (Trosborg 1995: 209-215), the array of choices which are realized in the CLIL data appears limited. The easiest conclusion to draw would be that these limitations are actually due to the limited language competence of the speakers involved. However, this might be too easy a solution, since it has to be kept in mind that the full taxonomy was derived from a much larger number of social situations than classroom interaction.[5] Looking at the naturally occurring data (compare examples (5) of typical teacher requests), we also find that the request realizations with their combinations of different kinds of strategies look considerably more varied than the table above would lead one to believe. Generalizing from the individual realizations, we find a prevalence of syntactic downgraders, that is modal verbs, especially those expressing wishes, willingness, ability and possibility, occurring in interrogative clauses. This is frequently combined with the strategy of shifting the deictic center away from the speaker (mostly the teacher) towards the hearer(s) or towards an inclusive *we*.

5.4 Personal and cultural styles

Over and beyond the wide repertoire of formal realizations of directives shown by the data, a quantitative check of the transcripts reveals clusters of

[5] If one wanted to measure the CLIL data against a putative native speaker norm – this being an undertaking of debatable validity in the first place – it would have to be a norm which is based on classroom interaction only and that, to my knowledge, is not available.

linguistic choices favored by individual speakers, which may actually indicate individual interactional styles. In other words, different teachers may interpret the social constellation within the classroom in subtly different ways. In order to follow up this particular question in any depth it would of course be necessary to make systematic comparisons with lessons conducted by these teachers in German. Only then might we begin to untangle the web of interference between the several interrelated factors which appear to be involved: "personal communicative style", "cultural style", "personal pedagogical philosophy", "L2 persona" and "degree of language proficiency". The following observations will illustrate this.

The one teacher who is also a native speaker of American English consistently uses less heavily modified directives than her native Austrian colleagues. Rather than jumping to the conclusion that this person is "more direct" or even "less polite", it might be more to the point that this difference reflects a different cultural pattern with regard to how teachers construct their relationship with students (One might regard this as a combination of the factors "cultural style" and "personal pedagogical philosophy"). It has been pointed out to me that the North American cultural script of the student-teacher relationship is one of collegiality, which would entail a less hierarchical relationship than that written into the Austrian cultural script and would thus require less discourse modification, which is what is in evidence in the speech of this one teacher.[6]

Conversely, the Austrian teachers use a considerably larger amount of request modification and indirectness – I will henceforth use the term request cushioning as an ad-hoc cover-term for both. Two scenarios suggest themselves for explanation, and while they are somewhat contradictory, they are not mutually exclusive. Firstly, employing the concepts of power, familiarity and imposition provided by the framework of analysis used (Brown and Levinson 1987; cf. section 3), one might say that the degree of request cushioning observed may be due to the fact that the Austrian teachers see themselves as relatively more distant from their (upper secondary) students than their American colleague does and convey this distance through the appropriate linguistic strategies.

The second scenario for explaining the unexpected amount of cushioning of directives evidenced in the classroom talk of these Austrian CLIL teachers

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6 Thanks to the discussants at the MLC Colloquium Series in the fall term of 2002. OISE, University of Toronto. See also Poole 1992, Falsgraf and Majors 1995; He 2000.

is the following: it might be the case that these teachers use linguistic distancing devices to a greater degree when they are speaking English than when they are speaking German, because this is the kind of L2 behavior they are accustomed to. In other words I am claiming that the teachers who are second-language speakers of English may have developed an L2-persona which reflects their contexts of acquisition (namely stays abroad among socially distant non-familiars; the reference culture being predominantly UK rather than U.S. or other English speaking countries) rather than their present context of use (in the CLIL classroom). With the present data these have to remain conjectures but I think that in principle these questions warrant further investigation.

Some indication that there might be something in this comes from looking at the linguistic choices made by a teacher who does not hold a degree in English (EFL) but in another field. In this particular case it was possible to obtain for comparison one lesson taught in German and in fact the requests made in both languages resemble each other a great deal. It may thus be the case that this particular teacher is transferring her teacher persona and the linguistic realizations expressing it more directly from German to English than is the case with the EFL teachers teaching CLIL lessons. An additional cause is of course to be sought in the different L2 proficiency of the teachers involved. Seen from this angle, the fact that the non-EFL teacher uses fewer modal verbs might not reflect a different "persona" at all, but might result from the fact that she feels less at home in using them spontaneously in interaction. In those cases where the non EFL-teacher does introduce modal elements in her requests, these tend to be formulaic, of the form would you like to read, would you like to do it please, would you like to continue. This formula is not used at all by any of the other teachers and the overall repertoire of request realization strategies of the non-EFL teacher is smaller than the repertoires of the more linguistically experienced EFL teachers.

This is not to say that the other teachers' repertoires are not also in a sense limited. After all it stands to reason to assume that language users (native and non-native) in general have certain idiolectal preferences in their modes of expression and the fact that each teacher uses a "personal" subset of preferred request realization strategies ties in with that. These possibly idiolectal constraints interact in subtle ways with the dynamics of any specific teacher-learner constellation and how it is interpreted by the participants. A notable case in point in the present data are the history lessons in a college for software engineering. The students are in the final grade (aged 19) and will be entering the job market or university in a matter of months. They are inter-

ested in the subject matter, which is, however, not central to their curriculum as a whole. The teacher took over the class about half a year ago, he sees them only once a week and since this is the final year there is no prospect of entering into a long term student-teacher relationship. The atmosphere in which the interaction takes place is one of good-humoured, respectful and slightly distanced camaraderie. I consider it significant that these are lessons in which no direct teacher directives are uttered at all neither in English nor in German. And even though the teacher orchestrates the overall structure of the lessons according to his institutional role, there are repeated episodes where the interaction takes on the coloring of talk between equal, non-familiar adults such as in the following extracts (7) and (8).

(7) Administrative affairs regarding final exams

1	Sm1	because there are some people who gave the sheets to mr malzacher ((the school administrator)) without signature ((which is T's signature)) because they were much too late ((laughter))
2	T	because they were much too late.
3	Sm2	you were
4	T	**thank you for saying that** ((T ignores Sm2; laughter)). so it's not my fault. THEY were much too late.

(8) Student presentation about a local WW2 concentration camp

1	Sm1	((giving a presentation on the Gusen concentration camp)) ... the disgusting thing about this factory is that they built two camps there with barracks for the workers and ah when they built the first three barracks and two for the ss people ah more than hundred prisoners were killed even on the building
2	T	**may i ask a question in between?** ah you mentioned this one ah aeroplane type
3	Sm1	ja
4	T	ah did you know which kind of an aircraft that was?
5	Sm1	i think it was a fighter with machine guns
6	T	yeah. mister schober ((Sm2)), you are the expert on ...military technology.
7	Sm2	ja i don't know it exactly but i i know that it was a fighter.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The main characteristics of these Austrian CLIL classrooms with regard to directives and discourse modification can be summarised as follows.

- The distribution of roles is relatively fixed: students are squarely in the role of requestees but rarely get to utter directives themselves. What little

active experience they have with making requests is almost invariably with requests for information.

- Contrary to our predictions, students do receive a considerable amount of indirect and modified requests. That is to say the language environment in the CLIL classrooms does contain numerous linguistic models for making 'polite requests' in English.
- Regarding the directness/indirectness of requests the classroom environment is characterized by a clear division along the lines of what the requests are for. Requests for information on curricular content follow different rules from requests for goods or services: requests for goods/services are indirect, requests for information are direct. This, however, is not necessarily the case in other social situations.
- The results of the present study indicate that directives in these CLIL classrooms show a far greater linguistic variety than anticipated. They exhibit practically the full range of formal possibilities for requests realization available in English. In this sense the language environment can be characterized as rich. The language environment in these classrooms is less rich and varied, however, with regard to the fixed distribution of roles in the classroom, which gives students next to no opportunity to utter directives themselves.

The summary of the results indicates that despite their reputation of being somehow 'more real and authentic' communicative environments than classical foreign language lessons, CLIL classrooms also fall within the scope of Cook's statement that "the opportunities for language socialization are very limited in the foreign language classroom" (Cook 2001: 84). It is obvious that the EFL and CLIL environments are parallel in the sense that the interactional rights and obligations of teachers and students are asymmetrical. Ellis (1992) concluded that it may be necessary to create sociolinguistic needs "artificially" in the classroom, since the classroom as such does not seem to create the sociolinguistic needs which may be required in other situations. Cohen (1996) also refers to the tension between learning opportunities afforded by naturalistic vs. orchestrated input.

> ...[it] remains to be explored, such as whether or to what extent the attainment of nativelike pragmatic ability in a language calls not only for exposure to the lan-

> guage in a variety of natural contexts but also for some form of instruction or guidance in the performing of speech acts. (Cohen 1996: 261)[7]

The CLIL classrooms studied here provide no opportunity for the students to experiment within varied parameters of power, distance or imposition. From the experience of numerous hours of classroom observation I would like to submit that, in general, current EFL teaching methodology affords learners more opportunities to play with interactional parameters and assume different roles than what is the case in content classrooms whether they are taught in the L1 or the L2. Further research would be necessary to substantiate what is at present a speculation.

In addition, the results certainly show that the role of cultural factors in classroom interaction is pervasive and should be taken into account when setting the language learning targets for, or expectations of, CLIL classrooms (native-like vs. EFL or ELF). These cultural factors can be seen to operate on two levels: the EFL level and the institutional level. On the one hand there is the fact that CLIL classrooms, even though they are not EFL-classrooms in the traditional sense and have a communicative purpose over and beyond the learning of the language, do operate in an EFL environment. All interactants are Austrian and this means that local Austrian interactional norms (or the "interactional cultural milieu" (Poole 1992: 610)) will and do influence the ways in which classroom interaction is carried out in English. On the institutional level, it needs to be acknowledged that school education itself consists of a set of deeply rooted cultural practices, including the enactment of prominent social roles by the interactants. This means that CLIL classrooms can only be expected to convey some but never all social messages which are relevant for an individual's functioning as a competent speaker of a given language (first, second or foreign). It remains to be explored whether CLIL students are able to independently transfer the formal and interactional linguistic knowledge they are able to gain from their classroom to other social contexts. There is ample room for further research in this direction.

The present study also raises methodological and theoretical issues. While the analytical framework employed has been a useful tool for sharpening the analyst's view of complex naturalistic data, there are also a number of in-

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[7] An important strand of ILP research since the mid-90s has consequently been dedicated to the question of the effects of instruction (e.g. House 1996; Cohen 1996; Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos 2003).

stances where it falls short of the complexities of interaction-in-context. For a full discussion of the implications, the reader is referred to Dalton-Puffer (2003). A serious limitation which the present study shares with many others anchored in interlanguage pragmatics is the absence of phonology, especially the level of intonation. The reasons for this are several: for one thing it is simply much more practical to conduct a lexicogrammatical analysis, because it can be based on written transcripts of role-plays or natural data which remain fairly close to the standard conventions of written texts. The production (and presumably also the interpretation) of transcripts which include phonological information is inordinately more costly and time-consuming. Second, research into pragmatics does not seem to draw on the description and theorising available in phonology in the same way as it draws on the description and theorising concerned with other levels of linguistic organisation.[8] A third reason lies within phonology itself as there has been little interest in anything that could be called "phonopragmatics". A fourth point comes into play when we consider the contrastive aspect of the question at hand: since an influence of L1-phonology has to be assumed, it would be necessary to draw on descriptions not only of English but also of Austrian German. To my knowledge, no full description of Standard Austrian discourse intonation is available. In short, there is ample room for further research into this direction.

In summary and with regard to the specific situational context investigated (i.e. CLIL classrooms in Austria) the study shows that at least with regard to the realization of requests the linguistic environment in these classrooms is actually richer than anticipated on the basis of current pragmatic theory. At the same time it has become obvious that altering the content of an interaction (CLIL vs. EFL) leaves untouched the major defining criteria of educational discourse (asymmetrical distribution of knowledge and speaking rights) and I have even suggested that EFL methodology may in fact offer more gateways into exploring modes of non-educational discourse than do CLIL classrooms. It will be the task of further research to focus on this comparison as well as on additional aspects (interpersonal, ideational and textual) of the CLIL discourse environment in order to furnish a sound basis for pedagogical action.

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8 This is with the exception of more strictly socio-linguistic approaches, of course, which are traditionally strongly concerned with the social impact and symbolic value of phonological realisations (Trudgill 1974; Labov 1972, 1976).

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What the Capitalization of nouns in Early Canadian English may tell us about 'colonial lag' theory: methods and problems[1]

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> THERE is scarcely anything of so much importance to a community, as a suitable SPELLING BOOK; it excerts an influence peculiarly its own, whether in regard to first impressions, or the formation of character and conduct. The sentiments acquired at school are generally retained through life. (Davidson 1845: iii)

The capitalization of nouns is both a superficial and a fascinating topic: superficial, as it is not a typical area of interest in linguistics and often deemed irrelevant, but also fascinating as discussions about 'how to write words' have dominated large stretches of the more recent language history. Put to extremes, orthography has frequently had to serve, in the sense of the quotation above, as an indicator to a person's character.

Everybody concerned with writing or printing is confronted with questions of capitalization. German speakers probably have the edge over speakers of many other languages in this respect, as questions pertaining to capitalization have not only ruled the discussion of a simplified German orthography for some 30 years[2], but also most of their school experience. In the English language and its varieties, this issue has played a prominent part in earlier times, about some 250 to 350 years ago, when the discussions of what to write 'big' or 'small' and when must have been not less thrilling (and superfi-

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1 This article is part of a bigger project on Early Ontario English (cf. fn 4). As the first publication of this work-in-progess, it is bound to raise more questions than it may answer but will, it is to be hoped, stimulate further discussion.

2 As a matter of fact, this discussion is much older: nineteenth-century Germanophone philologists generally strictly rejected the extended capitalization in German and used their publications to state an example – in lower case (e.g. Grimm 1826, Schleicher 1866).

cial?) than what we have recently seen in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the countries with sizeable German-speaking minorities.

1. Capitalization in context

In a Canadian context we may ask a few specific questions that may not be so obvious in other societies where English has had its fair share in communication. It is often stated that colonial societies tend to be linguistically conservative in general (for a diverging view see Görlach 1987) and it has been argued that Canadians, some of them United Empire Loyalists and therefore most loyal to the King, were, to paraphrase Jack Chambers (1998: 253), the 'conservative of the conservative ones'. Especially in the light of the new nation to the south that had been producing its own national dictionaries and reference tools since 1784 (Finegan 2001: 374, cf. Webster 1787), such conservatism is extralinguistically plausible. However, it remains to be *empirically* proven if, and to what extent, Canadian English is more conservative than other colonial varieties or British English varieties. Since the capitalization of nouns lends itself very easily to public comment, it is to be expected that linguistic conservatism would certainly be reflected at this level and should therefore be a good test case to see if Canadian speakers of English were more conservative than speakers of other varieties.

The purpose of this paper is to draw a first sketch of capitalization in Canadian English for the earliest period of central Canada, i.e. the time shortly after the American Revolution in 1776, and to see if capitalization meets the expectations as a test case for colonial lag theory. The aim is to produce language internal evidence that allows us to gain further insights into the question whether, and to what extent, a colonial lag existed in early Canadian English. What seems so plausible for extra-linguistics reasons, as outlined above, must, however, be primarily be shown language internally. In order to arrive at meaningful conclusions, we have to compare our data with other varieties. British usage will serve as the backdrop and Osselton (1985) is the point of reference. The Canadian data comes from three genres: diary writing, newspapers, and semi-public letters.[3] All examples used in the presentation in sec-

[3] Comparison with historical American data is another way to go, especially since we have early indicators for significant differences in Canadian and American English as early as the 1830s (Bailey 1982: 145f based on Thomas Haliburton's early Canadian novel from 1836, *The clock-maker, or the sayings and doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville*). Corpora like ARCHER feature components that may serve as a backdrop.

tion 3) are taken from the *Corpus of Early Ontario English*, 1776-1900, which is currently being compiled at the University of Vienna.[4] Therefore, the claims made are only based on Upper-Canadian (Ontario) material and may not hold true for Lower-Canadian, i.e. Québécois, English or Eastern Canadian varieties.

2. 17th- and 18th-century British English usage

Osselton's survey (1985) gives us an idea of capitalization in British usage from 1500 to 1800. His survey is based on around 50 randomly chosen prose passages from first editions of London printers, but we do not know what genres were used. The table below is taken from Osselton (1985) and provides the percentages of capitalized initials in words that would not be capitalized by PDE standards:

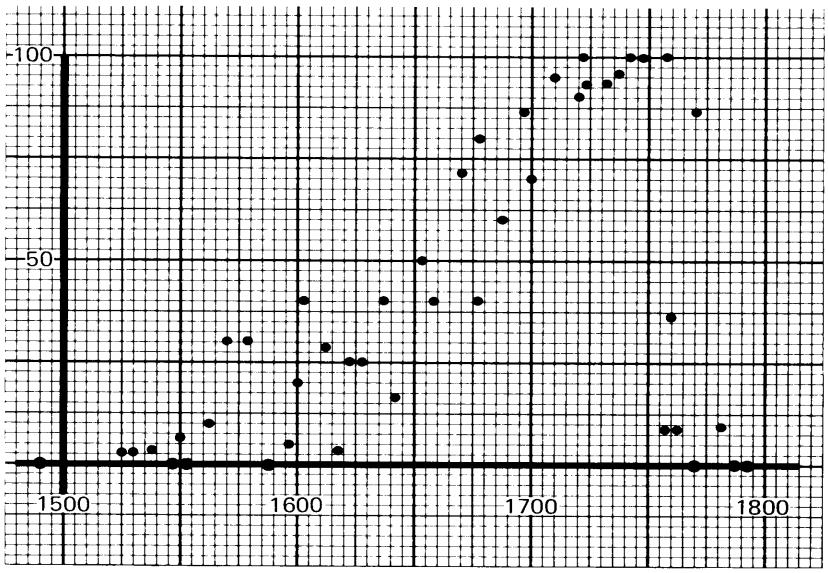

Figure 1: Percentage of nouns with initial upper case that would not be capitalized by PDE standards (taken from Osselton 1985: 50)

As Osselton's diagram shows, we can observe a dramatic decline in capitalization around 1760. This descriptive data is complemented by Osselton with prescriptive rules gleaned from grammars and spelling books between

[4] For further information see http://mailbox.univie.ac.at/stefan.dollinger/can.htm, for the corpus design cf. Dollinger (forthc.)

1660 and 1720. He identifies two core rules: therefore, a noun is capitalized if the author or printer either wishes to make a word more 'prominent' (rule no. 1), or if it fits a certain semantic 'category' (rule no. 2),. Thus, during the heyday of extended capitalization between 1660 and 1720, a writer was supposed to capitalize the following semantic categories, which are subsets of rule no. 2.

2a) animate nouns (*Persons*, *Mathematicians*)
2b) names of area of study or disciplines (*Grammar*, *Science*)
2c) names of concrete, physical objects (*Book*, *Leaves*)
2d) abstract nouns occur with capital initial the greater their generality (*judgement* as compared to *Ambition*)

(cf. Osselton 1985: 56)

Further prescriptions were possible, e.g. all house-keeping devices were meant to be capitalized, as one contemporary guide recommended (Osselton 1985: 54-57).

For our Canadian data, especially the categories of 'animate nouns' and 'names of concrete, physical objects' are of importance, as the other two only rarely occur in our text types.[5] We also see that rule, (2d), focussing around the 'generality' of abstract nouns, may at times come very close to the prominence rule. A good deal of uncertainty about what to capitalize and what not seems therefore to have persisted. Even the two core principles of capitalization that were introduced before, 'word-prominence' on the one hand, and 'semantic category' on the other hand, are no water-tight and clear-cut rules. Some contemporary grammars even paid account and "honest recognition that no set of rules could be fully comprehensive", declaring the shady zones of capitalization up to the 'writer's fancy' (Osselton 1985: 57).

This linguistic insecurity, however, was ingeniously serviced by all kinds of reference materials, above all spelling books. This most basic type of reference book appeared, just as other imprints, rather late in its distinctly Canadian form. While there were of course more pressing problems in early Canada, spelling books were, besides the obligatory bible, probably the most important books in the communities. Their influence on writers' capitalization habits may have been considerable, but it seems that quite a number of differ-

[5] In an advertisement in the Upper Canada Gazette, July 27, 1799, p. 4, promoting the opening of a school, however, we read, in accordance with rule (b) that "youth will be boarded and instructed in English, Greek and Latin languages ; Writing, Arithmetic, Book keeping and the different branches of the Mathematics". Please note that rule (2a), animate nouns, is violed in "youth".

ent spelling books were in use (cf. Parvin 1965: 16), for some of which Ireland (1979: 81-89) provides a first analysis.

3. Canadian data

The data comes from three different text types: diary, newspaper and semi-official letter writing. As such, the data are not really comparable, as will become clear shortly, but illustrate, with the exception of legal texts, the text types used in early Canada. One purpose here is to illustrate these three linguistic resources, as yet unexploited, and to draw preliminary comparisons to British usage. Even though the data will remain exemplary, it provides us with an indicator of the usage of capitalization in early Canada. In each category one example is discussed in greater detail. The texts are:

- **diary:** Anne Powell's diary from a journey from Montreal to Detroit, 1789
- **newspaper:** Upper Canada Gazette, or American Oracle, April 18, 1793
- **semi-official letter:** Adam Vrooman's land petition to the Honorable David Wm. Smith Esq. 1797

Land petitions are, in terms of variation, the most remarkable documents in the *Corpus of Early Ontario English* and may come close to demonstrate the linguistic knowledge of the everyday person moving to Canada around 1800. After discussing Vrooman's letter, we shall take a closer look at Anne Powell's travel diary for a specimen of educated usage in the Canadas, before we will look at Ontario's oldest newspaper for more standardized usage.

3.1. Adam Vrooman's petition, 1797

Land petitions are very essential to Canadian history. When during and after the American revolution many colonists of the former British colony fled northwards they were, as loyal subjects of the king, bestowed with land and, in the beginning, even with provisions. Needless to say that sooner rather than later not only loyal subjects migrated northwards, but also people with less honourable intentions than plowing up the land for Britain. The only prerequisite for such land grants was to prove one's loyalty to the crown and often we find the writer struggling to demonstrate his or her loyalty in the letter. Since Canada's population saw its first major surge at that time (Chambers 1998: 259-61), the language of those immigrants is particularly interesting for the history of Canadian English. Surprisingly though, no linguistic study has been published on that topic and so I would like to present one example of

what is to be found in the archives. The following letter is a verbatim transcript from microfilm MS-563, Reel 1, text no. 964, from the Archives of Ontario. Some parts of the text, especially the middle section, are almost incomprehensible, but the writer is still literate enough to express his request and explain the rudiments of his case.

Queenstown 25th Jany 1797

Deer

Sir I and my Brather have [Pissanod][6] the honorable Counsell – if thay see fit to Grant us som small Allowance of Land for our Disceasd Brather Jacob Vrooman Who Was in the Saxoons During the Later War Likewise for our Mother Who Disceased in [Whissilose Whiets] in Knauren by the honorable Robart Hamilton Esq. Sir us it is Wal Knawen and Can Producse Vauses for the Same Singth by Colo Buthan that I have her the meant of Bringin a number of Recrutes in which joind his Magesties forses in the Late War ~~=~~ and have Two Times Eamy year With Latters to be forwared to New York and BransW [xxx xxx] and Latters from thair. and never Got no Rason Since for the Same nor Can I be alowed as Much Lands as Thaes that have fought against me, Sir as I knaw that Lands from Latters Been Granted to Parsons for thair Disceased frinds Sir Since your [han-] is and of the Members of Councsell and Knaw you take as a father to the Settlement Bay your will do Som thing in my favour .... and Will for Ever obledge ..... .

Sir you Humble Sarvent

Adam Vrooman

to the Honorable

David Wm. Smith Esq.

Vrooman's land petition is of interest to the linguist not only for its features pertaining to capitalization, which will, however, be the only feature considered here. Disregarding proper names and the beginning of sentences,

6 Letters and words in [ ] are the result of 'guesswork', while [xxx] stands for a word that could not be deciphered at all.

we find 16 capitalized words in the text, of which five are verbs (to Grant, Was, Knawen, Can, Produse), three are adverbs (During, Likewise, Wal 'well'), one is an adjective (Disceased), and a mere six are nouns (Brather, Counsell, Allowance, Land, Later Water, Mother), which means that less than 50% of all capitalized words are nouns. We do not know where Vrooman acquired his writing skills,[7] he might have been taught in Britain or even have Dutch as a first language, judging from his name.

However, if we take this piece of writing as an indicator of literacy at the time, it illustrates Parvin's (1965: 16) thesis that teachers had to deal with different problems than capitalization. Although some 18th century grammars recommend to capitalize emphasized words regardless of parts of speech (Osselton 1985: 54 on Anne Fisher's (1750) and Thomas Dilworth's (1751) grammars), in Vrooman's case, chaos prevails. Vrooman does not seem to have any concept about how to use upper case, be it for means of emphasis or some other principle and so his patterns do not make much sense.

Even with his limited writing skills, however, he felt confident enough to write to the Upper Canadian Council and tried to explain a rather complex situation, but clearly he was anything but a frequent writer. Before 1800, literacy was still a privilege of the higher social classes (cf. Bailey 1996: 23). At that time, most Canadians had other worries than proper spelling. If someone from the lower social ranks like soldiers, small scale farmers and settlers were able to read and write at all, his or her competence may have been similar to Vrooman's level of literacy.

In terms of capitalization, however, his letter is an interesting example of Canadian usage at that time, but it cannot really serve our needs. In a study, where we hope to gain access to people's deliberate choices of upper and lower case, we would do better to rule out Vrooman's text.

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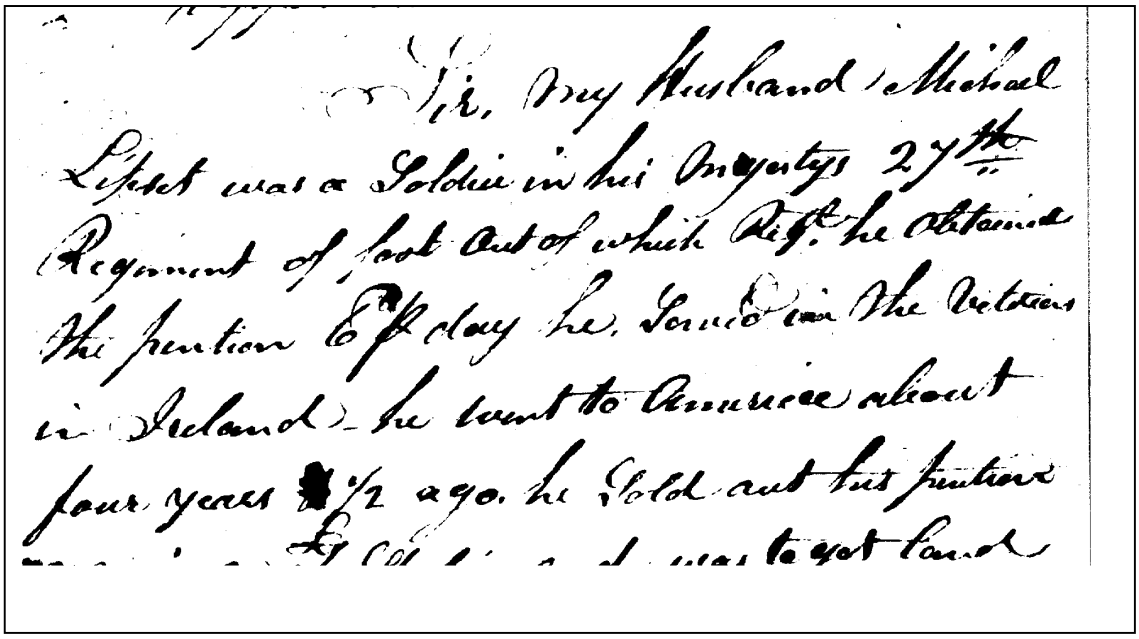
[7] There is, of course, a chance that Vrooman (and in fact all others that we consider authors) had the letter written by someone else. If this was the case, Vrooman had the letter also signed by his scribe, which is possible, if not very likely. After all, Vrooman was a soldier and was therefore probably able to sign his name. Moreover, since the quality of the writing is rather bad, the potential writer would have been anything but a professional writer. Therefore, we may surmise, the potential scribe would most likely have come from a similar social background than Vrooman himself, being possibly one of his siblings or a fellow soldier. At least socially, we are not that far off.

3.2. Why not to use handwritten texts

Despite the reasons to exclude letters like Vrooman's in studies on capitalization, there are, however, more fundamental reasons why handwritten texts should be excluded on the whole. Henry Widdowson has pointed out in the discussion of an earlier version of this paper that the question of capitalization would probably have to be dealt with completely differently for handwritten texts than for imprints. In manuscripts, and a good deal of early Canadian data is handwritten material, it may as well be that there is no dichotomous system of upper and lower case forms for every grapheme. On the contrary, the writer may merely have one form for a certain letter in his/her allographic inventory.

Let me illustrate this briefly. The following is an excerpt from Maragaret Lessiel's letter to the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, dating 12th January 1836 (Archives of Ontario, MS-563 Reel 14, No. 13473), followed by a transcription:



(Detail of original text)

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Sir, my Husband Michael Lessiel was a Soldier in his
[M]ajestys 27th Regiment of foot out of which
[Ricd.] he obtained the pention 6[]P day he Served
in the victories in I[r]eland, - he went to America
about four years 1/2 ago. he Sold out his pention
```

(Transcription from above, boldface added)

If we concentrate on word-initial 's-' (in boldface), we see the following instances: the first word, 'Sir', 'Soldier' in the second line, in the fourth line

'Serv'd', (or 'serv'd'?), in the sixth 'Sold', (or 'sold'?). If we take a closer look, we also find that the 's' in *served* and *sold* are neither different in shape nor in size so that it seems likely that Mrs. Lessiel had only one form, one allograph for the grapheme 'S' in word-initial position, i.e. some kind of 'case-neutral s-', in her handwritten inventory. While a writer could do just fine with only one allograph for a certain letter, the printer had to make a choice. This hypothesis is further backed by the problems encountered with the transcription of early manuscripts for the *Corpus of Early Ontario English.* In the earlier two periods, i.e. 1776-1824, it has sometimes been impossible to decide whether a letter is in upper or lower case, and there may be a good reason for that.

We may conclude that not only do we need more educated writers than Vrooman for a study of capitalization, but we should also rule out all manuscripts for the reasons illustrated.[8] The next two examples, however, should fulfill these requirements. The first is a piece of a member of the Canadian social elite at that time. Her capitalization is expected to be more regularized and more consciously applied and stands as such in stark contrast to Vrooman's usage. This example will be complemented by a short passage from an early Ontario newspaper. These data, taken together, should allow us to hypothesize about the proposed Canadian colonial lag.

3.3. Anne Powell's diary, 1789

In 1789 William Dummer Powell was appointed "First Judge" of the newly established District of Hesse, the western tip of what is now south-western Ontario. For that reason Judge Powell travelled from Montreal to Detroit, which by then still belonged to Canada. His sister Anne was 'part of the household' and travelled with him. Anne had originally intended to keep a diary while travelling by boat, but soon she became "aware of the difficulties attending the journey" (Powell 1789: 1), and

> left it [her journal] wholly alone and trusted to [her] memory (which never deserved such a compliment) for recollecting whatever was worth communication (Powell 1789: 1)

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[8] This, on the other hand, brings in the printers and with them other factors that would need to be considered. In the light of Lessiel's example, it seems plausible that a rigid dichotomy of upper and lower case is – initially - less the result of the influence of spelling books than of the spread of printing and of printers' conventions, but this is a question that would have to be addressed separately.

The quotes are taken from a typescript by William R. Riddell for which the typist has "personally seen to it that the original orthography is preserved in the copy" (Riddell: preparatory note), while the current whereabouts of the original are unknown. We can see from a few phrases that Anne was a writer from the other end of the social scale than Vrooman:

> We left Montreal on the 11th of May with a large party of our friends who paid us the compliment of seeing us the first Stage where we took a farewell dinner and all the party except Mr. Clarke left us. It was a melancholy parting here. I was the person least interested in it, and partook of it more from sympathy than any real sorrow I felt, all whom I was much attach'd to were going with me, but on those occasions crying is catching and I took the infection. Yet I felt melancholy, for tho' I had no particular friendships, I had received many civilities from the people of Montreal and I felt a general regret at bidding them adieu.

(the beginning of Anne Powell's diary)

We need to ask for whom Anne intended to record her 'communication'. The publication of diaries and journals was unthinkable at the time in Canada, even the more so for women. As no other writings of Anne seem to exist, we may assume that Anne did not have the public in mind as a recipient, but the diary was probably only for herself, or at the most meant for her descendants. Riddell reports that her manuscript is "beautifully written, clear and legible, certainly the productio[n] of a well educated and intelligent woman". Anne took great care putting down her experiences which provides some reason to assume that she did not adapt her spelling to this more private occasion (cf. Osselton 1984: 124), allowing us to compare her orthography to texts from more public domains.[9]

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9 During the discussion of this article, doubts were voiced against the idea of adapting one's spelling for more private occasions. Notions like "Who would do this?" and the idea that spelling is "deeply ingrained" are both plausible statements, but probably more appropriate for 20th century linguistic behaviour. These ideas stand in contrast to the dichotomy of informal and formal spelling (Osselton 1963). There are indicators that after 1755 dictionaries were bought for "the correction of one's private spelling" (Osselton 1963: 274) and that by the mid-1700s a 'pedantic' and a 'polite' orthography were in use, i.e. public and private. Before the background of changing norms in the wake of Johnson's dictionary this finding seems highly plausible, at least for the highly educated.

3.3.1. Capitalization: British and Canadian

If we take a look at the first three of the extant 16 pages, the following picture emerges. In contrast to Vrooman's letter, we find only capitalized nouns in Powell's diary. There are 190[10] nouns, of which we find 148 types:

nouns - tokens:		**nouns – types:**	
53 UC	28 %	37 UC	25 %
137 LC	72 %	111 LC	75 %
190	100 %	148	100 %

On the whole, we find in 25% of all nouns that have an upper case initial letter, as opposed to 0 %[11] for 1790 and a maximum of around 10% after 1776 in the British data (cp. Figure 1). The Canadian 28%, resp. 25%, would correspond to a British usage of not later than around 1760, but unfortunately, figure (1) spans too broad a period to derive a more precise comparison. Nevertheless, the comparison suggests that hypotheses about a Canadian linguistic conservatism do apply for the late 18th century.

At the micro level, the text reveals certain interesting examples. Thus, we find reference to a 'carriage' in lower case, while the more specific type of carriage, a 'Calash' < Fr. *calèche*, is always spelt with a capitalized initial letter. The same applies to the word 'peace', that is in lower case when referred to in general, but capitalized, when it is talked about *the* 'Peace', referring to the peace treaty of 1783 that marked the end of the American Revolutionary War. Therefore, Powell uses capitalization as a kind of definiteness marker, similar to the use of the definite article. This is carried out pretty consistently, but in other areas there are some examples of what may be termed free variation that create some problems for Osselton's rules. We find the following spellings, relativizing the animate noun rule (2a):

10 Excluded were proper nouns (e.g. Montreal, Detroit, May, also excluding military ranks – Major, Captn etc.) and the pronoun 'I', which is always capitalized; compounds were (e.g. farewell dinner) counted as one occurrence.

11 This is a result of Osselton's data. It should be easy, though, to produce BE texts from 1790 that did not capitalize all nouns.

Variation of initial letter: animate nouns	Man – man sister – Sister girls – Ladies friend, friends – Parents women – Wife

These word pairs illustrate nicely that animate nouns appear both with a capitalized initial letter and a small letter in the diary, where no different meaning can be inferred. Since Osselton's rule (2a) is certainly violated here, e.g. animate nouns (sister – Sister), we can only apply his prominence rule (1). The three remaining pairs are interesting in this respect: while 'girls' is written with a small initial, 'Ladies' is capitalized. If we take the last two examples, we may hypothesize that the capitalized nouns are somehow 'more important' or 'higher valued' than the ones on the left. The interpretation may be as follows: a girl does not have the social prestige as a lady does and friends are not one's social superior, whereas one's parents are. While this interpretation is possible for late 18th century Canada, it is highly speculative and may also be explained in terms of definiteness, e.g. *her* Parents, *his fellow's* wife.[12]

3.3.2. Digging deeper: Powell's use of MAN

We have seen that while Osselton's semantic category rule (2) does not hold in Powell's data, his prominence rule may pass, even though it is almost impossible to falsify and better concepts may apply. In this sense, we have not gained very much, but a more thorough analysis may add some clarity. Let us then take a more detailed look at one example, at Powell's use of the word 'man' (pp. 1-3), in greater detail:

Anne Powell's use of MAN	
capitalized initial	**small initial letter**
• "and has been 5 years married to a **Man** who is old" (Powell: 3)	• We breakfasted at the house of a **man** who keeps the Lock (Powell: 2) • "Mr. Hamilton, a sensible, worthy and agreeable **man**" (Powell: 7) • "when a **man** grows infirm and his talents are obscured by age" (Powell: 11) • "My Brother had also given a package to another young **man** and to Captn Harrow" (Powell: 7) • "Mr. H., who is a humane **man**" (Powell: 8) • "I was very much struck with the figures of these

[12] The last three examples may also be explained in terms of 'definiteness'.

	Indians as they approach'd us. […] One **man** call'd to mind some of Homer's finest heroes." (Powell: 11) • "he spoke English with propriety and return'd all the compliments that were paid him with ease and politeness. As he was not only the handsomest but the best drest **man** I saw" (Powell: 12) • "One old **man** diverted me extremely" (Powell: 13)

We have one occurrence of 'Man', while 'man' occurs seven times and therefore violates the animate noun rule more often than it meets it. If we take a look at the example of 'Man', with capitalized initial, we may argue that Powell could hardly stress the fact that the poor woman was married to a 'Man', since this was clearly nothing special, and therefore violates the prominence rule as well.

Let us then try to find another principle for the single instance in the left column. One possibility is that capitalization is influenced by the grammatical construction a certain word occurs in. It may be that 'Man' is capitalized because a relative clause refers to it. This would support Osselton's emphasis theory in a different way: she was not married to any man, but an old one. Anne Powell might have tried to emphasize her statement in this grammatically more sophisticated way. However, the first example on the right shows that this principle, if it applies at all, is at least not carried out consistently: "We breakfasted at the house of a man who keeps the Lock" is the exact same construction than on the left side of the table, but this time with lower case 'man'. That capitalization is used as a definiteness marker, another possibility, is also confronted with counter evidence: in the penultimate example of 'man' we see that the lower case is also used where one would expect upper case as a definiteness marker, denoting a certain person. Here, the phrase 'the best drest man I saw' is also referring to a person mentioned in the text before.

To sum up, we have not found a guiding principle for Powell's use of capitalization. Despite an emotional difference of the sentence on the left in comparison to the first sentence on the right, we may wonder why Powell chose to capitalize one word but not the other. We are at a loss here: Powell might have emphasized something, but we do not know exactly what and why.

So far we have shown that Osselton's semantic category rule ('animate rule') is not corroborated by the data, and his prominence rule is at best not entirely contradicted. However, since the latter is so general, we may not be in the position to refute it completely. As the discussion of Powell's use of MAN should have shown, we have little more than mere conjecture. We may

therefore tentatively conclude, backed by this mini-survey, that Osselton's semantic category rule (2) and possibly also his prominence rule are not borne out in the Canadian data. It remains to be shown if, and to what extent this is a specifically Canadian feature and if it is part of the proposed 'colonial lag', for which we found some indicator in section 3.3.1.

Questions like these need to be addressed by studies based on more comprehensive data. Osselton (1985: 49) refers to his data as "some fifty randomly chosen prose passages form first editions of London printers", but we do not know what kinds of prose he chose. Anne Powell's pages are prose, no doubt, but they were not meant for publication, although they seem to be written in public style. In the case of early Canadian newspapers this was of course different. Let us then take look at the usage of capitalization in this earliest type of imprint from Ontario and see if the results from Powell's text are borne out. Newspapers, after all, clearly belong to the public sphere where we can rule out interference from the private domain.

3.4. Upper Canada Gazette, April 18, 1793

Newspapers were among the first Canadian imprints. Before 1826, when Canada got its first paper mill (Stabile 2002: 271), all printing was a financially risky endeavour due to a high paper price, but the need for shared information enabled a small central Canadian newspaper culture to grow in the 1790s. Here, we are dealing with public texts and due to the lack of Canadian imprints in book form at that time this kind of data provides the best basis for a comparison with Osselton's study.

The *Upper Canada Gazette*, in its early years published with the subtitle *American Journal*, was Ontario's first newspaper that drew, like other early Canadian papers, heavily on governmental support (Burant 1985: 1483). As such, many proclamations and parliamentary speeches, or rather their summaries, were printed to inform the civil servants and the literate public. A good part of these early newspapers are reprints from other imprints for which it is very likely that the printers, working with the mirror image of the texts, did not bother to correct their colleagues' usage (Juliana Stabile: personal communication). In our particular newspaper from April 18, 1793, we can find evidence for this practice: Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe's proclamation, surely first printed in this newspaper, features a considerable amount of upper case initials. The reprints of the King's address to the (British) House of Parliament and some extracts of a Philadelphia newspaper, on the other hand, are more or less already set in PDE conventions, whereas a

following extract from the Quebec Gazette is set strikingly different, featuring many upper case initials. Since texts from the same genre, such as political news from Philadelphia on the one hand and Québec on the other, are printed with different conventions, the differences in capitalization cannot be the result of different text types, indicating the existence of specifically Canadian printing conventions on capitalization.

Towards the end of the papers, which often featured only one sheet of four pages for a good portion of the early times, we find occasional advertisements, some local news and notices. These local notices were either first written by hand and then set, or, if the message was short, the printer may have set the types directly from dictation. In either case, the printer had to choose, between upper or lower case characters and as such we have evidence of the printer's concept of capitalization. These cases of more local provenance provide a window on the printing conventions of a certain shop and consequently a certain area. In the following, I would like to provide an example from these notices (p. 4):

TO THE PUBLIC.
THE EDITOR of this News Paper, respectfully informs the Public, that the flattering prospect which he has of an
extensive sale for his new undertaking, has enabled him to augment the size originally proposed from a Demy Quarto to a Folio.

The encouragement he has met, will call forth every exertion he is master of, so as to render the paper useful entertaining and instructive, he will be verry happy in being favored with such communications as may contribute to the information of the public, from those who shall be disposted to assist him, and in particular shall be highly flattered in becoming the Vehicle of Intelligence in this growing Province, of whatever may tend to its internal benefit and common advantage. In order to preserve the Veracity of his paper, which will be requisite that all transactions of a domestic nature, such as Deaths, Marriages, &c. be communicated under real signatures.

The price of this Gazette, will be Three Dollars per Annum. All advertisements inserted in it and not exceeding 12 lines will pay 4s. Quebec Currency, and

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for every additional length a portionable price.

Orders, for Letter Press Printing shall be executed
with neatness dispatch and attention, and on the
most reasonable terms.
```

Counting the words in upper and lower case, we find 14 capitalized words, all of them nouns, with the exception of 'Three', which determines 'Dollars':

capitalized words (14):
News Paper
Public
Demy Quarto
Folio
Vehicle
Intelligence
Province
Veracity
Deaths, Marriages
Gazette
Three Dollars
Annum
Quebec Currency
Letter Press Printing
(= compound)

On the other hand, 22 nouns with small initials[13] are found in the text. If we complement this example with the other seven notices from that paper, we arrive at the following figures:

nouns - tokens:		**nouns – types:**	
49 UC	45 %	47 UC	45 %
61 LC	55 %	57 LC	55 %
110	100 %	104	100 %

In the notices of this particular issue, 55 % of all nouns that would be in lower case by today's standards are capitalized. That the ever prevalent uncertainty existed here as well is shown in the use of 'public' and 'paper', which are found intermingled with their capitalized instantiations. If we refer back to

13 'Orders' at beginning of line excluded.

Osselton's figure (1), this would again, if one were to assume a somewhat linear decrease, roughly correspond to British usage of around 1760. However, Osselton's figure can only serve as a vague indicator, since its scale, spanning three hundred years, does not allow for a closer analysis. While the data are comparable in terms of their use in public domains (newspapers vs. books), it needs to be added that a comparison of newspaper notices with their British counterparts would be needed to derive stronger claims.

4. Language internal and external evidence

We have seen in the discussion that the evidence for a colonial lag is suggested by the data, but we also said that this is what has been said about Canadian English for some time. However, we not only produced some language internal evidence in favour of the theory, but also, I fear, some ambiguity. By trying to 'date' the colonial lag, we may have opened Pandora's box. If one were to base statements of linguistic conservatism on historical facts, that is language externally, one usually does not ask the question how conservative a certain linguistic behaviour is. With our language internal data we seem to have arrived at some more questions, for which neither language internal data nor language external facts can provide us with answers. Let me illustrate this: So far, we have taken our percentages and put them on Osselton's graph, where we found some corresponding percentage at a certain time. We started in 1790, went back in time on the x-axis, and stopped at the first corresponding percentage, which was, due to the steep decline, both times around 1760. This is where the problem begins: If we take a look at Figure (2), which is still Osselton's graph, but now adapted to illustrate this point, we see the problem more clearly.

In terms of the percentages of nouns capitalized (28% and 55%), the Canadian usage would either compare with a usage of around 1760, as suggested before, or to some earlier periods (cf. the points of intersection of the horizontal lines, the upper line for newspapers, the lower one Powell's diary). This result reminds us a bit of the quadratic equations in secondary school: either of two solutions produces a methodologically proper result, in the case of newspaper usage (upper line) a time lag of either 30 years (for 1760) or some 140 years (for 1650) applies. Like in the days of math classes, we would need to look for another point of reference, and the prescriptive rules that Osselton identified should help us to decide whether 30 or 140 years are the appropriate solution.

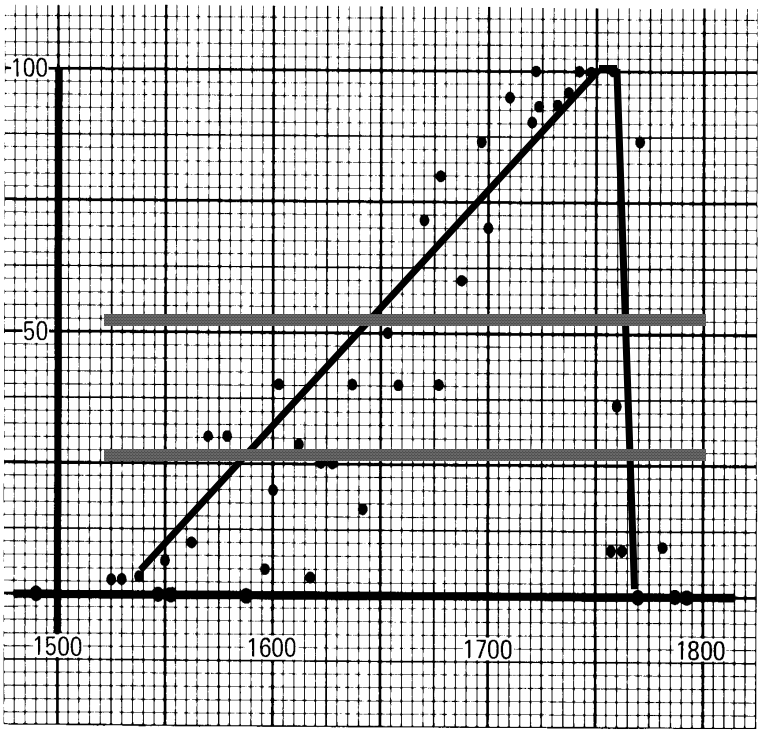

Figure 2: Osselton (1985) adapted

We have seen that we could not corroborate Osselton's two principles in our Canadian texts. The rejection of Osselton's core rules would imply that Canadian usage does *not* correspond to British usage between 1660 and 1720, as the principles were gleaned from reference texts from that period. Unfortunately, we are in trouble here: If we were to go by the newspaper data only, we could argue that a level of 55% is reached around 1650 and 1760 (upper horizontal line). Since the earlier cut-off point of 1650 is relatively close to 1660, when Osselton's rules apply first and which is not the case on the other end of the spectrum (1720 vs. 1760), we would opt for the later point of reference, i.e. 1760.

Let us assume that we would let the comparison of our prescriptive rules with our descriptive data pass for now, our method is bound to fly out the window with Anne Powell's data: according to our interpolation line, Powell's use of capitalization is equivalent to the percentages in British usage of around 1580 and 1760, but the data reaches the level again around 1625, providing us with not one, but two much earlier reference points of comparable usage between British and Canadian data. Osselton's rules cannot be applied

here, and we have no means to opt for either of the three dates. One is tempted to disregard the two earlier dates of 1580 and 1625 as being a bit too far off – after all, Ontario was settled in the 1780s and 1790s and the mathematical principle applied here is a kind of slippery slope. But on the whole it would be thinkable that Canadian loyalists, coming from the newly founded U.S. of A., might have preserved a much older usage in some restricted linguistic area like capitalization. Admittedly, 1580 seems a bit far fetched, but how can we decide whether Canadian usage corresponds either to British usage from 1760, 1650 or 1625? Language external reasoning may help here only partly, based on the notion that people who moved to Canada grew up in the 1760s. But, in the end, we have no clear-cut principle to rule out the other dates, bearing in mind that we are dealing with a very limited area of linguistic behaviour that would not affect comprehension.

5. Conclusion

We have gained some tentative evidence in favour of the colonial lag theory. It seems as if Canadians (or at least Canadian printers) were linguistically conservative with their more frequent application of upper case initials. However, our evidence is ambiguous as to the dating of the lag, allowing us to only tentatively produce two dimensions of the time lag, leaving us either with a lag of around 150 years on the one hand, or a mere 30 years on the other hand. If a lag existed on other linguistic levels to a similar degree, we could rule out the earlier dates on the basis of the documented changes in phonology and on other levels. If the phenomenon was more or less uniform on all levels, we would opt for a shorter time lag, i.e. that Canadian usage of the 1790s roughly corresponds to British usage from around 1760. If, however, different linguistic levels were affected by different time lags, e.g. pronunciation was less affected than the usage of capitalization on grounds so that mutual intelligibility with English speakers from elsewhere was preserved, we have no way to tell how far behind capitalization was in the Canadas: 1760, 1650 or 1625? Or even 1580? We wouldn't know.

Another limitation of the type of survey presented here is that it is merely based on a quantitative comparison of overall percentages of capitalization. We can therefore say little about the concrete usage of capitalization in early Canadian English, except for that it differed from British usage from around 1700 (1660-1720) and that the notion of definiteness seems to have been one principle to guide the use of upper case. However, it needs again to be stressed that all that could be done in this working paper was to raise and il-

lustrate a number of issues. The results, therefore, have to be treated cautiously. The tentative British reference point of around 1760, however, would give us a relatively small lag of not even two generations, which means that anything but a comprehensive study would not provide us with the proper data to clarify this question in a satisfactory manner. Osselton's study covers too big of a time-frame for our purposes so that first we would need to establish better reference points for British, but also American, data, covering the 18th century in greater detail.

I hope to have shown that these kinds of comparison promise, despite their limitations, highly interesting results. More comprehensive studies should be able to empirically not only verify, specify or even falsify colonial lag theory, but also date the time lag more precisely and it is to be hoped that the *Corpus of Early Ontario English* will facilitate this task.

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What is wrong with modern accounts of context in linguistics?

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1. Introduction

The two main objectives of this paper are as follows *first* to identify the weaknesses of current approaches to context in linguistics and *second* to propose some remedy. The latter will take the shape of an account of 'context as relation' investigated within the framework of non-Cartesian Relational Pragmatics.

The role and significance of the notion of 'context' for pragmatics and discourse analysis cannot be overestimated. Context is a constitutive concept for these disciplines, because without it they simply would not exist. Language users in real speech situations and analysts describing and interpreting pieces of discourse have to relate the relevant texts to the rich universe of contextual elements that regulate the pragmatic interpretation and use of utterances/discourses. Non-Cartesian pragmatics (cf. Kopytko 2001, 2002) should focus on the *pancontextual* (all-embracing) view of pragmatic phenomena. To be more specific, the question to consider is the following: How much context (or rather which contextual elements) language users must either know or retrieve from the universe of contextual factors that is located in their physical, mental, social and interactive environment. In addition, linguists have to examine the structure, function, and dynamic interaction of the (intrinsic) cognitive, affective, and conative context, and the (extrinsic) social, cultural, and interactive one, concluding with the investigation of the dynamic interrelations between the two types of context and the characterization of their interface. The idea of pancontextualism implies (1) a broad range of pragmatic research and (2) no restrictions on the scope of potential contextual factors in linguistic interaction, especially, no restrictions imposed by pragmaticians and discourse analysts by *fiat*.

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2. Context in discourse analysis and modern pragmatics – a brief overview

The researchers associated with the tradition of 'British contextualism' include Bronislaw Malinowski (1966 [1923]), J. R. Firth (1957), and M. A. K. Halliday (1978).

Malinowski notes that "a statement, spoken in real life, is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered… the utterance has no meaning except in the context of situation." (1923: 307). It should be noted that he also puts emphasis on the functions of language associated with the social life of a speech community and the relation between language use and action (for him the use of language depends on the course of activity). Finally, he attaches great importance to the context of culture both on the level of language use and interpretation. Kryk-Kastovsky (2002) presents an illuminating comparison of accounts of context in the works of Malinowski, Firth, and Austin. She also considers the significance of context in intercultural communication.

2.1. Context in discourse analysis

The role and scope of context vary in different approaches to language use (cf. Schiffrin 1993). In 'speech act theory' (cf. Austin 1962; Searle 1969) and Gricean pragmatics (cf. Grice 1975) the view of *context as knowledge* dominates. This is because the language user's knowledge of the "world" (including its mental, social and cultural aspects) guides the use and interpretation of language. We could expect the importance of context to grow in 'interactional sociolinguistics' (cf. Gumperz 1982). Gumperz's notions such as contextualization cues, contextual presuppositions and situated inferences put 'context' at the centre of interactional, sociolinguistic investigations. It should be noted that both contextual cues and situated inferences relate the pragmatic interpretation of meaning to the cognitive knowledge of the interactants and the present situation (situational context).

The 'ethnography of communication' (cf. Hymes 1974) attempts to integrate the cognitive context viewed as the knowledge stored in our communicative competence, and the socio-cultural context that defines communicative events. Its central notion is that of 'communicative competence'.

In William Labov's (1972) 'variation analysis' context as a situation and text come to the fore. The situational context in variation analysis is investigated by way of separate components such as (1) the social situation considered as the setting and scene, (2) the social identities (gender, age, and ethnicity), and/or (3) the key (formal vs. informal style). In contrast to interac-

tional sociolinguistics, variation analysis regards the situational factors as discrete and mutually exclusive entities that can be coded, counted and compared. Furthermore, the situational factors are considered to be relatively stable categorical variables. In interactional sociolinguistics contextual elements are viewed as dynamic concepts susceptible to influence from the self and interpersonal processes.

In 'conversational analysis' or CA (cf. Garfinkel 1967; Sacks 1992) the scope of context seems to be the broadest (among the approaches presented so far). This is so because it combines the view of context as (1) knowledge, (2) situation, and (3) text. Yet, it should be noted that in CA knowledge cannot be separated from the situation because it is knowledge "in use" rather than an independent knowledge stored in the brain (characteristic of speech act theory and Gricean pragmatics) that differentiates the notion of knowledge in CA from that used in other approaches to discourse analysis. In CA each utterance in a sequence is dependent on a prior context and creates context for the next utterance (thus it functions as its 'co-text').

Some approaches to discourse processing postulate the presence and/or necessity of knowledge *schemata* (as mental representations of typical situations) in our 'cognitive brain' (cf. Schank and Abelson 1977). Researchers in Artificial Intelligence have specially been attracted to the idea of mental schemata. Clearly, they view schemata as knowledge structures.

Similarly, in their *relevance theory* Sperber and Wilson (1986) focus on mental knowledge structures. Verschueren (1999: 263) claims that relevance theory "limits pragmatics to whatever can be said in terms of a cognitively defined notion of relevance." Sperber and Wilson suggest that 'relevant information' yields the greatest change in our knowledge for the least processing effort.

Closely related to the cognitive view of context in 'relevance theory' is the figure vs. ground distinction proposed by Duranti and Goodwin (1992). Despite some undeniable merits and theoretical advantages the interpretation of meaning by way of *context* and the '*focal event'* (cf. Duranti and Goodwin 1992; Auer 1995), derived from the *figure-ground* relationship in the Gestalt psychology of perception, has to face serious problems. The distinction between the figure vs. ground aims at organizing the unstructured, amorphous, or chaotic sense-data by selecting and focusing on the figure (or theme, topic, etc.), and relegating all the other elements or phenomena to the status of background. However, the problem is that actors frequently disagree about what is (or should be) the 'focal event' or the figure and what is the background in a specific verbal interaction. This is so because actors in speech

events are endowed with their specific knowledge structures and cognitive idiosyncrasies that make them perceive, categorize, and interpret reality subjectively.

In addition, there are numerous theoretical and practical questions associated with "contextual focus", especially concerning the mutual influence of contextual elements on each other and the selection of the 'focal event'; note that emotions and goals influence social perception and as a result 'figure' selection. Therefore, selecting one 'focal event' rather than another seems to be a matter of subjective preference (bias) and chance rather than that of the inescapable, deterministic and universal mechanism. If the figure-ground dichotomy is not positively resolved during verbal interaction either miscommunication (or an illusion of communicative success), or interpersonal conflict may ensue.

In sum, different approaches to discourse focus on different elements of context. Thus, speech act theory and Gricean pragmatics view context primarily as *knowledge,* interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking emphasize the significance of *knowledge* and *situation*, variation analysis concentrates on *situation* and *text*, and conversational analysis takes the relationships between *knowledge*, *situation*, and *text* as a major object of investigation.

2.2. Context in pragmatics

Ludwig Wittgenstein's view of linguistic philosophy radically changed the interest and orientation of many scholars concerning language use. The surprising conversion from *Cartesian* and positivistic methods and ideas in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* to the *Non-Cartesian* (cf. Kopytko 2001) claims in Wittgenstein's 'late philosophy' (cf. Wittgenstein 1922/92, 1953) stimulated the development of 'ordinary language analysis', that is, a method of philosophical investigation that focuses on contextual language use rather than abstract meaning. The names associated with this orientation include such famous British philosophers as John L. Austin, Gilbert Ryle, John Wisdom and George E. Moore. Wittgenstein's rejection of philosophical essentialism (cf. Kopytko 1995) and his new notions and metaphors such as 'family resemblance' or 'language game' resulted in a new perspective on linguistic phenomena.

Lyons (1977: 574) singles out the role of 'knowledge' in language use including: the knowledge of *role* and *status*, *location*, *formality level*, the *medium* (spoken or written), *subject matter*, *province* (or domain determining the

register of a language). Additionally, Lyons also sees the importance of linguistic features that interact with context.

Leech (1983: 13) characterizes context as "any background knowledge assumed to be shared by *s* and *h* and which contributes to *the h's interpretation of what s* means by a given utterance." (The letters *s* and *h* stand for the speaker and hearer respectively). Levinson (1983: 13) restricts context to the basic parameters of the context of utterance which include participants' identity, role, location, assumptions about knowledge, etc. He justifies such an approach to context with the aim of his book, which he sees as "an introduction to the philosophical-linguistic tradition" rather than "an exhaustive coverage of all the contextual coordinates of linguistic organization."

Mey (1993) presents a broad view of context as knowledge, situation, and co-text. He maintains that context is a dynamic rather than static phenomenon; therefore, contextual factors are in steady development during the process of social interaction. Besides, Mey holds that "any understanding that linguists can hope to obtain of what goes on between people using language is based, necessarily and uniquely, on a correct understanding of the *whole context* (my emphasis) in which the linguistic interaction takes place." (1993: 186). He has also introduced the notion of 'wording the world' that has social and contextual implications. Thus, Mey maintains that "in order to understand another person's wording, I have to participate in his or her contexts, to word the world with him or her." (1993: 304).

Verschueren (1999: 74-114) locates language users within contextual correlates of adaptability represented as a linguistic context and the 'mental world', 'social world', and 'physical world'. This is a broad scope of contextual factors including *knowledge*, *situation*, *co-text*, and others. According to Verschueren, the mental world activated in language use contains cognitive and emotive elements. He also mentions 'personality', 'beliefs', 'desires', 'wishes', 'motivations', and 'intentions'. The 'social world' is examined by its social settings, institutions, cultural norms, and values. The analysis of the 'physical world' focuses on temporal and spatial reference, and the physical properties of language users such as bodily postures, gestures, gaze, sex, physical appearance, etc. In his approach to pragmatics, Verschueren puts emphasis on the dynamics of interactive meaning generation.

In conclusion, the approaches to context presented above (see sections 2.1. and 2.2.) differ in their view of the scope of context and in their focus (one might also say bias) on some elements of context and the exclusion of others. The reason for this is the disciplinary bias and goals of particular researchers; note the influence of cultural anthropology on Malinowski's idea of

context, of analytical philosophy on John Austin, John Searle and Paul Grice, of sociolinguistics on William Labov's variation analysis and John Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics or of ethnomethodology on conversational analysis and so on. A prevailing method used by 'contextualists' (or researchers analyzing the context of language use) is that of 'enumeration' of relevant contextual factors (elements). Sometimes, they provide some disciplinary (local) justification for their claims rather than offering a general framework or justified theory of contextual phenomena.

3. Context in non-Cartesian Pragmatics

Since the early 60's the Cartesian paradigm has been very popular in the 'cognitive psychology' then 'cognitive science', the 'philosophy of mind', and 'linguistics'. Kopytko, (2001a:790-91) characterizes Cartesian pragmatics by a set of metaphysical and epistemological-methodological assumptions, claims, and features including the following: (1) the duality of the mental vs. physical "world", (2) the *innateness hypothesis*, (3) the modularity of mind, (4) a common cognitive processing mechanism, (5) the representational view of mind, (6) essentialism, (7) the discreteness/categoriality of pragmatic phenomena, (8) cognitive rationality, (9) certain knowledge, (10) universal rules, (11) universal claims, (12) the deductive method, (13) predictiveness, and (14) the priority of the 'knower' over the 'known'.

The emerging trends labeled as 'non-Cartesian pragmatics' may not endorse several or even all of the above postulates. Some non-Cartesians (including the present author) reject the disjunctive logic of 'either – or' and prefer to view pragmatic and other phenomena as gradable, interactive, unstable, etc. For that reason, the *innateness hypothesis*, for example, should not be rejected or accepted but rather corroborated or falsified at the ratioempirical level for each object of scientific investigation. The truth about human faculties seems to be that they are neither inborn nor socially acquired but rather that they result from a complex interaction between different systems (from the genetic and biological through the mental to the physical, social and cultural). The real relations between these interacting elements should be viewed as the subject matter of ratioempirical research rather than the result of philosophical assumptions.

The scope of interactional context is indefinite and infinite because each context is embedded in its own context that is embedded in its context and so on; in consequence, the situation of infinite contextual regress follows. Although for researchers this question remains a philosophical quandary, for

language users it is much less so, because, after all, they are capable of communicating effectively most of the time. Interpersonal communication is possible by actors' focusing on the relevant, interactional elements of the current contextual dynamics. A systematic explanation of this complex dynamic process is a goal worth pursuing, although, as may be expected, it will take much effort and multidisciplinary research to succeed. Of special importance to language users seems to be the issue of access to contextual information. In this connection, it is necessary to formulate the question whether all participants in verbal interaction have equal access to contextual information and what the possible consequences of such situations are.

The sum of individual perspectives contributed by language users makes the *contextual potential* of linguistic interaction. Manifestly, in this approach contextual knowledge is distributed among discourse participants. This means that no single actor acquires all contextual knowledge and that its distribution among them is not equal. Nonetheless, to communicate successfully they have to share at least some contexts to a certain degree. It should be emphasized that actors can learn and extend their contextual knowledge in the process of social interaction not only by the joint construction of new contexts but also by the acquisition of new information, the contextual change of individual perspectives and changing or seeking new goals of interaction. Finally, they can learn by coping with (1) the social and linguistic emergent[2] phenomena, which include *faux pas*, embarrassment, humor, joking, the loss of face, verbal duel, conflict, etc., and (2) the affective context of interaction viewed as the emotional states/processes and interrelations between actors.

One feature of perspective taking that emerges clearly from this discussion is that of 'subjectivity'. If actors embrace their perspectives in social interaction they may be viewed as their subjective points of view that depend on the content, structure, and interactional properties of their individual pragmatic potential. Thus, the feature of subjectivity must be assigned to the individual's mental faculties, the organization and content of (1) knowledge, beliefs, experience, social skills, social perception, etc., (2) affect characterized by the idiosyncratic structure of emotions related to personality features, (3) a hierarchy of goals and intentions and (4) the interrelations between the elements in (1-3) above. The content, structure and operation of an individual's contextual potential are subjective and unique (with some areas of possible

[2] Linguistic emergent phenomena in verbal interaction are first of all associated with the low predictability of their occurrence and potential threat to the course and success of communicative events.

overlap as has been suggested above). As a result, the addition of a new perspective may extend the contextual potential of interaction. By adding other perspectives/participants the contextual potential may grow *ad infinitum*, and as a consequence the phenomenon of *infinite regress* appears. Obviously, for practical reasons the scope of the contextual potential is rationally controlled and restricted; thus, the number of speeches in a parliamentary debate, participants in a talk-show, points of view in a newspaper debate, book or film reviews, the number of speakers in verbal interaction, are rationally regulated.

The feature of subjectivity associated with perspective taking/contextual potential leads to the supposition that no theory can predict the relevance of contextual elements in verbal interaction and their impact on its course. Nonetheless, the claim that some elements of context are more relevant than others does not appear to be unfounded. Kopytko maintains that "the relevant pragmatic context should include those elements of the (general) context that directly influence and shape the 'rationality' of the course of discourse, both in the positive and negative sense. Positively – when all participants of a speech encounter properly identify the relevant contextual features and conform to the accepted norms of linguistic interaction by maintaining face, observing conversational principles, etc.; and negatively – when the course of discourse is not smooth but disturbed by unexpected contextual intrusion such as *faux pas*, affective events, emergent pragmatic phenomena, etc." (1995: 486).

What language users contribute to the social interaction is their subjective pragmatic potential that can be seen as a structured system of cognitive, affective, and conative mental faculties and phenomena (cf. Kopytko 1998). The three elements are closely related and frequently form a unified cognitive-affective-conative system (for Plato's view of the triad 'reason', 'will', and 'passion' cf. Kopytko 1995, 2001).

We may assume, for the sake of a theoretical consideration that language users can be characterized either as subjective agents by their *Individual Pragmatic Potentials* (IPPs), or as members of an abstract social construct/set of language users characterized by their *Universal Pragmatic Potential* (UPP) with some claims to universality and objectivity. Finally, reconciliation between these two views might lead to a complementary approach so that both the IPP and the UPP of language users could be investigated. Nota bene, *pragmability*, that is, the human ability both inborn and acquired to produce and interpret texts in a holistic-relational context, has to be analyzed both in terms of the Individual Pragmatic Potential and the Universal Pragmatic Potential. It follows then that pragmability is a *conditio sine qua non* of

appropriate language use. Finally, as the name clearly indicates the Individual Pragmatic Potential represents and focuses on the subjective and person-specific aspects of a language user's linguistic skills.

Language users placed in a specific communicative situation have to play their parts by relying on the Individual Pragmatic Potential (IPP) at their disposal. Their communicative actions may either be a success or failure; both seem to depend not only on the agents' (IPP) but also on those of other participants in verbal interaction. Moreover, a third factor of utmost importance appears on the scene, namely, the interactional phenomena, processes, relations, etc. These may i.a. include collaboration and the collective construction of discourse reality, conflict, misunderstanding, persuasion, numerous emergent phenomena, etc. As a result, the centrality of (or focus on) language users is being questioned, and rightly so. Language users become only one of the many elements of social interaction. In addition, they should be viewed as dynamic rather than static entities, because they may develop, learn, and adapt to the changing, dynamic, social interaction. The changes may include any aspect of social intercourse such as the composition of the group (the number of participants), interactional goals, affective events, (mis)understanding, numerous cognitive factors (attention, memory, perception), or the individual behaviors of participants.

In the pancontextual view of pragmatics advocated here there is no limit to the scope of context. The relational context is open and dynamic. There is not just one locus of contextual knowledge; instead, context is distributed between actors, negotiated and frequently collectively constructed, deconstructed, and sometimes imposed upon them. Thus, the more skillful and powerful language users such as art or film critics, politicians and ideologists may impose their views, beliefs, or context interpretations on others. In the present approach, we may propose a basic dichotomy between the *intrinsic* vs. *extrinsic* context. Accordingly, the relational context may be examined by the intrinsic, contextual properties, phenomena and processes specified above as actors' Subjective Individual Pragmatic Potentials (IPP) correlated with other mental/cognitive elements and phenomena such as reasoning, self-concept, goals, emotions, etc. The elements of the relational context that are located beyond the mind/brain of the actor will be referred to as the extrinsic context. Actors have access to the extrinsic context through perceptual, cognitive-affective, and linguistic interfaces. Such a position has important philosophical consequences, namely, the question whether the available interfaces can secure objective cognition, or whether the intrinsic context does or does not influence/distort the perception of the extrinsic context. The answer

is that objective cognition is rather an unattainable ideal, and obviously, the subjective *intrinsic* context may distort social perception/judgment (cf. Forgas 1991).

The dynamic relations between the intrinsic and extrinsic contexts result in the *interactional context***,** viewed as a theoretical construct that should account for all elements, factors, phenomena and processes that appear in a specific verbal interaction. The most important among them are (1) the integrative discourse processes such as the collective construction of meaning/context, rationality, and cooperation, and (2) the disintegrative phenomena, viz., understanding, embarrassment, verbal aggression, conflict, deception, propaganda, social influence, etc. (cf. Giles and Robinson, 1990).

In conclusion, the pancontextual view of pragmatics suggested above raises the following issues: (1) questions the objectivity of the notion of 'context', (2) suggests a defocusing of the language user, (3) proposes an interactional point of view in pragmatic analysis, (4) explains why communicative success in verbal interaction is never guaranteed, and illusory understanding, or miscommunication occur so frequently, (5) suggests that actors' subjective (IPPs) may change, develop, and be enriched, (6) notes that the interactional processes (including actors' (IPPs) adaptation, enrichment, etc.) of multifarious cooperation between actors may lead to some form of social consensus and understanding (which, however, may prove to be unstable and only temporary), (7) reveals the dependence of Relational Pragmatics on other disciplines that investigate the different aspects of the relational context, (8) points to the possible interdependence between related disciplines (as an interactive cluster of shared elements, phenomena, and processes) (9) shows the interface between disciplines and the theoretical and practical consequences of such a situation, and (10) suggests that the 'neighboring' disciplines of pragmatics constitute and control all the phenomena and processes of social/linguistic interaction.

4. Context in Relational Pragmatics

Relational Pragmatics (RP) puts into focus the analysis of relations between elements of a pragmatic system that consists of (1) interactants or language users, (2) language and (3) context. Relational Pragmatics aims at showing the problems that language users have to solve if they wish to participate successfully in social interaction, and, even more importantly, it also aims at accounting for the communicative-interactive failures of incompetent participants. The three basic elements of the theory of language use, that is, the lan-

guage user, language and context, do not function in isolation; quite the opposite, they form an integrated system of interrelations. For this reason, the study of these interdependencies will be referred to as Relational Pragmatics. As presented above, a pragmatic system (PS) in Relational Pragmatics (RP) will be investigated as a triad (1) the language user or interactant (the latter term seems to be more abstract and more convenient when non-verbal communication (NVC) is referred to), (2) language (or code), and (3) context. It follows that three pairs of binary relations (xRy) make a pragmatic system: (1) Interactant (I) ← → Language (L), (2) Language (L) ← → Context (C) and (3) Interactant (I) ← → Context (C); (see Kopytko 1998). The crucial claim of Relational Pragmatics is the proposition that the three entities and interrelations between them make the pragmatic system which underlies the *pragmability* (my term) of language users. It follows then that pragmability is a *conditio sine qua non* of appropriate language use. Pragmability in Relational Pragmatics is a general notion that embraces both the Individual Pragmatic Potential (IPP) and the Universal Pragmatic Potential (UPP). Besides, it is significant to note that it is not equivalent to the idea of pragmatic or communicative competence, because there is no distinction between competence and performance in RP. Actually, Relational Pragmatics is the study of language users' pragmability.

The self-system in Relational Pragmatics also contains the concepts of *rationality* and *face* (cf. Kopytko 1993), the former cognitvely and the latter affectively-oriented. However, the meaning and function of these constructs in RP are different. In RP they are seen as pragmatic notions whose basic properties are the following: (1) incompleteness, (2) indeterminacy, and (3) instability (for brevity, they will be referred as the 3-I's). As a consequence, their functions (roles) in language use are less categorical and have to be, in principle, contextually evaluated.

A view of pragmability as qualitatively equivalent to linguistic competence that may occasionally be distorted by performance phenomena has been rejected here in favor of the claim that imperfect and incomplete acquisition of contextual knowledge and the three defining features of pragmatic context (see the 3-I's above) are phenomena *sui generis* associated with pragmatics. This is so because (1) the scope of the relevant context is usually unpredictable, (2) context is a dynamic phenomenon that may be constructed (regulated) by interactants, and (3) no two contexts or situations can be claimed to be identical (this also holds for the mental context discussed above). In brief, each contextual situation is unique.

5. Context as relation

Everything that is has its context of being. Even so called autonomous objects do not exist in a vacuum but are subject to a variety of internal and external factors that may influence, change, distort, or even destroy them. Context is the dynamic relation that may affect the autonomous, natural (physical) objects, or mental objects like language. At its most fundamental level context must be viewed as a relation of *co-being* or *co-presence* characterized as a situation such that there must exist at least two objects (entities) capable of entering into physical, mental, social, cultural, and interactive relations in which one of them will assume the role of the context for the other. This is the necessary (ontological) condition for the existence of context. Thus, the latter can be considered, first of all, as a relation of co-being and then as a sequence of dynamic relations between context and its object, or between the *effector* **(**Latin 'originator', 'creator') and *affectus* (Latin 'affected', 'suffering'). The causal relation between effectors and affectus will be referred to as *event*. In brief, then, context may be characterized as the (dynamic) relations between effectors and affectus. As a result, the principles – *no relation*, *no context*, (and its reverse) *no context*, *no relation* reflect clearly the basic assumption of Relational Pragmatics (RP). Furthermore, although RP does not focus on universal claims and innate ideas in pragmatic research it may be suggested, however, that the fundamental pragmability and the social practice of relating effectors to affectus (hearer's perspective) and affectus to effectors (speaker's perspective) appears to be universal among language users and plausibly, at least in its cognitive aspect, be to some extent innate. The individual differences in the mastery of the skill, which, certainly, relies not only on our pragmability or the IPP but also on the content and relations in the cognitive-affective-conative system, are so striking that some innate substratum could be tentatively posited to account for the innate differences associated with these phenomena.

Texts (characterized as any representation of meaning by way of a symbolic system) are related to their contexts. Such a situation of relatedness may be examined by using the concepts of 'effectors' and 'affectus'. The latter refers to different types of texts and the former to contexts. It may be useful to propose a distinction between the internal, linguistic, and the non-linguistic, socio-cultural context of texts. Thus, effectors responsible for the linguistic relations within text (such as coherence and cohesion) will be identified as *textors*; on the other hand, those governing the non-linguistic relations between text and context will be referred to as *contextors*. Accordingly, texts are

doubly related, first, linguistically to textors and second, non-linguistically to contextors. The latter constitutes a large set that includes the following classes of effectors: (1) mental (cognitive-affective-conative system), (2) social (micro- and macro-structures, social facts, social representations, gender, etc,), (3) interactional (creativity, emergent phenomena, miscommunication and others), (4) cultural (individualistic and collectivist cultures, cultural relativism, etc.).

The main task of Relational Pragmatics is to specify the relations between effectors and affectus, and specifically between contextors and texts. The crucial notion in RP is that of 'relation' (for an account of the notion of 'relation' in pragmatics see Kopytko 2002) which, unfortunately, belongs to the vaguest terms in the scholarly dictionary.

6. Conclusions

In contrast to other approaches to pragmatics and discourse analysis Relational Pragmatics does not (tacitly or by definition of pragmatics) only assume the presence of relations in pragmatic phenomena but first of all it attempts to investigate them in the framework of the Pragmatic Relational System and its dynamic relations with the Pragmatic Reference System (cf. Kopytko 2002). Such a change of perspective from the relatively static ideas of knowledge, situation, and text to the operation of relations accounts for a range of dynamic interactional phenomena associated with human communication as well as interaction with and interpretation of a variety of texts. Thus, such communicative problems as misunderstanding, misinterpretation (or pragmatic emergent phenomena including *faux pas*, verbal conflict, face threatening acts, etc.) come into being, most of the time, as a result of 'relational failures' (that is, contextually inadequate relating of effectors and affectus rather than the sheer lack of specific knowledge). In other words, the presence of the required knowledge does not guarantee a communicative success. The latter depends primarily on the 'relational work' between the Pragmatic Relational System[3] and the Pragmatic Reference System. Similarly, the inter-

[3] The ability to relate effectors to affectus seems to be a complex human faculty *sui generis* that involves many cognitive systems (knowledge, reasoning, attention, memory, etc.) but also social skills, social practice and pragmatic consequences of specific (social) verbal interactions; this is so because each verbal interaction is new, different, and unrepeatable. All these elements (subsystems) constitute the Pragmatic Relational System, which is a part of the IPP. Another part of the IPP is the Pragmatic Reference

pretation and understanding of any complex academic (scholarly or philosophical) texts relies first of all on the progressive, successful relational work within the available Pragmatic Reference System. It should also be noted that the focus on relations in pragmatics clearly demarcates the boundary between the semantic and pragmatic relations and phenomena.

In brief, then, what is wrong with modern accounts of context in linguistics? (1) different approaches to discourse and pragmatics present different views of the scope of context (knowledge, situation, text); (2) they frequently introduce disciplinary bias and promote selective goals of particular researchers (e.g. Malinowski, Austin, Labov, Gumperz, and others); (3) they rely on a number of unjustified assumptions about the nature of context and of the language user; (4) as a result, they assume the objectivity of the notion of 'context', or that of common (mutual) knowledge; (5) they either neglect the role of the language user in their approaches or present it as a rational, self-contained, and static being; (6) they pay little attention to the process of social (linguistic) interaction and its consequences for interpersonal communication; (7) they do not account (in their theories) for the reasons of communicative failure, misunderstanding, etc.; (8) they do not account for pragmatic emergent phenomena; (9) they focus (most of the time) either on the social or mental aspects of context; (10) they fail to emphasize the fact that contextual knowledge is socially distributed, constructed, or negotiated. Obviously, this critique (summarized here in ten points) concerns the specific approaches to discourse analysis and pragmatics to a different degree.

Finally, to remedy this situation we have proposed a holistic-relational view of pragmatics and context. Thus, the pragmatic system based on three pairs of binary relations ((1) interactant/language, (2) language/context, and (3) interactant/context) underlies the pragmability of language users. As a consequence, a theory of context demands a theory of the language user as its indispensable element. Language users have been analyzed in terms of their Individual Pragmatic Potentials (IPPs) and Universal Pragmatic Potentials (UPPs). This distinction clearly emphasizes the subjective view of context and interactional processes, which explains, inter alia, the persistent phenomena of communicative failures, misunderstanding, etc. In addition the holistic-relational view of context offers the following advantages over other theoretical approaches to context: (1) it attempts to account for the whole context rather than its arbitrarily selected elements; (2) it focuses on the relations be-

System. The latter system comprises a dynamic library of effectors that may be activated in verbal interaction or in the case of text interpretation.

tween effectors and the affected (entity), that is, views context in terms of causal relations; (3) it emphasizes the dynamics of interpersonal communication (this concerns both the processes within the intrinsic context and at the interface between the intrinsic and extrinsic context); and in consequence, (4) it investigates interactional dynamics and pragmatic emergent phenomena; (5) it aims at relating the social and mental aspects of context; (6) it shows the social distribution of context; and (7) it points to the processes associated with the social construction and negotiation of context and interpretations of texts (for an account of relations in pragmatics see Kopytko 2002).

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Language attitudes and language assessment in the classroom – an applied language attitude study on Black South African English (BSAE)

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1. Introduction

Just before the turn of the century a research project was started in South Africa with the aim to investigate BSAE (Black South African English) from various (socio)linguistic aspects.[2] This project is remarkable in two ways: firstly, because it involves a good part of all South African linguists and some international linguists interested in South African English and, secondly, because it is the first research project of this size solely concerned with BSAE, the English used by South Africans whose L1s are Bantu languages (cf. de Klerk 1999: 311). As this group of people makes up about 80% of the South African population, it is high time that a comprehensive linguistic description of their English was made available and placed next to the already existing descriptions of other varieties of English in South Africa (e.g. de Klerk (ed.) 1996, Lanham and Macdonald 1979, Mesthrie 1992). As part of this research project on BSAE we are concerned with how BSAE is evaluated and which consequences this might have for its users.

In the following we will describe our pilot study on language attitudes in the classroom (see 4.) and its implications for the next phase of our study (see 5.). Before we can turn to the pilot study itself, though, we will offer a brief description of the educational language policies in South Africa, focusing specifically on what is now termed historically disadvantaged schools, i.e. the

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[2] This project, entitled "Some phonetic features of BSAE and their social dimensions" and run from Potchefstroom University, South Africa, in part financed the pilot study reported on here. We are very grateful to the project's organisers, in particular Daan Wissing, for supporting us in this way and making this study possible.

schools attended by most BSAE speakers (see 2.). This will be followed by a description of what forms the ulterior motivation of our study (see 3.), namely the changing status of BSAE (see 3.1.) and the link between language attitudes and language assessment (see 3.2.).

2. A brief outline of educational language policies

In the wake of South Africa's fundamental political turn-around of the 1990s, societal institutions have, quite understandably, undergone substantial changes. With regard to schooling, the first and most urgent step was to abolish the apartheid structure of separate educational systems for the previously legally entrenched racial groups with their different rights and obligations. While legislative action could be taken fairly soon after the end of apartheid (cf. South African Schools Act, 1996) and all South African schools were legally declared open to all pupils in 1996, the reality of school attendance by racial background has not changed that dramatically from the "old" days. The formerly black schools are still attended by black pupils and the mixing of the school-going population has happened in a small percentage of all schools only, most of which used to be reserved for white pupils in the past. In other words, the previously advantaged schools have become mixed, while the large majority of previously disadvantaged schools are in reality still what they have always been: for disadvantaged black pupils only.

A second, very central area that was identified as needing change were the curricula and syllabi, which have also seen an impressive amount of development. One aspect repeatedly dealt with and particularly relevant to us is the question of which language(s) should or could function as mediums of instruction. This discussion must be seen in connection with, on the one hand, the multilinguality of the country – the constitution of 1994 recognises 11 official languages and there are, of course, many more spoken in the country – and, on the other hand, with past developments. In the old system, education through the mother-tongue was the credo of the first four years, but the remaining school years could then only be done in either English or, less frequently, Afrikaans. One of these two then official languages suddenly became medium of instruction after having been taught as subject from grade 1. The change-over was abrupt and without any easing-in or bridging measures whatsoever. That such a system is, to put it mildly, educationally unsound, has clearly come to the fore in two respects (for a detailed discussion of the system's negative implications cf. Macdonald and Burroughs 1991): the low pass rates from grade 5 onwards in the relevant schools and generally shared

highly negative attitudes to L1 education. Clearly, both developments had more than one reason, but the educational language policy played a big role in them as it, firstly, failed to equip the pupils with the necessary language proficiency in English and, secondly, perpetuated and strengthened the belief that education can only be gained through and in English. This has led to the still extremely wide-spread attitude that the Bantu languages are not good enough for education and should therefore not be used in this function.

The new policy concerning medium of instruction has tried to do away with this misfortunate set-up. Firstly, the top-down regulations have been replaced by bottom-up decisions; this means that schools and parents have a say in the language policy to be followed locally. Secondly, the change-over from one medium to another can now be done more smoothly; and, thirdly, L1s other than English (or Afrikaans) can be used as mediums of instruction as long as the school and parents wish to (cf. Language in Education Policy, 1997). Legislation, thus, has changed fundamentally; but reality – alas – has not: most schools have retained the old system and English is still their medium of instruction (cf. Alexander 2000, paras. 3-4). This means that the great majority of South Africans still receive their education in English; or, to be more precise, even when other languages are used in the classrooms out of sheer practicality, all the tests and exams have to be written in English. Educational success is thus still closely linked to proficiency in English.

For the schools of interest to us here – the historically disadvantaged schools – this means that the pupils, all of whom are L1 speakers of Bantu languages or even, as it is the case in the more rural areas, of one and the same Bantu language, are assessed on how they perform in English, or more precisely, in their respective manifestations of BSAE. In other words, how well they do in school depends very much not only on their own proficiency in English, but also on how the teachers evaluate their Englishes. It is the latter that we wish to investigate in more detail in our study.

3. Motivation

The motivation to undertake this study rests on two points of interest: firstly, the changing status of BSAE as the variety of English with the highest number of speakers in South Africa, but the least amount of research so far and, secondly, the relevance of language attitudes in education and, more specifically, the connection between teachers' attitudes and how they evaluate their pupils.

3.1. The changing status of Black South African English

While the label “BSAE” has been in use for quite some time already (cf. e.g. Lanham and Macdonald 1979), it has caused problems and repeatedly kindled debates for various reasons (cf. van Rooy 2000: ii). The most prominent argument against using this label has been that it perpetuates the rigid and racially based discriminatory system of the past. Besides this highly justified socio-political argument, the concept is also questionable for linguistic reasons: there is quite a mismatch between the seemingly homogeneous label and the extremely heterogeneous kind(s) of English it stands for. The defining criterion so far has been that the relevant group of speakers have Bantu language(s) as their first languages and that they use English as one of their second or other languages (cf. de Klerk 1999: 311). This implies that next to the normally found distinguishing within-group factors (e.g. sex, age, education, occupation) BSAE also covers distinctions caused by the two factors ‘various L1 languages’ and ‘cline of language proficiency’.

Put differently, BSAE covers the English(es) of people of various first language backgrounds, of highly differing levels of language proficiency and of highly differing ranges of language functions. This seems to be such an extremely heterogeneous mix that it is debatable whether a single label distorts reality rather than clarifies it. At the same time, the majority of users of English in South Africa are not monolingual English speakers, but highly proficient bilinguals with one or more Bantu languages as their home language(s). The English used by them can be seen as standing for the "unique linguistic melting pot [that] has been developing in this country" (van Rooy 2000: ii).

The resulting dilemma is far from dissolved and, unfortunately, we are also not able to offer a solution. What we want to do instead is to circumvent the whole question by leaving the more general considerations aside and move on to one manifestation of this English by focussing on education in historically disadvantaged schools, or, more precisely, on the ways actual users of English with Bantu languages as L1s – pupils and teachers – use and, more importantly, perceive the English they encounter at school.

With regard to the (changing) status of BSAE, the years before 1990 did not create a lot of scientific interest. While during apartheid times language attitude investigations were undertaken with all population groups, they generally concentrated on the South African language spectrum or on English varieties of white speakers (for an overview cf. Smit 1996: 62-71). The few studies of the ‘70s and ‘80s that included BSAE did so rather in passing, and

unanimously attested it a low status. In parallel with the more general socio-political changes, the late 1980s brought a shift insofar as BSAE moved from the periphery of research interest right to the core, i.e. BSAE speakers were asked to reveal their attitudes towards BSAE and other varieties (cf. Smit 1996: 88-92). These studies confirmed the very positive perceptions of English in general and a clear preference for the white standard varieties of English, either South African or British, over other varieties including BSAE. The studies done in the early 1990s (cf. de Klerk and Bosch 1993, Smit 1994), on the other hand, already foreshadowed a tentative shift in people's appreciation of this variety of English now used so much more visibly, such as in Parliament or the media (cf. de Klerk 1999) and reported on changing evaluations of BSAE. The recently pronounced appeal that researchers should "establish the BSAE speakers' own views" (de Klerk 1999: 319) coincided with an investigation which gives clear, and more stratified, evidence of a new (self)perception of BSAE speakers (cf. van Rooy, van Rooyen and van Wyk 2000: 187-190). In a video- and audio-based matched guise study that compared white and black high school pupils' attitudes to different kinds of White and Black South African English the Sotho-speaking respondents judged what the researchers call acrolectal BSAE as reflecting the highest social status and preferred it to standard White SAE. In other words, the English associated with successful Black professionals seems to have already won over its White counterpart, at least in the eyes of these users of BSAE.

At the same time, the study also throws light on the evaluative distinctions made with regard to acrolectal, mesolectal and basilectal forms of BSAE; that is kinds of BSAE that can be placed on a cline from close to standard to non-standard (cf. van Rooy, van Rooyen and van Wyk 2000: 191). This linguistically determined cline is reflected quite clearly in people's perceptions: the respondents ranked the three kinds of BSAE accordingly and also associated them with societally staggered jobs: acrolectal BSAE with doctors, mesolectal BSAE with teachers, and basilectal BSAE with farm workers or, maybe, shop assistants (*op cit.* 204). Even though this language attitude study was undertaken with about 100 pupils of one school only, its results provide clear support for what researchers have speculated on for some time, namely that (a) BSAE is no longer unanimously seen as unprestigious or lacking in social status and (b) evaluative distinctions are emerging with regard to different kinds of BSAE. From the point of view of the many users of BSAE, these two conclusions come close to something like a hot-cold shower: on the one hand, they seem to be allowed to finally lean back and relax about their English, which, on the other hand, is apparently only true for those speaking that kind

of BSAE that is closest to standard English; and, by definition, this group makes up a small proportion of BSAE speakers only. Put differently, most speakers of BSAE still battle with the social recognition of their English, and will most likely have to do so for quite some time to come.

This battling for the right kind of English takes place in all wakes of life, but the one setting where it is crucial and central to one's success is education. It is for this reason that we have chosen pupils' English and their teachers' evaluations thereof as our area of investigation.

3.2. Language evaluation

Teachers' evaluations of pupils' English can be interpreted in two ways, both of which are relevant to us: firstly, which attitudes teachers hold towards their pupils' English and, secondly, how they grade it. While the former is something all people do, the second activity is specific to teachers. And it is not really surprising that language attitude research turned to this connection already quite early. In the early 1970s, Frederick Williams and associates undertook the first studies on the potential influence positive or negative language attitudes could have on how teachers assessed pupils. They asked Black, White and Mexican-American US teachers to rate various pupils, or, more precisely, voices differing only in regard to English accent. The outcome was, even if not unexpected, still quite alarming: along the two dimensions of confidence-eagerness and ethnicity-nonstandardness, both Mexican-American and black accents were downgraded considerably, the latter more than the former (Williams 1993, 1994). In other words, this study showed quite clearly that, at least in that specific US setting, there was a clear connection between how teachers evaluated a specific variety of English and how they expected speakers of that variety to perform. Language attitudes were thus shown to stand in interdependence with teachers' readiness to up- or downgrade.

While this study received academic recognition (e.g. Fasold 1984: 171-6), its potential impact on applied concerns, e.g. student assessment or teacher training, was regrettably much less noticeable. This historical oversight or side-lining had the unfortunate consequence that the study was not followed up on by similar or ensuing research; neither was it, as far as we are aware of,

taken up and repeated in other cultural settings.[3] As it is, however, exactly the influence teachers' attitudes have on their assessment that we see as of central relevance to teachers and teaching in general, this study is meant as a step in this direction.

This research question belongs quite evidently to the broader research area of the influence language attitudes have on language behaviour, which was one of the oldest motivations of undertaking language attitude research in the first place (cf. LaPiere's research in the 1930s, summarised in Baker 1992: 15). For the last 70 years or so, researchers have tried to capture the link between attitudes and resulting behaviour, but have generally failed to do so. Various reasons for this lack of success have been suggested (for an overview cf. Smit 2000: 140-141). What they all boil down to is that language-related behaviour depends on many situation-specific factors, some of which are language attitudes of a similarly situation-specific kind. Classic language attitude studies, on the other hand, usually elicit fairly abstract language attitudes, which are too far removed from the specific situation that requires language-related behaviour. While the strong point of the matched-guise study definitely is that it leads to attitudes in the social psychological understanding, i.e. containing affect, cognition and behavioural intention (cf. e.g. Stahlberg and Frey 1996: 206-209), its weak point remains its limitation to the static, behaviour-unrelated kind of attitude. As Giles and Coupland (1991: 196-198) have conceded, there seem to be two kinds of attitude, namely the more general and situation-independent one, on the one hand, and, on the other, the dynamic, situation-related one. With regard to linking attitudes to behaviour it is obviously the latter that needs to be elicited, which is what we want to do in our investigation of how teachers evaluate pupils' English.

4. Pilot study

As it is the objective of this study to establish links between language attitudes and assessment, we aim at a highly situated research design focussing on specific written and spoken English tests produced by BSAE speaking pu-

[3] Williams's research falls clearly into the language attitude research paradigm as shaped by the social psychology of language (cf. e.g. Giles and Coupland 1991: 32-59). As this research interest has never lost attractiveness since its psycho-social inception in the 1930s, it would go beyond the scope of this article to attempt anything like a general overview or even a description of the status quo (cf. e.g. Bradac 1990; Cargile, Giles, Ryan and Bradac 1994; Milroy and Preston (eds.) 1999).

pils. This might not allow for far-reaching generalisations, but, so we hope, will give us in-depth insight into, on the one hand, how the teachers assess the texts and why, on the other hand, the attitudes some teachers have towards the English used in these texts.

4.1. Brief description

For our pilot study we narrowed down our topic of research to the written medium only. We therefore looked for various learners' texts and finally decided on a set of 18 assignments, written by grade 7 pupils in January 2001 on the topic of their newly renovated farm school close to Vanderbijlpark in the Vaal Triangle. The next step was to group these texts, which we did along the criteria (a) thematic progression, (b) sentence construction, (c) sentence grammar & choice of vocabulary. This allowed us to divide the texts into three tiers of differing levels of language proficiency. We then chose one text of each group of similar length and content.

> **Text 1**
> I think our new school is nice and beautiful I think our new school is nice becouse thy put tiles for every class and in the office. And our school is nice when they put the veranda ifront of the school. Because when the veranda is isn't infront of the school we cant have the shelter for the sun or the rain. I think our school is nice because they paint it. I like to think that people who help us for our school to be nice.

> **Text 2**
> I think about my new school because it is very nise and clean when they put the Tiles and the veranda and the shelter it is very beautiful it looks likes other schools now we need the shelter to stay the When the was raing outside and When the sun is heat strong and I am very brout about my school at the first time the was a lot of hole in the flore of the class that was not beautiful to as they pain in our new class to make it nise We thank for the people of Netherland.

> **Text 3**
> I think our new school is nice and beautiful because they put the veranda and they paint our classroom's walls and they also put tiles on the class. The veranda give us shade because when it is raining we sit under it. When we at the school it's like we are at the town but it is not at the town anymore it is at the farm school we would like to thank all the people who make our school so proud and clear. Thank you!

These three texts were then placed in a questionnaire that was designed to elicit teachers' evaluations. With the help of a pre-pilot study we clarified the

questions of our questionnaire. In August 2001, we could then undertake our pilot study with 40 teachers who mainly work as language teachers in various schools in the Vaal Triangle (for the questionnaire, including the three texts, see Appendix).

The first part of the questionnaire asked for some information on the respondents' personal backgrounds. As can be gleaned from Table 1, the 40 teachers involved in this study cover an age range from 20 to 60, with more than half between 30 and 40 years of age. 23 or 58% of them are male and almost 85% have post-matriculation diplomas or higher educational qualifications. As can be expected from the area where they live, 60% have South Sotho as their L1 and a further 23% Zulu. Finally, 50% of the teachers work in primary school and most of the others teach some languages at secondary level.

Table 1. Demographic information about the respondents

	20-30		30-40		40-50		50-60		**sex**	m	female	
Age	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
N=40	3	7.5	22	55	11	27.5	4	10	23	57.5	17	42.5
.	matric		und.gr.dipl.		BA		postgr.dipl.		B.Ed/Hon.		M.Ed/MA	
Educ	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
N=38	6	15.8	18	47.4	5	13.2	3	7.9	4	10.5	2	5.3
	Afrikaans		SSO		Zulu		Xhosa		Tsonga		Sepedi	
L1	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
N=40	2	5	24	60	9	22.5	2	5	1	2.5	2	5
	prim.school		English		English+oth		Sepedi+oth		Afr/Eng+oth		no lgs	
subj.	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
N=39	20	51.3	4	10.3	2	5.1	4	10.3	4	10.3	5	12.8

The main part of the questionnaire concerned the three learner texts. Having read each of them, the respondents were asked to reply to six questions, two closed and four open ones. In the following section we will present the answers given in a general overview of the closed and open replies. We will then combine the closed and open answers in our attempt to describe general response patterns.

4.2. Main results

4.2.1 General pattern of evaluation of texts (closed and open responses)

The two closed questions asked the teachers to

(a) award a mark out of 10 for the written passage (10 being the best) and

(b) evaluate the learner's grammar and language on a scale of 1 (=poor) to 5 (=excellent).

The responses given revealed that the teachers made a clear distinction between texts 1 and 2 versus text 3 (see Table 2, column "mean"). While the former two were given 5 out of 10 on average, text 3 was seen as between 7 and 8. The learners' proficiencies were rated similarly different: the writers of texts 1 and 2 were evaluated as having fair English (= 2) while the English of the writer of text 3 was judged as between good (3) and very good (4).

Table 2. Closed responses

	questions	valid N	mean	median	min	max	stddev
Text 1	out of 10	40	5.05	5	1	9	1.48
	gr&lang	40	2.05	2	1	3	0.64
Text 2	out of 10	39	4.53	4	1	9	1.71
	gr&lang	39	2.00	2	1	3	0.65
Text 3	out of 10	40	7.4	8	5	10	1.46
	gr&lang	39	3.31	3	2	5	0.85

When analysing each teacher's evaluations of the three texts, we could observe one main pattern: the texts were evaluated differentially with the two types of responses (closed and open)[4] supporting each other. This supports our original assumption, namely that the three texts are differently well written and reveal different levels of English proficiency. Respondent 40 exempli-

[4] The open responses were given to the following four questions:

qu. 1. How do you see this learner? Please write a very short profile of him/her.

qu. 3. Please motivate the mark *(given out of 10 for the written passage)* you have awarded, i.e. what are the **reasons** behind the mark you have given?

qu. 5. Why? *(have you evaluated the grammar and language used by this learner between 1=poor and 5=excellent*)

qu. 6. In your opinion, what are the main language problems (if any) experienced by this black learner of English? Please explain.

fies this pattern very well (for the complete replies see Table 3). The three texts were marked as 6, 5 and 7 out of 10 and the respective learner's English as 3 ("good"), 2 ("fair") and 4 ("very good"). This distinction is mirrored in the teacher's recommendations for the three learners. Learner 1 should attend to word repetition, sentence construction and the use of the tenses. Learner 2 would in general need "more special attention" because of his/her "grammar and language". Learner 3, then, is judged to have few language problems, except maybe punctuation and "writing skills".

Table 3. Examples of the main pattern of evaluation (followed by 36 out of 40 respondents)[5]

RESPONDENT 40	
Text 1	mark awarded: 6(out of 10); learner's English: "good" (3 out of 5)
qu. 1.	The learner is not so bad; but what is she/he used in her/writting is repitation of words e.g. new school, verenda. (The learner left full stop somewhere somehow.)
qu. 3.	According to the statement she/he has written above. for e.g. [that people] she/he is suppouse to say those for that [there are so many mistakes]
qu. 5.	As I've indicated above; it seems to me that the learner is doing English as the 2nd language
qu. 6.	Sentence construction; using present tense and past tense in the proper manner
Text 2	mark awarded: 5(out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5)
qu. 1.	The learer does not put full-stop and commas where he/she supposed to. [punctuality]
qu. 3.	The learner need to be tought how to write full stop and commers; when writting a paragraph. [sentence construction]
qu. 5.	Lerner need more special attention, because the gramma and language is avarage. [sentence construction] be tough carefully
qu. 6.	The main language proble is because the learner English is not her/his 1st language that is why he/she can't put
Text 3	mark awarded: 7(out of 10); learner's English: "very good" (4 out of 5)
qu. 1.	Puntuation – but not so bad at least the learner has write ful-stop and the exclamation mark in the correct place
qu. 3.	At least the learner has put the helping verb fullstop tense in proper way
qu. 5.	The language used is it is is very good
qu. 6.	The are not so much language problem used by the learner. He need to be tough about writting skills

5 The open responses included in this and the following tables are direct quotations from the questionnaires. Although the differences from standard English are quite apparent and definitely interesting in themselves, they will not be analysed here, as this would go beyond the scope of this paper which focuses on the teachers' evaluations only.

4.2.2 Interplay of assessment (closed responses) and criteria given (open responses)

When taking the individual text as point of comparison, one can witness an extremely broad range of assessments given (see Table 2, “min” and “max”). Texts 1 and 2 have been awarded marks between 1 and 9 out of 10 and their writers' English assessed as ranging from “poor” to “good” (1 to 3). The evaluation of text 3 spans from 5 to 10 out of 10 and that of its writer from “fair” to “excellent” (2 to 5). These differences are noteworthy in themselves, but should not be overrated, as the respondents were not given any criteria for their assessments. While it is possible that the wide range of evaluation is partly influenced by the teachers' varying expectations and experience, an interpretation along such lines cannot be done here as it would go beyond the scope of this pilot project.

What we want to do instead is to stay within the limits of our pilot study and focus on the connections between the marks awarded and the corresponding comments. For this purpose we have chosen three typical examples which cover the range from negative to positive evaluations for each text (see Table 4). The open arguments included here vary quite considerably in relation with the teacher's overall assessment of the texts. Text 1, for instance, is marked as 2 out of 10 because it reveals “poor grammar and language usage”, but it is worth 6 out of 10 as “the idea of what that learner is talking about is there”. And for the teacher who thinks that “though the learner cannot spell [...] the message is clear [...]” the text is even as good as 8 out of 10. Similar differences are observable for the other two texts: When text 2 is evaluated as having “spelling problem[s]” and “no logic”, it gets 3 out of 10 only. When the “grammatical errors” are still mentioned but connected with “you can understand what the learner has written”, then its evaluation is more positive – 5 out of 10. This improves to 8 when the teacher feels that “the logic of sentences is there [though] there are some mistakes”. Text 3 gets 5 out of 10 as its lowest mark because, although the learner's “imagination tries to put us [in] the picture”, s/he “must be taught to understand English”. When the learner is seen as “express[ing] herself correctly”, but still “encounter[ing] language problems”, the text is awarded 8 out of 10, which improves to the maximum of 10 for the respondent who stresses that “the paragraph is clear” and that there are “no mistakes”.

To sum up, this comparison shows that, while the assessments given vary widely, there are generally good reasons for the discrepancy. Put differ-

ently, the marks are not given haphazardly, but reflect the degree of relevance the individual teacher ascribed to certain language aspects.

Table 4. Examples of evaluations of learner texts 1, 2 and 3.

TEXT 1	
mark awarded : 2 (out of 10); learner's English: "poor" (1 out of 5); respondent 13	
qu. 1	He has a problem of spelling, does not use correct descriptive words i.e. over-uses "nice"
qu. 3	Poor grammar and language usage
qu. 5	Poor grammar and language usage
qu. 6	He thinks first in his mother tongue and then translates
mark awarded : 5 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5); respondent 20	
qu. 1	Only sees the physical being of the school.
qu. 3	*(no answer given)*
qu. 5	Sentence construction, spelling aren't that bad but the idea of what that learner is talking about is there
qu. 6	Most came from black disadvantaged schools where not enough time is given about the language, others are afraid to speak-shy being laughed at.
mark awarded : 8 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5); respondent 25	
qu. 1	She is not a dull learner. She has ideas but she can't write them correctly because of language problems
qu. 3	Though the learner cannot spell some words but the message is clear in his/her passage
qu. 5	Because sentence construction is not good
qu. 6	To be expose to English only at school
TEXT 2	
mark awarded : 3 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5); respondent 12	
qu. 1	She has spelling problem, punctuation marks capital letters and construction of sentences.
qu. 3	The is no logic in her paragraph and she has a problem in all things that I mentioned on 2.2.1.
qu. 5	She wrote most of her paragraph without understanding
qu. 6	Spelling, punctuation; capital letter construction of sentences.
mark awarded : 5 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5); respondent 9	
qu. 1	Grammatical errors. The learner writes as if she writes Zulu / Sotho etc.
qu. 3	Wrong tense. You can understand what the learner has written.
qu. 5	She has the vocabulary. Pronouncing problem tenses.
qu. 6	A problem of pronoucing e.g. brout instead of proud. Using preposition wrongly, or using them where is not necessary.
mark awarded : 8 (out of 10); learner's English: "good" (3 out of 5); respondent 27	
qu. 1	Vission in mind. Improvement of the school. Showing concern on Netherland people.
qu. 3	Same as in 1.9
qu. 5	As a second language, the logic of sentences is there. Through there are some mistakes.

qu. 6	Spelling. Construction of sentence.
TEXT 3	
mark awarded : 5 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5); respondent 24	
qu. 1	Sentences were long. Word order Usage of combine words
qu. 3	The learner is not used to this kind of thing but her imagination tries to put us on the picture let alone the grammatical errors.
qu. 5	Remediation, lot of pictures and participation in the lesson can help her get though.
qu. 6	The learner must be taught to understand English. Too much usage of translation. (African to English)
mark awarded : 8 (out of 10); learner's English: "good" (3 out of 5); respondent 36	
qu. 1	She has understanding but here ant there she encountered the language problem.
qu. 3	She wrote clear English and her grammar is correct. Though she has spelling mistakes.
qu. 5	She expresses herself correctly though she still experience spelling problem.
qu. 6	Spelling errors and sentence construction.
mark awarded : 10 (out of 10); learner's English: "excellent" (5 out of 5); respondent 27	
qu. 1	Good in second language no mistakes. Paragraph is clear.
qu. 3	No mistakes committed and the paragraph is clear.
qu. 5	Did well as compared to A & B.
qu. 6	None

The open questions asked for verbal evaluations and reasons for the closed responses put forth (see Appendix). The resulting list covers a wide range of reasons (see Table 5), which were given in support of either a negative or positive evaluation of the text and/or the learner's English. When looked at from the point of view of content, these 13 reasons belong to five criteria (reasons given in brackets):

a) SENTENCE GRAMMAR, i.e. points of correction below the level of the sentence (spelling & punctuation, tenses, vocabulary, word repetition, sentence construction)
b) TEXTUAL GRAMMAR, i.e. points of correction above the level of the sentence (editing, planning writing)
c) MESSAGE, i.e. content and thematic progression (content, logic)
d) LANGUAGE BACKGROUND, i.e. L1 / L2 factors (English as L2/L1 interference, language learning background)
e) PEDAGOGICAL ADVICE (exposure to English books, marks as pedagogic device)

Table 5. Categories of open responses with examples

	reason	example	
1.	spelling & punctuation	He lacks punctuations. Spelling also not good. Capital letters to be used correctly.	respondent 1, text 2, qu. 3
2.	tenses	Use of tenses e.g. present and past in a sentence.	respondent 11, text 2, qu. 1
3.	vocabulary	Very poor language expression. Very poor vocabulary.	respondent 15, text 2, qu. 5
4.	word repetition	There is no unnecessary repetition of words and the command of language is good.	respondent 5, text 3, qu. 5
5.	sentence construction	She is excellent, she can contruct good sentences.	respondent 22, text 3, 2.3.1
6.	editing	When to use conjuntions; in order ot avoid boredom and long sentences. Editing to avoid careless omissions.	respondent 31, text 3, qu. 6
7.	planning writing	She knows what she wants to say, her work is planned carefully, she thinks before she writes.	respondent 19, text 3, qu. 5
8.	content	The learner sends a message even though there is no proper sentence construction.	respondent 5, text 1, qu. 1
9.	logic	She deserve this mark for only logic in her paragraph	respondent 12, text 1, qu. 3
10.	English as L2 / L1 interference	One struggles to make meaning out of what the writer wants to say. There is also direct translation from 1st lang (African language) to 2nd (Eng)	respondent 2, text 2, qu. 1
11.	language learning background	Most came from black disadvantaged schools where not enough time is given about the language, others are afraid to speak-shy being laughed at.	respondent 20, text 1, qu. 6
12.	exposure to English books	The learner needs to read more English books.	respondent 30, text 2, qu. 1
13.	marks as pedagogic device	It is an average work. It is also going to motivate the learner to get high marks.	respondent 26, text 1, qu. 3

As the presentation of the data so far has focussed on how the teachers evaluated the three texts similarly or differently, we have treated the open responses as explanations of the closed ones. We will now shift our focus to the open responses themselves in order to show that the 13 different categories of argument included in them (cp. Table 4) were not simply used accidentally, but in a clearly discernible pattern. Of the five groups of reasons used, i.e. SENTENCE GRAMMAR, TEXTUAL GRAMMAR, MESSAGE, LANGUAGE BACKGROUND, PEDAGOGICAL ADVICE, the two most prominently employed are MESSAGE and SENTENCE GRAMMAR. As the examples listed in Tables 5 and 6

illustrate, the replies generally include comments on the respective learners' abilities to get across what they actually want to say, on the one hand, and, on the other, on, for instance, spelling, punctuation, word repetition or sentence construction. In other words, the responses indicate that the teachers have mainly evaluated the texts by considering content and what can be called classic grammar mistakes.

These two categories did not only serve as the most important arguments; they also appear to have been the decisive ones when it came to grading the learner texts. In other words, the weighting of the two criteria was apparently relevant to the overall evaluations of the texts, which becomes apparent when comparing the marks given to the texts with the positive or negative use of MESSAGE and SENTENCE GRAMMAR. The data yield two different types of weighting: either MESSAGE is regarded as less or as more important than SENTENCE GRAMMAR (for examples see Table 6).

Respondent 23, for example, evaluates all three texts as understandable and as lacking in grammatical correctness. While he uses MESSAGE fairly indiscriminately for all three texts, his comments regarding SENTENCE GRAMMAR clearly distinguish between the texts: text 2 is seen as most lacking (see e.g. reply to qu. 6), followed by text 1 (see e.g. reply to qu. 6) and text 3 as most successful (see e.g. reply to qu. 5). The cline of grammatical (in)correctness is also reflected in the overall marks given in the closed responses. The reverse kind of weighting comes to the fore in the evaluations given by respondent 38 (see Table 6), who foregrounds MESSAGE by mentioning it, firstly, much more often than SENTENCE GRAMMAR and, secondly, in a differentiated way: negatively for text 2 and positively for the other two. This could also be the reason why he grades texts and learners 1 and 3, but not text and learner 2, clearly better than respondent 23.

In a few cases, the second weighting – MESSAGE more relevant than SENTENCE GRAMMAR – is taken even further insofar as MESSAGE seems to be used as the only relevant criterion for the evaluations of the texts. Respondent 31, for instance, clearly downgrades learner and text 2 because it is "poor in paragraphing [...] construction and thinking [...]". This he places into clear contrast with the other two texts, both of which he evaluates as reflecting "good reasoning skills" (text 1) and "good [...] content presentation (text 3). The closed evaluations, which mirror the contrast of text 2 *vs.* texts 1+3, add another piece of supporting evidence for the overriding relevance of MESSAGE and the complete unimportance of SENTENCE GRAMMAR: Texts 1 and 3 are both marked equally well (8 out of 10), although their learners' grammatical proficiencies are regarded differently: learner 1 is judged as "need[ing] a lot

of guidance in proper language and grammatical skills" and learner 3 as "[h]e is generally good, and his language use is satisfactory". It is thus quite obvious that this teacher ignored the different levels of grammatical proficiency and took MESSAGE as only relevant criterion for evaluating the learner texts.

Table 6. Examples of weighting of criteria MESSAGE and SENTENCE GRAMMAR for overall evaluation of learner texts

MESSAGE is less/evenly important than/as SENTENCE GRAMMAR, respondent 23	
Text 1; mark awarded : 4 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5)	
qu. 1	Too much repetition. He has problem with spelling. He has a problem with the writing of correct language. Problem of punctuation.
qu. 3	The language seams to be not the home language but he/she tries express him or herself. I can understand what he is trying to say.
qu. 5	There are some words like beautiful which can be written correctly. He/she need extra remedial for writing correct language
qu. 6	Spelling, puntuation , repetition
Text 2; mark awarded : 3 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5)	
qu. 1	He writes long sentences, no punctuation marks, spelling problem e.g. nise. There are many spelling mistakes. Cannot use correct preposition.
qu. 3	There are too many spelling mistakes but take consideration of the home language and the environment.
qu. 5	What he wrote can be understand and the effort he/she to trying to express him/herself and considering the environment.
qu. 6	Spelling mistake, long sentences without puntuation marks and incorrect use of prepositions and language structure.
Text 3; mark awarded : 6 (out of 10); learner's English: "good" (3 out of 5)	
qu. 1	No problem with spelling. Can not use conjuntions and prepositions correctly. Too long sentences.
qu. 3	The sequence of facts is correct but he/she still has problem with long sentence, use of conjunction and preposition.
qu. 5	The spelling is correct, the facts are put chronological. Grammar is correct but is not correctly punctuated.
qu. 6	Too long sentences. The sentences can be made brief and conscize.
MESSAGE more relevant than SENTENCE GRAMMAR; respondent 38	
Text 1; mark awarded : 6 (out of 10); learner's English: "good" (3 out of 5)	
qu. 1	Very proud of his new school and would like the people outside to love and respect his school
qu. 3	Speaking mostly about the nice things his school is involved
qu. 5	Here and there some mistakes are committed concerning the grammer and spelling mistakes
qu. 6	Sentence construction as wll as spelling mistakes
Text 2; mark awarded : 4 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5)	
qu. 1	Quite a number of spelling mistakes and construction of sentence not up to standard.
qu. 3	Cannot express himself in an acceptable way.

qu. 5	Needs to put more attention on his mistakes.
qu. 6	Spelling, puntuation, and logic.
Text 3; mark awarded : 8 (out of 10); learner's English: "excellent" (5 out of 5)	
qu. 1	Very constructive and know how to arrange his facts.
qu. 3	Has the knowledge and insight of what he is writing about.
qu. 5	Good language usage and facts arranged chronologically.
qu. 6	Not any at this stage.
MESSAGE most relevant, respondent 31	
Text 1; mark awarded : 8 (out of 10); learner's English: "fair" (2 out of 5)	
qu. 1	This is a learner with good reasoning skills. He need a lot of guidance in proper language and grammatical skills
qu. 3	To me the learner does deserve this because his worst is good apart from the few mistakes I have mentioned above
qu. 5	He is not altogether hopeless in this regard. He has many correctly spelt work and other grammatical skills to be credited.
qu. 6	Correct spelling or words, fluency, expression limited vocabulary and correct linking of sentences.
Text 2; mark awarded : 3 (out of 10); learner's English: "poor" (1 out of 5)	
qu. 1	A very poor learner. His presentation sentence, structures, logic, language is very poor.
qu. 3	No good points, according to assessment in a language could be discerned from this text.
qu. 5	See 2.2.. The learner need's a lot of guidance and individual attention.
qu. 6	Confidence a expression, poor spelling and vocabulary, poor in paragraphing poor sentences construction and thinking of sentences.
Text 3; mark awarded : 8 (out of 10); learner's English: "good" (3 out of 5)	
qu. 1	This is also a good learner, very perceptive and logical thinker. Also a confident learner.
qu. 3	To me he/she is very much like the first learner, a logical thinker, good in content presentation with few mistakes.
qu. 5	He is generally good, and his language use is satisfactory. The few mistakes can easily be eradicated.
qu. 6	When to use conjuntions; in order ot avoid boredom and long sentences. Editing to avoid careless omissions.

In sum, the teachers' evaluations have yielded the following results: Firstly, the third learner text was clearly judged to be the best of the three texts included in the study. Secondly, the open evaluations, which have added highly useful reasons and arguments for the closed assessments of the texts, include 13 different arguments belonging to five criteria of argumentation, i.e. SENTENCE GRAMMAR, TEXTUAL GRAMMAR, MESSAGE, LANGUAGE BACKGROUND, and PEDAGOGICAL ADVICE. Thirdly, as can be expected from such an open assessment task, the three texts have triggered highly diverse evaluations as apparent in closed and open answers. Fourthly, the reconstructable interplay of closed and open answers points to the relevance of the two criteria

MESSAGE and SENTENCE GRAMMAR as regards the general evaluation expressed: whichever one of the two criteria is seen as more important is granted more space in the open responses and seems to constitute the main reason for the overall mark awarded. In other words, this pilot study has shown that the teachers who acted as respondents have evaluated the three learner texts highly diversely, but consistently in regard of the two main criteria of assessment: getting the message across and adherence to sentential grammar.

4.3. Implications for our study

As we have reported on a pilot study here, we need to see in how far its results have provided information with regard to the original research questions (cp. 4.). Concerning the first one - how the teachers assess the texts and why - the study has led to some clear findings, as summarised above, but has also left a few points open: while most of the teachers have ranked the third text best, not all have done so. Reasons for this variation in assessment patterns will have to wait for more data, which we hope to gather during the next phase of our study. Similarly, the categories of open responses established here need more supporting material, but not merely more of the same. The open responses given here seem to fall quite neatly into a few categories, but we cannot be sure whether this categorisation actually still reflects the teachers' intentions. Written responses are simply too short to gain such confirmation. We will therefore enlarge our research design and include structured interviews with some of the teachers who will act as respondents in the next phase of the study. These interviews, we hope, will also give us more information on the main outcome of this pilot, namely that the teachers' assessment has mainly rested on intelligibility and accuracy, and on the relationship between the two criteria.

With regard to the second research question - the attitudes some teachers have to the English used in these texts - the pilot study has not yielded any direct insights. As required by the questionnaire, the teachers did not evaluate the English as such or the pupils in general, but they offered arguments for their grading only. While these can clearly be used to infer some general perceptions the teachers might have of the English (see below), more detailed language attitudes will have to wait for more and more refined information as we want to gather it in the interviews.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion we want to shift our focus back to the more theoretical concerns discussed here: the variety so reluctantly called "BSAE" and the link between language attitudes and assessment. We have to concede that, with regard to the latter, the pilot study cannot offer a new solution. While, as intended, the results gained are highly situated, they are so embedded in the context that attitudes and assessment cannot be taken apart. It is therefore not possible to establish the relationship between the teachers' language attitudes and their assessment of the texts at the moment, but we do hope that the interview data will allow for the discursive approach to language attitudes as advocated by social psychologists (e.g. Potter and Wetherell 1987).

Concerning BSAE, the response patterns reported on here show that the learner texts were clearly evaluated in the framework of a learner language that still needs improvement. At the same time, though, some respondents judged specifically learner text 3 as reflecting "full understanding" of the language, despite some problems of spelling or sentence construction. In other words, the English used here was in part seen as acceptable the way it is. This has its implications on how the learners' English – "BSAE" – is experienced. While it is quite obviously evaluated as reflecting different stages of interlanguage on its way towards higher levels of language proficiency, its status of an independent variety apparently also meets with acknowledgement. This, we would like to argue, implies that the respondents of the pilot study have experienced the learners' English as heterogeneously as we had anticipated, but that there is also a maybe diffuse but still shared understanding of a variety of its own which requires recognition as such, whether it gets the label BSAE or another one.

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Appendix

Questionnaire (abridged version)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this anonymous questionnaire. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. (Remember your answers cannot be wrong!) The aim with this questionnaire is to get an idea of what you think of English as used by South Africans in general.

I) Biographical information

What is your age Male / Female What is you highest post-matric qualification?
Where do you live? What is your home language?

Are you involved in primary or secondary teaching?
What subjects do you teach? (please name all)
How would you regard you own proficiency in English?
(*tick one of:* poor; fair; good; very good; excellent) Why?
What language do you use in your teaching?
(*tick one of*: teach only in English; use mainly English; code-switching between English and African language; use mainly African language; Use only African language)

II) Assessment of English as used by learners

Please read the following texts, which were written by grade 7 learners, and answer the questions according to your personal assessment. Please remember: There are no "wrong" answers because we are interested in your personal evaluations and opinions.

Text 1
I think our new school is nice and beautiful I think our new school is nice becouse thy put tiles for every class and in the office. And our school is nice when they put the veranda ifront of the school. Because when the veranda is isn't infront of the school we cant have the shelter for the sun or the rain. I think our school is nice because they paint it. I like to think that people who help us for our school to be nice.

Text 2
I think about my new school because it is very nise and clean when they put the Tiles and the veranda and the shelter it is very beautiful it looks likes other schools now we need the shelter to stay the When the was raing outside and When the sun is heat strong and I am very brout about my school at the first time the was a lot of hole in the flore of the class that was not beautiful to as they pain in our new class to make it nise We thank for the people of Netherland.

Text 3
I think our new school is nice and beautiful because they put the veranda and they paint our classroom's walls and they also put tiles on the class. The veranda give us shade because when it is raining we sit under it. When we at the school it's like we are at the town but it is not at the town anymore it is at the farm school we would like to thank all the people who make our school so proud and clear. Thank you!

Questions (*after each text*):

1. How do you see this learner? Please write a very short profile of him/her.
2. Please award a **mark** out of 10 for the written passage.
3. Please motivate the mark you have awarded, i.e. what are the **reasons** behind the mark you have given?
4. How do you evaluate the **grammar** and **language** used by this learner?
   (*tick one of:* poor/1; fair/2; good/3; very good/4; excellent/5)
5. Why?
6. In your opinion, what are the main language problems (if any) experienced by this black learner of English? Please explain.

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