

Concluding Remarks

This book has been written due to a deep belief in the need of adopting a single official language of the EU, a language which would not discriminate against languages and cultures of other member states, but a language which would celebrate the wealth of variety the European Union is created from. The European Union, being an idealised vision of a truly united and cooperating Europe, with member states supporting each other and building stronger and stronger ties, needs a common language which would become the glue to amalgamate Europe even more.

The main reason for conducting the study exploring different realisations of the selected speech act of apologising reported here was the creation of the pragmatic core for the English for European Communication realisation of this speech act. Here the first step has been made to create the English for European Communication reference guidelines to the realisation of the speech act of apologising. It needs to be stressed that the core suggested for the realisation of this speech act does not enumerate strategies which are to be present in all European apologies. Rather, they form the basis on which the Europeans can build their apologies to express their identities. The core is the canvas on which Europeans can paint. What paints they choose to use is up to them, however, the basis is for all Europeans to use the same canvas (or choose a different canvas based on an informed decision), and for all Europeans to have a basic set of painting tools.

The belief that English can serve as the official language of the European Union is flawed. English, as it is taught in schools across Europe, is the language of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and since one of the pillars the Union is built upon is equality of its members, promoting the language of two countries is not an option which could ever be accepted by the rest of the member states. However, the fact that the EU is in dire need of one language is indisputable. The question whether European citizens will ever acknowledge that they are EU citizens and have a European identity, without a common language uniting them, is a debated topic. Undeniably, adopting an artificial language as the official language of the EU would be the most politically correct step, however, with the financial crisis in Europe and so many Europeans believing the EU generates too much cost, artificial language as the language of the EU is not a viable option. The

vision of the plurilingual European citizen, although most righteous, is again not a solution that would help the Europeans truly unite and create ties. It seems that English, being already the most widely taught and learnt language across Europe is a natural candidate. However, what is the claim of this thesis is not that it is not the English used by the British or the Irish that should be deemed the official language of the European Union, but English based on the English used by non-native speakers across Europe. It is this type of English for European Communication, which can make it more realistic to meet the challenge of multiculturalism and fostering diversity that Europe is proud of. However, learning this European English should not rely solely on the language education but should also include learning about different member state cultures, traditions, values, and preferably languages. Such holistic education would foster plurilingualism advocated by the EU.

The solution at hand is not only simple, but time and cost effective, building on what 43 % already know (Rise 2010), i.e. English. The goal of specifying English for European Communication pragmatics is truly feasible. Throughout this book, it has been stressed that English, although seen by many as a destructive force, is in the linguistic reality of Europe and it is here to stay. Whether we allow it to be destructive is up to us, the Europeans. One attempt to justify the spread of English as a Lingua Franca of Europe has been made by proponents of the ELF idea. However, as it has been mentioned, ELF has met with substantial criticism, as it seems to sanction the innovations in the linguistic code that have traditionally been treated as incorrect in English language teaching. Even though it is a misconception, ELF studies are doomed to stay in a theoretical sphere as no teachers will ever allow for what they have always considered to be mistakes to enter the curriculum. The option proposed here seems more realistic with respect to the possibility of implementing in the school system, as it unites the British English linguistic code, which so many teachers and non-native speakers of English cherish, with the Europe-customised pragmatic system which reflects the most common pragmatic behaviour of the Europeans. In this way, the heart and the soul of European communication, with its richness and diversity is maintained.

Studies conducted on speech act realisation are numerous and provide insights into cross-cultural differences and the need for improvement of language teaching. It is now common knowledge that perceptions of appropriateness and politeness are culturally specific and that cross cultural communication bears the risk of causing misunderstanding or even of breakdown in communication. However, most ESL/EFL courses do not equip students with sufficient knowledge to avoid misunderstandings stemming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Apologies are among the speech acts most culturally bound and, consequently, in cross-cultural communication they can be expected to cause problems related to the pragmatic transfer. Equipping learners with speech act knowledge and skills is not a task outside of teachers' grasp—it is feasible and rewarding, and what is most important—it prepares students for intercultural communication.

Blending English language teaching with insights from pragmatic research seems to be the most effective way of spreading knowledge of how English in Europe functions. Showing learners of English for European Communication how

non-native speakers from different countries realise specific speech act would not only increase their intercultural competence and sensitivity, but would also allow them to recognise the differences between Euro-Englishes, English for European Communication and British English. In fact, the data rendered from this study by means of a Discourse Completion Test was used in a course of intercultural classes, in which students compared speech act realisations, explained linguistic behaviour and characterised strategies most commonly used by speakers from different European countries. Thus, not only the validity of the concept of Euro-English for educational purposes has been checked, but the usefulness of the data collection procedure by means of the DCT has been additionally confirmed, as not only does a DCT provide a time and quantity effective method of collecting data, but the collected data can be also used for educational purposes.

This study aimed to begin what is hoped to be an exciting venture into English for European Communication uniting all the Europeans. The topic is not exhausted but merely touched upon, however, with more studies conducted and more patterns established, there is tangible hope for English for European Communication to become a reality.

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