



Teaching English as Modular Content
Warsaw University of Technology
27 April 2023



English in students' lifeworlds: a holistic take on language exposure and use

Ute Smit



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Outline

- A. Introduction
- B. Lifeworld & English
- C. Approaching English exposure & use
- D. Illustrative research
- E. (Cor)relation to ELL

- A. What is in focus?
- B. How capture it?
- C. How research it?
- D. Such as ...
- E. What can we draw from it?

A. Introduction



<https://ilca.in/changing-perspective-on-english-teaching/>



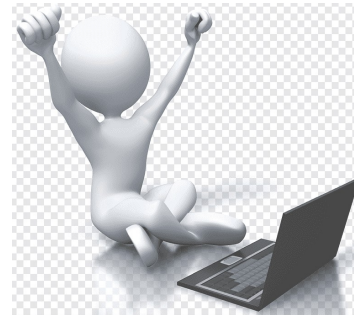
<https://www.wordsworthelt.com/blog/classroom-dynamics-english-second-language-class/>



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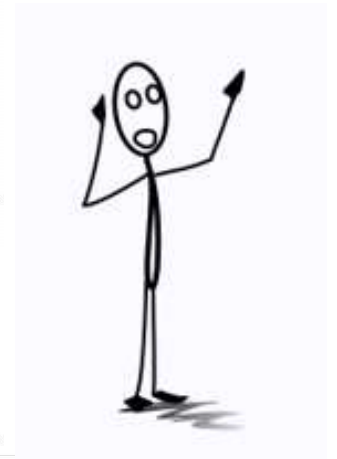


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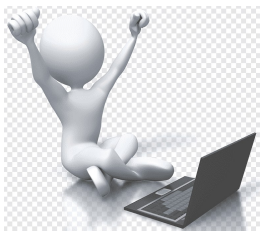


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B. Lifeworld

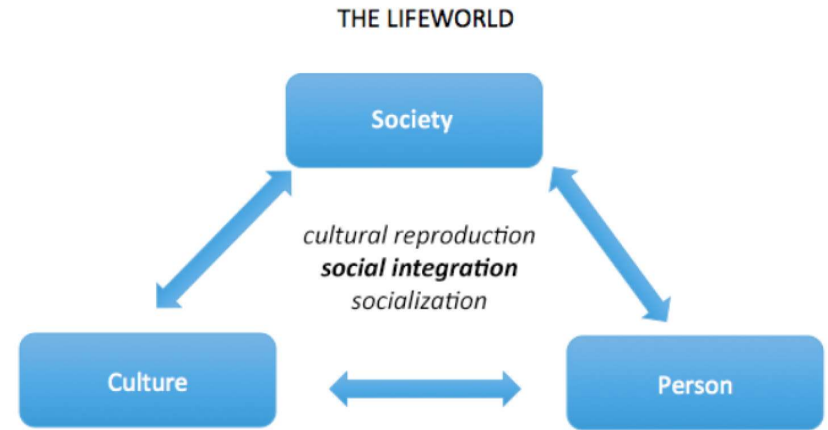


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= a person's **subjective construction of reality**, which they form under the condition of their **life circumstances** (material & immaterial) (Kraus 2015)

= a socially constructed reality, constantly **(re)negotiated through communication & action** (Habermas 1984)



Niemi 2017

B. Lifeworld



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= a socially constructed reality, constantly **(re)negotiated through communication & action** (Habermas 1984)

➤ diversified, multi-layered, dynamic within and between individuals

➤ strongly mediatised (cp. #YouthMediaLife)

<https://youthmedialife.univie.ac.at/>

B. English in students' lifeworlds



roles &
functions
of English?

= a person's **subjective construction of reality**, which they form under the influence of their **life circumstances** (Kraus 2015)

socially constructed reality, which is constantly (re)negotiated through communication & action (Habermas)

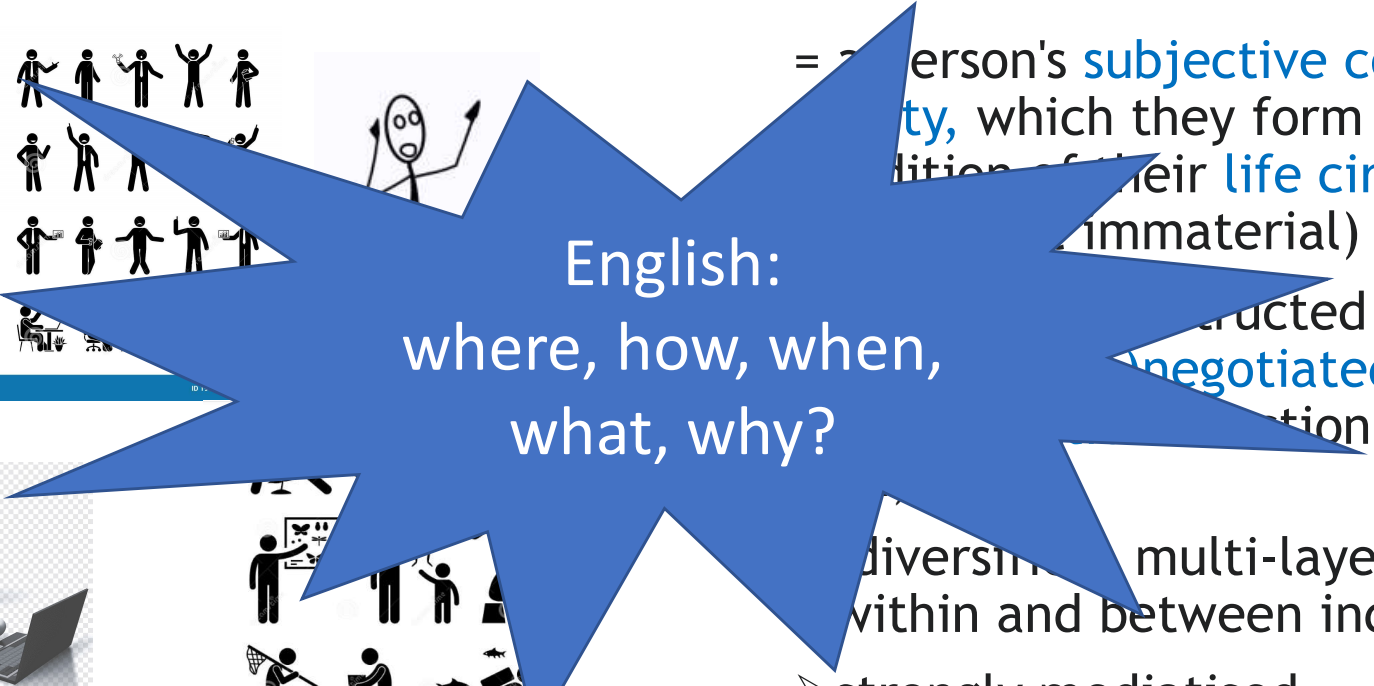
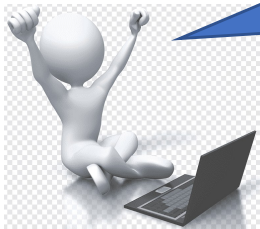
is a complex, multi-layered, dynamic process that occurs between individuals

- strongly mediatised (cp. #YouthMediaLife)
<https://youthmedialife.univie.ac.at/>

B. English in students' lifeworlds



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= a person's **subjective construction of reality**, which they form under the **condition of their life circumstances** (Kraus 2015)

constructed reality, negotiated through interaction (Habermas)

diversified, multi-layered, dynamic within and between individuals

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<https://youthmedialife.univie.ac.at/>

B. English

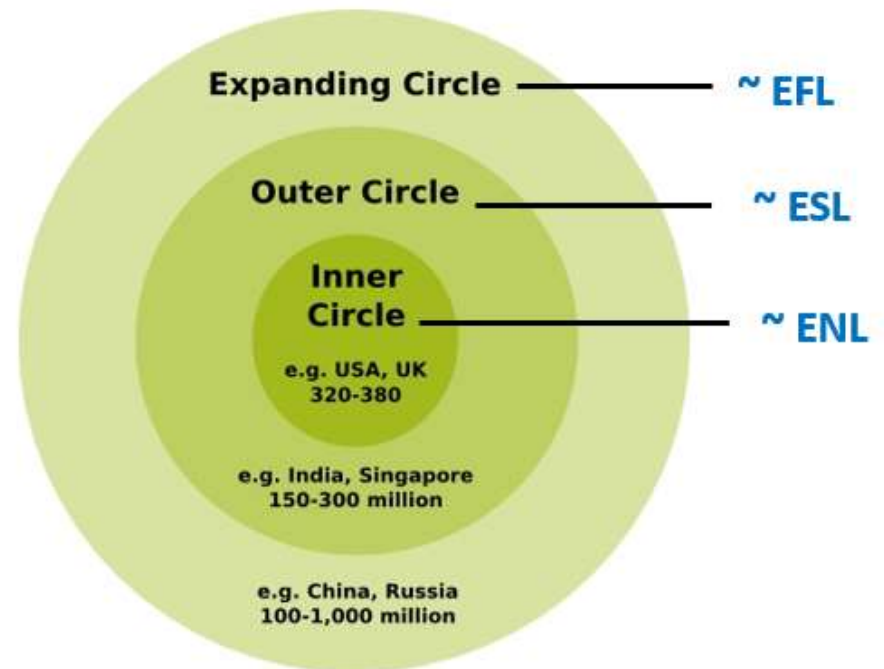
- ENL - ESL - EFL
(e.g. Quirk et al 1985)

English Language Teaching

- English as a Native Language
- English as a Second Language
- English as a Foreign Language

B. World Englishes

- ENL - ESL - EFL
(e.g. Quirk et al 1985)
- 3 Circles Model of World Englishes (Kachru e.g. 1992)



(Crystal 2003: 61, based on Kachru 1992)

B. World Englishes

- ENL - ESL - EFL (e.g. Quirk et al 1985)
- 3 Circles Model of World Englishes (Kachru e.g. 1992)
- Language Contact Typology of World Englishes (Onysko 2016)

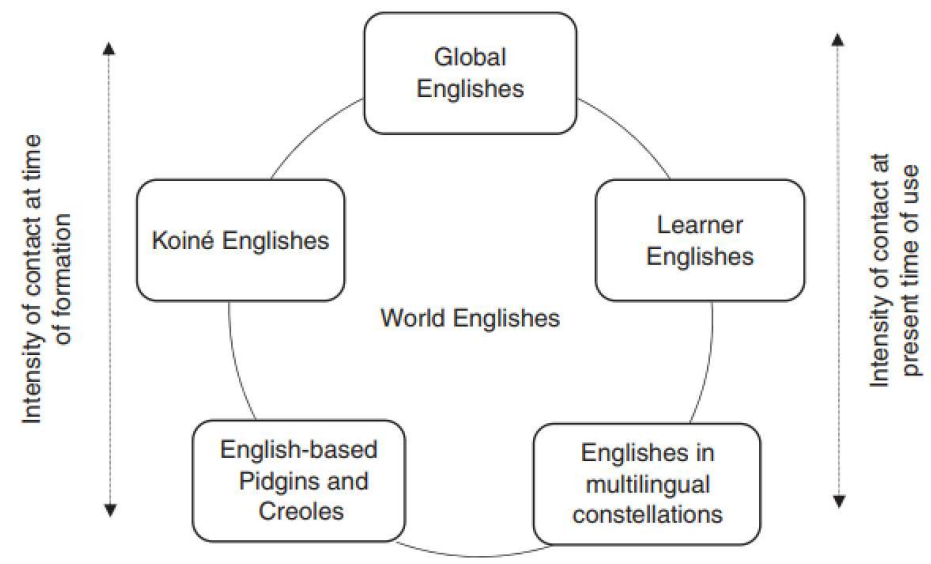


Figure 1. The Language Contact Typology of world Englishes

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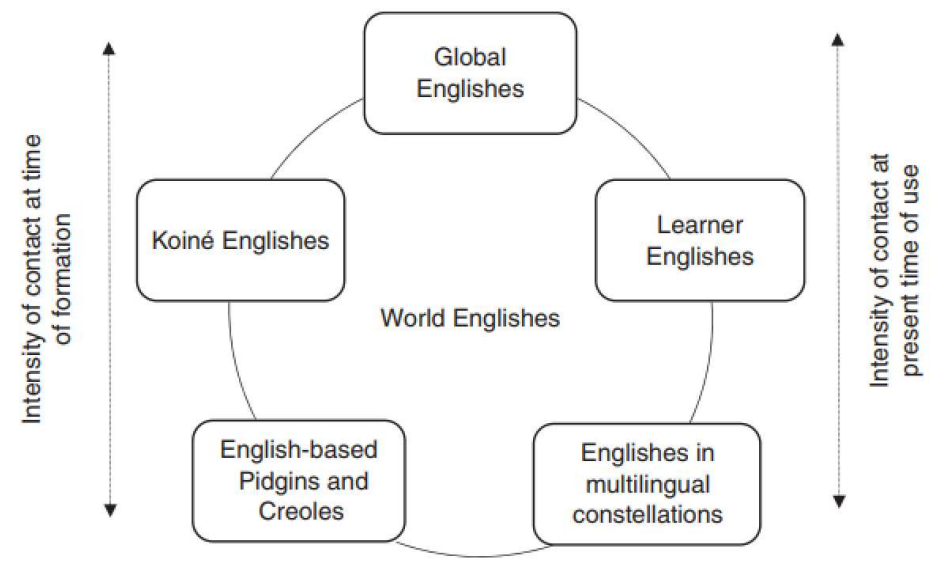


Figure 1. The Language Contact Typology of world Englishes

B. English(es) in (central) Europe

- tourism & business; research, expertise, (higher) education; entertainment, cultural activities
- foreign language education
- expat / international communities
- range of usage domains: education; media; linguistic landscape; communities

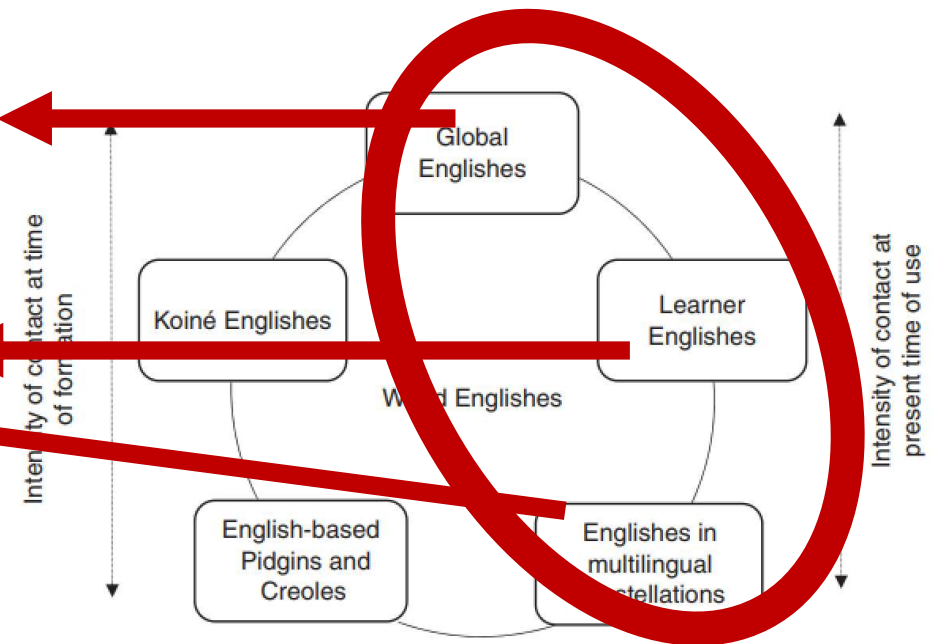


Figure 1. The Language Contact Typology of world Englishes

for Austria: Smit & Onysko 2023; for Poland: Kasztalska 2014

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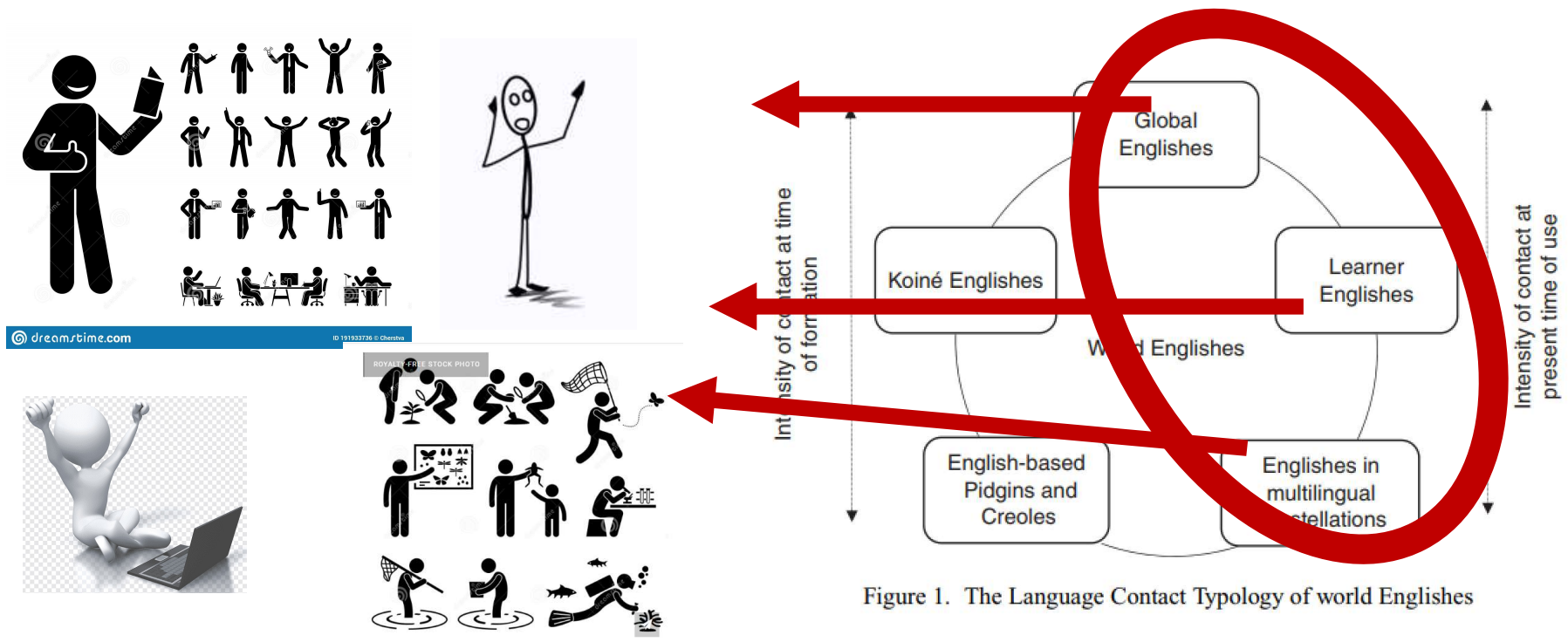


Figure 1. The Language Contact Typology of world Englishes

C. Approaching English exposure & use

- roles, functions & use of English are highly diversified & stratified
- needs to be dealt with sensitive to 'lifeworlds', i.e. contexts / domains & how experienced by social actors
- domains that have been researched:
 1. public space: use & attitude surveys, linguistic landscape
 2. private space: media use in English
 3. education: ELT, CLIL & EMI

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 1. public space: **use & attitude surveys**, (linguistic landscape)
 2. private space: **media use in English**
 3. [education: ELT, CLIL & EMI – TE-Con3!]

D. Illustrative research

1. public space: use & attitude surveys

2. private space: media use in English

1. Kasztalska 2014; Davydova & Ilg 2021

2. Sierocka, Jurković & Varga 2019; Ghamarian-Krenn & Schwarz forthc.

D1. English in Poland (Kasztalska 2014)

Motivation: describe impact of English on contemporary Poland **sociolinguistically** & linguistically (World Englishes paradigm)

Sociolinguistic research interest: spread, use & functions of English across domains (education, media, business) & attitudes to English (esp. media discourse)

Study design (qual):

- desk research
- internet discourse: readers' comments in online daily (gazeta.pl) to 15 articles (2008-12)

Findings: English is ...

- the **main foreign language** (learnt in school & used for work & leisure)
- considered an **asset**: access to international community, economic advantage, symbol of educational achievement and employability
- ... and a **threat**
 - to the future of Polish, in terms of status & form (e.g. Anglicisms)
 - to Poland 'lagging behind other industrialized nations'
 - causes feelings of shame of not reaching what are considered inadequate proficiency levels

D1. English in Poland (Kasztalska 2014)

English is regarded as:

- main foreign language
 - an asset (international economy & business, education achievement)
 - a threat (to Polish; to learners' self-confidence)
-
- socio-economically powerful & contested
 - English = native standard variety

...
language (learnt in work & leisure)

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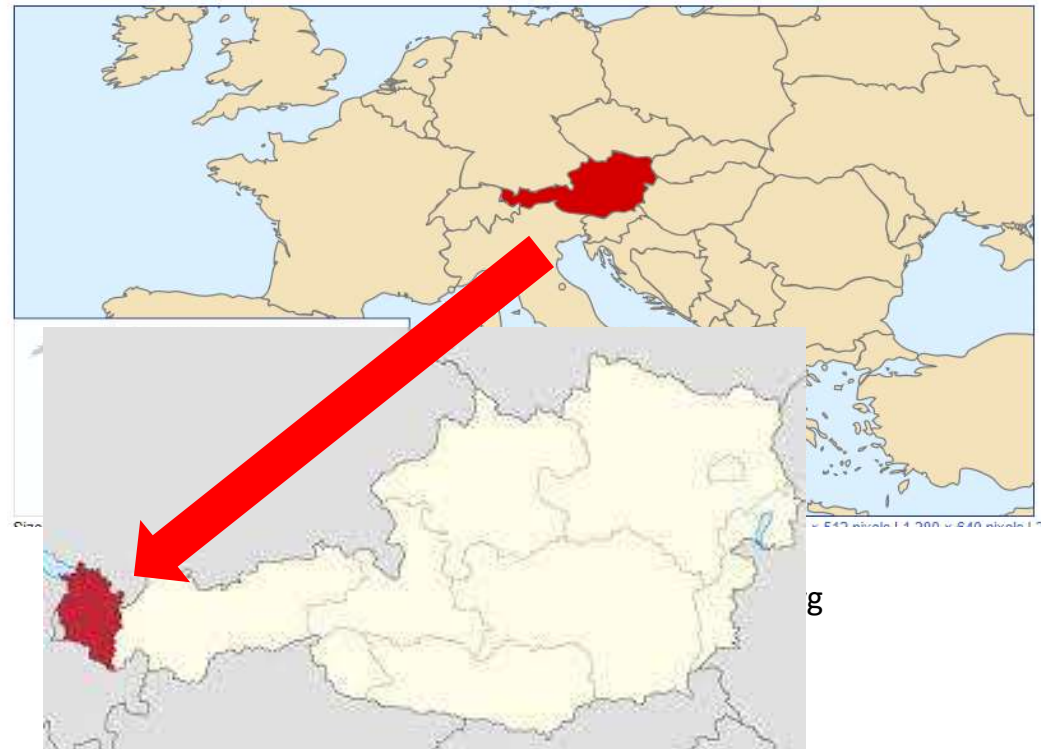
D1. English in Vorarlberg (Davydova & Ilg 2021)



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:LocationAustria.svg>

D1. English in Vorarlberg (Davydova & Ilg 2021)

- 2,600 km²
(Austria: 84,000 km²; Poland: 323,000 km²)
- neighbouring Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, (Tirol)
- 402,000 inhabitants
- relatively strong economy (cp. to neighbouring areas)
- sociolinguistics:
 - ‘Vorarlbergerisch’ = Alemannic German dialects
 - diglossia with Standard German



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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vorarlberg_in_Austria.svg

D1. English in Vorarlberg (Davydova & Ilg 2021)

Motivation: in our age of globalisation: English seen as “contributing to the socio-linguistic fabric of a given speech community” (p. 2) - *also in Vorarlberg?*

Research questions (RQs): identify the social meanings attached to the 3 varieties in question:

local dialects (Vb)
High German (Ge)
English (En)

Study design (quan): language attitude questionnaire

Participants: 142 respondents (aged 14-85; lived in Vorarlberg >1 year, with 81% having grown up here)

Findings:
principal component analysis
→ 3 components (= 69% of variation)

- social attractiveness
- social status
- cosmopolitanism

pos. ratings:

Vb
Ge

En
En
En

D1. English in Vorarlberg (Davydova & Ilg 2021)

English is regarded as:

- highly prestigious: education, international communication (link to outside world),
- highly 'attractive' & 'loved': language of modernity & lingua franca (but not Ge)

- socially powerful variety with enormous social popularity (*a new form of diglossia?*)
- which English(es)?

respondents
in Vorarlberg
having grown

sent analysis
(= 69% of variation)

pos. ratings:

ness

Vb

En

Ge

En

m

En

D2. Language use on smartphones

(Sierocka, Jurković & Varga 2019)

OILE: Online Informal Learning of English

Motivation:

- informal language learning opportunities linked to online practices
- centrality of smartphone for such practices
- potential differences between linguacultural groups

Research interest: address aspects of online language use comparing Polish & Croatian student groups:

RQ1: most frequent smartphone use activities?

RQ2: the predominant language used for those activities?

RQ3: correlation between activities & self-assessed ELC

D2. Language use on smartphones (OILE)

(Sierocka, Jurković & Varga 2019)

Study design (quan+qual):

- online survey
- self-assessment language competence grid (CEFR)
- semi-structured interviews

Participants:

- **quan:** 260 Polish students (of law); 117 Croatian students (3 disciplines)
- **qual:** 14 students

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Participants:

- **quan:** 260 Polish students (of law); 117 Croatian students (3 disciplines)
- **qual:** 14 students

Findings

1. **both groups** use smartphones similarly (e.g. texting, reading social media, watching video clips)
2. **L1s** prevail; **English predominant** for listening to music, watching video clips & reading social media comments
Croatians use more English than Polish students for the above activities + looking for information

D2. Language use on smartphone (OILE)

(Sierocka, Jurković & Varga 2019)

Study design (survey) Findings

Students:

- use their smartphones for many different activities, also in English;
- in overall similar ways, but in different degrees of intensity (depending on nationality & academic discipline)

smartphones
(texting, reading
watching video clips)

English predominant for
e.g., watching video
social media

more English than
for the above
looking for information

D2. Exposure to English in leisure time

(Ghamarian-Krenn & Schwarz forthc.)

Extramural English (EE): that students come in contact with outside the classroom/school (Sundqvist 2009)

Motivation:

- informal language learning opportunities linked to English as global lingua franca
- comparison of two research projects, one focusing on Viennese teenagers, the other on students of English

RQ1: How does **engagement with EE** compare in two groups of Austrian learners of English differing in terms of age and proficiency level?

RQ2: How do the two groups of learners compare in relation to the effect of engagement with EE on receptive and productive aspects of vocabulary knowledge?

D2. Exposure to English in leisure time

(Ghamarian-Krenn & Schwarz forthc.)

Study design (quan):

- student EE questionnaire
- different vocab tests (receptive + productive)

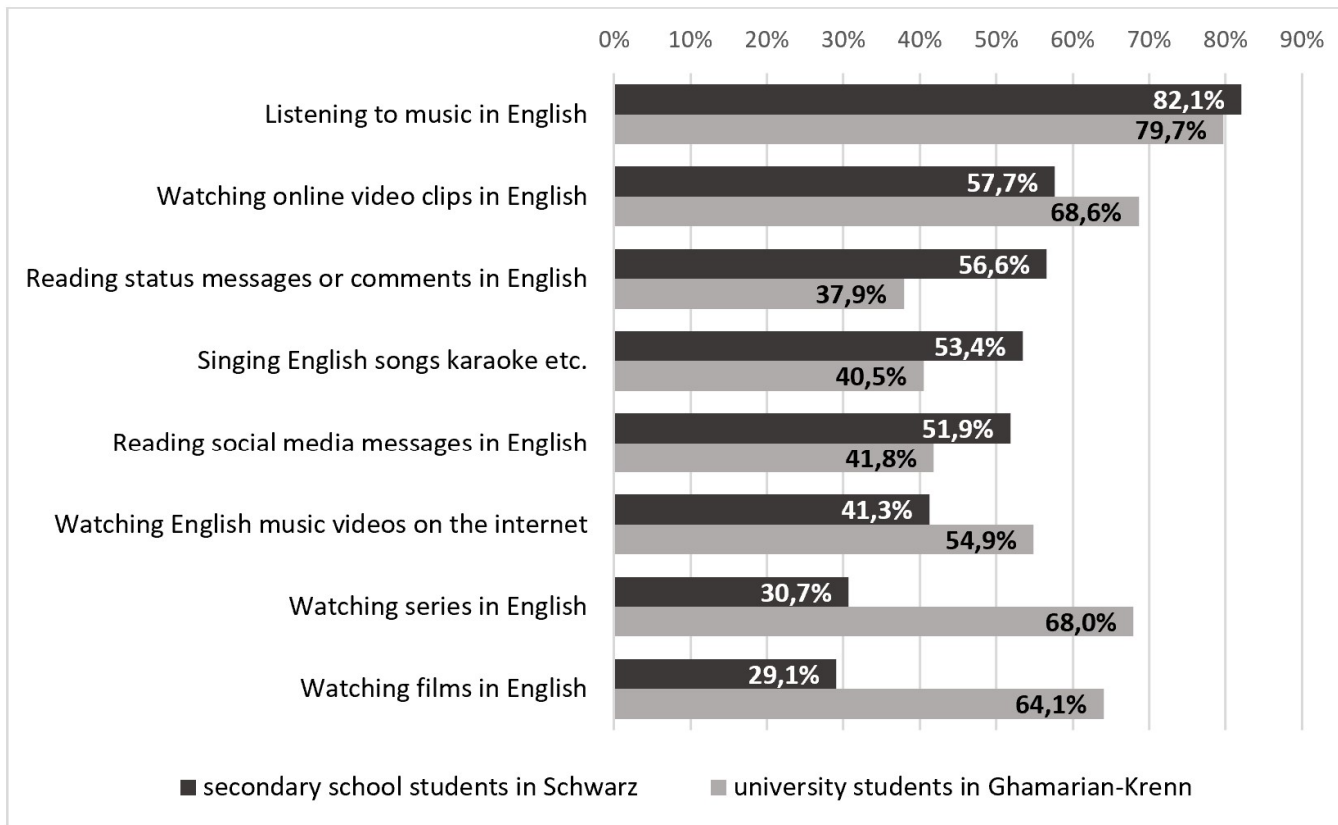
Participants:

- 201 students from 7 Viennese upper secondary schools (grade 10, 15-16 yrs old)
- 152 BA students of English (20-22 yrs old)

RQ1: How does **engagement with EE** compare in two groups of Austrian learners of English differing in terms of age and proficiency level?

RQ2: How do the two groups of learners compare in relation to the effect of engagement with EE on receptive and productive aspects of vocabulary knowledge?

D2. EE study, findings RQ 1 - EE engagement - range



→ shared by most:

- digitally-based
- receptive

→ differences betw. groups:

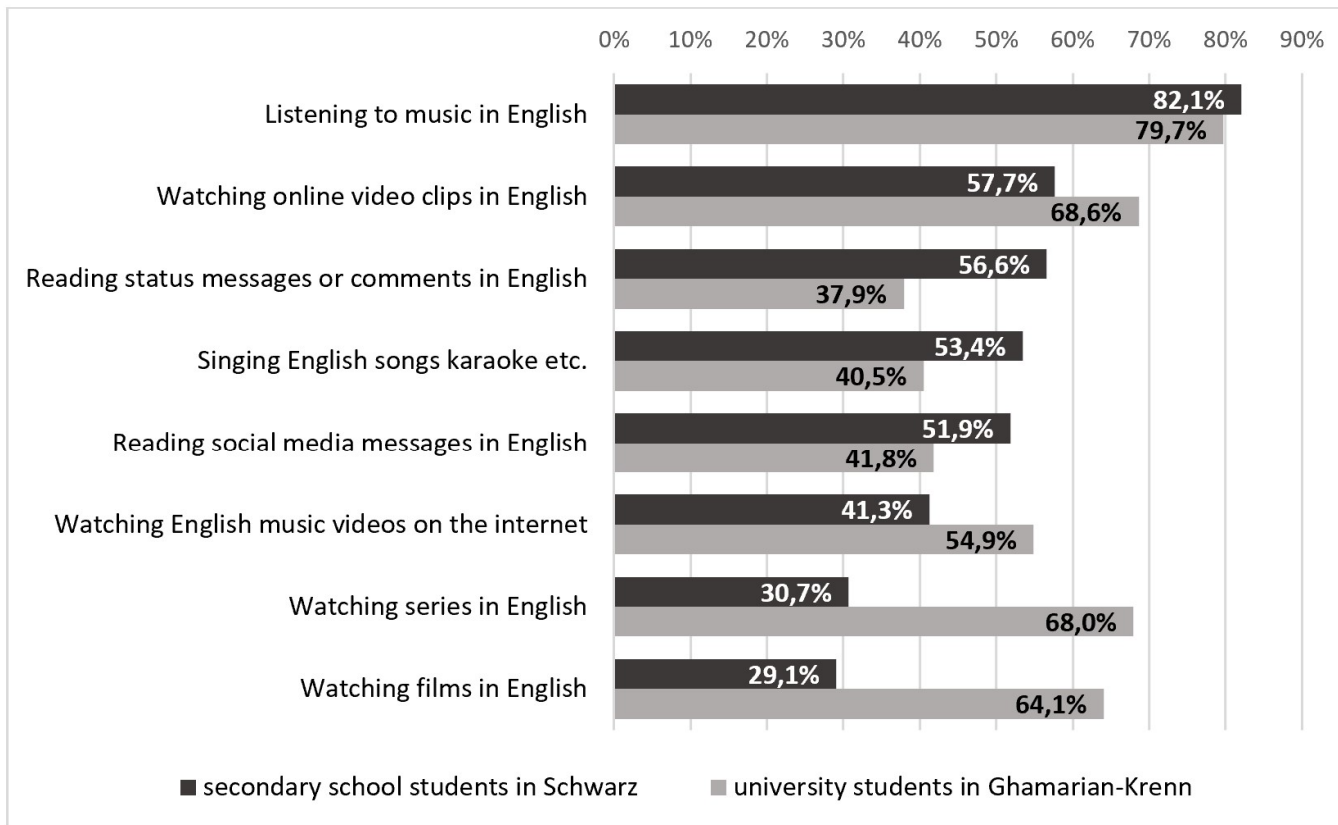
- watching in English

But actual EE practices:

- individualised + incl. 'niche' ones (e.g. acting, rapping, writing fan fiction)
- often productive

Figure 1: EE activities engaged in (almost) every day by more than 50% in at least one of the two studies

D2. EE study, findings RQ 1 - EE engagement - time

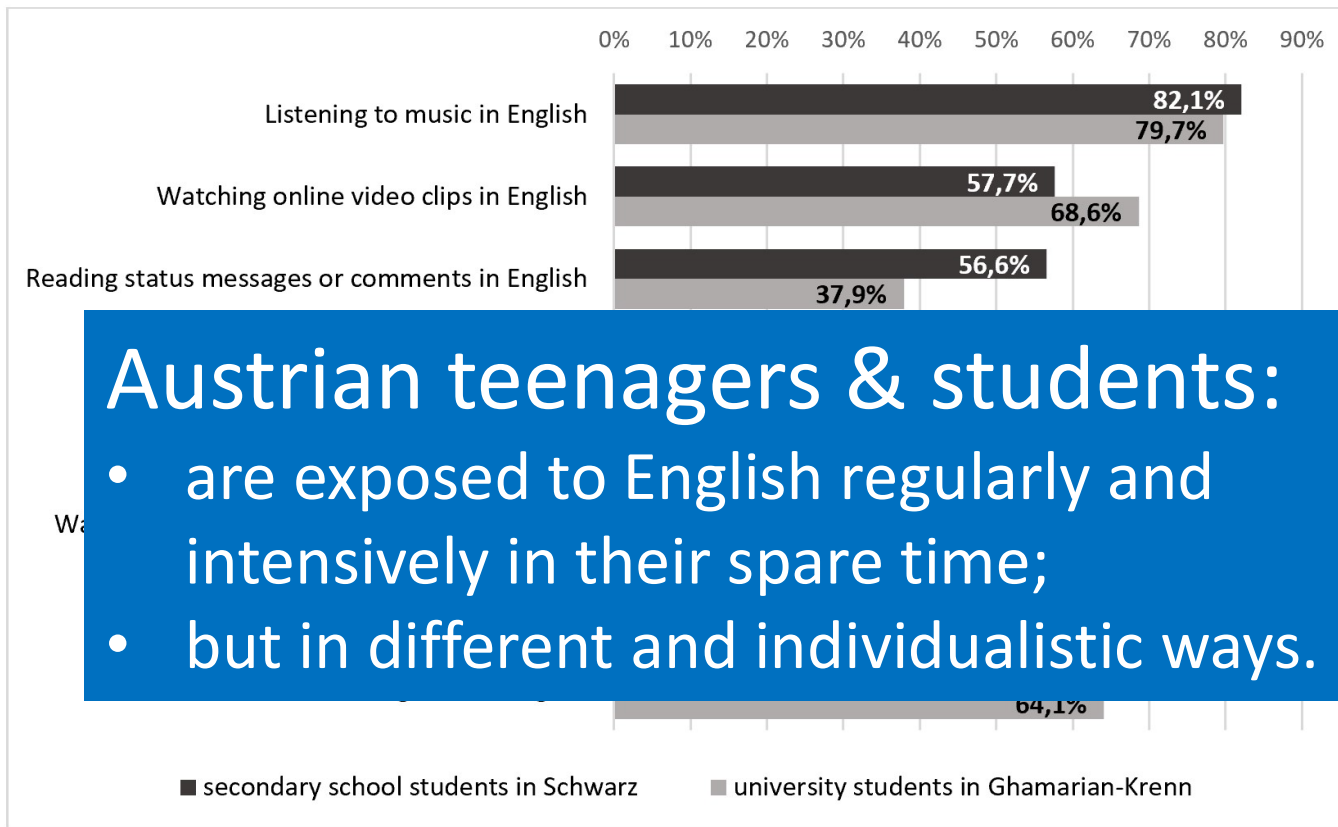


Schwarz (2020):

- 96.3% report using English (almost) every day (based on EE quest.)
- mean EE time per day (based on language diaries): approx. 4 hours (248 mins., SD = 158.3)

Figure 1: EE activities engaged in (almost) every day by more than 50% in at least one of the two studies

D2. EE study, findings RQ 1 - EE engagement - time



Austrian teenagers & students:

- are exposed to English regularly and intensively in their spare time;
- but in different and individualistic ways.

- 96.3% report using English (almost) every day (based on EE quest.)
- mean EE time per day (based on language diaries): approx. 4 hours (248 mins., SD = 158.3)

Figure 1: EE activities engaged in (almost) every day by more than 50% in at least one of the two studies.

D. English exposure & use - in sum

Public space

- English is globally relevant, locally popular &, possibly, nationally contested.

Private space

- English is highly present in young people's lifeworlds, but its roles & functions are not equal for all.

Open questions

- Regionally specific multilingual constellations & expectations?
- Regionally specific English exposure & use?
- Which English(es)?
- (Cor)relation to English language learning?

D. English exposure & use - in sum

Public space

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Private space

- English is highly present in young people's lifeworlds, but its roles & functions are not equal for all.

Open questions

- Regionally specific multilingual constellations & expectations?
- Regionally specific English exposure & use?
- Which English(es)?
- **(Cor)relation to English language learning?**

E. (Cor)relation to English language learning

Public space studies

- need to learn standard English well, but fear of failure (Kasztalska 2014)
- wish to improve English language skills (Davydova & Ilg 2021)

Private space studies

- **no correlation** between smartphone English use & **self-reported ELC** (Sierocka, Jurković & Varga 2019)
- **correlations** between EE engagement & **receptive vocabulary knowledge** (& supportive qualitative findings) (Ghamarian-Krenn & Schwarz forthc.)

E. (Cor)relation to ELC - further research support (Azzolini, Campregher & Madia 2022)

ELC: English Language Competence, as measured by SURVEYLANG

Motivation:

investigate drivers for their impact on ELC cross-nationally:

1. individual & family factors;
2. school English exposure;
3. out-of-school English exposure;
4. linguistic distance (betw. English and main language of schooling)

Research interest:

investigate differences in ELC (listening, reading, writing) acc. to

- between countries
- factors 1-3 (multilevel modelling)
- as related to linguistic distance (factor 4)

E. (Cor)relation to ELC - further research support (Azzolini, Campregher & Madia 2022)

Study design:

- SURVEYLANG (2011); English proficiency tests (reading, listening, writing) + background data
- + PISA data (2009) as a predictor for L1 language competence

Participants:

- 50,000 students (grs. 8-11)
- 14 EU member states
- probabilistic sample

Research interest:

investigate differences in ELC (listening, reading, writing) acc. to

- between countries
- factors 1-3 (multilevel modelling)
- as related to linguistic distance (factor 4)

E. (Cor)relation to ELC - quantitative research support (Azzolini, Campregher & Madia 2022)

Study design:

- SURVEYLANG (2011); English proficiency tests (reading, listening, writing) + background data
- + PISA data (2009) as a predictor for L1 language competence

Participants:

- 50,000 students (Grs. 8-11)
- 14 EU member states
- probabilistic sample

Findings:

influencing factors for ELC:

1. family socioeconomic background
2. school English exposure: age of onset, frequency of English lessons
3. out-of-school English exposure
4. language distance:
factors 1+2 more relevant for distant languages (less for closer languages);
factor 3: relevant for all languages

~~E (Cor)relation to ELC - quantitative~~

ELC (and getting there) depends on various factors:

- socioeconomic background
 - linguistic distance
 - school-based ELL
 - AND: out-of-school exposure to English
- *It is relevant to learn about our students' engagement with English in their lifeworlds*
- *As this varies a lot, situated research is needed, also by English language teachers!*

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