

WORLD ENGLISHES AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between World Englishes and Higher Education by focusing on the meaning making resources used by “users” of different varieties/dialects of World Englishes. The results of the study indicate that if we focus on the “uses” of language in particular contexts, we find patterns of similarities that are shared by speakers of diverse varieties of World Englishes. These findings support the broader literature on genres that show that language patterns on use—that is, patterns in language relate to specific contexts of use. In such contexts, the identity of the user seems to be less important than the purpose or use of the text. It is this “use” dimension of World Englishes that is explored in this paper using SFL as an informing linguistic theory. The paper shows that such studies can lead to interesting new ways of looking at variation across Englishes and that they can contribute greatly to our ability to use World Englishes research in our work on education, linguistics, and socio-economic development.

Move 2
step 1

step3

step 2

step 4

Keywords

educational linguistics, SFL theories of genre, uses-user complementarity

About the author

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is one attempt to explore the meaning making resources used by “users” of different varieties/dialects of World Englishes in the context of higher education. The purpose of doing this is to explore if and how language varies in the context of higher education and what, if any, implications this has to teaching and learning of English in these contexts. The paper will argue that language variation can be studied from a “user” perspective and a “uses” perspective and that the literature on World Englishes has so far

put in more emphasis on “user” variations than on “uses.” The paper will illustrate that studying variation along the “uses” dimension is also very important and that such studies are highly relevant in the application of World Englishes research in (higher) education.

This paper is based on the understanding that language is a semogenic system: a system that creates meaning. And that meaning created in specific contexts share patterns of language structure. Structural patterns in language are important because they carry the physical signs that are associated with meanings. In creating meaning, the context and the function of our text (oral, written and/or signed) is of vital importance and our choice of structural patterns is determined by what is considered socially appropriate in the context in which our text is produced. This can perhaps be exemplified by the considering the following example:

Imagine two people meeting. In one context, a person says “Good morning, Mr. Brown”; in another context, the same person says “Hey, wazzup dude.” What is the difference between these two texts? You have probably already figured out that the first greeting is a formal one, one in which the speaker is talking to their boss or a senior person in a formal context; whereas the second one is an informal greeting where both participants are friends and on an equal footing. You were able to figure this out simply by looking at the lexico-grammar used in the two texts. The reason you were able to do this is because you know that language reflects the context in which it is used. As humans, we are able to recognize, interpret, and create these patterns. These patterns construe and reflect our social and cultural realities. The structures themselves are selected through a system of choices: where each choice construes and reflects a different relationship between the participants. The first choice of wordings in the greetings creates a formal relationship, while the second a personal one. Language, thus, is a system of choices where different linguistic realizations create different meanings, enact different relationships between participants, and encourage different interpretations/reactions to the meanings that are being conveyed through specific linguistic choices.

Language is the fundamental resource with which we build and negotiate relationships, shape experience, and deal with the many issues and challenges of life. Thompson and Collins, in discussing how language constructs and maintains our sense of the world around us, give the example of how language reflects social structures and how a shift in language both represents and furthers changes social structures. They write:

Every time someone uses language “appropriate” for a social superior, they are both showing their awareness of their status and simultaneously

reinforcing the hierarchical social system. If people begin using less formal language when talking to social superiors (as has happened, for example, with the near disappearance of “Sir” as a term of respectful address to men in Britain), they are in effect changing the social structure. (137)

The change in the use of “sir” and its relationship to social hierarchies is one example of how language relates to society. Another more widely discussed example of how language relates to society and constructs our sense of “reality” is that of language and feminism. Feminist writers and activist have argued that English, like many other languages, constructs a “reality” that is couched in male ways of looking at the world. They argue, for example, that using “he” or “man” as gender-neutral pronouns is not a neutral process but rather creates a male-dominated view of the world. In response to this, there has been a shift in how formal and academic texts now use “they” as a gender-neutral pronoun—for both singular and plural subjects. They argue that in order to create a world that is gender-equal, we need to identify how language creates a male hegemony (dominance that is mistaken by most, including the dominated, to be fair and natural) and to make people aware of it so that a larger social objective can be achieved. In the examples shared above, it is notable that language represents and construes our understanding of the world and that a shift in language therefore represents different understandings and projection of realities.

The introduction to this paper has, so far, attempted to establish that language is about making choices that reflect our need to create contextually appropriate meanings. We will now consider how this issue is relevant to World Englishes and Higher Education. World Englishes has, in its short history, focused primarily on structural variations. This, as we will see in this paper, is partly a result of the dominant traditions in sociolinguistics. However, it is perhaps important to go back to early work in World Englishes that sees World Englishes as a process of resemanticization.

Meanings are of central importance in World Englishes. And meanings, of course, are realized in the form of wording and exchanged in social life. The importance given to meaning in Kachru’s early work is not surprising because Kachru, as a student of M.A.K. Halliday, was well aware of the role context plays in construing meaning in and through language. Meaning was crucial to a discussion of World Englishes to Kachru because, like Halliday, Kachru recognized that people, living in different contexts, construe and represent different realities through their language (in this case their variety of English).

In the context of World Englishes, this means that linguistic choices made by the speakers of different varieties of Englishes construe and represent meanings that may be different from other varieties of English. Mahboob provides one example of research demonstrating how English in Pakistan has been *resemanticized* to reflect local Islamic traditions, beliefs, and practices (this study will be discussed again later) (“English”). It is this kind of expansion of the meaning potential of English in the context of World Englishes that represents distinct linguistic varieties; and, not the structural variations in and of themselves.

Given the importance of the role of meaning in the development of World Englishes, it is surprising that much of the recent work on World Englishes describes linguistic variation only at or below the clause level (phoneme, phonology, morphology, lexis, and syntax) without much discussion of how these features relate to meaning. Kandiah also raised concerns about research on World Englishes that does not consider semantics and semiotics as a key aspect of their research. For example, Kandiah argues that World Englishes “fundamentally involve a radical act of semiotic reconstruction and reconstitution which of itself confers native userhood on the subjects involved in the act” and that this semiotic reconstruction and reconstitution needs to be studied by researchers working in this area (100). The research that does look at larger chunks of language in a World Englishes context does so by labeling the work as studies of pragmatics—and thus not “core” linguistics. Thus, it is not surprising that even the most comprehensive studies of inner and outer circle Englishes (e.g., studies included in Kortmann and Schneider) focus on structural variation in the dialects without giving much consideration to how the choices in the lexicogrammar made by speakers of these varieties of Englishes relate to the meanings being construed.

The critique of World Englishes for lack of attention to meaning in some ways goes back to the classic criticism of variationist sociolinguistics, as hinted earlier. Many researchers in World Englishes draw on models of research in sociolinguistics which focus on structural variation. In her critique of sociolinguistics, Beatriz Lavandera argues that variation studies that deal with “morphological, syntactic, and lexical alteration suffer from the lack of an articulated theory of meanings” (171). She finds this lack of attention to meaning problematic and argues that different forms mean different things and therefore should be studied as such. Without such consideration, she argues, a study of these variables “can only be heuristic devices, in no sense part of a theory of language” (179).

This is a severe criticism of studies in sociolinguistics that do not consider meaning to be an essential aspect of their study. Regrettably, a substantial body of research on World

Englishes falls under this category (e.g., contributions to Kortmann and Schneider)—paying little attention to the meaning-making aspects of language, and, consequently (and as Lavandera predicted) having little influence on theories of language. The structural variation research on World Englishes focusing on country-based Englishes serve as “heuristic device” to mark national identities, but do not really contribute to “a theory of language.” By doing this, World Englishes literature has had relatively little to say about (higher) education. The work that does deal with this (e.g., Matsuda) tends to talk about valuing the local varieties in education and arguing that using structural features from local varieties in education will empower the students. This paper explicitly questions such a position. The argument, as developed in this paper, will show that language variation can be seen in terms of “users” and “uses” of language and that it does not serve the interests of our students to teach them “user” varieties in contexts where communities-of-practice have well-established “uses” varieties of the language. In the context of education, it will be noted, we need to have a robust understanding of how language variation works, which forms of languages we should teach, for what purposes, and how.

In saying that World Englishes literature has had relatively little to say about (higher) education or that it has had relatively limited impact on linguistic theory, we need to clarify that we are *not* saying that World Englishes literature has had no impact on the politics of English language studies—it has. World Englishes evolved out of a need to question linguistic hegemony and to question the use of “native” models of English as the only “correct” ways of using language. In this, World Englishes has been quite successful (see Chapter 1 of Mahboob, *Applicable Linguistics*, for a longer discussion for this). What is meant here is that the influence of World Englishes on linguistic theory has been limited because it primarily focuses on how linguistic structures vary across geographical boundaries. World Englishes looks at how language is used in diverse global contexts to reflect and construe diverse cultural and human activities and beliefs and therefore has the potential to significantly contribute to a theory of language. This significance can be greatly boosted if we study how meanings and reality is construed in different varieties of World Englishes.

USERS AND USES OF WORLD ENGLISHES

In their 1964 book, *Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*, Halliday, McIntosh, and Stevens outline the linguistic basis for why and how language differs along the dimensions of language “use” and language “users.” They point out that on the one hand

language is shaped by the “use” that it is put to and on the other hand it carries markers that identify the “users” or speakers of that language. This is a key distinction that needs to be understood in the context of World Englishes and higher education. In this paper, I call this the distinction the *uses-user* complementarity. The term complementarity here highlights the importance of considering both perspectives in studying World Englishes.

Literature on World Englishes has traditionally focused on the “users” and looked at linguistic features and structures that can be used to identify them. The results of such a focus on the “users” leads to a neglect of the “uses” of English within a World Englishes paradigm. This paper will attempt to show that focusing on the “uses” of English is an equally useful way of studying World Englishes, especially in the context of higher education. The importance of this in the context of higher education can be appreciated if we look at the work being done in educational linguistics, which is briefly reviewed below.

While literature on World Englishes has focused on “user” based variations in English, research in educational linguistics (Martin and Rose *Working with Discourse, Genre Relations*) has significantly contributed to our understanding of “use” based variations in language. Genres in Systemic Functional Linguistics are defined as “staged social processes.” Genres carry particular social roles and functions in society and are goal-oriented, institutionalized forms of discourse (Martin and Rose *Working with Discourse, “Designing Literacy”*). Genres in SFL relate to different “uses” of language and refer to different types of texts, which are created to interact with other people in specific contexts.

These “uses” (genres) of language have a prominent role in language in (higher) education. The language of academia includes a range of genres that are used in various disciplines. For example, people who work in science use specific genres to write up their experiments and research reports. These reports tend to follow similar organizational patterns (e.g., the report starts with listing the objectives of the experiment, followed by a list of the apparatus/equipment/material used, a presentation of results, a discussion of these results, and finally a conclusion) and use similar language structures (e.g., use of agentless passives, past tense in describing the procedures used, etc.). These patterns of language bundle with specific uses of the language and evolve over time and are shared by the speech community that use them. It is important to note that such descriptions of language are not prescriptive, but rather describe how language is used. Furthermore, these patterns of language are not fixed, but rather fluid and change over time, as deemed necessary by the community that uses them.

Although there is considerable research on “user” and “uses” based variations in language, there is almost no literature that looks at the intersection of these: What happens

when users of different varieties of English write texts that serve similar purposes? Are their patterns of use different from each other or similar? How can we explain these? The present paper is an initial attempt in addressing these questions. In this study, as will be noted in the analysis and the discussion of the findings, we note that the “uses” of the language in higher education seem to influence the choices made by “users” of different World Englishes. However, there are a number of issues that also need to be considered in interpreting and using the findings of this study. These findings and issues will be presented and discussed in greater detail in later sections of this paper.

A discussion of language “uses” and “users” relates closely to some new and interesting discussions of World Englishes in the context of intercultural communication as well. Specifically, the *user-uses* complementarity in language discussed here corroborates Kirkpatrick’s “identity-communication continuum.” In describing this model, Kirkpatrick writes,

I call one end of the continuum “communication” because being intelligible and getting your meaning across is the most important aspect of the communicative function. More standard or educated varieties are likely to be better suited for communication. Broad, informal varieties or job- and class-specific registers are likely to be better suited for signifying identity. (*World Englishes* 11)

This description of “identity” and “communication” is compatible with *user-uses* complementarity: “users” mark their personal traits by using “identity” features; and “uses” are socially constructed ways of making meaning in specific contexts so that people from different backgrounds can “communicate” efficiently and effectively. Kirkpatrick further clarifies that the “communication” function requires a stable common language because “the more people who are involved and the greater the social distance between them, the greater the intelligibility function of their speech will be in any act of communication ... If they use these [identity] varieties with people outside their group, they can be impossible to understand” (11-12). As such, there is a move within World Englishes literature that is starting to consider the “uses” of language and the linguistic features associated with it as the subject of study. This paper pursues this distinction to show how “uses” of English, in the context of higher education, can be seen as being similar across some national/regional boundaries and that it is important to distinguish

between “users” and “uses” of Englishes as we try to study the implications of World Englishes for higher education.

A FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING “MEANING” IN WORLD ENGLISHES

This paper adopts a Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics perspective to studying meaning in World Englishes. SFL takes meaning and social variation in language as a starting point for understanding how language functions in different contexts and is therefore quite appropriate to adopt in this context. Thus, in order to explore how individuals using different varieties of Englishes construct meaning, this paper will report on a SFL oriented analyses of texts written by three users of outer circle varieties of English – this analysis will be shared in a later section. There are two main reasons for using SFL as an informing linguistic theory for this work.

One reason for using tools based on SFL is that, as stated above, it looks at language as a meaning-making process that is grounded in the context of culture and situation (texts examined here are produced in specific contexts and for specific purposes).

This is important in the context of World English because it shifts our gaze from only syntagmatic structures of the language and helps us to focus on paradigmatic choices that relate to variations in meaning as well. SFL, as a theory of language, posits that the context impacts our linguistic choices, and, in fact, relates to the linguistic choices that are allocated to us as members of various communities. The importance given to context allows us to develop understandings of how language variation relates to the purposes (uses) and users of language.

The second reason for using SFL is that it considers the whole text as the unit of analysis since “[s]ocial contexts are realized as texts which are realized as sequences of clauses” (Martin and Rose “Designing Literacy” 4) rather than only focussing on language at or below the clause level. This, again, has implications for studies in World Englishes that typically focus on clause level or smaller units of language. Meanings evolve over longer texts. Focusing on only clause or smaller units does not allow us to explore the ways in which users of World Englishes create meanings. Thus, a text-based approach is more appropriate if we are to explore how meanings are construed and represented through language.

Building on this, this paper attempts to examine the meaning-making resources that are used by users of three varieties of World Englishes. The data used in the study

are authentic texts that three students from the outer circle countries wrote as part of their MA coursework at an Australian university. The texts are “article reviews” — one of the core assignments for the course. In order to complete this assignment, students were asked to read a key research article in their field of study and then to summarize and critique the article. All article reviews written by the students in the course who agreed to participate in this study were analyzed. (There were 28 students enrolled in the course of which 20 students participated in this project). However, for the purposes of this paper (in consideration of space constraints), only article reviews written by three students will be shared. These three students were selected because they represent different linguistic and national heritages—they were born and grew up in three different outer circle countries. The pseudonyms for the three students whose texts are analyzed here are: Niloo, Ashwini, and Yasmina. Niloo, an Australian citizen of Sri Lankan origin, was educated in English-medium schools in Sri Lanka before migrating to Australia in 2006. Niloo speaks Sinhalese and English at home. Ashwini, a Singaporean student (of Indian heritage), was a first semester student in the program and had recently arrived from Singapore, where she was educated in English medium schools. She speaks English as well as Punjabi at home; however, Ashwini does not consider her Punjabi very proficient and prefers to speak in English. Yasmina, an Australian citizen of Indian origin, received her formative education in India, but attended college in Australia before joining the MA program. Yasmina speaks English at home, and Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi with her extended family. This paper will examine the linguistic resources used by these three individuals to construe specific meanings required in writing article reviews.

In order to proceed, we will provide a broad introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theories of genre. We will then briefly describe the analytical tools used in this paper and examine how the three students from the outer circle countries construct their texts and discuss the implications of such an analysis to World Englishes.

SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AND GENRE STUDIES

Systemic Functional Linguistics views language as a social semiotic system—a resource that people use to accomplish their purposes and to construe and represent meaning in context. This view of language implies that language is a system of choices and that aspects of a given context (e.g., the topics, the users) define the meanings that are to be expressed and the language that can be used to express those meanings. In SFL theory, language as a social semiotic system is realized on four different levels of

abstraction, which have been termed *strata*: phonology-graphology, lexico-grammar, discourse-semantics, and context. The most basic resources for meaning-making are basic phonological or graphological units. At the strata of lexico-grammar, the units of phonology and graphology are realized as words and structures and as higher-level abstractions. At the discourse semantic level, meanings are created across text as a whole, rather than just within clauses. Context stands at the highest level of abstraction or strata, which can be divided into context of situation (register) and context of culture (genre). Register realizes genre through the metafunctions or variables of *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. Field is concerned with the nature of social action; tenor refers to the relationship among participants, their roles and status; whereas mode refers to the role of language to realize meanings (Martin and Rose *Genre Relations*).

Genres are defined as “staged social processes” with particular social roles and functions in society that are goal-oriented, institutionalized forms of discourse (Martin and Rose *Working with Discourse, “Designing Literacy”*). Genres in SFL theory are used to refer to different types of texts, which are created to interact with other people in social contexts by using different social functions. These social functions of language are defined as metafunctions and are used to make *ideational*, *interpersonal*, and *textual* meanings in texts. In brief, within the academic context/texts, ideational meanings (field) are created when technical and specialized discipline areas or discourses are built. Interpersonal meanings (tenor) are constructed in distanced and objectified ways to build relationships between the writer and the reader, as some kind of “social reality” is constructed. Textual meanings (mode) are used to pack up information and refer to the resources used for the organization of abstract texts (Eggs; Martin and Rose *Working with Discourse, Genre Relations*).

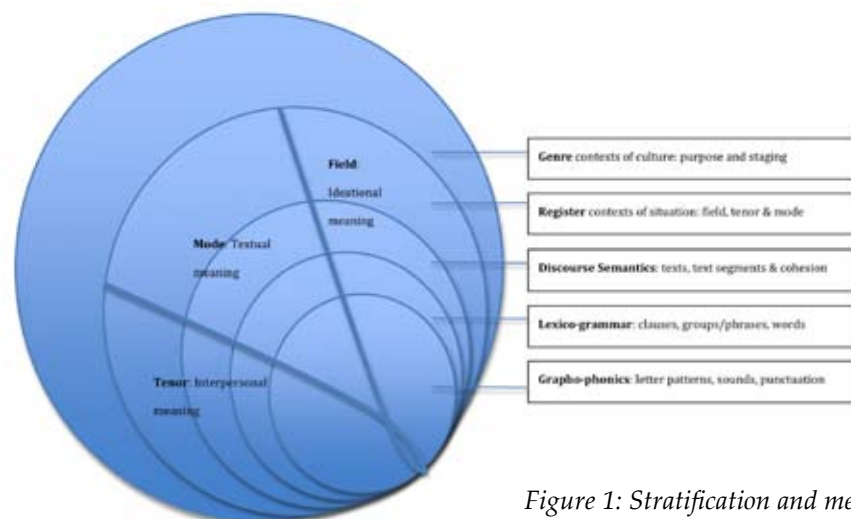


Figure 1: Stratification and metafunction in SFL

The strata and metafunctions in SFL are mapped on to with each other. This mapping is presented in Figure 1.

This paper uses the SLF framework in developing analytical tools for examining student texts. These tools are discussed below.

ANALYZING THE DATA

The article reviews collected for this study were analyzed for their language by using a 3x3 matrix (Humphrey et al.). The 3x3 matrix used is based on a systemic functional understanding of language and maps three levels of strata (genre, discourse, and grammar and expression) on the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual), described in the previous section. The complete matrix is presented in Figure 2.

	1. Genre (at level of whole text)	2. Discourse (across clauses)	3. Grammar and Expression (within clause)
A. Ideational Meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does the text include information which is relevant to the topic and purpose? ii. Do the Beginning, Middle and End stages of the text achieve the purpose? iii. Are tables, diagrams, examples and quotes combined with verbal text in logical relationships (eg. to extend, report, specify or qualify points). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is field or subject knowledge demonstrated through classifications and generalisations of things and activities (eg. as a type of part of something). ii. Is the information related in logical relationships (eg. time, cause, consequence, comparison). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Are activities and things described and classified by expanding noun groups? ii. Does the text feature technical and formal vocabulary appropriate to the field? iii. Is explaining and reasoning carried out mainly within the clause (ie. through nouns, verbs and adverbials)? iv. Does spelling follow academic conventions?
B. Interpersonal Meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is the text organised rhetorically to orient reader to a particular position on issue or data? (eg. By accumulating evaluations across the text; by reinforcing thesis within individual arguments) ii. Does the text show a critical perspective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does the text evaluate phenomena according to institutional rather than personal criteria (eg. value, benefit, relevance, validity, significance). ii. Are assessments and evaluations expressed indirectly? iii. Are resources of grading used to control the intensity and focus of evaluations? iv. Does the voice of the student writer control the argument? v. Are authoritative sources used to provide evidence? vi. Are expanding and contracting resources used to control development of arguments and introduce alternate perspectives (eg. modality, attribution and concession) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does clause structure follow recognisable and appropriate patterns of English? ii. Are subjects and verbs consistent in terms of number? iii. Are tense and voice choices appropriate and consistent? iv. Are 1st and 3rd person pronouns used appropriately? v. Is grading infused in lexical items rather than expressed as isolated adverbials? vi. Are sources referenced according to discipline specifications (eg. MLA)? vii. Is interpersonal metaphor used to express modality (eg. probability, obligation)?
C. Textual Meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do layers of preview and review elements across text predict the information to come and consolidate points made (eg Outline, Summary). ii. Do global headings, layout conventions and internal conjunctions scaffold generic stages (eg. In conclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Are topic sentences used to predict information in paragraphs? ii. Do choices of given and new information create a logical flow of information across paragraphs? iii. Are entities tracked through appropriate cohesive resources (eg. referencing, substitution, repetition and ellipsis)? iv. Does the text shunt between 'packaged' abstract entity focus in topic sentence and more 'unpacked' concrete activity focus within paragraphs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Are sentence and clause Themes used to signal topic focus and shifts in meanings? ii. Is nominalisation used to rework processes, qualities and logical relations as abstract things? iii. Are articles used appropriately? iv. Does punctuation assist information structure?

Figure 2: The 3x3 Matrix (3 metafunctions x 3 strata)

The 3x3 matrix is set up as a set of questions that help identify how and what linguistic resources are used to construct ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning in these texts across the three strata (genre, discourse, and grammar). The three strata were conflated within each metafunction for the purposes of this study. By adopting the 3x3 matrix for the purposes of this study, we were able to carry out a detailed linguistic analysis of the students' texts focusing on what linguistic resources the writers used in constructing these texts. The following section presents the results of the analysis.

CONSTRUING MEANING IN WORLD ENGLISHES

This section presents the results of the linguistic analysis of the texts written by the three participants chosen for this study. The analyses focused on what linguistic resources Niloo, Ashwini, and Yasmina used to construct ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings in their texts. The discussion following the analysis shows how the three students drew on similar (and genre appropriate) linguistic resources in developing their texts. As a note, it needs to be emphasized that the texts analyzed here were written by students in Australia studying in an MA course. Thus, while we find patterns of similarities here, it is possible that students writing article reviews in their home countries might use different linguistic resources. This is a possibility; however, for the purposes of this paper (and because of the data used here), we will not pursue this line of inquiry. It is, however, an issue that will be raised again later on and is worthy of future studies.

LINGUISTIC RESOURCES IN NILOO'S TEXTS

Niloo, an Australian student of Sri Lankan heritage, received her formative education in Sri Lanka and migrated to Australia about three years ago. In Niloo's essay, ideational meanings at the genre level were constructed through clear functional stages (summary and critical evaluation) to answer the task critically. A range of linguistic resources at the discourse level was used to generalize and classify the field, and points were related logically by addition, extension, exemplification, contrast, cause and time. Examples of these are shown in Table 1.

Expressions generalizing field	Logical relationships
<p><i>pedagogical resistance</i> <i>social and linguistic backgrounds</i> <i>oral component in the examination</i></p>	<p><i>exemplification:</i> <i>in the form of</i> <i>cause:</i> <i>[t]herefore, are indicative of</i> <i>contrast:</i> <i>while</i> <i>time:</i> <i>at the end of the course, before</i> <i>the final examination</i></p>

Table 1: Building field and logical relationships

At the grammar and expression level formal and specialized vocabulary strings and expanded noun groups were chosen as linguistic resources to build discipline-specific field knowledge. Examples of specialized vocabulary within expanded noun groups include “the lack of student motivation,” “29 socially underprivileged Tamil students,” and “grammatical product-based learning indicative of accommodation of the desire for social mobility.” Recognizable spelling also contributed to the construction of ideational meanings.

Interpersonal meanings at the level of genre created a relatively personal relationship with the reader. Although academic texts usually adopt objectified ways of creating meaning, Niloo’s subjective language constructed a convincing and critical evaluation of the article because of her use of authoritative evidence. Examples of this are illustrated in Table 2.

Resources used to introduce a critical perspective
<p>I question [the author]’s credentials and evidential data to pursue such a psychoanalytic argument. Having gone through a compulsory English programme in a Lankan university myself, I argue that ‘glosses’ is a common phenomenon. Therefore, to link these to unconscious forms of resistance is far fetched. I think a control study of similar glosses in texts used for other subjects might give us more insight to this question.</p>

Table 2: Resources used to provide a critical and convincing answer to the task

Niloo's use of evaluative resources on the discourse level contributed to the construction of persuasion. Examples of academically valued ways of assessment (e.g. benefit, relevance, significance, as well as expanding (attribution, modality) and contracting devices [denying, confronting]) were widely applied. Excerpts to show examples of these are included in Table 3.

Resources to develop critical stance
<p><i>There are some fundamental flaws</i> in his argument. <i>The clear message by the students</i> that mastery of English is sought primarily for passing the examination, <i>is not emphasized</i>. He also <i>overlooks</i> the lack of oral component in the examination, which <i>if present may have had</i> a different response from students. Including a process-based component in the examination <i>may have been</i> a worthwhile control in this research.</p>

Table 3: Control of linguistic resources to develop critical stance

At the grammar and expression level, sentence structure, tense and voice choice, subject/verb agreement and referencing conventions were also used to build the academic status of the writer.

In terms of *textual* meanings, Niloo's text demonstrated an ability to organize the text and signpost meanings. For example, the choices of Themes such as "The paper examines...", "[The author] claims...", "[The author] hypothesizes...", "The analysis finds..." and "[The author] concludes..." keep the focus on the research activity. The construction of a well-organized text on the discourse level was also demonstrated by the use of various cohesive devices, such as topic sentences, Themes, referencing, repetition, and shunting to create logical flow throughout the text, as indicated by Table 4.

A range of cohesive resources/Shunting/ <u>Themes</u>
<p><u>This paper</u> examines how a Sri Lankan Tamil General Purpose English class resists and accommodates an alien culture, depicted by an American core text. [...] <u>They</u> categorically state that they enjoyed learning about American culture. [<u>The author</u>] concludes that the students' conscious statements belie their unconscious resistance to this foreign culture.</p>

Table 4: Cohesive resources

At the level of expression Niloo used metaphorical expressions of processes and evaluations, such as nominalization to package information and reasoning through verbal groups. One example of this is given in Table 5:

Metaphorical expressions/ Nominalisation
<p>The lack of student motivation is due to an alien culture imposed on the students which result in student resistance.</p>

Table 5: The use of metaphorical expressions, nominalization and Themes

Therefore, despite a personal focus, Niloo's use of linguistic resources to build technical and abstract meanings at each strata resulted in the construction of an academically valued genre-specific text.

LINGUISTIC RESOURCES IN ASHWINI'S TEXT

Ashwini, a Singaporean student (of Indian origin), was a first semester student in the program and had recently arrived from Singapore. At the level of genre, clear functional stages were used to answer the task critically in an objectified way in Ashwini's text. She also demonstrated knowledge of the specialized field through generalizations and built logical relationships (e.g., addition, extension, contrast) throughout the paper. Examples for

generalizing the field naming participants, activities and qualities, and linguistic resources to create logical relationships in this student’s text are shown in Table 6. Furthermore, at the grammar and expression level, specialized field knowledge was built by formal and specialized vocabulary, and expanded noun groups, for example: “22 Sri Lankan tertiary Tamil students,” “[*The author*]’s (1989) definition of ideological domination,” and “the complex range of attitudes of minority students.”

Expressions generalizing field	Logical relationships
<i>ideological domination</i> <i>an empirical study</i> <i>the sociopolitics of the language...</i>	<i>addition: also</i> <i>extension: [h]is other findings</i> <i>contrast: although, and yet</i>

Table 6: Building field and logical relationships (experiential meanings)

Interpersonal meanings valued in academic writing at the genre level were created by introducing a critical perspective, which means that Ashwini provided an objectified and convincing answer to the task. Examples of these resources can be seen in Table 7.

Resources used to provide a critical and convincing answer to the task
<p>However, this explanation seems tenuous as the threats to cultural alienation are not obvious as the students themselves claim that they enjoy learning about the American culture.</p>

Table 7: Resources used to provide a critical and convincing answer to the task

At the level of discourse, regarding the student’s control of resources to develop critical stance, there were examples of impersonal and indirect evaluative resources; for instance, assessment of benefit, relevance, and significance, as well as expanding (attribution and modality) and contracting (denying, confronting) resources as shown in both Table 8 and 9.

Resources to develop critical stance
<i>Undoubtedly</i> , English is seen as a <i>useful</i> language that the students <i>need</i> to learn and master. Their falling attendance <i>may simply be due to the fact that</i> they are not being taught the grammar rules that are <i>necessary</i> for them to pass the examinations.

Table 9: Control of linguistic resources to develop critical stance

At the expression level, linguistic choices to establish the authority of the text were exemplified by her choice of tense and voice, subject-verb agreement, and discipline-specific referencing strategies. Thus, it has been shown that this student's construction of interpersonal meanings was demonstrated by the use of linguistic resources mainly on the discourse and expression levels.

To build textual meanings at the genre level, Themes to signpost and predict stages as well as layers of preview and review were used to organize the text into a coherent piece of academic writing. Some examples of this are: "[*The author*]'s study examines...", "[*The author*] examines...", "[*The author*] calls for..." In [*the author*]'s study, he finds...", "His other findings reveal...", "His explanation...", "However, this explanation...", and "Although [*the author*]'s study aims to..." At the discourse level, *textual* resources to predict information were found, as Ashwini used a range of cohesive devices such as Theme-as-topic, repetition, referencing, and conjunction as shown in Table 10:

Cohesive resources/ <u>Themes-as-topic</u>
<i>The opposition</i> to English is seen in the textbook glosses , falling attendance and their resistance to using English in the classroom.

Table 10: Cohesive resources

At the level of grammar and expression, nominalization was one linguistic resource chosen to signal topic focus, examples of which are shown in Table 11.

Nominalization
<p>Their reasons for learning English are mainly practical as the majority state educational need as their first preference and suggest more pragmatic reasons in open-ended questions.</p>

Table 11: Nominalization and Themes

All in all, it can be seen that Ashwini used more linguistic resources to build academically valued abstract meanings at the discourse and expression levels than at the genre level to construct an academic text.

LINGUISTIC RESOURCES IN YASMINA'S TEXTS

Yasmina, an Australian citizen of Indian origin, had received her formative education in India before coming to Australia to attend college in 2004. *Specialized field knowledge* at the genre level were constructed in Yasmina's text by clearly marking the stages of summary and critical evaluation. The information provided was easily identified in terms of staging and was relevant to the purpose of the assignment. At the discourse level, specialized field knowledge was built by the use of various linguistic resources, such as generalized vocabulary and logical relationships (addition, cause, comparison, contrast, time, etc.) throughout the text. Some examples of these are included in Table 12.

Expressions generalizing field	Logical relationships
<p><i>a longitudinal study</i> <i>difference in teaching styles a clash of pedagogical styles and expectations</i></p>	<p>addition: [a]dditionally cause: it is because of, the reason for contrast: rather than time: as the year progressed</p>

Table 12: Building field and logical relationships

At the grammar and expression level, formal and specialized vocabulary strings and the use of expanded noun groups contributed to the construction of technical, discipline-specific meanings. Examples include “their retaliation in reaction to English language learning,” “Tamil students from Sri Lanka of underprivileged personal backgrounds,” and “a clash of cultural demands in the need for education.”

Interpersonal resources at the level of genre were used in a distanced and objectified way resulting in a convincing and critical answer supported by authoritative evidence. Examples of these are indicated in Table 13:

Resources used to introduce a critical perspective
While it is important to understand the way in which resistance in the classroom occurs to language acquisition as a response to cultural threat, perhaps more attention needs to be given towards the notion of English itself.

Table 13: Resources used to provide a critical and convincing answer to the task

At the discourse level, the development of critical stance was realized by evaluative examples of attribution, assessment of benefit/relevance, grading, interplay of student voice with authoritative evidence, expanding (attribution, modality) and contracting (denying, confronting) devices, which were widely applied throughout the whole text. Excerpts from the text containing examples of these are shown in Table 14:

Resources to develop critical stance
<i>Although he outlines</i> the difference in teaching styles and classroom expectation between his pedagogy and the Tamil pedagogy, there are a few things that <i>need to be questioned</i> in this study. [...] By pushing a pedagogical style onto students <i>in claim of being more beneficial</i> or <i>more appropriate</i> , it is, <i>undoubtedly, placing</i> one teaching style <i>over</i> another <i>in value</i> .

Table 14: Control of linguistic resources to develop critical stance

At the grammar and expression level, Yasmina’s choices of tense and voice, subject-verb agreement, and referencing strategies also contributed to convincing the reader.

To build *textual* meanings on the level of genre, layers of previewing and reviewing were widely used to predict and scaffold stages, examples of which include “[*The author*] attempts to understand...,” “[*The author*] highlights the contrast...,” “[*The author*] suggests...,” “The predominant suggestion by [*the author*] ...,” “Although [*the author*] spends time...,” and “The chapter discussed above provides....” At the discourse level, Yasmina’s use of cohesive devices (referencing, repetition, conjunction, and shunting) contributed to creating logical flow throughout the text . Some examples of these are included in Table 15:

A range of cohesive resources/Shunting/<i>Themes</i> (<i>New</i>)
He aims to analyse...the way in which students react in a way of tackling a <i>cultural struggle and threat</i> . Providing students from war-torn, poor backgrounds with these textbooks containing images and stories of people from a culture that can in no way be related to their own .

Table 15: Cohesive resources

At the expression level, metaphorical expressions of processes and evaluations, such as nominalization to package information, reasoning through verbal groups, and topical and marked Themes to signal topic focus were widely applied in Yasmina’s assignment, as shown in Table 16.

Metaphorical expressions/ Nominalisation/ <i>Themes</i>
<i>Most students</i> ...did not see English as a language that threatened their own culture, and some even believed that it would provide them with the tools required to better their own society . [...] ... the reason for student reaction ...was because of ...the complete lack of cultural empathy in the material.

Table 16: The use of metaphorical expressions, nominalization and Themes

The analysis provided above show that abstract and academically valued meanings were constructed in Yasmina’s assignment by using a wide range of linguistic resources across all strata.

COMPARING TEXTS WRITTEN BY NILOO, ASHWINI, AND YASMINA

The results of the analysis presented above showed some emerging patterns: the three participants used a number of similar linguistic resources to construct the types of meaning required in the task. In fact, the participants showed more similarities in creating their texts than differences. This is understandable because we had analyzed written texts that were written for the same (specific) purpose. Article reviews are a specific genre—which reflect use-based variations—and genres tend to share a pool of resources that are used in their construction. While it is possible that people speaking certain varieties of World Englishes use different language resources to create the same text type, the present study did not find any such differences. Had we found such evidence in the present study (and the three participants had used different linguistic resources to create the same text types), there would have been a strong argument to categorize them as different varieties of English—since those varieties would have shown different ways of constructing and representing meaning for achieving similar purposes. However, this was not the case and for the most part the three participants used similar linguistic resources to create the types of meanings expected in an article review. Thus, the three participants—even though they represent three different national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds—can be said to be users of the same variety of English (which may or may not be similar to Inner, Expanding, or other Outer Circle varieties) when it comes to writing in the context of higher education. In interpreting the results of this study, it does need to be considered that had the three participants written different types of texts (say, an article review, a research proposal, and an exposition), there might have been many more differences in the linguistic resources that they used than similarities. But, these differences would most likely have been a result of the variation in genres rather than in the varieties that the participants represented. Furthermore, given that all three of the participants are students at an Australian university and have lived in Australia for some time, it is possible that their exposure to Australia and the educational system in Australia has influenced their linguistic choices. It is therefore quite relevant for us to carry out studies that examine comparable texts from people living in the outer circle countries to study the similarities/differences in the ways that these text types are produced locally.

While Niloo, Ashwini, and Yasmina used a number of similar linguistic resources to create metafunctions across all strata of language, there were a few observable differences in the texts written by the three participants. However, based on the current data, we did not find any strong patterns of differences in their writing. It is possible that the differences observed and discussed below were individual differences and not patterned difference between varieties. Some of the differences observed are discussed below.

When constructing ideational meanings at the discourse level, Ashwini chose to use a narrow range of linguistic resources: addition, extension, and contrast were her three choices to relate points logically. In comparison, the other two participants adopted a larger range of linguistic resources to create similar meanings. There were also a few differences in the linguistic choices made to construct interpersonal meanings at the genre level in each text. While Ashwini's and Yasmina's arguments were presented in a distanced and impersonal way, Niloo chose to present her answer in a personal rather than objective manner supported by authoritative evidence. While all the three participants used evaluative resources at the level of discourse to persuade the reader, one difference in their construction was identified once again in Niloo's assignment. While the other two students assessed the original article according to institutional rather than personal criteria along with providing authoritative evidence, some direct value judgments appeared in Niloo's text, for instance, "there *are* some fundamental flaws" or "the clear message *is*." While the differences between Niloo and the other two participants are noteworthy, it needs to be mentioned that Niloo was from Sri Lanka, which was the context in which the study being reviewed was set. Thus, Niloo's choice of adopting a personal tone might be a result of her first-hand understanding of the context being shared—something that the other two participants did not have (and which reflected in their choice of a more objective and distanced stance).

DISCUSSION

The results of the linguistic analysis show that the three students created meanings using mostly similar linguistic resources when reviewing the same text. The differences between the writers were mostly a result of individual differences and varying degrees of awareness of the context of the article being reviewed. These findings are consistent with an understanding of "uses" based variations in language studies (e.g., Martin and Rose). It also confirms Kirkpatrick's position that language in the academic arena serves as a "communicative" function where "getting your meaning across is the most important

aspect" (11). Among other things, one important question that arises from this discussion is the role of World Englishes in (higher) education.

As has been shown in this paper, language variation is meaningful. Furthermore, language can vary based on "users" and "uses." In the context of education, the primary function of language is to employ language for particular "uses" (writing narratives, reports, etc.). In such contexts, "who we are" is less important than "what we are saying" (the purpose and "uses" of our texts). What we say is understood in the context of disciplines, subject matter, and specific tasks. The language used in these contexts has evolved over a period of time and represents how a particular field construes meaning. This understanding is very important in the context of (higher) education. If the goal of education is to help students to engage with specific academic and professional fields, then we need to be able to give these students the language that they need to succeed. The purpose here is not to suppress their "user" varieties, but rather to help them develop an understanding of "uses" varieties as well. At present, various genre-based and ESP approaches to language and literacy training are experimenting with ways in which this can be done in a number of different countries. These approaches do not discount individual identities. Rather, they help learners achieve their ambitions by giving them access to the language that they need in order to succeed in education (and life).

An understanding of how genres work in education and the pedagogical implications of such an understanding of language on education in the context of World Englishes has yet to be fully explored. This paper is an attempt to explore this relationship. However, it is limited in that the texts examined here, although written by authors representing different varieties of Englishes, were all written for a program in Australia. The linguistic resources used by these speakers showed considerable convergence. However, what we don't know is how these texts are produced in the context where World Englishes are used as the dominant native dialects. These are questions that still need to be explored.

While the current study does not provide us data with how "users" of World Englishes may construct texts differently in their home contexts, previous work in World Englishes that focuses on text as a unit of analysis do suggest that there are certain key differences. For example, Hartford and Mahboob studied the organizational structure of letters of complaint published in Pakistani English and observed that the letters written by users of Pakistani English include moves that are not found in a comparable corpus of American or British English. They observe that letters of complaint in Pakistani English

often begin with a broad introduction and/or praise. This introduction does not contribute to the topic of the complaint. Two examples cited in Hartford and Mahboob are:

(1) In today's scientific world, as you know, the society is developing rapidly. However, at the same time a number of problems also arise as a result of these developments. In this letter the problem that I will bring to your notice is the disorganization of traffic.

(2) I feel happy writing that your newspaper *Nawa-e-Waqt* makes an enormous contribution towards the spread of religious and moral learning.

In both (1) and (2) the introduction and the praise do not directly relate to the topic of the letters. They function as mitigators to soften the complaints. Such softeners are not found in American or British letters of complaints. In addition to organizational features, Hartford and Mahboob also note that the authors of the letters of complaint that they studied used AIPs (Affect Indicating Phrases—which indicate the writer's attitude towards the request being made, e.g., "It is high time that...") instead of IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices—those introductory clauses which actually name the speech act which is about to be performed, e.g., "I request that..."). They report that a number of the IFIDs and AIPs are used in passive construction. Hartford and Mahboob suggest that this is done to mitigate the request and to make it more polite. These variations in Pakistani English change the tenor of the text and provide some evidence that particular genres may be realized in different ways in different varieties of Englishes.

In another study that focused on whole texts, Mahboob looked at Acknowledgements to the MA thesis and once again found that the Acknowledgements written by Pakistani writers included moves that reflect local cultural practices. In surveying 18 MA theses submitted to a Department of English at an urban university in Pakistani in 2006, all of them started with reference to Allah. Example (3) below is one such acknowledgement from our corpus:

(3) This thesis was written by the guidance of Allah, who made the completion of this project possible...

The explicit praise of Allah in the first part of the Acknowledgement is foregrounding a Pakistani Muslim tradition in which one acknowledges their humble

nature and praises Allah for all things. This move reflects the context of culture, which relates to the meanings that are construed and reflected in a particular speech community.

The two studies described above suggest, contrary to the present paper, that “users” of World Englishes do chose to create meanings differently in and through their texts. The contrast between these findings and the current study needs some discussion. One possible reason for the difference in the findings is that the data analyzed in this paper comes from World Englishes speakers who are studying in an Australian university. Being successful students, they understand what language is valued in constructing academic texts in these contexts and therefore adopt the appropriate language. We can find some support for this hypothesis in Mahboob and Szenes’s paper in which they look at assessment practices in higher education and document how non-use of appropriate genres and language can result in low (or even failing) grades in the University. Thus, students learn to use the language that is valued in their particular contexts.

Another possible explanation for the differences in the findings of the current and the previous studies is that the current study focuses on an academic genre, whereas the other studies looked at socially and interpersonally loaded texts (complaints and acknowledgements). It is possible that academic genres do not reflect similar variations—given their context of use and their purpose. However, this hypothesis needs further examination. One way of doing this would be to analyze articles written and published by authors of World Englishes in their own countries. Such an analysis may give us more insights as to whether academic genres are constructed in similar ways across varieties of Englishes or not. If they do use similar linguistic resources, than the findings will have a significant impact on our pedagogical practices. If the linguistic resources used to construct academic texts across the varieties are similar, then we do need to consider how to teach these genres of power to our students in order for them to achieve their goals. This implication of linguistic studies of genre to education has been explored in educational linguistics.

Educational linguists who focus on the “uses” based variations in language have been very relevant to educational contexts (see, for example, Christie; Cope and Kalantzis; Feez; Macken-Horarik; Martin). Critical applied linguists and educational linguists working with genre-based pedagogy have documented that students who come from non-privileged socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds are not always able to cope with the language needs posed to them in the context of education. They have shown that student from these contexts need to be taught the social functions, purposes, and linguistic features of different discipline-specific genres explicitly—if these people are to succeed in the

educational enterprise. They point out that the skills required to produce written academic texts—the genres of power and access—are not equally available to students from minority or marginalized groups—including users of World Englishes. The aim of genre pedagogy is not simply to teach students genres in an unquestioning manner as in transmission pedagogies but to also teach them the skills to critically deconstruct texts to avoid creating another assimilationist model of education. It needs to be clarified that genre pedagogies do *not* support a prescriptive approach to language teaching/learning. They understand that writers can learn to and be accepted for using alternative ways of making-meaning—ways of meaning that are valued in specific contexts of use. However, this acceptance comes through a process of learning in which the novice writers first gain access to the community of practice that they want to become members of before posing challenges to it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the goals of this paper was to explore if and how language varies in the context of higher education. The results of the study indicate that there are more similarities than differences in the language used by users of three regional varieties of English when writing specific assignments. These findings support the broader literature on genres that show that language patterns on use—that is, patterns in language relate to specific contexts of use. In academic discourse, such as article reviews, the communities of academics that write these texts have evolved ways in which to structure these texts. The students, who are learning to become members of these academic communities, learn how to use these patterns and adopt them in their own work. These genres are not “native” to any particular speech group (or inner circle variety), rather they evolve and change based on the needs of the discipline and the purpose of the texts. In such contexts, the identity of the user is less important than the purpose or use of the text. It is this “use” dimension of World Englishes that is explored in this paper using SFL as an informing linguistic theory.

In studying World Englishes from an SFL perspective, it is important to keep the focus on how and what linguistic resources are used to construct and represent specific meanings in context. It is important that focus be kept on language as a meaning making resource and not just as a marker that identifies the country/region that the users of this language belong to. While “user” features are important to consider, the identities of the people using various World Englishes are only one factor that leads to language variation. The “uses” of language significantly contribute to an understanding of language (variation) and need to be studied within a World Englishes framework as well. Studies of World

Englishes that focus on meaning and reflect how English functions in different contexts are essential if World Englishes is to develop an applicable¹ dimension and contribute to theorizations of language. The current paper shows that such studies can lead to interesting new ways of looking at variation across Englishes and that such studies can contribute greatly to our ability to use World Englishes research in our work on education and socio-economic development.

NOTES

- 1 See Mahboob and Knight (2010) for a detailed introduction to the notion of “applicable linguistics.”

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