DAFYDD GIBBON

Afterword (V. 07):
Navigating Pronunciation in Search of the Golden Fleece

1. The ocean of sound

Why is it that when foreign language learners fall overboard into the ocean of the sounds of English, so many people expect them to surface sputtering English according to a textbook norm, clutching a regulation lifebelt and with the expectation of being rescued by a ship on a mission to find the Golden Fleece of English Language Teaching (ELT)?[1] More realistically, the speakers of English in the oceans of the world are not just swimmers clutching lifebelts, but members of autonomous communities sailing their own robust ships, built independently of the UK and US ELT shipyards. These speakers have never heard of RP or GenAm, couldn't care less about standard accents, and are constantly in contact with each other, using an endless variety of the sounds of English found around the oceans of world: native rhythms, perhaps a slow mid-Atlantic swell, animated cries in the souk and the bazaar, whispered gossip on the street corner − hissing and thundering surf on countless beaches around the world. Can the Golden Fleece be found on these shores? Is there a Golden Fleece?

Whether there is a Golden Fleece or not, there are several ELT regulation lifebelts for rescue operations en route. One is an artefact called RP, modelled on the upper class British pronunciation of 3% of the native speakers of English, spoken mainly by non-native ELT teachers (and rumoured to have been constructed specifically for learners of English as a foreign language). Another, known as GenAm or GA, is not spoken uniformly over vast acres in the USA, but is also an abstraction, reified by teachers of foreign students who are applying for admission to US universities.

Many other languages, both natural and artificial, have been proposed for international communication, and all succeed or fail for the same reasons: either they are or they are not anchored in an identifiable social, political, economic and military power base.

I exaggerate. But the relevance of these remarks in the present context is that a new and highly competitive regulation lifebelt has been put on the market: a slim artificial accent for curriculum design purposes, called the English Lingua Franca Core (LFC). The LFC is the "invention" of Jenkins, to use her own terminology (Jenkins 2000; for a compact and revised overview see Jenkins 2002). To judge by other contributions to the present volume, the deployment of this invention has caused a massive splash which has alerted several ships to come to the rescue of anglophile humanist ELT across Europe. The idea of English as a *lingua franca* the teaching of it, and the demographic fact that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers, are not innovations in themselves. Much of the discussion dates back to the early days of colonial language teaching, as anyone familiar with the history of English or with creole studies will know. The idea of a core of such a *lingua franca* is new, however. The LFC discussion has certainly enlivened discussion about which accent (indeed, which English) to

---

teach to non-native speakers, is contributing to learner empowerment in the language learning arena, and is to be thoroughly commended for stirring up a field which has often been tradition-bound rather than empirical in the justification of learner needs, and highly conservative in its objectives, whether humanist or commercial. The papers in this volume make instructive and sometimes quite entertaining, indeed fascinating reading as transcripts of scholarly and not-so-scholarly dispute, and clearly demonstrate that "a raw nerve" (Jenkins, this volume) has been touched in both areas. Several papers in the volume focus critically on the LFC approach, while others provide flanking discussion of key areas such as prosody. I will focus on the former.

In her earlier scholarly monograph (Jenkins 2000), referred to by several papers in this volume, Jenkins discusses a wide range of factors which led her to create a definition of core features of English as a non-native-speaker oriented Lingua Franca (ELF) or English as an International Language (EIL), not to be confused with native-speaker oriented English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as a point of orientation in modern English language teaching, testing and curriculum development. I concentrate on the LFC approach, focussing mainly on the monograph, rather than on Jenkins' contribution to the present volume or specific details of the other contributions (though I will refer to these wherever directly relevant) because of the intrinsic interest of academic debate: the Jenkins paper is a riposte. By and large, I agree with Jenkins' remarks on certain misconstruals of LFC: Jenkins' approach is about EIL/ELF, not EFL, and is about curriculum development, not theoretical or descriptive phonology and phonetics, though the motivation of LFC is not always convincing. I will continue with comments (and comments on comments, and comments on comments on comments) which an Afterword to this debate demands, dealing first with some of the background to the controversy on LFC conducted in this volume (2), then with the idea of why a "core" (our current interpretation of the Golden Fleece) might not actually be a feasible model in view of polycentric approaches to ELT goals and family resemblance models of pronunciation modelling (3), followed by discussion of sociolinguistic design modelling with respect to a selection of different ELT scenarios described in terms of a simple model (4), comments on the proposed LFC, and conclusions to be drawn for its use in curriculum design (5), concluding with an outlook section (6), in which the LFC and competing approaches to ELT are categorised as market-oriented Research and Development. A sneak preview of the conclusion: ELT is a media industry driven by market forces, like the human language technologies (HLT) - I am tempted to write "the *other* language technologies" - as deployed, for instance, in tutorial systems and dictation software, and the present debate is driven by the same market forces.

2. Troubled waters: the core of the storm

The syntax of science determines its theories, the semantics of science relates to the truth values of its theories, and the pragmatics of science consists of verbal and economic interaction between scientists. While Grice, his Conversational Maxims and his Cooperative Principle are often cited in connection with verbal interaction, 'non-Gricean' communication, in which Grice's Maxims and Cooperative Principle are not followed, is obviously far more interesting: disputes, insults, errors, misunderstandings, face-endangerment, exploitation, polemic, irony, sarcasm, petulance, disagreement, criticism, verbosity, inexplicitness, clumsiness, inattention and the multitude of other infelicities which we love to point out in others. Some of these non-Gricean features are to be found in the contributions to this volume. Many of the features of Jenkins' approach are missed by some of the other contributors to the volume (to the extent that in some cases the reading of Jenkins' work must have been rather selective), but in all fairness

it seems that at least some of the responsibility for this lies with Jenkins' original contribution itself. And Jenkins also appears to have missed the multidimensionality of the differences: her critics are discussing advanced state school and university ELT, whereas she is discussing more elementary language school levels. Both camps seem to have missed the point that the motivation for ELT in general, whether EIL/ELF/LFC or traditional EFL oriented, is precisely that English is a *lingua franca* in all of these scenarios, albeit a pluricentric *lingua franca* used in a complex navigation space, with many degrees of proficiency and many different contexts. The LFC type of EIL/ELF, and EFL in the anglophile humanistic sense, are at opposite ends of the scale.

Despite the impressive breadth of discussion, the obvious in-depth knowledge of the state of the art, and the careful argumentation, a number of relevant aspects which could have contributed to more Gricean communication on both sides are not optimally presented: the variety of relevant language teaching and learning scenarios, the bilingualism discussion, the underlying sociolinguistic assumptions and the interaction between phonology and other components in spoken language performance are left relatively inexplicit. Non-Gricean communication is, of course, not necessarily a bad thing (except when plain face-saving strategies become obtrusive). When it comes to the market place (and we are debating within the framework of a market oriented applied science, not basic research), non-Gricean communication is rampant, and Jenkins is right to use the same non-Gricean style to take her critics to task for their inaccuracies and misunderstandings. Still, imagine a similar non-Gricean style in serious engineering publications about new standards for global mobile telephony or word processing or aircraft safety. Worrying.

So are we mainly concerned with the market place? I think we are. The market-place is a very significant pragmatic dimension in the LFC dispute, as in many other paradigms in English Language Teaching, as well as other language and speech based industries (Gibbon et al. 2000). ELT is a major industry in the UK. The English language has been a massive money-spinner for a very long time. The turnover of the top ten ELT companies in the UK reached nearly £100 million in 2002, the highest earning company making profits of well over £1 million, according to Internet sources. This information is sufficient as a pointer, without going into the turnover and earnings of other ELT media environments, including publishing, radio and television, worldwide. The development of new ELT paradigms is certainly not dictated by scientific considerations alone; ELT customers pay well, but they buy a "black box" which has to work, regardless of its scientific foundations. It is perfectly legitimate to query the explicit and implicit economic motives behind specific approaches to ELT, and their consequences for the market-place. And indeed there is a big difference, with respect to the market place, between two extremes of the ELT spectrum which clash in the present volume.

The EFL banner is flown largely by an anglophile humanistic lobby, and is typically - I exaggerate again - represented in institutionalised grammar school foreign language teaching and driven by traditions of European cultural, political, diplomatic and touristic interchange, mainly between the upper middle "chattering classes" (in current journalistic jargon) of neighbouring countries. Even though modern curricula specify the need for relevance to learner experience, media are in practice largely outdated before they appear, and in any case highly stylised in their view of what youngsters (or young adults) are interested in, as my young daughter keeps telling me. Often, therefore, EFL content is largely irrelevant to the actual English contact experience of the majority of learners, who are more acquainted with and interested in the cool English of the stars of stage, screen and iPod, who come and go in rapid succession. Later these learners may discover that a smattering of English occasionally comes in useful in pubs and bistros all over the world, but then they may still be heard to claim, even after years of school teaching, that they speak English either not at all, or badly (which is no doubt true, by school curriculum standards). Of course, this is a picture of a straw man, to some extent: school English teaching is in general much more flexible and useful than I am implying for the sake of the present argument.

At the other end of the ELT spectrum are the hard-nosed businessmen and million dollar babies with EIL/ELF logos, from the highly reputable end of the commercial scale to the dubious (a microcosm of life in general). Clearly, the vested interests in this arena are equally legitimate, though widely different from those of the anglophile humanists. These commercial interests are very clearly portrayed in the language school advertisements of the leading national weekly newspapers and journals and on the internet, but they tend not to be reflected in the justifications of ELT paradigms which are developed in the traditional Applied Linguistics literature, which demurely respect the usual Gricean traditions of scientific communication. These descriptions trace their lineage to linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, psychology and sociology, and present targets of proficiency in language and speech interaction as being independent of commercial ELT goals such as revenue from instruction and testing, filling market gaps, achievement of process ergonomics and efficiency, and product salesworthiness. Elements of these parameters are scarce even in the recent literature on World Englishes (Jenkins 2003): most studies content themselves with a simple overview of historical events without looking into explanatory political or economic models - maybe I have just not looked far enough into the literature. This is not a cynical view of the ELT scene and - witness the socio-economic motivation behind Kuhn's notion of "scientific paradigm" (Kuhn 1962) - the discussions in the present volume are not independent of these considerations.

It is often joked in informal discussions at conferences, for example, that functionalist goals in ELT, such as "communicative competence", happen to be very convenient for (more or less) monoglot teachers as typical representatives of the chattering classes who teach highly polyglot groups, or who travel (or are assigned) to different places around the world. Such goals are easily interpreted as absolving the teacher from knowing anything about the language or languages of his pupils, and indeed from being a polyglot role model for his pupils. But is it just a joke? Not at all. Such one-sided interpretations of the communicative competence goal exist. But then we are talking about an applied science, and from the point of view of the market-place the interpretation is absolutely legitimate in terms of efficient global personnel deployment and share-holder value.

Formalist goals, such as LFC, are not exempt from similar interpretations and may be located within the same argumentative context. LFC may not, from the scientific perspective, have been conceived with this in mind, but from the perspective of the market-place it does, *prima facie*, happen to make teaching and testing more efficient (or seem more efficient), and weaken optional goals (e.g. the acceptability component of proficiency) while emphasising some central functional goals (i.e. the indispensable intelligibility component of proficiency). If the analysis sounds distasteful to some, as it will, then this emotional reaction can perhaps be derived *a fortiori* from a distaste for "commercialisation" in general. This does not invalidate the fact that applied sciences are, pretty much by definition, commercial and political in their long-term goals.

Applying the same kind of market-place contextualisation to other paradigms also leads to interesting results. Why was the "grammar-translation method" decried so vehemently in the 1970s and following decades? Well, apart from the insight that grammar is pretty boring for everyone except us dedicated linguists, and therefore not particularly salesworthy, a few moments reflection suffice to show that translation is actually one of the few socially useful functionalities of language proficiency. Translators perform indispensable services to our global society, from the translation of EU regulations and computer handbooks to software localisation. The functions of translation are now much more commercially interesting than the days when we were given chunks of Caesar, Maupassant and Thomas Mann to translate. So where's the rub? Well, translation is much harder than chattering, for a start, and it is a specialist profession, whereas simply everyone can learn to chat (if not to chatter). It is the sheer number of potential consumers which motivates a billion dollar industry. In the face of these commercial arguments, the standard linguistic, psychological and methodological

arguments for not teaching or learning translation pale into insignificance, even allowing for the fact that a near-monoglot teacher with a polyglot clientele is unable to offer translation as a mass-market product, or even to offer it at all. Since there is a clear need for translation at all levels, should the ELT industry not come up with good products in this area, rather than declare bankruptcy?

Teaching future teachers, as many of us do, is different again. In this context, versatility as well as scientific knowledge of language and literature is indispensable - in the course of a 40-year career, the commercial and political goals for ELT will change many times. An optimal attribute of a good teacher is to be a good role model; for ELT the optimal case for a native-speaker teacher, for example, is to speak my students' language (whether as native or non-native speaker) with at least the same proficiency as they are aiming to speak mine. But as noted above: compromises will always have to be made in ELT for polyglot classes, between the theoretically optimal role model on the one hand, and personal limits and commercial viability on the other.

3. The calm at the core

Nevertheless, the idea of a "Core Model" of English for ELT purposes is very appealing. Two approaches to defining a core are discussed by Jenkins: descriptive and prescriptive. At the descriptive end of the scale, an empirically identifiable core would be postulated, which would cover all varieties of English, from Perth, Scotland to Perth, Australia, and from London, England to London, Ontario and beyond. If an empirical core (by which I mean linguistic generalisations over an extensive relevant corpus) could be identified, the prescriptive operationalisation needed for an applied science would be easy to motivate. But, while the varieties of English are all historically related, there is neither *a priori* a guarantee nor *a posteriori* a demonstration that they share a common core. Influences from other language substrates indicate that the opposite may well be the case: the similarities may not be pervasive enough to form an empirically motivated core, and the invention of a prescriptive core on other grounds may be necessary. Still, a quick look at the basis for supposing that there may not be a common core (I will refer to such an approach as the Common Core Model) will not come amiss. In this respect, there are two conspicuous "non-core" models which I will introduce for the sake of the present discussion, which can be seen as competitors of the Common Core Model from a logical point of view: the Strict Structuralism Model, and the Family Resemblance Model.

The Strict Structuralism Model holds that the function of any unit of language is determined by its position in the system. If the system is different, even if only slightly, the unit and its function are different, and it is not legitimate to generalise from units in one system to units in another. In Weinreich's classic article "Is a structural dialectology possible?" (Weinreich 1954) he points out that this tenet falls apart when explanatory issues of the comparison of theories and varieties of language are addressed.

It was this background of criticism of the Strict Structuralism Model which motivated the universalist and rationalist approaches to linguistics popularised by Chomsky. This variety of rationalism permitted different structures to be derived from the same underlying principles, and to share parameters which may be implemented differently, but comparably, in different languages. If a Common Core Model can be associated with rationalist theories, it is different from the idea of an empirical Common Core Model: a rationalist common core would be associated with formal universals - the basic structuring principles of the languages of the world. An empiricist common core would be associated with substantive universals: in general,

observable implications and tendencies.

Jenkins does justice to this issue in her discussion, and remains, understandably, sceptical. Much of the discussion in this area has referred to the learning of Western Indo-European languages by speakers of other Western Indo-European languages which is characteristic of the EFL branch of ELT; it is hardly surprising that an empirical Common Core Model is not too hard to find for varieties of English, even non-native English, within this geographical and historical context. It is equally unsurprising that this kind of Common Core Model would appear not to have a direct operalisation in the EIL/ELF branch of ELT.

The most direct competitor for the empirical Common Core Model is the Family Resemblance Model. The concept of Family Resemblance was introduced by Wittgenstein (1953) in a direct attack on notions of "core meaning". The Family Resemblance Model embodies the claim that related units in a set of similar items may only be similar pairwise (or in other small subsets), and that there is no single empirically observable characteristic property or set of properties which defines this set. The Common Core Model and the Family Resemblance Model of similarity are visualised in Figure 1.
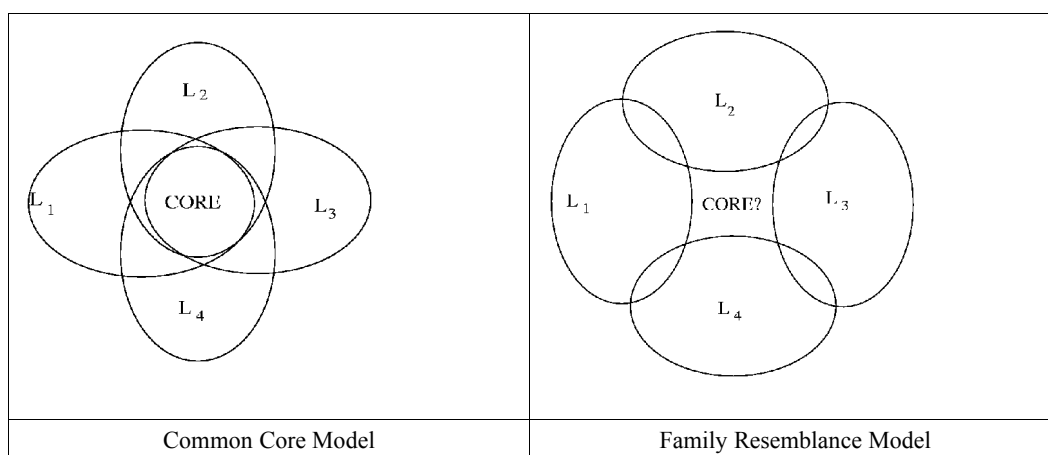

| Common Core Model | Family Resemblance Model |

Figure 1: Similarity as overlapping feature sets.

Wittgenstein's key example of Family Resemblance was the meaning of the word "game": what do field games, card games, board games, arcade games have in common from an observable, empirical point of view? They can perhaps be ascribed to functional, interactive categories, without being definable in terms of observables; nevertheless we tend to hypostasise similarities and instinctively assume that similarities are also empirically observable.

The same applies to the word "family" which lends its name to the model: it is absurd, in many cases, to look for a physical resemblance between relatives, but we do it all the same: sometimes we are lucky, but relatives remain relatives on legal grounds as well as on physical grounds (and sometimes there are less institutional reasons for suspecting a lack of physical similarity).

The null hypothesis, with respect to the choice of a Common Core Model as opposed to a Family Resemblance Model, is that the learner's accent is the same in L_{origin} and in L_{target}. This is supported by the many examples of substrate, interference and transfer influences in non-native speech. The examples of misunderstandings based on highly diverse pronunciations of English which are documented by Jenkins (2000) point to the empirical superiority of the Family Resemblance Model for EIL/ELF purposes, rather than to a Common Core Model.

From the prescriptive point of view of an applied science, the arguments about an empirical common core do not really matter. A Common Core Model can be defined, for instance, by criteria of expediency. This is what Jenkins does, quite legitimately. This is what

was done even in the case of Esperanto, in relation to the Western Indo-European languages.

But in fact the arguments do matter. There has to be a criterion for defining the common core - it has to relate to some kind of reality somewhere if it is not to be totally arbitrary (and unmarketable). In LFC, this link to reality lies in a carefully selected set of features taken from educated southern British pronunciation (a near-enough definition of Received Pronunciation, RP) and General American pronunciation. Both of these "regulation lifebelts" are, as already noted, essentially ELT-motivated artefacts, and constitute the identifying attributes of a long tradition of pronunciation models for curriculum development in all varieties of ELT. RP is sociolinguistically, i.e. functionally, defined, and has been adapted in the course of time to sociolinguistic changes, with a catch-all category of "modified RP" for many of the other varieties of British English spoken by educated speakers. The most recently recognised modification is "Estuary English", a striking blend of RP and some London area accents; a version which is close to RP might be dubbed "Blair English". But around the world there are very many other norm-generating prestige accents, some more local, some more global.

And there's the rub. Jenkins' approach is commendably egalitarian - theoretically - in respect of learner empowerment and the emancipation of the non-native speaker clientele from post-colonial native speaker claims to language ownership. But what happens when we get down to brass tacks and actually formulate a Common Core Model? Basically, this:

1. The language situation of the non-native speaker clientele is in reality very highly polyglot and better characterised by a Family Resemblance Model than by a Common Core Model.
2. The English accents of this clientele are based on these substrates and are consequently also better characterised by a Family Remblance Model.
3. So a generally valid Common Core Model cannot be induced in any obvious way from the accents of the speakers (even from the accents of the variety of native speakers around the world).
4. Consequently, if a Common Core Model is needed, it it cannot be "found" but must be "invented".
5. But if a Common Core Model is invented, then to avoid being arbitrary it must be based on plausible real-life models.
6. So which are the the real-life models? Why, it so happens that the post-colonial (or neo-colonial) native speaker is a very convenient model for LFC, either as RP or GenAm, or as a mélange of these. What a coincidence!

It looks very much as though the native speaker, by the force of logic rather than through solid corpus-based quantitative and interpretative empirical evidence, is being reinstated as the controller, if not as the owner of the language (the issue of the stigmatisation of non-standard accents as inferior, mentioned by Jenkins and others, is a separate level of appraisal, and is not considered here).

Is there an alternative to this "native speaker as control freak" hypothesis? Yes, there is: Bamgbose's "pluricentric" approach, which Jenkins discusses in the context of "polymodel" approaches, and which she appears to espouse (Jenkins 2000:128f.) to some extent. The polymodel and pluricentric approaches reject the idea of a common core, and are compatible with the Family Resemblance Model: Estuary English, Edinburgh English, Plymouth English, Swansea English, Belfast English, Dublin English, Accra English, Lagos English, Nairobi English, Cape Town English, Jamaica English, Toronto English, Boston English, Detroit English, Houston English, San Francisco English, New Zealand English, Australian English, Hongkong English, Singapore English, the Indian Englishes – all are norm-generating native speaker prestige varieties of English which serve different regions and attract the interest of non-native speakers of these varieties for various political, commercial and military, perhaps also cultural reasons. There is a plethora of normative forces between little England, with its non-egalitarian accents and cream teas, and, for example, down-under, "where women glow

and men plunder" and consume Vegemite sandwiches, and where both the norm-generating native and the immigrant or trading speakers of English could not care less about the regulation lifebelts offered by the ELT industry of the Northern Hemisphere, and have contributed to the present system of decentralised verbal free trade in English on their own initiative.

Some pairs in this Family Resemblance set have a large set of features in common and are mutually quite intelligible. Some have a much smaller set of common features, and some are mutually quite unintelligible without a great deal of interactive effort. This is not surprising when one considers the typological variety of the languages concerned: terraced tone languages and implosives in West Africa, ejectives in East Africa, clicks in South Africa, contour tone languages in South-East Asia, pitch accent and CV syllable structure in Japanese. All have different substrate influences on the accents of English which characterise these areas. There is little consideration of the underlying causes of this variety in the discussion in the present volume, which is really surprising, since in defence of a Common Core Model it could have been noted that all of these sounds and prosodic effects also exist in English - but with paralinguistic function: the orthographically rendered reduplicated alveolar click "tut-tut", the contact-free kiss greeting as a rounded bilabial click, or the reduplicated lateral click as a dubious compliment to a pretty girl.

It is therefore not immediately clear why Jenkins apparently accepts the polymodel and pluricentric approaches and then immediately contradicts it with her claim: "Varieties of English would nevertheless have to be referrable to a common core, since tolerance of such variety is dependent on establishing a centre to ensure mutal intelligibility" (Jenkins 2000:128). *Si tacuisses...?* This reasoning is a *non sequitur*. There are many reasons why "a" centre need not be necessary, except for specific business and political purposes in the context of the globalisation of the economy and political system of English-speaking countries, mainly of the USA, and of the powerful ELT export industry which supports these systems and is supported by them.

For practical purposes, on a more regional level of interaction, the Family Resemblance Model as manifested in the pluricentric approach of Bamgbose is perfectly adequate, even for prescriptive purposes. Jenkins' claim brings us back to earth: it really boils down to prescriptive political and commercial interests in "establishing a centre to ensure mutual intelligibility" ("centre" is nicely ambiguous between *core* and *central location*). Is this Common Core Model perhaps supposed to be that elusive kernel of Englishness in pronunciation which corresponds to other elusive kernels of Englishness such as country houses, tea at Grantham and a lineage of non-authochthonous kings and queens and their consorts? The "native speaker control freak" monster appears to be rearing its head to defy the world-wide free trade area which deals in Englishes. This is a real conflict and a contradiction, which focusses on the difficult issue of how to promote ELT industry exports to a non-native clientele, to the advantage of the UK or the USA, and still remain egalitarian and learner-empowering. Perhaps there is no single Golden Fleece for ELT, but rather a selection of hides from many different animals, as well as purely synthetic clothing from the bargain counters.

4. Back to the drawing board

In designing a vessel for navigating the oceans of English pronunciation, the needs of the target audience, the teachers and learners of English, as well as the resources in the environment supply the relevant parameters. The articles in the present volume, and the original contribution by Jenkins, provide too few of these parameters: the underlying sociolinguistic models are not discussed in appropriate detail.

For example, Jenkins essentially discusses one kind of situation, namely her personal experience of teaching English to polyglot classes. This is a common situation, both in universities and in commercial language schools. Within this situation, she applies a number of descriptive methods, from observation collection to experiment, to provide the data for her discussion. The approach is empirical, in the general sense of the term of being experience-based and also experimental; it is not yet clear how far it permits valid quantitative and interpretative generalisations about an observational domain, such as a relevant corpus of speech and writing, which goes beyond the experience of an individual investigator. On the other hand, Jenkins' critics discuss state school teaching situations or university teaching situations of the EFL type, a very different scenario indeed, which leads to much rather fruitless altercation at cross-purposes. And there are many more widely divergent scenarios.

The EFL vs. ELF/EIL distinction used by Jenkins is indeed relevant and useful, but it will be helpful to adopt a more detailed and formal parametrisation. Only the minimum of necessary detail will be introduced; also (instead of the conventional but ambiguous and in many scenarios incorrect shorthand of "L_1" and "L_2") the more general terms "L_{origin}" and "L_{target}" are used.

The components of the teaching situation which are useful here are the following:

1. *Role*: teacher, pupil, administrator, textbook writer, ...
2. *Language*:
    1. L_{origin}: one or more home, official or vehicular languages, e.g. French, Swiss German, Brazilian Portuguese, Mandarin, Ibibio, Hausa, Tok Pisin
    2. L_{target}: in the present context, one or more varieties of English
3. *Location*: L_{origin} location, L_{target} location, other location
4. *Goal*: proficiency in cultural, economic, touristic, diplomatic, technical, military registers
5. *Institution*: commercial language school, state school, university, everyday exposure

Using this simple model, a number of specific scenarios for ELT varieties can be defined, depending on what the teachers' and pupils' languages are. A few typical scenarios which are relevant in this context are the following.

Scenario 1: Commercial language school (1):
1. *Role*:
    1. Teacher: native speaker of L_{target} (non-native language proficiencies unknown), often (but not always) trained in ELT methodology
    2. Pupil: polyglot class with several different instances of L_{origin}
2. *Location*: L_{target} region
3. *Goal*: heterogeneous, proficiency in economic, cultural, teacher-training, tourism registers
4. *Institution*: commercial language school

An instance of this scenario could be a language school in Brighton, Beckenham or an English-speaking university; the scenario is close to the scenario described by Jenkins, and underlies much of the output of the ELT publishing industry.

Scenario 2: Commercial language school (2):
1. *Role*:
    1. Teacher: proficient L_{target} speaker, often less well-trained native or near-native, often (but not always) trained in ELT methodology
    2. Pupil: L_{origin} monoglot class
2. *Location*: L_{origin} region
3. *Goal*: homogeneous, proficiency in business registers, negotiation, public multimedia presentations
4. *Institution*: commercial language school

An English class for businessmen in Tokyo, or in many other places around the world, could be a representative of this scenario; in the case of some multinational ELT companies the teacher is a relatively untrained L_{target} native speaker.

Scenario 3: European State School:
1. *Role*:
    1. Teacher: generally native speaker of L_{origin} and proficient L_{target} speaker, highly trained in language teaching methodology
    2. Pupil: monoglot L_{origin} class (variant: mixed monoglot + polyglot immigrant classes)
2. Location: L_{origin} region
3. Goal: homogeneous (institutionally regulated, oriented everyday life and traditional culture), proficiency in cultural and selective everyday registers
4. *Institution*: European State Secondary School

My current favourite example of this scenario would be the *Ratsgymnasium* in Bielefeld, the grammar school which my youngest daughter attends.

Scenario 4: European university:
1. *Role*:
    1. Teacher: (near-)native L_{target}-speaking, sometimes professionally trained in Applied Linguistics, sometimes not
    2. Pupil: monoglot L_{origin} class
2. Location: L_{origin} region
3. Goal: homogeneous (related to institutionally regulated school subgoals), proficiency in academic and cultural registers
4. *Institution*: European University

Two more current favourites: *Uniwersytet im. Adama-Mickiewicza w Poznaniu*, where I occasionally attend conferences and give lectures, or *Universität Bielefeld*, where I work.

Scenario 5: European translator/interpreter training institution:
5. *Role*:
    1. Teacher: (near-)native L_{target}-speaking, trained in advanced Applied Linguistics and highly competent in translation/interpreting methodology
    2. Pupil: monoglot L_{origin} class
6. Location: L_{origin} region
7. Goal: homogeneous (related to institutionally regulated school subgoals), highest possible level of proficiency in a wide variety of spoken and written registers, mainly business and political discourse
8. *Institution*: European University

A good example of this very specialised scenario is the *Fachbereich Sprachen* of the *Fachhochschule Köln*, where I worked a quarter of a century ago.

Scenario 6: Total immersion:
1. Role: teacher = pupil
2. Location: L_{target} region
3. Goal: proficiency in registers of business, everyday life
4. Institution: business environment

My all-time favourite for this scenario is my former family doctor in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, some 40 years ago - an Austrian emigré of 30 years standing, whose unchanging and nearly incomprehensible accent was the delight of the neighbourhood.

Applying these prototypical scenarios to the discussion of LFC, it is rather clear that Jenkins is discussing curricula for *Scenario 1*, while much of the criticism of Jenkins' approach is, as she indicates (Jenkins, this volume), concerned with matters pertaining to *Scenario 3* and *Scenario 4*. In terms of the EFL/EIL distinction, *Scenario 1* is concerned with ELF/EIL, while *Scenarios 3* and *4* are typically concerned with EFL. From a logical point of view, all of these scenarios

can be seen as special cases – some more advanced, some more core level – of the teaching of English for use as a world-wide *lingua franca*.

5. The core of the matter - pronunciation in context

It came as something of a surprise to see the main selection of features for the Common Core Model of an English pronunciation curriculum reduced by Jenkins to just five mostly rather general areas, after five chapters of lengthy and sophisticated motivation for developing a core English curriculum. Other contributors to this volume have taken issue with what details there are in the selection of core features, and I will simply provide some additional informal comments.

Table 1 takes up the original definition of LFC (2000:159) areas. The table in Jenkins' contribution to the present volume (cf. also Jenkins 2002) differs slightly from the original listing, particularly in respect of prosody, where originally "stress placement" and "word group division" were listed in addition to "nuclear stress"; in the present volume, only "nuclear stress" is listed, most of the rest of prosody being categorised as "unteachable" (which does not mean "unlearnable", of course). There is no proof of this claim (nor is it easy to see what might constitute proof).

#	*Core Areas*	*Core Features*	*Comments*
1	Consonantal inventory	postvocalic US rhotic [ɻ]	Will the LFC learner whose accent is strongly influenced by the UK, e.g. all areas of Africa, Australia and New Zealand, be disadvantaged? In any case, why not a more consonantal rhotacism than the US variety?
		non-flapped intervocalic /t/	US influenced varieties with intervocalic flaps are extremely widespread; free trade in English accents will inevitably enforce this, despite the homophony it may introduce: there is not much point in tilting at windmills.
		/θ/ substituted by [f / s / t] /ð/ substituted by [v / z / d]	Plausible: [f / t, v / d] already taught in practice in some areas, e.g. France; [s, z] less so. In everyday situations visitors to London will immediately come across theta and eth substitutions in many London sociolects.
		close approximations permitted	Obviously.
		unless confusable	Obviously, unless disambiguation is possible.
2	Phonetic requirements	initial fortis plosive aspiration	Why? Many of our French colleagues get by fine without.
		vowels short/long before fortis/lenis consonant	Why? Practically everyone gets on fine without, even with final devoicing (which may also cause ambiguity in the languages with this constraint).
3	Consonant clusters	initial clusters not simplified	Unrealistic, because heavily marked in UK and US English (as in other Indo-European languages). And unfair: listen to how BBC newsreaders - professionals - pronounce names like "Sgrena" and "Nkrumah" more like /səgreɪnə/ and /nəkru:mə/ (or /ɛnkru:mə/) respectively.
		medial/final clusters simplified according to L_{origin} rules	Plausible in view of lower functional load of final consonants.

#	Core Areas	Core Features	Comments
4	Vowels	vowel length distinction	Sensible, but not completely necessary; our Polish friends (except the contributors to this book and their colleagues) get by fine without, as do many West African friends.
		use of L$_{target}$ regional qualities permitted, /ɜː/ to be preserved	The last condition is somewhat idiosyncratic in view of the rhotacism condition within the context of English phonotactics.
5	Intonation	nuclear stress	These three systems correspond, roughly, to Halliday's *tone*, *tonicity* and (maybe) *tonality* systems, a fairly comprehensive intonation model; only the first figures in Jenkins' list in this volume, in the context of the supposed unteachability of the rest of prosody.
		stress placement	
		word group division	

Table 1: LFC definition (Jenkins 2000:159) and comments.

The non-required "non-core areas" (2002:98) cover the interdental fricatives, the dark [ɫ] allophone, weak forms, assimilations in connected speech, pitch direction, word stress placement and stress-timed rhythm. This is a realistic selection – provided that communication functionality is restricted to simple representational functions and the more complex expressive, appellative and phatic functions which go beyond tourist-level interactive proficiency are ignored. Even though some attitudinal functions of prosody may be "unteachable" (Jenkins 2002:99) at the elementary LFC level, presumably these attitudinal speech-act based functions of comunication, and at least some of their manifestations, are not.

The non-core areas leave considerable discretionary freedom of choice, but still, a Common Core Model of this kind generates many problems when confronted with the Family Resemblance Model of learner realities, as the comments in the table illustrate. Although Jenkins' approach is conceptually close to the early stages of Natural Phonology (Stampe 1969), citing universal preferences (Jenkins 2000:100ff.) as one of the bases for selection of LFC elements, it does not use the more sophisticated mechanisms of later versions (Dziubalska-Kołaczyk 2001), and does not get as close to reality (and the rest of language) as one would expect from an approach with such leanings. It is gratifying to see that a bridge between the work of Jenkins and that of Natural Phonology is not only feasible but is being actively encouraged by the production of the present volume.

Returning to the main function of the LFC, in developing a pronunciation curriculum focussing on intelligibility rather than acceptability, there is actually an interesting parallel to this categorisation in speech technology. The standard criteria for evaluation of the quality of text-to-speech synthesis software are exactly these: intelligibility and acceptability (the latter usually being called 'naturalness'). The relative importance of these two criteria is also the same: intelligibility is more important than acceptability. In speech technology, a wide variety of reliable quantitative measures for intelligibility have been devised, some of which concentrate on the pronunciation dimension of intelligibility. One very simple technique involves perception tests involving the reading aloud of nonsense words, or of sentences containing semantically incompatible words which are written down by the relevant target audience and scored for accuracy (Gibbon 1997). This probably sounds really weird to ELT specialists; nevertheless, the methods are highly reliable and consistent pronunciation checking techniques which discriminate between top-down and bottom-up factors - and, for this very reason, highly relevant for market-oriented development engineers. The ELT market is not too different from the speech technology market. In the LFC context one might, therefore, expect further discussion of a wider range of factors which impair intelligibility, of the consequences of dispensing with acceptability, and of techniques for testing the LFC and its market appeal.

But a rigid focus on intelligibility is not always justified, and in relation to the

prototypical ELT scenarios outlined earlier, there is also a case for applying acceptability criteria in many contexts, even at relatively elementary EIL/EFL levels. A modern view of ELT learning views spoken and written language as being contextualised in professional contexts, and as embedded in the context of technical media: telephone, the mass media of film, television, radio and computer entertainment, edutainment and infotainment. In technical registers such as these, intelligibility alone - semantics - is quite insufficient, whether with the aid of the context or not. What is important is pragmatics: participation in fluent dialogue - the illocutionary part of pragmatics - and persuasiveness - the perlocutionary part of pragmatics. And if these require a particular level of pronunciation acceptability, for instance in public multimedia presentations in business contexts with English-speaking native speakers, or in phatic communion with members of the native speaker chattering classes in various regions of the world, well then so be it.

Jenkins' approach is explicitly concerned with phonology, of course. Nevertheless, phonology has interfaces with many other components of language which also contribute to intelligibility (and acceptability), especially so when the phonological (and phonetic) contributions to intelligibility fail. There is an interesting analogy in studies of Automatic Speech Recognition. Purely bottom-up speech recognition does not work at all well. A multitude of competing word and sentence hypotheses are generated from the speech signal, and need to be disambiguated by sophisticated statistical language models (Gibbon et al. 1997). There are exact procedures for measuring system performance under different conditions, and for determining what is the contribution of bottom-up factors and what is the contribution of top-down factors. This relation between bottom-up and top-down information relates to Jenkins' note that learners tend to focus too much on bottom-up analysis and ignore top-down contextual cues, which could greatly enhance understanding (Jenkins 2000:80ff.). Consequently, common sense suggests, as Jenkins also points out, that learners need to be trained in both bottom-up and in top-down strategies, and especially in the latter, contrary to widespread assumptions. A handful of anecdotal notes will illustrate the point.

First, let us assume an utterance with massive neutralisation of phoneme contrasts and disruption of timing, whether in non-native speech, in fast speech, tired speech or drunken speech. On the other hand, let us assume that the co-text and the context in which the utterance occurs are clearly understandable. Then as long as there are a few phonologically recognisable cues in the utterance, it is likely to be intelligible: the contexts of everyday speech of these kinds are likely to be relatively uncomplicated, as - *horribile dictu* - the authors of phrasebooks (one of the more commercially successful FL product lines) know very well.

Second, during a recent visit to Brazil I accompanied two colleagues to a laundry and dry cleaner's. My two colleagues spoke some Portuguese and were puzzled by a question of the employee who attended them. I had no problem with this question, although my Portuguese is nigh on non-existent, so I translated: "Would you like it ironed with or without a crease?" The option was obvious to me from the context, while my colleagues were still concentrating on the face-saving issue of decoding the pronunciation. This confirms the insight that non-native speakers tend to focus on problems of pronunciation and form, and work bottom-up. I am not even a non-native speaker of Portuguese, so this did not bother me - though I was unfortunately not able to get by as easily as this in other situations.

Third, I am frequently confronted with analogous situations during fieldwork in West Africa, in which something very important may depend on correctly interpreting an utterance which I have not understood, and in which interpretation via contextual cues is the only available strategy. It also helps, incidentally, in conversations with taxi-drivers in places like Poznan when neither speaks the language of the other, a comparable fieldwork situation.

These observations suggest an entirely different conclusion from the primary conclusion drawn by Jenkins, who concentrates on the bottom-up pronunciation problems with only a few comments on "accommodation" (cf. the overview in Jenkins 2002:98ff.). But if non-native speakers have problems mainly with interpreting the utterance in context, and are distracted by

a non-analysed pronunciation in a bottom-up processing strategy - well, then, why not concentrate on training them to cope with interpreting contextual cues at least as much as concentrating on pronunciation?

If I may be pardoned for a heretical and somewhat whimsical further remark: isn't this exactly what commercial phrasebooks do - present pronunciation (and orthography) in context? Which brings us back to the communicative competence paradigm, with its pragmatic idioms, gambits and other fixed expressions in the initial stages of learning (and of course more advanced strategies later on). Contextual disambiguation and uptake-securing strategies deserves more explicit interfacing with the pronunciation issues under discussion in the present volume. Rather than swinging the pendulum from the functionalist communicative competence direction to the formalist branch of LFC in the EIL branch of ELT, why not go for a more integrative approach? But, as the saying goes, competition enlivens the market.

6. Outlook

There have been many attempts to do justice to the variety in the accents of English, and to the criteria for selection accents for teaching and learning. These studies range from the definitive study of the phonetic and phonological forms of English accents by Wells in a broad snapshot of the situation in the second half of the 20th century (Wells 1982) to studies which embed accents in their sociolinguistic concepts (Trudgill 2001), including the context of native speakers of English in the newer nations, as argued by Bamgbose, the doyen of linguistics and applied linguistics in Nigeria (Bamgbose 1998). In her studies of varieties of English and their consequences for those involved in the ELT industry, Jenkins has done the phonetic, sociolinguistic and applied linguistics community a long awaited service by stirring up debate with her considered overview of the problem and her controversial proposal for a Common Core Model for use in developing teaching and testing guidelines.

Is the controversy, with its misunderstandings and its polemic, "a bad thing"? Of course not. Science has its Gricean elements, but the behaviour of scientists to each other is no more or less Gricean than anyone else's behaviour, perhaps regrettably. Science was never wholly Gricean in any case: counter-arguments and falsification are the name of the game, at least as much as shared paradigms and unquestioned axioms. Misunderstandings, refutations, corrections, tunnel vision and sweeping claims all play their role in defining problems and clarifying solutions. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the proof of the seaworthiness of a vessel to navigate the oceans of English pronunciation, and of the efficacy of its lifebelts, lies in operational deployment beyond the experience of individual talented teachers. I look forward to the publication of actual teaching and testing materials based on the LFC Golden Fleece, so that operational deployment can take place and be evaluated against a gold standard of proficiency. And the same goes, of course, for the Golden Fleeces of the opponents of LFC; their criteria have been around for a couple of centuries longer, so they have more to lose.

So what might be a way forward? The answer is that whether we like it or not, we are concerned in the present discussion with industrial standardisation procedures and their application to ELT. The negotiation processes for ELT are no different in principle from those I have experienced in other industrial standardisation procedures, whether in the speech and language technology area or elsewhere (Gibbon 1997, 2000). An important distinction is made in this area between institutional standards (e.g. ISO, ANSI, DIN, BSI, ...), *de facto* standards (e.g. IBM PC, MS-Windows, Linux), consensual standards and company-internal standards. One of the mechanisms in the first two types is that manufacturers fight to get their company-

internal standards accepted in one of the other categories. One of the most well-known examples of this used to be standards for video-taping; currently there is strong competition in the area of digital memory cards. The hardware of PCs made its way competitively from a company-internal IBM standard in the early 1980s through a *de facto* industrial standard in the late 1980s to an institutional standard (or set of standards) in the 1990s. Exactly the same kind of standardisation conflict is clearly taking place in the ELT field (though the participants do not usually categorise their own interaction in this way).

Having noted this, what might be an appropriate direction for the actors in the ELT standardisation arena to take? Language engineering standardisation in Europe (from which ELT is also gradually benefiting) has been based on the consensual standardisation approach taken, for instance, in the European Commission funded EAGLES (European Advisory Group for Language Engineering Standards) project in the 1990s appears to be the most promising, particularly for those working more in the applied science than in the direct commercial Research and Development (R&D) context. In consensual standardisation procedures it is assumed that there is not one evident overriding truth promulgated by a public relations genius, but an accumulation of "best practice" in different R&D laboratories, possibly world-wide, which can be negotiated in a careful long-term process. Perhaps the most well-known and successful case of this in phonetics is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) itself, as well as the keyboard-friendly SAMPA encoding of the IPA for simple technical interchange and speech engineering purposes. The SAMPA consensual standard was proposed and negotiated by John Wells in the European Commission funded SAM (Speech Assessment Methodologies) project in the late 1980s (see his - easy to find - website and Gibbon 2000, Appendix A). The negotiations, with representatives from speech engineering laboratories in all countries of the then EEC (as it was known until 1992), were time-consuming and not easy. Different countries had different terminological and descriptive traditions for keyboard friendly notation on different levels of transcription - narrow phonetic, broad phonetic, systematic phonetic, phonemic, phonotypic, archiphonemic - and much tenacity in negotiation was required. And this was just transcription...

The approach proposed in this paper, and implied by pluricentric approaches such as that of Bamgbose, entails a massive shift away from an intuitively developing informal community based on simple "core" notions, to a paradigm which is more like a "Standardisation Consensus Framework" for ELT based on the Family Resemblance Model. This most definitely does not mean opting for a Procrustes bed of immutable guidelines - although experience shows that my proposal will inevitably be described as such in some quarters, as a knee-jerk reaction to the idea of standardisation. Nor does it mean that everyone must follow the standards all the time without regard to specific local needs. The Family Resemblance Model excludes this particular kind of tunnel vision. Consensus achievement means tough and fair negotiation based on a clear understanding of needs, models, and alternative solutions, and definition of reference benchmarks. In practice, standardisation of this kind already exists in the restricted domain of language testing, of course, in the guise of widely recognised and competing certificates, which define standard levels and protocols for information exchange about language proficiency.

In a Standardisation Consensus Framework, applied science work in ELT of the kind represented in this volume would be categorised as R&D, as in engineering, and notions of "Common Core", "Reference Model", "L_{target}", would enter into the arena of discussion on standards, in competition with polycentric and Family Resemblance Models. Pressure would increase in the direction of precision of definition, quality of resources and empirical methodology, and accuracy of evaluation. Evaluation, which is fundamentally the reason for standards in the first place, is especially important: the LFC, and other approaches, then needs to be subject to explicit operationalisation in such a way that specific applications can be evaluated with respect to the standard.

So where does the consensus formation start? The ship-builders and lifebelt makers in different parts of the world, whether Jenkins in Britain, Sobkowiak in Poland, Bamgbose in

Nigeria or others in other parts of the world, will hopefully continue the interchange manifested in the present volume and thrash things out the hard way, with Gricean and non-Gricean negotiation tactics, successes and bankruptcies, examining each others' ships and lifebelts professionally, and competing openly - and fairly - in the ELT market-place for the favour of their customers. In this endeavour the present volume is a promising ferry-boat across some of the more local archipelagos in these pronunciation oceans where the English language fair trade area has been developing for so long.

7. References

Bamgbose, A. (1998). "Torn between the norms: innovations in world Englishes." In: *World Englishes* 17/1:1-14.

Dziubalska-Kolaczyk, Katarzyna, ed. (2001). *Constraints and Preferences*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Gibbon, Dafydd, Roger Moore, Richard Winski, eds. (2001). *Handbook of Standards and Resources for Spoken Language Systems*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Gibbon, Dafydd, Inge Mertins & Roger Moore (2000). *Handbook of Multimodal and Spoken Dialogue Systems: Resources, Terminology and Product Evaluation*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Jenkins, Jennifer (2000). *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Jennifer (2002). A Sociolinguistically Based, Empirically Researched Pronunciation Syllabus for English as an International Language. *Applied Linguistics* 23:83-103.

Jenkins, Jennifer (2003). *World Englishes. A resource book for students*. London and New York: Routledge.

Jenkins, Jennifer (this volume). Misinterpretation, bias, and resistance to change: the case of the Lingua Franca Core.

Kuhn, Thomas S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stampe, David (1969). "The acquisition of phonetic representation". CLS 5.

Trudgill, Peter (2001). *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Weinreich, Uriel (1954): "Is a structural dialectology possible?" In: *Word* 10: 388-400.

Wells, John C. (1982). Accents of English, vols. 1-3. Cambridge University Press.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1953) *Philosophical Investigations /Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Edited by G.E.M. Anscombe und R. Rhees, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.