

EFL coursebooks and the pluricentricity of English

Máté Huber

University of Szeged

Copyright (c) 2022 by Máté Huber. This text may be archived and redistributed both in electronic form and in hard copy, provided that the author and journal are properly cited and no fee is charged for access.

Abstract. The present study is part of a complex research project, which investigates the role of the pluricentricity of English in the Hungarian educational system in general. Within that framework, the focus of this study is on two EFL coursebook series that are widely used in Hungary, covering the full range of CEFR levels from A1 to C1. As the literature unanimously advocates the representation of pluricentricity primarily in the field of the receptive skills, this paper examines three areas in the coursebooks in question: (1) vocabulary, (2) reading comprehension, and (3) listening comprehension. The most fundamental finding is that pluricentricity plays a rather marginal role in these coursebooks, which is completely in line with previous research findings. However, as the two coursebook series were published by different publishers, and one of them is considerably more pluricentricity-oriented than the other, this suggests that a greater openness to pluricentricity is indeed possible to achieve, given an appropriate degree of openness to linguistic variability. Although the differences between the varieties are manifest at all levels of the language, the coursebooks studied concentrate almost exclusively on vocabulary, in some cases accompanied by pronunciation patterns. This study provides textbook authors and publishers with concrete, scientifically grounded recommendations, which, if implemented, will bring language teaching and real-life language use closer together, thus potentially making the language learning process more successful.

Key Words. teaching English as a foreign language, pluricentricity, coursebooks

1. Introduction

The model of linguistic pluricentricity, developed by Kloss (1978) and further elaborated by, among others, Clyne (1992) and Muhr (1996b and 1997) has a number of implications for language teaching, which have, however, been relatively rarely discussed in academic discourse. Although it is generally accepted that the different national varieties should be treated as equal (cf. Hägi, 2006; Marlina, 2014, 2018; Muhr, 1996a or Sherman, 2010), the concrete implementation of this principle has not really been elaborated on in applied linguistic and language pedagogical research. Not to mention the role of language textbooks in this matter, which, although crucial, is a very rarely discussed segment of the subject. This paper analyzes two specific series of EFL textbooks with regard to the way in which and the extent to which different (non-dominant) standard varieties appear in them.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Pluricentricity in general

According to Ammon (2005), a language is pluricentric if it has several standard varieties, belonging to different cultural or political centers. Kloss (1978) goes on to add that the different standard varieties of each center are always characterized by different linguistic norms, and these norms are usually codified. Furthermore, Clyne (1992) and Muhr (1996a, 1997, 2012) take into account the different cultural and political resources of the different standard varieties, and distinguish between dominant and non-dominant national varieties. Countries with dominant standards are referred to as primary centers (e.g. USA, UK, or Germany), while countries with non-dominant standards are called secondary centers (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, or Austria, Switzerland) – cf. Huber (2021, 2022).

The dominant vs. non-dominant distinction has been refined by Muhr (2003, 2005 and 2012) through a number of additional observations, such as the fact that dominant varieties tend to have more speakers, higher social and political prestige, and a more influential global media presence than non-dominant varieties, furthermore, their norms are exported from the primary centers to the secondary ones, as well as to non-native learners of the given language. Moreover, the codification of dominant varieties is almost invariably complete, while that of non-dominant varieties is sometimes incomplete or not given at all (Muhr, 2003, 2005 and 2012).

As regards the advantages of applying the pluricentric model, it should be noted (based, among others, on Lanstyák 1996: 25) that it conceives of each national variety as a more or less equivalent standard variety with its own norms. This approach, thus, allows for the coexistence

of multiple standard varieties, rather than describing non-dominant varieties as deviations from a single standard, and in this way facilitates intercultural communication, an important virtue especially when incorporated into language teaching (Marlina, 2014, 2018; Rauer and Tizzano, 2019).

2.2 English as a pluricentric language

The varieties of English are a very complex system, if only because there are so many speakers worldwide, and it is not always entirely obvious to decide who qualifies as a native speaker and who does not. Crystal (2008) estimates that roughly one billion people worldwide speak English as a first or second language – and this does not include those who have learned it as a foreign language.

Another important characteristic of English as a pluricentric language is that there is often a huge geographical distance between its standard varieties – in certain cases an entire ocean separating them. This is an important difference compared to many other pluricentric languages, such as German, whose varieties are found in a more or less contiguous geographical area (Dollinger, 2019a, 2019b). The explanation for this difference lies primarily in the historical past, namely in the circumstances of the emergence of pluricentricity, which in the case of English meant colonial expansion, during which English acquired a significant administrative status in many parts of the world (Clyne, 1992; Schneider, 2011).

It is important to note at this point that the pluricentric approach is limited to the description of standard varieties, and does not include English as a lingua franca, which refers to international communication between non-native speakers. A number of different models can be used to attempt to describe the complex system of the varieties of English, but, as Seidlhofer (2009) points out, rather than considering these models in isolation from each other, an integrative approach is much more beneficial. In other words, it is worth reviewing which models are the most appropriate for the specific questions one is asking, and possibly combining them in accordance with the aims of one's research.

In this spirit, I will attempt to combine Kachru's (1992) model of *World Englishes* with the pluricentric framework outlined above (cf. Huber, 2022), thus creating a more accurate and more readily applicable model for describing the role of different national standard varieties in teaching English as a foreign language.

Kachru (1992) divides English speakers and their countries into three concentric circles. **(1) The Inner Circle** is a group of countries where English has been traditionally present as a native language (*ENL*), such as the UK, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, etc. In these

countries, English arrived before the colonial period, and Kachru (1992) refers to them as *norm-providing* regions.

(2) The countries of **the Outer Circle**, on the other hand, were reached by English precisely during the colonial period, and English has played an essential role in the governance of these countries ever since (Schneider, 2011). For a significant proportion of the people living in these countries, English is an integral part of life; it is not a foreign language, but a second language (*ESL*), which is present in their immediate environment, and they speak it as a natural result of language acquisition. Since it is here that norms from the Inner Circle are transformed, and new national standard varieties emerge, these are called *norm-forming, norm-developing* regions in Kachru's (1992) system.

(3) Finally, **the Expanding Circle** is a group of countries where English is used as a foreign language (*EFL*). English has not traditionally been present in these parts of the world, but globalization and the emergence of English as a global lingua franca have brought it here, and it is mainly used in business, the (global) media, and (higher) education. For Kachru (1992), these are the *norm-following, norm-dependent* regions. With a little exaggeration, all other parts of the world can be included in this category, but perhaps most characteristically Scandinavia, China, Japan, parts of Latin America, etc., where the presence of English has been getting stronger and stronger in the past decades in (higher) education, economy, diplomacy, and sometimes even in state administration.

In comparison, the classical Clynean pluricentric approach only looks at British and American English as the dominant national varieties, based on the cultural and political resources mentioned earlier, while the other national varieties are treated as non-dominant (Clyne, 1992; Schneider, 2011), regardless of whether English plays the role of a native language (ENL), a second language (ESL) or a foreign language (EFL) in these countries. By combining Kachru's (1992) aforementioned *World Englishes* approach and Clyne's (1992) pluricentric framework, as I discuss in detail in another work (Huber, 2022), both models can be further refined, and a more accurate description of sociolinguistic reality can be achieved. In fact, if we merge together the two approaches, all that changes is that at the core of Kachru's (1992) concentric model we separate a dominant (UK, USA) and a non-dominant Inner Circle (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, South Africa). In the Outer and Expanding Circles, everything remains the same.

In an earlier article of mine, I argue for combining these two models as follows:

The inclusive combination of the two models [...] makes it possible, on the one hand, to extract from Kachru's (1992) Inner Circle those national varieties whose international prestige (and thus normative potential) far exceeds even that of the other Inner Circle varieties (obviously, we are talking about American and British English). On the other hand, it also provides an opportunity to break down Clyne's (1992) rather heterogeneous set of non-dominant varieties into three widely divergent subsets (namely, the Non-Dominant Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle). It is relatively easy to see that – to take a random example – there are very significant differences between Canadian and Nigerian English in sociolinguistic terms, even though in the original Clynean (1992) system they both belong to the same (non-dominant) category (Huber, 2022: 25-26).

In the present study, I apply the pluricentric model for English along the lines of the above conceptual refinements.

2.3 Implications concerning language teaching, in particular the role of textbooks

The use of the pluricentric model in language teaching would be desirable in many respects, yet it plays only a marginal role in most language textbooks (Christen and Knipf-Komlósi, 2002; Hägi, 2006; Muhr, 1996a; Su, 2016). Muhr (1996c: 42) argues for a “meaningful coexistence of norms”, meaning that mixing norms in production should be avoided, while for receptive skills it is paramount that learners be able to understand all standard varieties to the greatest extent possible (cf. Hägi, 2006).

While the above sources mostly make their claims with regard to German, they generally hold true for teaching any pluricentric language. However, to narrow down the scope of the present investigation onto the specific context of TEFL, even though many similar ideas are formulated in this regard (cf. e.g. Jenkins, 2006; Jianli, 2015; Marlina, 2014 and 2018), most of the sources do not focus strictly on the pluricentricity of English, but rather on its role as an international lingua franca, so that relatively little attention is paid to the plurality of native standards in the shadow of the *native vs. non-native* distinction. In other words, while the underrepresentation of non-native speakers and their lingua franca English varieties is a common theme in applied linguistics literature (cf. Medgyes, 1992; Kramsch, 1995; Alptekin, 2002; Matsuda, 2003; Sherman, 2010), the fact that the native standards themselves are diverse and not equally represented in different segments of language teaching is much less in the spotlight (Su, 2016). To use Kachru's (1992) nomenclature, the underrepresentation of the Expanding

Circle is discussed relatively frequently, while the discrimination against the Outer or Non-Dominant Inner Circle in favor of the Dominant Inner Circle is very rarely brought to the fore. This observation further emphasizes the need to harmonize Clyne's (1992) and Kachru's (1992) models based on Huber (2022).

This is therefore – at least in the case of English – a relatively under-researched area of pluricentric language teaching, which makes the question of how and to what extent the pluricentricity of English and German is reflected in specific textbook series particularly relevant. In what follows, as a final step in outlining the theoretical background, I will attempt to present the recommendations of the literature on the role of pluricentricity in language teaching and, within that, in language textbooks. As many of the specific suggestions and observations that are available in the literature apply to German, I will try, wherever possible, to interpret them for English, and take them to a more general level.

As Auerbach (1995), Sadker and Sadker (2001) and Neuner (1994 and 2007), among others, point out, the textbooks applied are an extremely important part of language teaching, and what they contain has an impact on the language learning and teaching process as a whole. According to Sadker and Sadker (2001: 134), the use of textbooks accounts on average for 80-95% of classroom work, and textbooks are also the basis for many of the fundamental pedagogical decisions in the teaching process. This further reinforces the above claim as to the relevance of the present study.

In light of the theoretical considerations explained above, an ideal textbook should contain audio materials and reading comprehension texts from a wide range of standard varieties. This is what Muhr (1996a: 144) calls “interregional representation [...] with listening and reading texts showing regional characteristics.” Furthermore, Muhr (1996a: 141) argues that it is also necessary that pluricentricity be presented at all linguistic levels. Pluricentricity is “more than just a few kitchen vocabulary items” (Muhr 1996a: 141), and it manifests itself at all levels of the linguistic system, from phonetics and phonology to grammar and pragmatics (cf. also Muhr, 1993; Council of Europe, 2002; Glaboniat et al., 2002; Lehtonen, 2010).

Pluricentric content should be introduced gradually in language teaching in general, including language textbooks in particular. In this context, Muhr (1996a: 143-144) formulates the principle of a “neutral beginner level”, i.e. that it is not worth introducing too much linguistic variety at the beginning of the language learning process, thus imposing extra burden on learners (cf. Christen and Knipf-Komlósi, 2002 or Neuland, 2011), but that pluricentricity should be introduced gradually, step by step, making it an integral part of the language learning process.

In this context, one should also mention the principle of “geographical proximity to the nearest target language country”, which is “based on the linguistic relations of neighboring countries” (Muhr 1996a: 144). In the Hungarian context, this principle clearly emphasizes the importance of the Austrian standard in the case of German, while in the case of English it seems to confirm the existing British hegemony. However, in addition to the “principle of geographical proximity” (Muhr, 1996a: 144), the size and relative economic and political power of the target language countries also play an important role – cf. e.g. Ammon and Hägi (2005: 34) – which somewhat nuances the picture and, contrary to the above, tips the balance towards Germany German in the case of the German language, and American English in the case of English, even in an East-Central European context.

The way out of this apparent contradiction lies in taking into account the individual plans and intentions of the language learner (Christen and Knipf-Komlósi, 2002, and Hensel, 2000), since, for example, if the learner plans to work in Austria in the future, it makes sense to teach him or her primarily the Austrian standard variety from the very beginning. However, in today’s globalized world, it is very difficult to foresee which variety a particular learner (or group of learners) will need in the future, so as language teachers, the best we can do is prepare our learners for linguistic diversity, especially in the area of the receptive skills, primarily with respect to standard varieties (Huber, 2022).

The need for a pluricentric approach to language teaching is now officially recognized, namely through the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2002) and its English Profile (URL1) proposals for learning objectives, which include a whole chapter on pluricentricity. There is also agreement in the literature that it is advisable to present pluricentricity in close connection with intercultural content (cf. Bettermann, 2010; Hägi, 2006; Huber, 2022), without reinforcing the development of simplistic national stereotypes that are extremely harmful for intercultural communication (Kramsch, 1993; Marlina, 2018).

In conclusion, the role of pluricentricity in language teaching is obviously not the first and foremost task of language teachers, but the learning and teaching process should definitely include getting to know different national varieties and standards (Huber, 2022). As Ammon and Hägi put it: “Broad similarities should not be neglected in favor of national and regional varieties, and the language taught [...] should have the widest possible communicative range” (2005: 34).

3. Pluricentricity in textbooks

Textbook analysis as a scientific genre has a relatively short history: according to Heindrichs, Gester and Kelz (1980) as well as Krumm (1994), it has become more and more widespread since the early 1970s, and it is now very frequently used for a variety of purposes. Heindrichs, Gester and Kelz (1980: 149) basically distinguish three levels within the field of scholarly investigations connected to textbooks: textbook criticism, textbook analysis and textbook research. While textbook criticism mainly approaches textbooks from a learning theory perspective, textbook analysis collects and processes data from textbooks according to a set of criteria, and textbook research is about experimentally testing textbooks and drawing empirical conclusions (cf. Lehtonen, 2010). Of these categories, the present study clearly belongs to the level of textbook analysis, where it is the theoretical framework of pluricentricity that yields the set of criteria to be applied.

Neuner (1994) further refines the system of Heindrichs, Gester and Kelz (1980) by distinguishing three levels within the category of textbook analysis itself. On the one hand, analyses can focus on general, interdisciplinary aspects, such as general pedagogical goals and their realization, the role of the educational policy environment, etc. More commonly, however, textbook analysis, while still general, is discipline-related, aiming at the investigation of certain content-related questions in a given subject. Finally, the third level is that of specialized, subject-specific questions, which is where the present study belongs, focusing on subject-specific theoretical and didactical questions, in this case situated on the borderline between variational sociolinguistics and language pedagogy.

As can be seen, textbook analyses can be produced from a variety of approaches and with a variety of focuses, even within the field of foreign language teaching. In the following, I will attempt to briefly review the evolution and main results of pluricentricity-oriented textbook analyses in TEFL, thus preparing the ground for the presentation of the results of the present research.

3.1. The results of past analyses

As I have already pointed out, there is much more extensive literature on the role of pluricentricity in language teaching in the case of German than in the case of English. This is no different with regard to textbook analysis, where in the case of English, the focus has been on the under-representation of non-native speakers, mainly from a lingua franca perspective (e.g. Cook, 1999; Sherman, 2010; Takahashi, 2014; Vettorel, 2018; Motschenbacher, 2019),

and much less has been said about the role of the differences between native speaker standards. In what follows, I will attempt to briefly summarize and synthesize the results of the few analyses that have been published on this topic.

Matsuda (2002), Yamanaka (2006), Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), Hanashiro (2016) and Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) all report that the textbooks they study focus almost exclusively on the varieties of Kachru's (1992) Inner Circle, whether published for domestic use in Japan or for the international market. Su's study in Taiwan (2016) also found similar results: the textbooks in use there legitimize the exclusivity of American and British English at the expense of other varieties, native or non-native, standard or non-standard. Based on the categorization developed above, it can be argued that these textbooks focus exclusively on the Dominant Inner Circle Varieties. Narrowing that focus even further, Syrbe and Rose (2018) observed, in the context of the TEFL textbook market in Germany, not only the predominance of the Dominant Inner Circle, but even within that, the predominance of British English in three popular language textbook series.

Sporadically, however, some positive examples of openness to pluricentricity can also be found, such as a whole chapter on Hong Kong in one of the Japanese textbooks studied by Matsuda (2002), and a page on Kenya in another, although these highlight mostly cultural rather than linguistic elements, but in both cases there are speakers from the given Outer Circle area, so there is some pluricentric presence in listening comprehension and pronunciation too.

3.2. The results of the present analysis

Against the above background in terms of the pluricentric theoretical framework as well as the outcome of past analyses with a similar focus, in the following, I will attempt to analyze and compare two EFL textbook series with respect to the application of the pluricentric model and the presentation of (non-dominant) standard varieties in them. Both textbook series are relatively recent and widely used in Hungarian public education, as they are available on the official textbook list of the Hungarian public education system.

To be more specific, I analyze the series *Pioneer* and *English File* by MM Publications and Oxford University Press, respectively, the latter in its third edition. While the *Pioneer* volumes were published between 2015 and 2017, *English File* was published between 2012 and 2015. For both textbook families, there are separate American and British versions, the latter of which is the one I am analyzing, as it is on the Ministry's official list of textbooks that can be used in Hungarian public education institutions. I note that the separate American and British editions are not at all advantageous from the point of view of pluricentric language teaching,

rather, one with a wider communicative scope, a common, general version open to linguistic diversity would be preferable, since in today's globalized world we do not know which variety will be most beneficial to the learners – probably all of them (cf. Christen and Knipf-Komlósi, 2002; Hensel, 2000; Huber, 2022).

Both textbook series are well suited for use with young people, although they have not been exclusively designed for that age group, and they are both applicable in or outside the target language countries, although in the case of *Pioneer* the non-native language area clearly dominates. The textbooks have been published in the UK (*Pioneer* in London, *English File* in Oxford).

I will examine the presentation of pluricentricity and non-dominant standards in three areas: (1) vocabulary, (2) reading comprehension, and (3) listening comprehension materials, as the role of these three areas is very important in the light of the literature reviewed above.

3.2.1 Vocabulary

In terms of vocabulary, I base my findings mainly on the vocabulary lists that are available for both of the textbook series analyzed, at the end of each textbook and/or as online downloadable files. Quite simply, I have counted how many entries these lists contain and then examined how many of these items are not from the British dominant standard variety. (The fact that the British standard dominates these textbooks has become evident very early on.)

In relation to the vocabulary lists, it is important to make the following methodological remark: these lists often fail to indicate if a vocabulary item is from a non-dominant (or, to be more precise, non-British) variety. Similarly, the equivalents from other varieties are not always presented either, which goes against the expectations of the literature on the topic (cf. Ammon and Hägi, 2005; Bettermann, 2010; Glaboniat et al., 2002; Huber, 2022).

However, since the non-dominant vocabulary items that are present in the textbooks are not necessarily always included in the vocabulary lists mentioned above, I have examined each lesson separately and added to the entries already counted in the vocabulary lists the non-dominant vocabulary items from the different exercises which in some cases were missing from the list but appeared in the textbook itself. The results of my calculations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The number of vocabulary items from non-British standard varieties (in relation to the total number of vocabulary items in the given textbook)

	Elementary (A1 / A2)	Pre- Inter. (A2 / B1)	Inter. (B1 / B2)	B1+	Upper- Inter. (B2)	Adv. (C1 / C1+)	Total.
Pioneer	107 (1741)	143 (1522)	123 (1740)	0 (2303)	130 (2103)	2 (3097)	505 (12506)
English File	9 (1042)	8 (971)	12 (1280)		3 (1637)	24 (886)	56 (5815)

In general, the hegemony of British English in the textbook series examined can be seen from Table 1. This is particularly problematic because it does not simply show the neglect of the non-dominant standard varieties, but also of the co-dominant American English standard. At first glance, it would appear that *Pioneer* globally outperforms *English File*, but it is often just a case of having a separate list at the end of the textbook, the elements of which are not necessarily included in the lessons themselves (e.g. *jumper* vs. *sweater*, *rubbish bin* vs. *trash can*, *opposite* vs. *across from*, etc.). Thus, these non-British elements lack proper contextualization and embeddedness in the form of texts, exercises, etc. that would be built upon them. This in itself is not enough, although it is certainly a positivity and a good starting point for a revision in a more open-minded, pluricentricity-oriented spirit. (Also, it should be noted that at B1+ and C1/C1+ levels, *Pioneer* is not a positive example at all, while the last volume of the *English File* has a much stronger pluricentric ratio.)

The imbalance between the levels can be explained by the different topics of the individual textbooks, since, not so surprisingly, the vocabulary items that appear coincide with the topics covered in the textbooks, and certain topics, such as food and drinks, education systems, transportation, etc. simply lend themselves more readily to the incorporation of pluricentric vocabulary in the textbooks. (For a detailed description of the thematic distribution, see section 3.2.2, since the vocabulary topics presented are, of course, closely related to the topics of the reading and listening materials).

In connection with the numbers and proportions shown in Table 1, it is important to mention Muhr's (1993) suggestion, which he bases on his own calculations regarding an

acceptable ratio of non-dominant vocabulary in language textbooks. Muhr (1993) determines the proportion of about 3-5% of all vocabulary items as an acceptable ratio of non-dominant vocabulary to be presented. Based on this, solely concentrating on numbers and proportions, most of the *Pioneer* volumes (with the exceptions of B1+ and Advanced) seem to meet Muhr's expectations, while none of the *English File* volumes do, even though the advanced (C1) one does come close to it. It is essential, though, to add as an important caveat here that the overwhelming majority of the non-British elements in the textbooks are American ones, and American English is also a Dominant Inner Circle variety, while Muhr talks about non-dominant presence, which makes the above numerical comparison somewhat less convincing, but it does show that the aforementioned British-American vocabulary lists in *Pioneer* are a great asset. Of course, as has been mentioned above, they should be better contextualized and integrated into the body of the textbooks themselves, but they do constitute a promising point of departure in a more pluricentricity-oriented direction.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that the complex presentation of vocabulary is clearly a feature of the textbooks studied. This means that semantics, spelling and pronunciation all appear as essential elements of vocabulary study, although it is also true that pronunciation is explicitly presented only according to the British standard, which might be an advantage in terms of coherence, but is clearly a serious shortcoming in terms of the presentation of pluricentricity.

3.2.2 Reading and listening

As already mentioned, Muhr (1996c) stresses the importance of the receptive skills in the role of pluricentricity in language teaching. Accordingly, reading and listening comprehension tasks play an essential role in textbooks in this respect. If they contain a considerable amount of language elements from non-dominant (non-British) standards, learners are provided with the input they need to acquire these non-dominant elements as desired. However, if this is not the case, then it can be said that the textbook is not suitable for teaching non-British varieties.

Table 2. The number of reading comprehension tasks containing elements from non-British standard varieties (in relation to the total number of reading tasks in the given textbook)

	Element. (A1 / A2)	Pre- Inter. (A2 / B1)	Inter. (B1 / B2)	B1+	Upper- Inter. (B2)	Adv. (C1 / C1+)	Total
Pioneer	0 (47)	1 (53)	0 (41)	0 (55)	0 (32)	1 (30)	2 (258)
English File	1 (34)	0 (41)	1 (42)		0 (30)	0 (46)	2 (193)

From Table 2, it is clear at first glance that the British hegemony is also present in reading comprehension, as was the case with vocabulary. An important point to note with regard to research methodology is that some of the texts counted in the textbooks are not part of reading comprehension tasks in the classical sense, but function, for instance, as sample texts in writing tasks, however, in any case, all of them (also) develop reading comprehension.

As the numbers and proportions in Table 2 are very low, it can be argued that the reading comprehension tasks in the textbook series under study would need to contain much more non-dominant language elements in order to be able to teach these non-dominant varieties. In addition, an aggravating circumstance is that not only non-dominant varieties of English are discriminated against, but British English is also in a hegemonic position vis-à-vis the equally dominant American English.

It is also a problem that the little pluricentric presence that is given is almost exclusively limited to vocabulary, even though there would be scope for grammatical or pragmatic phenomena in the texts as well. Thus, in turn, the low rates in Table 2 also indicate a low embeddedness of non-dominant vocabulary items in the texts, which is clearly negative from a methodological point of view.

Table 3. The number of listening comprehension tasks containing elements of non-British standard varieties (in relation to the total number of listening tasks in the given textbook)

	Element. (A1 / A2)	Pre- Inter. (A2 / B1)	Inter. (B1 / B2)	B1+	Upper- Inter. (B2)	Adv. (C1 / C1+)	Total
Pioneer	1 (177)	3 (148)	0 (85)	7 (43)	6 (32)	23 (72)	40 (557)
English File	52 (322)	38 (272)	37 (250)		22 (143)	23 (193)	172 (1180)

As can be seen from Table 3, there is a slightly higher degree of pluricentric presence in listening comprehension than in reading comprehension. This is mainly due to the fact that, in addition to British speakers, there are also American speakers in these recordings, so that this is mainly a matter of pronunciation, although vocabulary elements do appear in rare instances.

Here too, the distribution between levels is rather unbalanced, and Muhr's (1993) principle of the neutral beginner level is not really implemented, except in *Pioneer*, where after a marginal pluricentric presence at levels A1-A2-B1, levels B1+, B2 and C1/C1+ show gradually increasing pluricentricity. At those levels where there is no pluricentric presence, this is mostly justified by the topics of the volume, which are less suited to presenting the specificities of the different standard varieties, especially as far as lexis is concerned. If, on the other hand, the topic does not lend itself to a discussion of lexical differences at a given level, it would be possible, for example, to present pragmatic or grammatical differences at that level, but this is not the case in the textbooks examined.

On the positive side, however, it is worth noting that the pluricentric linguistic elements are mostly embedded in (inter)cultural topics, which is probably related, among other things, to the observation of Christen and Knipf-Komlósi (2002: 16) that linguistic elements with pluricentricity can be the basis for interesting discussions about the target language cultures.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasized once again that the application of the pluricentric model in language teaching would be beneficial in many respects, but it still plays only a marginal role in the textbook series under study, which is in line with previous findings in the literature (cf., among others, Ammon and Hägi, 2005: 33-37; Christen and Knipf-Komlósi, 2002: 17-19;

Muhr, 1993: 119-122 or 1996b: 244, etc.). Thus, the “meaningful coexistence” of divergent norms as suggested by Muhr (1996c: 42) is still largely absent in the textbooks analyzed – although there are some positive signs at certain levels – and a very strong British English dominance can be observed.

Since British English is only one of the two (co-)dominant English standards, its hegemony in the textbooks discriminates not only against the non-dominant standard varieties, but also against the dominant American English standard. Obviously, this is due to a number of reasons, from geographical proximity to the predominance of British materials on the international market of textbooks and teaching aids, but, as has been remarked multiple times, it is not beneficial for the learners at all, whose best interest would dictate a balanced presentation of the different standard varieties.

Furthermore, another fundamental problem is that the presentation of pluricentricity in the textbooks analyzed is practically limited to the field of lexis, supplemented by pronunciation, but other language levels such as grammar or pragmatics are not mentioned in this context. In any case, there is room for improvement, so that the present work can be seen essentially as a critique of the textbooks in question.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is undoubtedly a positive (albeit somewhat ambivalent) example, namely the *Pioneer* series, which contains a considerable amount of pluricentric content, but much of that is only found in the American-British vocabulary list at the end of the textbooks, and is not well integrated into the rest of the material. Similarly, the pluricentric vocabulary is not really embedded properly in texts in any of the textbook series studied, with a particularly low presence of pluricentric vocabulary being present in the reading comprehension tasks. In the case of listening, even though the tasks exhibit more pluricentric presence, it is mostly in terms of pronunciation and less so regarding vocabulary.

The most important implication of this is that in the future, new textbooks should be developed with a more pluricentricity-oriented mindset, building on the positive (but not yet sufficient) results already observed. To achieve this pluricentricity-oriented development, I offer the following suggestions to textbook authors and publishers:

(1) Greater linguistic variety is necessary in the reading and listening comprehension tasks, pointing towards a balanced, cross-regional representation in the receptive skills (cf. Muhr, 1996a).

- (2) The communicative scope of the foreign language taught should be maximized by regularly presenting a wide range of standard varieties (cf. Knipf-Komlósi, 2002; Glaboniat et al., 2002).
- (3) The presentation of pluricentricity should be embedded in intercultural content.
- (4) Pluricentricity should be presented in as diverse ways as possible, covering a wide variety of topics. Pluricentricity is “more than a few kitchen vocabulary items” (Muhr 1996a: 141).
- (5) After a neutral beginner level, non-dominant varieties should gradually gain more and more ground (cf. Muhr 1996a).
- (6) Pluricentricity must be manifest at all levels of language (from pronunciation to grammar and vocabulary to pragmatics), not only in the lexical domain (cf. Muhr 1993, 1996a, Glaboniat et al. 2002).
- (7) In a pluricentricity-oriented textbook, at least 3-5% of the vocabulary items should be of non-dominant origin (based on Muhr, 1993 and Glaboniat et al., 2002), especially from the intermediate level onwards. Since these vocabulary items appear partly in the reading and listening comprehension tasks, this can have a positive washback effect on the pluricentric presence in receptive skills as well.
- (8) Equivalent forms of the different national varieties should be introduced in parallel, and it should always be clearly indicated to which variety they belong.

The aim of the above suggestions is to allow for the fullest possible reflection of the linguistic reality, which should be one of the most important features of language teaching (cf. e.g. Hägi 2006: 180-182).

Works cited

- Alptekin, Cem (2002). “Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT.” *ELT Journal* 56 (1): 57-64. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.1.57>
- Ammon, Ulrich (2005). “Pluricentric and divided languages.” *Sociolinguistics: An international handbook of the science of language and society*, edited by Ulrich Ammon, Norbert Dittmar, Klaus Jürgen Mattheier and Peter Trudgill. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter. 1536-1543. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110171488.2.8.1536>
- Ammon, Ulrich and Sara Hägi (2005). “Nationale und regionale Unterschiede im Standarddeutschen und ihre Bedeutung für Deutsch als Fremdsprache.” *Deutsch revival: Pädagogische Zeitschrift für das ungarndeutsche Bildungswesen* 2005 (2): 27-39.

- Auerbach, Elsa R. (1995). "The politics of the ESL classroom: Issues of power in pedagogical choices." *Power and inequality in language education*, edited by James W. Tollefson. New York: Cambridge University Press. 9-33.
- Bettermann, Rainer (2010). "D-A-CH-Konzept." *Fachlexikon Deutsch als Fremd- und Zweitsprache*, edited by Hans Barkowski and Hans-Jürgen Krumm. Tübingen and Basel: Francke. 41.
- Christen, Helen and Elisabeth Knipf-Komlósi (2002). "Falle, Klinke oder Schnalle? Falle, Klinke und Schnalle! Informationen, Meinungen, Forderungen aus der Sektion >>Deutsch als plurizentrische Sprache<<." *Mehrsprachigkeit und Deutschunterricht*, edited by Monika Clalüna and Günther Schneider. Rome: Bulletin Vals-Asla. 13-19.
- Clyne, Michael ed. (1992). *Pluricentric languages: Differing norms in different nations*. The Hague: Mouton de Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110888140>
- Council of Europe (2002). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Strasbourg: Language Policy Unit. <https://doi.org/10.35213/2686-7516-2019-1-1-35-38>
- Cook, Vivian (1999). "Going beyond the native speaker in language teaching." *TESOL Quarterly* 33 (2): 185-209. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587717>
- Crystal, David (2008). "Two thousand million? Updates on the statistics of English." *English Today* 93 (24): 3-6. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078408000023>
- Dollinger, Stefan (2019a). "Debunking >>pluri-areality<<: On the pluricentric perspective of national varieties." *Journal of Linguistic Geography* 2019 (7): 98-112. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlg.2019.9>
- _____ (2019b). *The pluricentricity debate: On Austrian German and other Germanic standard varieties*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429031496>
- Glaboniat, Manuela; Martin Müller, Paul Rusch, Helen Schmitz and Lukas Wertenschlag (2002). *Profile Deutsch: Gemeinsamer europäischer Referenzrahmen*. Stuttgart: Langenscheidt.
- Hanashiro, Kazu (2016). "How globalism is represented in English textbooks in Japan." *Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series*, 14 (1): 2–13.
- Hägi, Sara (2006). *Nationale Varietäten im Unterricht Deutsch als Fremdsprache: Duisburger Arbeiten zur Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft* 64. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. <https://doi.org/10.1515/infodaf-2008-2-343>
- Heindrichs, Wilfried; Friedrich Wilhelm Gester and Heinrich P. Kelz (1980). *Sprachlehrforschung: Angewandte Linguistik und Fremdsprachendidaktik*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer. <https://doi.org/10.2307/327390>

- Hensel, Sonja N. (2000). "Welches Deutsch sollen wir lehren? Über den Umgang mit einer plurizentrischen Sprache im DaF-Unterricht." *Zielsprache Deutsch* 1 (1): 31–39.
- Huber, Máté Imre (2021). "Plurizentrik in DaF-Lehrwerken: Zwei Lehrwerkreihen im Vergleich." *Kétnyelvűség – oktatás – nyelvmenedzselés: Írások, tanulmányok Vančo Ildikó születésnapjára*, edited by István Csernicsekó and István Kozmács. Nitra: UKF. 113-127.
- ____ (2022). "A nyelvi többközpontúság elméletének szerepe a nyelvoktatásban az angol és a német példáján." *Modern Nyelvoktatás* 28 (1-2): 18-35.
- Jenkins, Jennifer (2006). "Current perspectives on teaching World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca." *TESOL Quarterly* 40 (1): 157–181.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/40264515>
- Jianli, Liang (2015). "Pluricentric Views towards English and Implications for ELT in China." *English Language Teaching* 8 (4): 90-96.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n4p90>
- Kachru, Braj Bihari (1992). "World Englishes: Approaches, issues and resources." *Language Teaching* 25 (1): 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800006583>
- Kloss, Heinz (1978). *Die Entwicklung neuer germanischer Kultursprachen seit 1800*. Düsseldorf: Schwann. <https://doi.org/10.2307/410180>
- Knipf-Komlósi, Elisabeth (2002). "Die Rolle der Variation in der deutschen Gegenwartssprache im Sprachunterricht." *Sprache – Kultur – Identität*, edited by Péter Canisius, Zsuzsanna Gerner and Manfred Michael Glauninger. Pécs: Edition Praesens. 181-189.
- Kramsch, Claire (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ____ (1995). "The privilege of the non-native speaker." Plenary address at the *Annual TESOL Convention*. April. Long Beach, California.
- Krumm, Hans-Jürgen (1994). "Stockholmer Kriterienkatalog." *Zur Analyse, Begutachtung und Entwicklung von Lehrwerken für den fremdsprachlichen Deutschunterricht*, edited by Bernd Kest and Gerhard Neuner. Berlin: Langenscheidt. 100–105.
- Lanstyák, István (1996). "Gondolatok a nyelvek többközpontúságáról (különös tekintettel a magyar nyelv Kárpát-medencei sorsára)." *Új Forrás* 28 (6): 25-38.
- Lehtonen, Piia (2020). *Standardvarietäten in Finnischen DaF-und EFL-Lehrwerken: Ein Vergleich zwischen Deutsch-Lehrwerken und Englisch-Lehrwerken*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Jyväskylä.

- Marlina, Roby (2014). "The pedagogy of English as an International Language (EIL): More reflections and dialogues." *The pedagogy of English as an International Language*, edited by Roby Marlina and Ram Ashish Giri. New York City: Springer. 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-06127-6_1
- _____ (2018). *Teaching English as an International Language: Implementing, reviewing, and re-envisioning World Englishes in language education*. Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315315768>
- Matsuda, Aya (2002). "International understanding through teaching world Englishes." *World Englishes* 21 (3): 436–440. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971x.00262>
- _____ (2003). "Incorporating World Englishes in teaching English as an international language." *TESOL Quarterly* 37 (4): 719-729. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588220>
- Medgyes, Péter (1992). "Native or non-native: Who's worth more?" *ELT Journal* 46 (4): 340-349. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/46.4.340>
- Motschenbacher, Heiko (2019). "Non-nativeness as a dimension of inclusion: A multimodal representational analysis of EFL textbooks." *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 29 (3): 285-307. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12237>
- Muhr, Rudolf (1993). "Österreichisch – Bundesdeutsch – Schweizerisch: Zur Didaktik des Deutschen als plurizentrische Sprache." *Internationale Arbeiten zum österreichischen Deutsch und seinen nachbarsprachlichen Bezügen*, edited by Rudolf Muhr. Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky. 108-123.
- _____ (1996a). "Das Deutsche als plurizentrische Sprache: Zur Sprachrealität der deutschsprachigen Länder und zum Normbegriff im DaF-Unterricht." *Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German: Zeitschrift des amerikanischen Deutschlehrerverbandes* 1 (2): 137-146. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3531823>
- _____ (1996b). "Österreichisches Deutsch und interkulturelle Kommunikation im Kontext des Faches Deutsch als Fremdsprache." *ÖDaF Mitteilungen: Informationen des Vereins „Österreichischer Lehrerverband Deutsch als Fremdsprache"* 1 (1): 31-44.
- _____ (1997). "Norm und Sprachvariation im Deutschen: Das Konzept 'Deutsch als plurizentrische Sprache' und seine Auswirkungen auf Sprachbeschreibung und Sprachunterricht DaF." *Germanistische Linguistik* 28 (137-138): 179-203.
- _____ (2003). "Language change via satellite: The influence of German television broadcasting on Austrian German." *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 4 (1): 103-127. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jhp.4.1.06muh>

- _____. ed. (2005). *Standardvariationen und Sprachideologien in verschiedenen Sprachkulturen der Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- _____. (2012). "Linguistic dominance and non-dominance in pluricentric languages: A typology." *Non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages: Getting the picture*, edited by Rudolf Muhr. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 23-48. <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-653-01621-5>
- Neuland, Eva (2011). "Variation in der deutschen Sprache: Auswirkungen auf den (Fremd)Sprach(en)unterricht." *Deutsch aktuell 2: Tendenzen der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*, edited by Sandro Moraldo. Rom: Carocci. 48-63.
- Neuner, Gerhard (1994). "Lehrwerkforschung – Lehrwerkkritik." *Zur Analyse, Begutachtung und Entwicklung von Lehrwerken für den fremdsprachlichen Deutschunterricht*, edited by Berndt Kast and Gerhard Neuner. Berlin: Langenscheidt. 8-22.
- _____. (2007). "Lehrwerke." *Handbuch Fremdsprachenunterricht*, edited by Karl-Richard Bausch, Herbert Christ and Hans-Jürgen Krumm. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag. 399-402.
- Rauer, Agnes and Elena Tizzano (2019). *Teaching English with a pluricentric approach: A compilation of four upper secondary teachers' beliefs*. Unpublished MA thesis. University of Malmö, Faculty of Education and Society, Department of Culture, Languages and Media.
- Sadker, David and Myra Sadker (2001). "Gender bias: From colonial America to today's classrooms." *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*, edited by James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks. New York: John Wiley and Sons. 125-151.
- Schneider, Edgar W. (2011). *English around the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Seidlhofer, Barbara (2009). "Common ground and different realities: World Englishes and English as a lingua franca." *World Englishes* 28 (2): 236–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971x.2009.01592.x>
- Sherman, John Eric (2010). "Uncovering Cultural Bias in EFL Textbooks." *Issues in Applied Linguistics* 18 (1): 27-53. <https://doi.org/10.5070/14181005123>
- Su, Ya-Chen (2016). "The international status of English for intercultural understanding in Taiwan's high school EFL textbooks." *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 36 (3): 390-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2014.959469>

- Syrbe, Mona and Heath Rose (2018). “An evaluation of the global orientation of English textbooks in Germany.” *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 12 (2): 152–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2015.1120736>
- Tajeddin, Zia and Maryam Pakzadian (2020). “Representation of inner, outer and expanding circle varieties and cultures in global ELT textbooks.” *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* 5 (10): 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-020-00089-9>
- Takahashi, Reiko (2014). “An analysis of ELF-oriented features in ELT coursebooks.” *English Today* 30 (1): 28-34. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078413000539>
- Tomlinson, Brian and Hitomi Masuhara (2013). “Adult coursebooks.” *ELT Journal* 67 (2): 233-249. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cct007>
- Vetorel, Paola (2018). “ELF and communication strategies: Are they taken into account in ELT materials?” *RELC Journal* 49 (1): 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688217746204>
- Yamanaka, Nobuko (2006). “An evaluation of English textbooks in Japan from the viewpoint of nations in the inner, outer, and expanding circles.” *JALT Journal* 28 (1): 57–76. <https://doi.org/10.37546/jaltj28.1-4>
- URL 1: <https://www.englishprofile.org/> (date of access: 19/06/22)

The textbooks analysed

- Latham-Koenig, Christina; Clive Oxenden and Paul Seligson (2012). *English File Elementary. Third edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latham-Koenig, Christina; Clive Oxenden and Paul Seligson (2012). *English File Pre-intermediate. Third edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latham-Koenig, Christina and Clive Oxenden (2013). *English File Intermediate. Third edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latham-Koenig, Christina and Clive Oxenden (2014). *English File Upper-intermediate. Third edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latham-Koenig, Christina; Clive Oxenden and Jerry Lambert (2015). *English File Advanced. Third edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mitchell, H. Q. and Marileni Malkogianni (2015). *Pioneer elementary*. London: MM Publications.
- Mitchell, H. Q. and Marileni Malkogianni (2015). *Pioneer pre-intermediate*. London: MM Publications.

Mitchell, H. Q. and Marileni Malkogianni (2016). *Pioneer intermediate*. London: MM Publications.

Mitchell, H. Q. and Marileni Malkogianni (2016). *Pioneer B1+*. London: MM Publications.

Mitchell, H. Q. and Marileni Malkogianni (2015). *Pioneer B2*. London: MM Publications.

Mitchell, H. Q. and Marileni Malkogianni (2017). *Pioneer C1/C1+*. London: MM Publications.

Máté Huber is an assistant professor at the Department of English Language Teacher Education and Applied Linguistics of the University of Szeged. His primary research interest lies in sociolinguistics, more specifically linguistic pluricentricity. As he is a practising language teacher himself in the Hungarian public education system, he is particularly interested in the role of dominant and non-dominant linguistic standards in teaching English and German as foreign languages. This is also the topic of his dissertation, which he is currently working on. In this field, he is an active member of the steering committee of the international Working Group on Non-Dominant Varieties of Pluricentric Languages, organizing conferences and publishing thematic volumes on the topic on a biannual basis since 2014. Apart from linguistic pluricentricity, he also does research and teaches classes on World Englishes, the sociolinguistics of globalization, TEFL Methodology, linguistic discrimination, and the sociolinguistics of the Hungarian language outside of Hungary. hubermate@gmail.com

Received: 30 June, 2022

Final version accepted: 1 November, 2022