

WHAT IS ‘GLOBAL’ IN AN ELT GLOBAL COURSEBOOK?

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE NEW HEADWAY UPPER-INTERMEDIATE STUDENT’S BOOK

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KEYWORDS

discourse ; English Language Teaching ; stylistics, textbook research

ABSTRACT

The adjective ‘global’ has become a buzzword in recent years, not least in academia. Within the area of English Language Teaching (ELT) in particular, ‘global coursebooks’ have aroused a great deal of interest, but also much suspicion, as their content turns out not to be as universal as the adjective ‘global’ might literally mean. In this paper, I investigate the 2014 *New Head-way Upper-Intermediate Student’s Book* and bring to light some of the ideological constructions underpinning this supposedly global course material. As a result of this analysis, I provide an expanded characterisation of the ELT global textbook, regarding it as a course built upon standard language ideologies rather than, as suggested by previous studies, as an artefact shaped by a predominantly neoliberal agenda.

1. Introduction

The word ‘global’ has become ubiquitous in the contemporary world: expressions such as ‘Global Positioning System’ (GPS), ‘global reach’, ‘global warming’, and ‘global village’, among many others, have entered common usage. More recently, phrases including the adjective ‘global’ have been coined to reflect uniformly shared values. To give but two examples, the ‘Global Citizen Festival’ has gathered dozens of singers, actors, and politicians since 2012 to promote freedom and justice for all human beings (Global Citizen 2017), and ‘Global Education’, in a similar vein, is said to be “an active learning process based on the universal values of tolerance, solidarity, equality, justice, inclusion, co-operation and non-violence” (GLEN 2017). Academic disciplines have not been spared by the latest ‘global’ trend either: in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) specifically, the literature has abounded with studies centred on the ‘global textbook’, a learning resource that will constitute the focus of this article.¹ Teaching material specialist Brian Tomlinson, in line with the above universalist trends, construes the ‘global textbook’ as a “coursebook which is not written for learners from a particular culture or country but which is intended for use by any class of learners in the specified level and age group anywhere in the world” (Tomlinson 2011: xii). Yet, scholars who have begun to explore the nuances of the term ‘global’ as it is used in ‘global textbook’ have expressed doubts about the generic meaning of this new label. In Bell & Gower’s (2011: 137) view, for instance, this genre of course material is “misleadingly called [...] ‘global’” as it is in fact designed for “a restricted number of teaching situations in many different countries rather than all teaching situations in all countries”. These widely diverging opinions – Tomlinson’s on the one hand, Bell & Gower’s on the other – certainly warrant an investigation into what lies behind the adjective ‘global’ in ELT textbook research. To put it differently, I wish to help to further define this adjective and find out what is actually ‘global’ in a ‘global coursebook’.

With a view to understanding what ‘global’ can not only denote but also connote in the ELT context, I will conduct an in-depth examination of one of the best known so-called global textbooks: the fourth edition of *the New Headway Upper-Intermediate Student’s Book* by John and Liz Soars (2014) (hereafter *NH UI SB*).² To be more precise, I intend to investigate what *NH UI SB* appears to “include

¹ Following the example of Garton & Graves (2014: 12), I will use the nouns ‘textbook’ and ‘coursebook’ as synonyms throughout this paper.

² I decided on the *New Headway* set of teaching resources for a number of reasons – some undeniably more objective than others. To begin with, I myself had to attend English classes in secondary school that were greatly dependent on, not to say moulded by, the *New Headway* course materials. It is also the coursebook series that I had a chance to probe into in some measure as part of a seminar on “Globalisation, Identity and English Language Education” I enrolled in as an Erasmus student at the University of Leeds in 2012 (Lamb & Simpson 2012). Additionally, not only is *New Headway* a recurring object of study in global textbook research (as the next section will attest), but it is also said to be a “cultural icon” – a phrase Holliday (2005) applies to “certain concepts, individuals and artefacts which are revered and sustained within [...] the ideological structure of Western TESOL [Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages]” (Gray 2010a: 96). The upper-intermediate level, for its part, corresponds to the final years of secondary school education in Belgium and to the expected proficiency of the first-year university students to whom I was teaching English conversation classes when I carried out this study. I was curious to gauge whether the content of *NH UI SB*, on which most

and exclude in terms of topic, linguistic information, pedagogy, and culture” (Harwood 2014: 2). The method I will adopt favours a chiefly linguistic and qualitative approach. After briefly reviewing the current literature devoted to the ELT global textbook in general and the *New Headway* series in particular, I plan to discuss the salient phonological, grammatical, lexical, and cultural features of *NH UI SB*. It will soon become apparent that the terms ‘global’ and ‘inclusive’ are far from being interchangeable.

2. The global textbook in ELT research

2.1. ELEMENTS OF DEFINITION

The last decade of the 20th century was marked by new perspectives on the analysis of teaching materials. Research was no longer limited to the functions and use of coursebooks in the classroom; their nature, production, and content were given attention too (Apple 1992). From this moment on, the words ‘textbook’ and ‘coursebook’ would notably co-occur with ‘artefact’ and, within the growing ELT “industry” (Gray 2002: 155), with ‘commodity’ (e.g. Apple 1989: 282, 1992: 6; Gray 2000, 2002: 157, 2013a: 2–5, 7–10). Accordingly, for many ELT scholars working on textbook analysis, ‘global’ in the phrase ‘global coursebook’ came to indicate its area of ‘consumption’. By way of illustration, Melliti (2013: 1) asserts that this learning resource is “produced to be disseminated around the world”, while Harwood (2014: 1) adds a centre-periphery component to the definition of this coursebook when he states that it is “normally published in the West and marketed world-wide”. John Gray, who has been most prolific in this domain over the last few years, further delineates this core-periphery axis: he has been concerned with the “financially lucrative and widely disseminated *UK-produced* [ELT] ‘global course-book’”, a concept which he glosses as “an artefact which is predicated on the questionable assumption that ‘one size fits all’ – regardless of the social, geographical and educational context of use” (Gray 2010a: 1, 3; my italics). Gray, guided by Pierre Bourdieu’s economy of linguistic exchange and Karl Marx’s idea of commodification, takes the view that English is indeed a symbolic product of globalisation.³ Not only is language “a form of linguistic capital, capable of bringing a profit of distinction to those speakers with the ability to access it (or, more accurately, its socially legitimated varieties)” (Gray 2010a: 16–17), but it “can also be packaged,

of them had learnt to learn English, had somehow affected their identity as non-native speakers of the language, their perceptions of ‘English’, and the goals they hoped to achieve as English language students.

³ As Gray (2010a: 13) reminds us, “[a]lthough there is no agreed definition of globalization, a cluster of factors are commonly associated with the term. These include the deregulatory policies of economic neoliberalism, the rise of the so-called new capitalism [...] and the ‘new work order’ [...]; the challenge to the autonomy of the nation-state ensuing from the ascendancy of powerful transnational corporations; increasing global interconnectedness as a result of technological developments which compress time and space; flows of population, media and ideas; and increasing cultural hybridization”. Neoliberalism, still in Gray’s (ibid.) view, “may be said to entail the opening up of domestic markets to unrestricted free trade, the privatization of state assets and the marketization of areas such as health and education, along with the scaling down of the welfare state”.

imaged and sold as *if* it were a commodity like any other” (Gray 2010a: 198; italics in original). To Gray’s mind, the sales pitch of the English course taught through a global textbook relies upon a series of factors that are worth elaborating on here, namely deterritorialisation, inclusivity, and neoliberalism.⁴

2.2. THE GLOBAL COURSEBOOK IN JOHN GRAY’S WORDS: DETERRITORIALISATION, INCLUSIVITY, NEOLIBERALISM

A recurring comment on contemporary ELT global coursebooks is that they no longer feature characters and stories exclusively located in Britain. Deterritorialisation arises from the international settings that are nowadays an integral part of the learning resources’ cultural frameworks (Gray 2002: 157, 2010a: 109; Buckledee 2010: 149; Vettorel 2010: 178). Gray (2002: 157), after examining the 1996 *New Headway Intermediate Student’s Book (NH I SB)*, claimed that the attention paid to non-British locations “reflect[ed], no doubt, a growing sense on the part of the publishers of English as an increasingly global language”. As for inclusivity, the term – borrowed from Gray (ibid.) – originally covers guidelines on textbook content that “refe[r] to the need for a non-sexist approach to the way in which men and women are represented throughout the coursebook”. “Early surveys”, Gray (ibid.) wrote around fifteen years ago, “concluded that women were under-represented, trivialized and stereotyped in a wide selection of British and North American coursebooks”. However, he continued, “[e]ven the most cursory look at a selection of modern global coursebooks produced in the UK shows that this is no longer the case” (ibid.). As a result, in the 1996 edition of *NH I SB*, female characters are in his opinion “highly visible” and perform “a variety of roles” including those of artist, TV presenter, and judge, while men cook and wear aprons (Gray 2002: 159). Turkish scholar Arda Arikan and Tunisian researcher Mimoun Melliti strongly disagree with Gray’s optimistic conclusions (see Gray 2002: 159, 2010a: 109, 2013a: 5–6) and voice in unison sharp criticism about the argument which he puts forward with respect to the feminising of coursebook content, especially in the case of the 2003 version of *NH I SB*. According to Arikan (2005: 36), women remain under-represented, portrayed stereotypically, and predominantly associated with child-rearing; equally crucial is a persistently sexist job distribution. Melliti (2013: 6), who shares Arikan’s view on female protagonists’ lack of visibility and stereotypical portrayals, moreover insists on the problem of “ethnocentricity” as “the [2003 *NH I SB*] coursebook primarily foregrounds Western women in Western situations”. Under the heading “inclusivity”, Melliti (ibid.) gives damning evidence of racial bias and underscores “the limited numbers and kinds of [...] roles and topics assigned for non-White minorities”. Discussing the same edition of *New Headway*, Gray (2010a: 106) conversely remarks that “ten of the twelve units feature a wide range of phenotypically

⁴ Other such determinants are heteronormativity (Gray 2013b) and inappropriacy (Gray 2002: 159), the latter being a set of guidelines that concerns “those topics which writers are advised to avoid so as not to offend the perceived sensibilities of potential buyers and users” (Gray 2010a: 112). These factors will not be covered here as they fall outside the scope of the present paper; for further information on these issues in *NH UI SB*, see Gerday (2015).

diverse characters”. Part of my survey of *NH UI SB* will consist in shedding more light on this hotly debated issue.

Last but not least, several studies, principally conducted by Marxist researchers, have dealt with the impact of neoliberalism on the content of ELT global coursebooks over the past few years (e.g. Gray 2010b; Gray & Block 2012; Kullman 2013). For John Gray, neoliberalism is the essential component of the “new” capitalism (2010b: 717), and thus of globalisation (2010a: 13), and it is concomitant with the emergence of a “highly insecure and stressful” world of work and what he calls “the reconfiguration of the self” (2010b: 717–719). The latter notion is connected to Tom Peters’ influential work (e.g. 1999), grounded in the idea that “the way for individuals to survive in a neoliberal climate is effectively to brand themselves in order to stand out from the growing army of generic labour” (Gray 2010b: 718). Both aspects of neoliberalism were examined by Gray (2010b: 721) in twelve UK-produced global textbooks published between 1979 and 2005. It appears that the world of work has consistently been depicted in a positive manner since the 1980s, and that characters in textbooks have “repeatedly display[ed] distinction, commitment and passion in relation to their chosen careers – in which they begin to achieve increasingly spectacular success” (2010b: 722). With regard to *New Headway (NH)*, these characters have even tended to belong to the “choiceoisie”, that is, a group of people whose lifestyle choices are not heavily influenced by social, financial, or personal constraints (Probyn 1990, quoted in Gray 2010b: 725). At the same time, these characters seem aware of job insecurity in the neoliberal context because references to redundancy, unemployment, and savings for a rainy day occur regularly, especially in recent teaching materials (Gray 2010b: 725). It may therefore come as no surprise that, over the same period, working-class characters have steadily been removed from those ELT global coursebooks in favour of an “overwhelming focus on consumerism and the lifestyles of a cosmopolitan middle class” which, as Gray & Block (2012: 45–47) put it, “celebrat[es] neoliberal ideology”.

An ELT textbook, to sum up, is labelled ‘global’ by most scholars when it is spread – or, more accurately, sold – on a world scale. Here is presumably what the adjective basically denotes in the ELT literature and industry. As far as its connotations are concerned, Gray in particular sets forth in his historical and culture-oriented work the insidious impact of globalisation and its related overarching and intricate ramifications such as neoliberalism on this genre of teaching materials. An ELT global coursebook, then, is from his point of view a commodity whose content is deeply determined by, and reflective of, this economic, cultural, and political framework. In contrast to Gray, I would rather contend that this web of processes termed ‘globalisation’ merely amounts to the tip of the iceberg. As I will demonstrate in this article, ‘global’ when applied to *NH UI SB* refers first and foremost to a discourse that is founded on the language ideologies underlying the standard linguistic models of the *NH* course. To describe ‘discourse’, I take my cue from Simpson & Mayr (2010: 5), who defend the idea that a “text’s linguistic structure functions, as discourse, to privilege certain ideological positions while downplaying others – such that the linguistic choices encoded in this or that text can be shown to correlate with the ideological orientation of the text”. Ideology, in turn, corresponds to “the ways in which a person’s beliefs, opinions and value-systems intersect with the

broader social and political structures of the society in which they live” (Simpson & Mayr 2010: 4).⁵ My claim in this article is that tenets of globalisation and neoliberalism only combine in *NH UI SB* to support and reinforce long-standing language bias, as well as to create aspirational content – that is, “something which [students] aspire to and therefore interests them and motivates them” (Gray 2002: 161).

3. A qualitative linguistic analysis of *NH UI SB*

3.1. THE LINGUISTIC SEGMENT AS AN UNDER-RESEARCHED CONSTITUENT OF ELT GLOBAL TEXTBOOKS

The starting point for my reflection is a question that refines the general “What is ‘global’ in an ELT global coursebook?”: is the English language at the heart of the *NH* course ‘global’, that is to say, is it adapted to learners whose linguistic profiles are at least as numerous and diverse as the gamut of languages encompassed by the textbook’s areas of ‘consumption’? This question points to a blind spot in the ELT literature, as few studies to date have centred on the linguistic orientation of ‘global’ teaching materials. What is more, in the rare cases when the linguistic issue is addressed, it is often examined partially: only one or two branches of linguistics are covered. For example, researchers belonging to the field of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) studies have begun to be involved in identifying – albeit partly – the linguistic standard prevailing in this kind of learning resources.⁶ Because the body of non-native speakers relying upon English to interact mainly with other non-native speakers has largely outnumbered native users of English (see Buckledee 2010; Crystal 2012; Jenkins 2015a), ELF scholars take the view that choosing native English as a model to emulate in ELT is no longer tenable (e.g. Jenkins 2000, 2007; Seidlhofer 2011). ELF, by contrast, is thought to represent and meet learners’ increasingly international communicative needs. Buckledee (2010: 150) specifies in this regard that phonology is “the most thoroughly researched and codified aspect of English as a Lingua Franca”. Buckledee (2010: 145–149), in order to observe if concessions to ELF were made in a corpus of ELT global textbooks (*including Straightforward and Total English* among others), analysed the accents of English, stress, and rhythm found in listening exercises. Received

⁵ “As an integrated form of social behaviour”, Simpson (1993: 6) suggested in *Language, Ideology and Point of View*, “language will be inevitably and inextricably tied up with the socio-political context in which it functions. Language is not used in a contextless vacuum; rather, it is used in a host of discourse contexts, contexts which are impregnated with the ideology of social systems and institutions.” As a corollary, since “language operates within this social dimension it must, of necessity *reflect*, and some would argue, *construct* ideology” (italics in original).

⁶ ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ is typically glossed as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer 2011: 7, quoted in Jenkins 2015a: 44). Jennifer Jenkins, one of the leading figures in ELF studies, provided in a 2015 paper an updated name, ‘English as a Multilingua Franca (EMF)’, and an amended definition: “[m]ultilingual communication in which English is available as a contact language of choice, but is not necessarily chosen” (2015b: 73).

Pronunciation (RP), Estuary English, and General American remained dominant, leading Buckledee (2010: 150) to conclude that “it is disappointing to find so few instances of non-native models of pronunciation”. Vettorel & Lopriore (2013) offered to widen the scope of the linguistic investigation through a case study based on ten English language coursebooks used in Italy. Similarly, their work in part consisted in detecting a possible shift towards ELF or institutionalised varieties of English in their linguistic input (2013: 493). The two scholars established that this “shift is in the majority of cases only realised in terms of acknowledging the co-existence of varieties besides standard British English, of stimulating recognition of differences in vocabulary, in spelling or in pronunciation”, and finally “in the use of varieties of English in the audio and video materials” (2013: 495). The manner in which standard British English and these varieties of English are represented – for instance, as classified in a hierarchical order according to specific values or a *rapport de force* – is, however, not explored. It is in this sense that Gray’s work may be seen as a step forward. When the researcher inspects the phonological content of global textbooks, he not only determines the accents of English or counts their occurrences, but he also attempts to understand the way in which these accents are used to portray speakers of English (2010a: 59–62, 71–73, 83–87, 96–98). In the case of *Streamline Connections*, he remarks that

the surface variation in the representation of English phonologically does not imply equality of status for all accents. [...] Although [it emerges] that several speakers whose jobs are not generally regarded as being particularly high status have [an RP accent] – thereby making the point that this accent [...] does not automatically presuppose a high-status job – it is also clear that higher-status jobs *tend* to be accompanied by [an RP accent] and that regional UK accents are more clearly associated with blue-collar employment. (2010a: 61; italics in original)

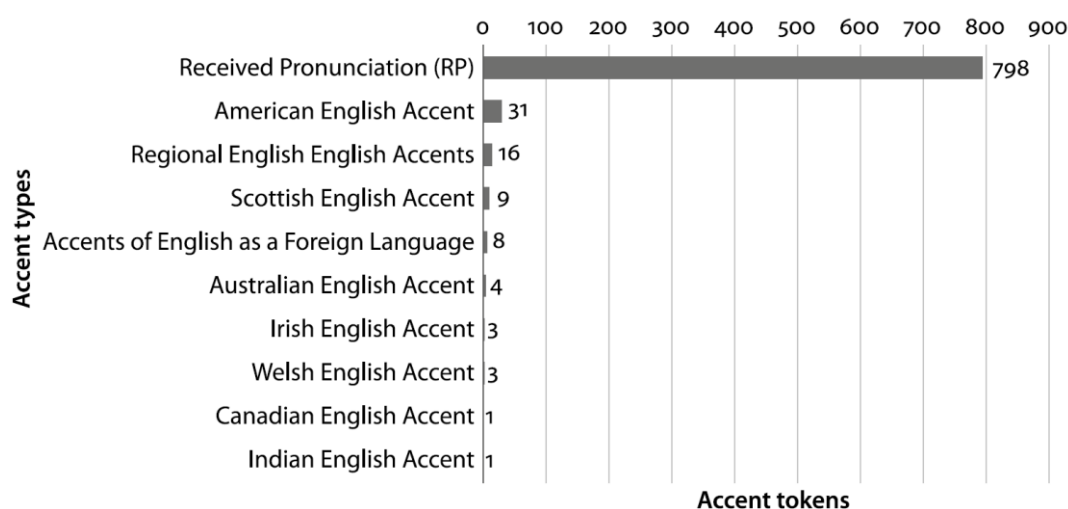
This comment remains a simple observation as Gray does not propose any explanation for such an imbalance between accents of English. I would suggest that it is exactly at this stage that an in-depth linguistic analysis becomes decisive to account for these assumptions: indeed, as will be spelt out below, the types of accents, grammar, and lexis upon which an English course hinges shape its ideological content.

3.2. DELVING INTO THE PHONOLOGY OF *NH UI SB*

The investigation of the *NH* course that I undertook in this perspective first concentrated on phonology. Learning to pronounce the ‘correct’ sounds, word stress, and intonation patterns of English to improve one’s living conditions is not only the pillar of the well-known 1964 American musical *My Fair Lady*, but it appears to be a core value of *NH UI SB* as well. I base this statement on a quantitative and qualitative study of the sample of accents represented in the coursebook’s listening exercises. *NH UI SB*, it should be clarified from the outset, comprises four CDs which include 143 tracks in total and whose content is transcribed at the end of the textbook (Soars & Soars 2014: 120–138). I closely examined all the tracks with a view to identifying distinct accents of English. These accents were then categorised according to a method inspired by the contrast between ‘word types’ and ‘word tokens’ (e.g. Biber et al. 1999: 51–54). While the former correspond to “different word forms”, the latter describe “running words” (1999: 52–53). By way of illustration, in the sentence “The cat is on the roof”, there are five word types (‘the’, ‘cat’, ‘is’, ‘on’, ‘roof’) and six word

tokens as the definite article ‘the’ occurs twice. A similar distinction between ‘accent types’ and ‘accent tokens’ was expressly drawn for this study. Welsh English, to take but one example, here becomes an accent type whose accent tokens amount to its occurrences in all the monologues and interactions covered by the 143 tracks.⁷ Figure 1 combines the accent types identified in the four Class Audio CDs (on the vertical axis) with their respective tokens (on the horizontal axis).

Figure 1. *Accents in the four NH UI SB fourth edition Class Audio CDs*



This classification gives rise to three pivotal findings. Firstly, RP does remain the predominant accent of English in the *NH UI SB* audio material, occupying the leading position with 798 occurrences – namely, 91.3% of the total accent tokens. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of the non-RP accent types are linked to varieties of native English – American English, regional English English other than RP, Scottish English, Australian English, Irish English, Welsh English, and Canadian English. Lastly, and as a direct consequence, non-native speakers are represented in about 1% of the total accent tokens: no more than eight tokens refer to accents of English that are inflected with Chinese, Spanish, Slavic, or Greek sound patterns (e.g. Soars & Soars 2014: tracks 1.5.10, 4.14, 1.7.5, 5.8.3), while the Indian English accent can be heard only once (Soars & Soars 2014: track 7.7). To account for the persistent supremacy of RP in UK-produced ELT global coursebooks, Gray (2010a) once more invokes the logic of consumerism. In his opinion, “by exposing students to a very narrow range [of] accents, by consistently privileging [RP] [...], English is not only simplified for the purposes of teaching and learning, it could also be argued that it is reified and stabilized [...] for commercial reasons” (2010a: 137). Put differently, Gray claims that English pronunciation appears purposely restricted to RP to make it invariant and turn it into what Wajnryb (1996) called “a marketable product” (Gray 2010a: 137). I would advance instead that RP is still preeminent in the *NH* course

⁷ Conversational turns were not considered to be accent tokens. In the case of a dialogue involving people who speak with what appears to be a Canadian English accent, I noted two accent tokens related to this type, regardless of the number of turns per speaker.

because of the values it is assigned, more specifically the ‘correct language use’ it is surreptitiously equated with.

Indeed, although RP is not the sole accent on the Class Audio CDs, it is the only one taught and learnt throughout the textbook. Furthermore, all the non-RP accents recorded on the CDs are affected – even slightly caricatured. What certainly characterises the *NH* audio material is a finite set of voices – those of the actors who recorded the tracks. As a result, while an accent type is illustrated by several voices, the same voice can also perform different accent types. A striking example is the voice that exemplifies the Indian English accent type. It is said to be that of Pratima Kejriwal, a woman who entered into an arranged marriage (Soars & Soars 2014: 57). A picture in the coursebook showing a female Indian adult dressed in a gold and red sari leads learners to expect an authentic Indian English accent when listening to the corresponding track. The instantly recognisable voice of this supposed speaker of Indian English nonetheless shifts to an RP accent in fourteen other tracks. Gray made a somewhat similar observation about the 2003 edition of *NH I SB*: “[t]he same voice, most probably that of an actor, appears to be used for a Japanese speaker in one unit and for a Korean in another” (2010a: 97). In addition, all the voices whose ‘correct’ stress and intonation patterns learners are asked to repeat and imitate in the exercises (e.g. Soars & Soars 2014: 12; Soars et al. 2014: 18, 51) are instances of the RP accent – a single type of accent that is neither named nor explicitly introduced to these learners as such. In the same way, there is only one phonetic system found in the textbook (Soars & Soars 2014: 167) and it groups the symbols that are generally used to describe RP (Roach 2004). What is thus implied here is that “there is a single model of English [...] which is appropriate for all students in all contexts” (Gray 2010a: 136).

3.3. UNVEILING ASSUMPTIONS IN *NH UI SB* IMPARTED BY GRAMMATICAL PRESCRIPTIVISM

Predictably, the same ‘one model’ policy applies to grammar. Prescriptivism actually pervades the whole *NH* course: the word ‘correct’ occurs repeatedly, and what is viewed as unacceptable in the “Grammar Reference” section of *NH UI SB* is not only preceded by an asterisk and crossed out – as in “~~*Less people go to church~~” (Soars & Soars 2014: 146) – but it is also signalled by means of modal auxiliary verbs – as in “[w]e cannot say [...]” (2014: 140) and “[w]e cannot use [...]” (2014: 150). Far less apparent is the type of English that precisely lies behind the phrase “Grammar Reference”, that is to say, the model of correctness that was selected for the textbook. One comes across this standard in the final comment on the present perfect:

American English is different from British English. In American English, these sentences are correct.

Did you hear the news? The President resigned! Did you do your homework yet?

Your father just called you.

I had breakfast already. (2014: 141)

Two varieties of native English are named in this comment. Even though features of American English are described as “correct”, the point of reference of *NH UI SB* is definitely standard British English: combining the past simple with ‘yet’ or ‘just’ is correct but *diverges* from the model

established as the grammatical framework of the *NH* course. In other words, this rule is correct in American English, yet incorrect in standard British English.

In short, standard British English is not only a synonym for correctness, but it is also the type of native English to which learners have to conform. This is eloquently illustrated by a remark made about the modal auxiliary verbs ‘may’ and ‘might’, still in the “Grammar Reference” section (2014: 147). Here it is assumed that “[l]earners of English often express these concepts of future possibility with *perhaps* or *maybe* ... *will* and so avoid using *may* and *might*” (ibid.). “However,” the textbook continues, “these are widely used by native speakers, and you should try to use them” (ibid.). Other noteworthy examples of this divide between ‘native speakers’ and ‘learners of English’ can be spotted in two successive writing tasks (2014: 103–105). In an activity entitled “Informal Writing – Correcting mistakes”, which plainly bespeaks prescriptivism, learners are first asked to correct mistakes in eight sentences. Among them, three are pretend constructions written by people defined as non-native speakers of English, two of whom are learners of English: “I born in 1991 in one small town in Mexico”, “I learn English for five years. I start when I had eleven years”, and “I do a evening course in English. I enjoy very much to learn languages” (2014: 103). Language students are then invited to correct, in pairs, the mistakes contained in a letter that is said to have been sent by ‘Fernando’. Fernando, a presumably fictitious black or mixed-race character whose photograph appears next to his letter, lives in Brazil and is about to travel to England where he is going to be hosted by James, the addressee. By living with James and his family, as mentioned in the concluding paragraph of Fernando’s text, the young man revealingly hopes to improve his English (2014: 103). As a consequence of both exercises, the notion of ‘mistake’ tends to be associated with non-native speakers – mostly learners – of English. The final instructions moreover suggest that Fernando’s letter exemplifies the mistakes that should be avoided (2014: 103): learners are therefore encouraged to distance themselves from the author of this letter. Conversely, in the writing task that follows, a letter of complaint to an airline written by fictional white Benjamin Potts from Brighton after flying from Antigua is an instance of formal writing to imitate (2014: 104–105). This second text does not show any ‘mistakes’ and, as such, does not have to be ‘corrected’ or modified to any degree. Regarded as a prototypical example of formal writing in English, it is a source of inspiration for learners, who subsequently have to write a letter or email of complaint themselves (2014: 104).

Intrigued by the pervasive connection between ‘learners of English’ and ‘mis-take’, I set out to investigate whether there was any correlation in *NH UI SB* between, on the one hand, the representation of non-native speakers in general and learners of English in particular, and, on the other, prescriptivism. To do so, I computed for each unit the occurrences of the lexeme ‘correct’ in the exercise instructions of the grammar parts of the coursebook, as well as the characters that were clearly described as non-native speakers of English. Significantly, references to non-native speakers of English steadily disappear in the teaching resource as prescriptivism becomes subtler. On the one hand, five non-native speakers out of the nine found in the course are grouped in the first unit. Another of these speakers can be found in Unit 4, the seventh in Unit 5, the eighth in Unit 6, and the last one – Pratima Kejriwal – in Unit 7. On the other hand, in Unit 1, which indeed contains the largest number of non-native speakers of English, the word ‘correct’ is prominently used as a transitive verb. As the writing tasks based on Fernando’s and Benjamin Potts’s letters indicated, learners are asked

in the grammar activities whose instructions include the verb ‘correct’ to spot ‘mistakes’ – for the most part, again, made by non-native speakers – and substitute them with constructions that are regarded as grammatically acceptable, perhaps so as to apprehend and absorb the *NH UI SB* standard of correctness. In the rest of the language course, however, ‘correct’ is more and more often noticed in its adjectival form and, interestingly, as a premodifier in a noun phrase (NP): students have to select “the correct form” of an item in one grammar exercise (2014: 39), write verbs in “the correct tense” in another (2014: 40), and fill in gaps in a text with “the correct article” (2014: 94) or “the correct demonstrative” (2014: 96). Because the adjective ‘correct’ is firmly lodged in an NP and is rarely detected in predicative position, it presupposes that the referent of the related NP is at present known to learners. To put it another way, it is assumed at this point that students have a good command of the norms of British English and can apply it to specific tasks; not inconsequentially, ‘correct’ as an attributive adjective appears chiefly in units which no longer feature non-native characters. This stratagem might have been devised not only to deepen the split between non-native (speakers of) English and ‘correct’ English, but also to set native-speakerism as the ultimate goal to reach at the end of the *NH* course. What the first and last but one non-native speakers of English in *NH UI SB* say also merits careful attention in this perspective. Track 1.5.9 corresponds to a conversation between two characters whose – affected – accents label them as speakers of non-native English. The first voice explains that “In my very first English lesson I was taught to introduce myself and say ‘hello’”, to which the second reacts “I was taught to say ‘The cat runs after the mouse’, and stuff like that – useful, eh?” (2014: 8). The eighth non-native speaker in the course, who is characterised by a fake Chinese accent, assures his interlocutor that “I’m very pleased with my English. I’m making a lot of progress” (2014: track 6.6.2). Particularly worth stressing is that all three voices tell listeners about their experiences as learners of English. They seem to address language students directly and even to represent them in the first half of *NH UI SB*. Indeed, they accompany them in the process of learning English and stimulate them to make progress.⁸ The last enthusiastic meta-linguistic message communicated to learners is meaningful: the Chinese non-native speaker is delighted to be improving his English as prescriptivism becomes more ingrained in the *NH* course. What is consequently intimated is that ‘making progress in English learning’ means ‘assimilating standard British English’ – an interrelationship which, it should be recalled, ELF linguists readily dismiss as illusory and strive to disentangle via empirical research on ELT and international communication in English.

That being so, in line with what the analysis of phonology in *NH UI SB* has pointed out, the grammar standard of the textbook is one type of native English that is promoted to the rank of model of correctness. This study has nevertheless helped to uncover a set of encoded assumptions artfully interwoven with this model that learners are encouraged to emulate: ‘non-native speakers/learners of English’ and ‘mistakes to avoid’, together with ‘mastering standard British English’ and ‘progress’. These subliminal equations undergirding the *NH* grammar input are by no means incidental, as they appear to exclude certain categories of speakers to delineate the custodians of the norm. The lexical

⁸ Pratima (Soars & Soars 2014: track 7.7), the final non-native speaker of English in the teaching material, is actually a prime example of high language proficiency.

framework of the course, as the following paragraphs will establish, entrenches this linguistic and ideological segregation.

3.4. SORTING OVER-LEXICALISED WORDS: *WORK, EDUCATION, MONEY, LEISURE ACTIVITIES, CARS*

Scanning the words used in the listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks to identify the type(s) of English that is (are) represented in *NH UI SB*, one quickly realises that several words and topics recur throughout the textbook. The *NH* language course indeed does not have to be subjected to close scrutiny to single out five themes that are repeatedly referred to: abundant terms pertain to the world of work (see Gray 2010b: 715), education, money, leisure activities, and cars. Utterly bewildering is the fact that these themes tend to be solely coupled with RP speakers of English. This observation is reminiscent of a concept relevant to the fields of stylistics and discourse analysis – namely *over-lexicalisation* (Wales 2011: 298). In Fowler's (1996: 218) words, it is “the availability, or the use, of a profusion of terms for an object or concept”. Over-lexicalisation is not limited to synonymy and includes “other, similar, lexical processes” which lead to the foregrounding of the ideas linked to the overly repeated items (1996: 218–219). This notion is especially thought-provoking as it is “a pragmatic strategy of encoding ideology in [...] discourse” (Simpson & Mayr 2010: 112). Let us emphasise in this respect that ‘work’ is manifestly the most frequent word in the *NH* resource, as it is the focus of multiple exercises and learning activities: it is used in innumerable illustrative sentences – such as “He’s been working such long hours recently. He never sees the children” (Soars & Soars 2014: track 1.4) and “She works in our Paris office” (2014: 64) – and is the main topic of “a telephone conversation between two work colleagues, Andy and Barry” (2014: 45), of a writing task about CVs and covering letters (2014: 108–109), and yet of another one in which learners have to conduct a consumer survey pretending to work for “a firm of marketing consultants” (2014: 111). Remarkably omnipresent within these work-related examples are references to business. The “Everyday English” activity of Unit 6, for instance, is devoted to “Business expressions and numbers” (2014: 53). In the same section of the coursebook, learners have to imagine opening a restaurant and answer questions such as “How will you raise money to start it?” and “How many workers will you hire and how much will you pay them?” before giving a “[b]usiness presentation” of their venture (2014: 52). These telling examples tend to back up Gray & Block’s (2012: 66) claim that, in the *NH* textbook, “the actual number of working class characters is shown to be on the decline”. The world of work seems in point of fact restricted to the categories of entrepreneurial figures and “white-collar” workers (Gray 2010b: 728). Arguably, the excessive attention paid to the business sector is meant to reinforce the idea that English is “the medium for many of the new service industries” (Holborow 2012: 16). It is British English, more importantly, that is meant to be this medium in *NH UI SB* since many RP-accented voices are said to be businesspeople. Consider the case of Theo, a young non-white man who works in the City in London and who intends to be “even more successful” in the near future, “earning twice what [he is] getting now”, and to eventually become a millionaire before he is twenty-five (2014: track 5.1.6). Because business is essentially presented in a positive light (e.g. 2014: tracks 1.9, 5.10.3, 6.9), as a source of

achievement, pride, and satisfaction (see Gray 2010b: 722), RP is unrealistically equated with both personal and business success.

Still on the subject of work (again, especially in the field of business), it has to be highlighted that qualifications turn out to be an asset that is unevenly distributed among the textbook's characters. Paired with certain accents, the 'education' item creates a gap between, on the one hand, those who stand a chance of securing employment and, on the other, those who have bleak career prospects: the former characters are English native speakers of English defined by an RP accent; the latter are British native speakers of English with non-RP accents (e.g. with a Northern English accent), non-British native speakers of English (e.g. inter-actants with a North American English accent) as well as non-native speakers of English (i.e. users of English as a Foreign Language). A revealing listening exercise in this regard is "A NEET solution", in which the acronym stands for "Not in Employment, Education, or Training" (Soars & Soars 2014: 41). Three fictitious young people recount the reasons for their uphill struggle to find a job (2014: track 5.8). Darrell, who is twenty-one years old, left school at sixteen because "sitting at a desk just wasn't [his] kind of thing". The then adolescent soon realised that the chief problem was that "[he] didn't have any qualifications and there weren't any jobs", adding "Can't believe how stupid I was, really". Joining a NEET programme, Darrell was offered the opportunity to become an apprentice in a car factory. Crucial here is that Darrell speaks English with a bogus Birmingham accent. Another voice, marked by a rhotic accent, represents twenty-two-year-old Kara, who comes from Canada, "an unemployment black spot" in her view. She has been unsuccessfully looking for a job in her subject area since she graduated in journalism and economics, complaining "So, all those exams and three years at university to be an unpaid slave!". As an alternative occupation, Kara plans to work on a literacy programme in Malawi. Lastly, Loukas, whose accent is fake Greek-English, does a course in farming at the American Farm School in Thessaloniki. Although he has a degree in business, Loukas does not succeed in finding a "proper full-time job" and thus regards farming as "an opportunity", wishing to "make it a success" in order to repay his parents. These three profiles, however fictional, drastically contrast with those of the 'successful' English businesspeople characterised by an RP accent. What results from these data is the improbable idea that RP – currently spoken by approximately 2% of people in the UK (BBC 2014a; British Library n.d.) – is an indispensable means to reach the top of the social scale, a requisite for the improvement of a speaker's living conditions.

The remaining recurrent themes – 'money', 'cars', and 'leisure activities' – are social markers which are likewise instrumental in this ideal depiction of English RP speakers. 'Money' and 'cars' specifically draw a sharp distinction between different categories of British speakers of English. To take a few examples, the sole Scottish businesswoman to be found in the *NH* course appears to have an irresponsible attitude towards money: to an RP voice inquiring how she can afford to buy splendid clothes, she explains, "Hopefully, I'm going to get a bonus this month. My boss has promised. After all, I did earn the company over £ 100,000 last year. Basically, I deserve it" (2014: track 12.9.3). As can be inferred, the Scottish worker spends money anticipating a bonus that she may not receive. Another Scottish woman confesses that she is not going to have a holiday because she "just can't afford it" (2014: track 1.11.6), and a male voice defined by a Scottish accent states that he left his "briefcase on the bus" (2014: track 1.5.6). Accordingly, the latter is most likely a

commuter who uses public transport. English RP speakers, by contrast, drive and own cars. Instances are “You must have hit the roof when she crashed your car./Well, yes, I was a bit upset” (2014: track 7.10.3), “Do you like my car? It’s brand new” (2014: track 9.6.5), and “Look, I have two cars. Borrow either one, I don’t mind. I probably won’t be using either anyway” (2014: track 12.3.9). It is important to note in this connection that cars, which are “status-conferring objects” and “indicators of social and economic worth as well as key markers of identity” (Best 2006: 4), are not associated with other categories of speakers of English. Finally, and contrary to the old adage, money is believed to guarantee happiness in *NH UI SB*. In a “Language Focus” activity, learners have to choose the happiest person among A and B on the basis of the written sentences “I have a few friends and a little money” (A) and “I have few friends and little money” (B) (Soars & Soars 2014: 47). The answer given in *the Teacher’s Book* is unequivocally A (Soars et al. 2014: 82). While both friendship and wealth could have been understood here as factors contributing to happiness, concern is above all expressed by English speakers with an RP accent throughout the *NH* course about earning and spending money: “What does she do for a living?/She’s a corporate lawyer./That sounds boring./Humph! Boring it may be but it’s really well paid!” (Soars & Soars 2014: track 2.6.3), or “I’ve just sent my nephew £ 10 for his birthday./Well, I have five nieces, I gave £ 10 to each one for Christmas. Cost me a fortune./I only have the one nephew at the moment. Thank goodness” (2014: track 12.3.4). Savings may be spent partying, another word extensively heard from the mouths of adolescents and young adults (e.g. 2014: tracks 1.9.5, 4.10.1, 6.3.3, 11.2.2), going to the cinema (2014: tracks 3.13, 6.2.10, 10.4.4), or shopping (2014: tracks 7.3.1, 12.7.3), while businessmen such as Andy and Barry prefer playing golf (2014: tracks 4.1.5, 5.13). As Gray & Block (2012: 58) declared in a comparable context, the “activities [engaged] in are indexical of middle class leisure activities and consumption patterns”.

3.5. ASPIRATIONAL CONTENT SERVING STANDARD LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

As I have tried to demonstrate above, over-lexicalisation is a stylistic device that helps to build a valueladen discourse about RP speakers of English in *NH UI SB*, in that it portrays them as exemplary and laudable. The “strong celebratory strand” of the English course arises from the fact that these speakers’ lives, “whether fictional or non-fictional, are celebrated in terms of personal and professional success” (Gray 2010a: 109). The way I account for this aspirational content nonetheless departs from Gray’s, as neoliberalism alone cannot be the motivation behind the interplay between such varied elements as content, RP, British English, and prescriptivism. I would again rather hold that the bedrock of the *NH UI SB* ethos is the tenacious grip of standard language ideologies.

It might be worth reminding readers at this stage that language standardisation, which began in England in the second half of the 15th century (Melchers & Shaw 2013: 5), was aimed “to fix and ‘embaulm’ (Samuel Johnson’s term) the structural properties of the language in a uniform state and *prevent* all structural change” (Milroy 1999: 28; italics in original). This standard, as Davis (1999: 85) assures, is not “a harmless descriptive term” and “has sense only within a strict form of prescriptivism”. Prescriptivism – which, as opposed to descriptivism, centres on a finite set of almost immutable rules determining the so-called correct use of a language without taking its actual use

into consideration (Crystal 2003: 461, 467) – may be seen as a linguistic mode of maintaining the fixity of a language initiated by the process of standardisation (Milroy 1999). Prescriptivism, so it seems, preserves the linguistic ideology of correctness deeply rooted in the standard language (Milroy 1999: 18), in addition to the values with which the variety was coupled when it was codified:

The developing standard was London-based – in particular, it reflected the language of the prosperous middle-class businessmen who had moved into London from an area north-east of the city. The influential University of Cambridge in that area is also believed to have played an important role here.
(Melchers & Shaw 2013: 4–5)

Received Pronunciation (RP), which was established as a model of correctness at the dawn of the 20th century (Milroy 1999: 18), is said to characterise primarily educated male speakers from Southern England too (Upton 2004: 217). Upton (*ibid.*) nevertheless affirms that “[e]arly twentieth-century assumptions are not necessarily ours” because “education is now more democratic in respect of both gender and class, and Southern England no longer holds a grip on linguistic prestige which it had on Britain a century ago”. The scholar therefore recommends being “more relaxed about the [acknowledged] RP” and avoiding “mak[ing] the model too precious or confin[ing] its speaker-base to an elite” (2004: 218). By means of this mere advice, Upton noticeably admits that the terms ‘precious’ and ‘elite’ remain inextricably intertwined with the initials RP. He eventually concedes that “a commonly-held view persists that RP is a very narrow class-based and region-based variety of English pronunciation” (*ibid.*). It becomes manifest that, while from Gray’s cultural studies-informed angle the emphasis on work, business, money, and middle-class people in *NH UI SB* is perfectly consistent with the lineaments of neoliberalism, the intersection between the same topics, standard British English, and RP is not accidental and can best be elucidated within the compass of standard language ideologies. These and neoliberalism doubt-less thematically converge in the *NH* textbook, but only the former allow one to fathom out the mysteries of the admirable profile of RP speakers of English drawn through over-lexicalisation.

One aspect of these standard language ideologies that has been touched upon but not yet examined in detail as regards *NH UI SB* is gender bias. Indeed, both standard British English and Received Pronunciation were believed to classify in essence educated *male* speakers from Southern England when they were set as models of correctness (Melchers & Shaw 2013: 4–5; Upton 2004: 217–218). It is true that this type of gender-based discrimination might at first sight appear to be a thing of the past in *NH UI SB*: in the textbook, young Teresa Sayers is photographed sitting on a motorbike (Soars & Soars 2014: 7), fictitious Robert Johnson cooks biscuits with his son (2014: 80), and a double-page spread revolves around the late Iraqi-British Zaha Hadid, who is “the first woman architect to win the important Pritzker Prize for Architecture” (2014: 118–119). Scratching beneath the surface of these pictures and exercises, one soon reaches a thick layer of sexism. In fact, not only do female characters remain numerically inferior to male protagonists (75 against 89 in the whole textbook),⁹ but they are also assigned different tasks and roles. As Arikan (2005: 36) already observed in relation to the 2003 edition of *NH I SB*, only women take care of their homes. To the question “Doing anything

⁹ The anonymous voices recorded on the audio material were not taken into account.

interesting this weekend?”, a female voice responds “Yeah, if you call housework interesting. I’ve just got to tidy my flat this weekend” (Soars & Soars 2014: track 1.6.5). Another female speaker complains that “Mike’s away on business”, hence that she has to “do the lot. School, shop, kids, cook, clean” (2014: track 5.11.2). An example of a man compelled to run an errand, fetch his children from school, or do the Hoovering because his wife is “away on business” cannot be spotted in any part of the coursebook. Women are moreover in charge of childrearing, which – interestingly enough – connotes sacrifice and burden (e.g. 2014: tracks 7.2.2, 11.2.3). As for job distribution, a female protagonist in the *NH* course can be a writer (2014: 25), a carer (2014: 42–43), a businesswoman (2014: track 1.9), a barrister (2014: track 9.5.2), or an advertiser (2014: track 12.6), while a man can work as a stuntman (2014: 24), a car mechanic (2014: track 5.8), a chef (2014: 46–47), or an arborist (2014: 66–67). Despite this apparently egalitarian distribution, business is still predominantly men’s business. This is evidenced by references to non-fictional tycoons such as the billionaire mobile phone magnate John Caudwell (2014: track 3.4), young app entrepreneur Nick D’Aloisio (2014: 42–43), Apple founder Steve Jobs, and Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz (2014: 50–51). Only one grammar exercise features a real-life businesswoman, Maureen Wheeler, the founder of the *Lonely Planet* travel guides (2014: 16–17). However, she is not the sole focus of this learning activity: her husband is thought to be equally involved in this “outstanding publishing success” (2014: 16). To all outward appearances the textbook is inclusivity-driven, while under a veneer of male-female parity only a few women are appointed to managerial responsibilities. What emerges from this gender imbalance in the entrepreneurial sphere of *NH UI SB* is a marked tendency for businesspeople to be male, and ultimately for businessmen with an RP accent to be the backbone of the book’s aspirational content.

4. What is then ‘global’ in *NH UI SB*?

4.1. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To return to the point of departure of this investigation, the answer to my preliminary research question – namely, “Is the English language at the heart of the *NH* course ‘global’?” – on account of these findings is no, not at all. This language course proudly claims to be “*renowned worldwide for its clear understanding of teacher and learner needs*” (2014: back cover; italics in original). Does such a statement therefore imply that a learning resource providing linguistic input limited to a hegemonic RP system, a sample of false non-RP accents, and a largely invariant standard British English grammatical and lexical framework, conforms to what both target groups scattered all over the globe require? Does this mean that an English textbook whose ‘aspirational’ linguistic content perpetuates centuries-old language, class, and gender bias for the most part tallying with and buttressed by neoliberal ideology is what they all yearn for? As I will expound in the last section of this essay, what is ‘global’ in *NH UI SB* is fundamentally a matter of discourse – a discourse that rests upon both the linguistic and cultural components of the coursebook.

4.2. FURTHER COMMENTS: MULTICULTURALISM AND DETERRITORIALISATION

In a historical study of four British ELT ‘global’ textbooks, Gray (2010a: 109) perceived a “progressive multiculturalizing of content”. Fleshing out his statement, the researcher made clear that

there is a move away from the use of black and Asian characters to signal that the scenes depicted take place “abroad” (*Connections*) to one in which such characters [...] are the main focus of the unit (*Headway Intermediate*). [...] Linked to this is a concomitant globalizing of content which is most noticeable in *Headway Intermediate*. (2010a: 109)

Still, among the 164 characters who are “the main focus of the unit” in *NH UI SB*, only fourteen are non-white, three of whom are non-native speakers of English (Soars & Soars 2014: 37, 57, 103) and half of whom are black (2014: 9, 13, 55, 68,

77, 97, 103). Non-white people are as a consequence under-represented (8.54%) in the English-speaking world sketched out in the *NH* course material. As was the case for the description of independent women, multiculturalism proves to be a façade: it is primarily the artwork which conveys the idea of cultural diversity. By way of illustration, a picture of Tanzanian children accompanies the email written by Teresa Sayers (2014: 7); eight Russian people working for Starbucks are photographed in Unit 6 (2014: 50); and another picture of a Latin American woman constitutes the background of the article “The Peter Pan Generation” (2014: 58). All of these non-white people are at the margins of learning activities and are silent. Put differently, they are present but not invited to speak English. While their presence is surely intended to suggest the global spread of the language, their silence contributes to the immutability of English. The British English linguistic model of *NH UI SB* is indeed not challenged by many instances of other native and non-native varieties of English and thus remains preeminent. What is more, silence gives consent: these speakers have conceivably a good command of British English and may give the impression that the type of English they embody and which is diffused worldwide is the *NH* model of correctness.

In a similar vein, deterritorialisation seems to signify that British English is used globally. Obviously, the learning activities in the textbook are not exclusively located in Britain; examples of international settings are Tanzania (2014: 7), Germany, Spain, France (2014: track 1.7), Southeast Asia (2014: 15), Hawaii (2014: 18–19), Egypt (2014: track 8.10), Russia (2014: track 8.11), and Vanuatu (2014: track 11.3). Even so, all these locations are visited by British native speakers of English only. Margaret, for instance, comes from Yorkshire and has lived in Germany for thirty years, whereas Mairie, who is from Scotland, has just settled in Madrid. RP speaker Simone went to Egypt on holiday while Anna used to work in Russia (2014: tracks 8.10, 8.11). The case of a Costa Rican woman who works in China and relies on English to communicate with the local population is non-existent. As a result, the assumption that British English is known on a global scale is dependent upon the implicit equation ‘British characters = globetrotters’.

Admittedly, there are some non-native speakers of English in *NH UI SB* who travel as well. Yet, contrary to the British English speakers who discover the four corners of the globe, these non-native speakers head straight for England, and London in particular. Tetyana and Sem, who come from the south of Ukraine, live in England (2014: track 1.7), and Argentinian Luciana visits some friends in

London (2014: track 4.14). London is also the place where Fernando wishes to “improve” his English (2014: 103). Revealingly, the city that is tied to the linguistic models of the ELT course material is referred to as the place to go to improve one’s English.¹⁰ London is furthermore believed to be a doorway to the world. This new ideological connection is established in the text devoted to the travel guide company *Lonely Planet* (2014: 16–17). Maureen Wheeler, born in Belfast, settled in London when she was twenty “*because she wanted to see the world*” (2014: 160; my italics). The conjunction ‘because’ expresses causality, the *because*-clause corresponding to the cause, the main clause to the effect or result (Dancygier & Sweetser 2000: 120). Maureen Wheeler, in other words, wanted to see the world. For that reason, she went to London. By means of this causal relationship, a link is arbitrarily – and, one might say, illogically – created between the two clauses, more specifically between ‘wanting to see the world’ and ‘going to London’. It can therefore be inferred that learners have to go to the capital city of Britain to master the type of English which is presented as the global language – British English – and which is the prerequisite for travelling around the world. In this perspective, multiculturalism and deterritorialisation in *NH UI SB* ostensibly allude to the many and varied users of English across the planet, but they are only strategies developed to assign British English the status of a ‘global language’.

5. Conclusion

As this investigation draws to a close, it becomes evident that the adjective ‘global’ usually tagged onto the ELT *New Headway* course is deceptive. ‘Global’ proves to be one value, or one connotation, deliberately embedded in the linguistic points of reference of *NH UI SB*, in the same way as ‘correctness’, ‘progress’, and ‘success’ appear to be. John Gray, quoted above, supports the view that the English learnt via a ‘global’ textbook is intentionally made uniform because of the ‘one size fits all’ assumption shaping the course material and in order to turn it into what Wajnryb (1996) termed “a marketable product” (Gray 2010a: 137). Simply put, the genre of the ELT coursebook supposedly determines the variety of English taught and learnt. I would go so far as to say that it is actually the other way around: the invariant or standard English language is the main determinant of this kind of resource. What the latter denotes or is believed to be – that is, broadly speaking, a textbook spread on a worldwide scale – covertly helps to substantiate the equation ‘standard British English = global language’. The object ‘textbook’ here, to put it in a nutshell, is the connotation materialised; it is the discourse, a discourse which has not grown out of egalitarianism and inclusiveness – unless “greater inclusiveness, paradoxically, also seems to reject this very principle in practice” (Tsu 2012: 159).

¹⁰ Ironically, English is merely one language among many used in this multilingual city. The number of languages spoken in London is often estimated at over 300 (BBC 2014b; British Council 2018).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Dr Daria Tunca for her careful supervision and unstinting support all through the writing process. I am also grateful to the editors and anonymous reviewers for their perceptive insights into and constructive comments on the research areas dealt with in this article.

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