Université de Liège

Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres

Département de Langues et Littératures Modernes

Whose English Does the *New Headway Upper-Intermediate* Global Coursebook Spread?

Mémoire présenté par Laura Gerday
en vue de l'obtention du grade de Master en langues et littératures modernes,
orientation générale, à finalité approfondie.

Sous la direction de Madame Daria Tunca

Lectrices :

    Madame Lieselotte Brems

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Introduction

1. Background to this MA Thesis

In 2012, as an Erasmus student at the University of Leeds, England, I chose to attend a first-semester course given by Professors Martin Lamb and James Simpson from the School of Education. As can be inferred from the title of the class, "Globalisation, Identity and English Language Education", this third-year module aimed to highlight the connection between language and identity within a speech community, as well as the manner in which the worldwide spread of English Language Teaching and Learning in the context of globalisation currently affects this link. The description of the course read as follows:

> This module should appeal to students of English or modern languages with an interest in how languages are learned and taught. Its starting point is the belief that language is an integral part of individual and community identity, and the spread of English, amongst other linguistic features of globalization, is giving rise to tensions and dilemmas in the UK and other national settings that demand attention from anyone involved in language education. (Lamb and Simpson, 2012)

Throughout the 11 seminars, issues such as English as a Lingua Franca, learner motives and identity, language and culture, traditional and contemporary teaching practices, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), language education, migration and citizenship were repeatedly addressed (Lamb and Simpson, 2012). The final session, which took place in December 2012, was devoted to a sensitive subject in the field of English Language Education, a topic which has been my obsession for approximately 2 years and a half. On that Friday morning, several copies of the *New Headway Intermediate Fourth Edition Student's Book* were distributed to pairs of students in addition to a handout whose heading read "A Critical Look at English Language Teaching Materials" (Lamb, 2012). Among the various questions listed in the document, 3 caught my attention. These were "What countries/cultures are represented [in the textbook]?", "What kind of people are included/excluded?", and "What kind of topics are discussed/ignored?" (Lamb, 2012). When attempting to answer them, I realised that the type of coursebook which I had used for 4 years at secondary school to learn English provided an approach to the language which was far from neutral. Before doing this exercise, I had hardly

ever questioned the ideas and beliefs communicated by means of the *New Headway* teaching materials. Neither had I thought that a biased conception of the world could be conveyed by a textbook intended for learners of English. I later understood that the view of language which I had supported as a secondary-school and undergraduate student corresponded to what Paul Simpson and Andrea Mayr call a "liberal" one (2010, p. 4). Indeed, I would have argued a few years ago that "texts" were "natural outcomes of the free communicative interplay between individuals in society, uninhibited by political or ideological influence" (Simpson and Mayr, 2010, p. 4). This assumption of mine was undermined by a quote from John Gray's "The Global Coursebook in English Language Teaching" reproduced in the second section of the handout:

> [C]oursebooks are commodities to be traded, but what they contain is the result of the interplay between at times contradictory commercial, pedagogic and ethical interests. ELT [English Language Teaching] publishers may be said to present a vision of the world in the texts they produce. (2002 quoted in Lamb, 2012)

Connecting this quotation to the aforementioned questions, I finally discovered the concrete consequences of a notion which I had regarded so far as obscure and exclusively theoretical. Ideology was not a simple set of beliefs belonging to the upper spheres of abstraction. Ideology could take the shape of a seemingly trivial object such as a textbook and permeate our everyday lives. What the exercise devised by Professor Lamb therefore enabled me to understand was Simpson and Mayr's view of language, according to which "[it] is influenced by ideology and […] all texts, whether spoken or written, and even visual language, are inexorably shaped and determined by a web of political beliefs and socio-cultural practices" (2010, p. 4).[1] More importantly, I was surprised to observe that I had needed such a task to become aware of the power of language. Leaving the classroom at the end of this seminar, I wondered why I had taken the content of the *New Headway* coursebook for granted for all these years. It is only 10 months later, as I attended my first Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Stylistics course in Liège, that I was given an answer. In the introduction to *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English*, Lesley Jeffries asserts that a major concept related to CDA is "naturalization" (2010,

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[1] Ideology, in Simpson and Mayr's book as well as in this dissertation, corresponds to "the ways in which a person's beliefs, opinions and value-systems intersect with the broader social and political structures of the society in which they live" (2010, p. 4).

p. 9). As the linguist puts it, "some ideology may be 'naturalized' to the extent that it becomes 'common sense' to members of the community" (2010, p. 9). In other words, the discourse conveyed by the *New Headway* textbook is so deeply ingrained in the white middle-class portion of the Western society to which I belong that it may go unnoticed. Crucial questions then sprang to mind. Had I been somehow shaped by this discourse, and if so, in what ways? What are the main political, social, and cultural ideas underlying it? Can these beliefs be spotted although they are "naturalized"? How may I detect them since I appear to share the same vision of the world as that embedded in the teaching materials cited above? The issue undoubtedly aroused my interest and gave me food for thought. I consequently chose to investigate the matter thoroughly in my MA thesis, in respect of the *New Headway* coursebook which I had cursorily examined at the University of Leeds. Since the research is concerned with an English language textbook, it must perforce start with a few words on the current status of English as a global language.

2. Contextualising the Issue

Consulting diverse quality newspapers, scholarly journals and books, one soon realises that finding the exact number of current speakers of English around the globe is a difficult – or, indeed, impossible – task. Jennifer Jenkins, in her 2015 *Global Englishes: A Resource Book for Students*, estimates that roughly 360 million people nowadays speak English as a Native Language (ENL), approximately 360 million belong to the group of speakers of English as a Second Language (ESL), and about 2 billion people use English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (pp. 10-11). Of course, these recent figures are far from indisputable. Not only do they constantly change, but they also depend on the level of linguistic competence which is believed to define a "speaker" and the type of English which is taken into account. By way of illustration, English-based pidgins and creoles are not included in Jenkins' ENL or ESL categories (2015, p. 11), whereas other linguists, such as David Crystal, prefer to add them to their estimations (2012, pp. 62-69). What the figures however clearly demonstrate in all cases is that the body of native speakers has been largely outnumbered by the non-native users of the language. In fact, the demand for English Language Teaching and Learning has not ceased to

increase (Buckledee, 2010, p. 141) and, as a result, ELT publishing has become "a growing and highly competitive industry" (Gray, 2002, p. 155).

Calculating the total number of people who learn English today appears to be an equally insoluble problem. Nonetheless, tendencies exist and have been studied in relation to particular territories. For example, Steve Buckledee, relying on Kirkpatrick's 2006 figures, states that Chinese learners of English are more numerous than the British, American, and Australian native speakers of the language combined (2010, p. 141). Furthermore, it is worth emphasising that non-native speakers at present most often use English in order to interact with other non-native speakers of the language (2010, p. 142). In this perspective, some scholars working in the fields of applied linguistics and ELT, among whom Adolphs (2005), Gray (2010b), Seidlhofer (2011), and Jenkins (2015), have lately raised a pivotal issue: which type of English do non-native speakers need to learn? Is ENL still a relevant linguistic model to teach?

Over the past 15 years, a lot of research has been carried out into English as a Lingua Franca – that is, English used by people who speak different mother tongues in order to interact (Crystal, 2003, p. 464). Jennifer Jenkins and Barbara Seidlhofer appear to have been most prolific in the past few years. The former compiled a list of all the phonemes which are thought to be necessary for intelligible communication between English users of various mother tongues in the "Lingua Franca Core" (see Gnutzmann and Intemann, 2005, p. 18). The latter has analysed the salient lexicogrammatical features of English as a Lingua Franca on the basis of the spoken ELF corpus VOICE (Seidlhofer, 2004). Both linguists belong to the editorial board of the *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, whose first issue was published in March 2012 (De Gruyter, 2015). Special attention has been paid to ELF because it is considered by many researchers to be a linguistic system which suits English learners' needs (Jenkins, 2015, p. 155). In its latest definition, ELF is precisely glossed as "*any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option*" (Seidlhofer, 2011, her italics, quoted in Jenkins, 2015, p. 44). Striking is that, in contrast with English as a Foreign Language, the native speaker is here no longer the "yardstick against which [non-native speakers'] use is measured" (2015, p. 45). In fact, intercultural communication being the prime objective of ELF, "differences

from native English that achieve this are regarded not as deficiencies but as evidence of linguistic adaptability and creativity" (2015, p. 45).[2] Recurring "differences" from ENL thus constitute the features defining ELF which, in Gray's opinion, establish "a norm in its own right – appropriate for a different kind of speaker who does not wish be [sic] constructed as an ersatz 'native speaker' " (2010b, p. 182).

Despite considerable research and growing interest, ELF does not seem to have gained full acceptance in the ELT industry yet as the native speaker tends to remain the custodian of the norm and the model to mimic. This conclusion was reached in particular by Buckledee (2010) and Gray (2010b) after investigating the content of several ELT coursebooks. The object of their studies is worth stressing because

> [t]extbooks, for better or worse, *dominate* what students learn. They set the curriculum, and often the facts learned, in most subjects. […] The public regards textbooks as authoritative, accurate, and necessary. And teachers rely on them to organize lessons and structure subject matter. (A. Graham Down quoted in Apple, 1992, p. 6, my emphasis)

The English language textbooks which were selected by Buckledee and Gray – for instance *Straightforward*, *Total English* (2010, p. 145), *Streamline Connections*, and *Building Strategies* (2010b, p. 55) – are included in a subcategory of ELT teaching materials known as global coursebooks (2010b, p. 1). In Gray's terms, a "global coursebook" labels the "financially lucrative and widely disseminated UK-produced [ELT textbook]" which is part of "an incremental English language course designed for the global market" (2010b, p. 1). These resources, which heavily influence English courses, are therefore especially intended for a large and geographically diverse audience of learners. Buckledee wished to discover in this respect whether some "concessions to English as a Lingua Franca" could be identified in a series of language textbooks (2010, p. 144). Unfortunately, he concluded, the gap between what learners of English are thought to need (ELF) and what they are taught (ENL) remains wide (2010, p. 141). In a similar vein, Vettorel and Lopriore, who examined the content of the 10 best-selling English textbooks in Italy, contended that the linguistic reference point did not show any shift towards ELF (2013, p. 497). By contrast, the settings in which certain learning activities took place were no longer essentially British or American but "focused on other parts of the world"

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[2] The concept of intercultural communication will be described and discussed further in this dissertation.

(2013, p. 496). Gray had already made an identical remark after analysing the 1996 *New Headway Intermediate Student's Book* (2002, p. 157). To his mind, the attention paid to "international settings reflect[ed], no doubt, a growing sense on the part of the publishers of English as an increasingly global language" (2002, p. 157). Vettorel, Lopriore, and Gray's common observation alludes to a major bone of contention in ELT, which is the relevance of culture in global coursebooks. It is indeed often assumed that language is tied to culture, the former expressing, embodying, and symbolising the latter (Kramsch, 1998, p. 3). As a consequence, learning a language necessarily implies learning its related culture (Hinkel, 1999, pp. 2-7). In the case of a widely used contact language such as English, a key question arises: to which culture(s) should it be linked? Some scholars, among whom Claire Kramsch and Michael Byram, maintain that the native speaker's environment has to be part of the cultural background of English learning (see Hinkel, 1999, pp. 2-7), whereas others, such as Vivian Cook, assert that culture teaching in the context of a lingua franca is not pertinent (see Vettorel, 2010, p. 157). Another group of scholars brings together those who support the view that various "non-native" cultures should be taken into account in ELT teaching materials. Anna Niżegorodcew, for example, states that "proficient non-native and minority English language speakers should provide […] appropriate models of those who promote their own cultures while using English" (2011, pp. 10-11).

As detailed below, my dissertation is designed to reassess the views on the ELT global coursebook expressed by these scholars. Using the 2014 edition of the *New Headway Upper-Intermediate Student's Book*, I argue that a shift towards international settings in an English language textbook does not inevitably entail a non-Anglocentric perspective on English and culture.

3. Objectives and Methodology of the Research

The present MA thesis principally consists in studying the linguistic models on which the *New Headway* (hereafter *NH*) English course is based. The analysis of a volume in this collection of ELT coursebooks is intended to reveal whether its content is consistent with the current needs of English language learners, which converge towards non-native speaker/non-native speaker communication skills.

In this perspective, I will first attempt to discover whether the language which is taught in the selected *NH* textbook is still exclusively ENL, or presents some features of non-native English. Indeed, "[a]ny move towards an [ELF] model is likely to be a step-by-step process of change rather than a sudden switch" (Buckledee, 2010, p. 144). Although the research question which is at the core of this thesis – namely *Whose English Does the* New Headway Upper-Intermediate *Global Coursebook Spread?* – revolves around a linguistic issue, culture is also central to this study. In fact, owing to the assumed connection between language (learning) and culture (teaching), I will then endeavour to identify the cultural framework with which the linguistic models of the course are associated. In the same vein, I will investigate whether this framework remains predominantly British/American-centred, or whether it emphasises a multicultural approach to English learning. In so doing, I also plan to highlight some of the values and beliefs underlying the *NH* course, hypothesising their potential impact on the learner's conception of the phrases "the English language" and "speakers of English". Indeed, the investigation aims to contribute to an understanding of the reasons why ELF has not gained full acceptance in the ELT industry as yet, and the meanings to which ENL is tied might prevent the switch to a non-native speaker model of English in this category of teaching materials.

As mentioned above, the study is centred on one particular global coursebook – the *New Headway Upper-Intermediate Student's Book* (hereafter *NH SB*) – which is the mainstay of the *NH* course upon which other *NH* teaching resources (the *Teacher's Book* and the *Workbook*) rely. While the learner's perspective will be focused on, the keys and notes included in the *Teacher's Book* will be taken into consideration, as they are of paramount importance to understanding the linguistic and cultural approach adopted in *NH SB*. Furthermore, I opted for the fourth and latest edition of *NH* so as to find out about the authors' and publishers' most recent standpoints and choices regarding ELT. As far as the level of competence is concerned, I decided to study an upper-intermediate textbook, which is commonly used in the final years of secondary school.[3]

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[3] I wish to thank Dr Germain Simons for advising me to select this level of competence.

From a methodological point of view, it is worth indicating that a coursebook can be analysed at 3 levels: *content*, *consumption*, and *production* (Harwood, 2014, p. 2). The first refers to "what textbooks include and exclude in terms of topic, linguistic information, pedagogy, and culture" when they are viewed as entities isolated from the classroom context (2014, p. 2). By contrast, the level of consumption is precisely concerned with the manner in which "teachers and learners use textbooks" (2014, p. 2). The "processes by which textbooks are shaped, authored, and distributed" are the focal point of the third level (2014, p. 2). My research, however, will cover the first dimension only. Because I am not a didactics student, and, as will be explained further in this thesis, because I did not manage to contact the authors and the Oxford University Press publishers of *NH*, I was not in a position to examine the levels of consumption and production. As a result, the study will concentrate on *NH SB* as a finished product of the British ELT industry which is about to be consumed by learners with various profiles.

Besides, I intend to use linguistic concepts as a shovel to unearth some of the beliefs and assumptions embedded in the English models of *NH SB*. I concur with John Thompson, who suggests that

> [t]he theory of ideology and the study of language are two concerns which bear a close connection. For the theory of ideology has commonly sought to examine the ways in which "meaning" or "ideas" affect the conceptions or activities of the individuals and groups which make up the social world. While the nature and modalities of ideology have been analysed in different ways, it seems increasingly clear that the study of language must occupy a privileged position in any such analysis. (1984 quoted in Richardson, 1987, p. 361)

In contrast with earlier research in the field of ELT global textbooks whose focus was almost exclusively culture (see **Chapter I**), I prefer to select an innovative method, favouring a chiefly linguistic and qualitative angle on the matter. Since ideology and language are strongly linked to each other, readers should also bear in mind that this dissertation cannot be considered to be objective and neutral. It cannot be ignored that this thesis is written by a student who is herself caught up in a web of particular meanings and ideas (see Richardson, 1987, p. 368). Consequently, the linguistic diagnosis of the *NH* course can only be valid "within [the] framework of cultural knowledge" to which I belong (1987, p. 367). It is indeed vital to point out

that some other beliefs which are intertwined with *NH SB* may be revealed by scholars who are part of different cultures. In addition, I do not claim to conduct a comprehensive study of the textbook; as specified below, this dissertation corresponds to a reflection on its content which covers few chapters.

4. Organisation of the Study

The thesis consists of 5 chapters. Following this introduction, **Chapter I** provides some background information which is essential to grasp the notions of the "textbook" in general and the "language coursebook" in particular. It subsequently reviews the ELT literature devoted to the global textbook and the major findings from related empirical research which generated the question at the core of this dissertation. By identifying the gaps in these findings, I clarify at the same time the aspects of *NH SB* which will be examined and narrow the scope of my investigation.

As a hinge between theory and practice, **Chapter II** briefly introduces the *NH* series of ELT coursebooks. It principally aims to collect general information on the course before an in-depth study of its content is conducted. The main findings of this investigation are presented in **Chapter III** and **Chapter IV**. The former includes the results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis of phonology, grammar, and lexis in *NH SB*, while the latter contains the ones of the study concerned with the salient cultural aspects of the course. Although separate, these chapters are complementary as the interaction between all the findings is also considered. Finally, because conclusions are gradually drawn in respect of the initial research question, **Chapter V** only groups some perspectives on the nature, the role, and the future of ELT global textbooks.

I. Literature Review

1. Introduction

Chapter I can be regarded as a toolbox that includes the topics and concepts which are useful to conduct this study. The upper tote tray of this toolkit contains the generic notion of the "textbook": indeed, before getting to the heart of the matter – namely the global coursebook – one has to concentrate on the intrinsic characteristics of the textbook first.[4] In accordance with the scope of this thesis, emphasis is principally laid on the nature of the teaching and learning resource whereas its functions – essentially related to the classroom environment – are covered only briefly. Attention will gradually shift from the coursebook in general (**2**) and zoom in on the language textbook. In this second section (**3**), the issue pertaining to the relationship between language and culture, and its current effects upon language education will predominantly be addressed. Finally, the third part of this chapter (**4**) consists in describing the ELT global textbook in connection with the language-culture link: its content will first be defined from a cultural point of view, and ultimately from a linguistic perspective.

2. The Textbook

"No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook", write Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p. 315). This sort of material, in other words, appears a key component of education. In fact, looking up the definition of a coursebook, one primarily comes across metaphors which reflect the major roles it plays in this field. McGrath cites the terms "recipe", "springboard", "straightjacket", "supermarket", "holy book", "compass", "survival kit", and "crutch" (2002 quoted in Richards, 2014, p. 19). In a less figurative sense, Cunningsworth refers to "resource", "(reference) source", and "support" (1995, p. 5). The textbook, to sum up, tends to be described first and foremost as an educational tool (Gray, 2013a, p. 7). As can be inferred from this wide diversity of images,

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[4] Following the example of Garton and Graves (2014, p. 12), Tomlinson (2011, xi) and Harwood (2014, p. 1), I intend to use the words "textbook" and "coursebook" interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

it ranges from an object which is at the service of learners and teachers to one which is their master (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 5). The degree of teachers' dependence on materials, especially coursebooks, to organise their lessons even became a hotly debated issue at the dawn of the 1980s and retained this controversial status until the 1990s (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Some offered to limit the role of teaching materials, considering them to be resources whose aim was not to determine but rather to contribute to the content of a course (Allwright, 1981; Cunningsworth, 1995). Others advanced that a textbook was a necessary medium, "the most convenient means of providing the structure that the teaching-learning system […] requires" (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994, p. 317). Talking about ELT specifically, O'Neill assumed that "learners who do not work from textbooks may be being deprived of a useful medium of orientation and study outside the classroom" (1982, p. 104). My prime concern here is not to settle the question debated by these scholars; rather, I wish to stress that, in those days, the coursebook was chiefly analysed from a pedagogical point of view, and defined as a tool involved to a greater or lesser extent in the teaching-learning process.

It is the last decade of the 20th century which was marked by new considerations in the description of the textbook. Scholars' attention was no longer focused on its functions and use in the classroom; the nature, production, and content of a coursebook also turned out to be worth investigating (Apple, 1992). An influential article in this respect is Michael W. Apple's "The Text and Cultural Politics", in which the education theorist opted for the term "artifact" to characterise the textbook (1992, pp. 4-5). Anticipating the quote from Gray's "The Global Coursebook in English Language Teaching" found in Martin Lamb's handout (2012), Apple in fact contends that texts, thus textbooks, "are the simultaneous results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles, and compromises", adding that they "are conceived, designed, and authored by real people with real interests [and] published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources, and power" (1992, p. 4). By means of the noun "artifact", the accent is definitely on the impact of textbook production on the content of such teaching materials, the cursor steadily moving away from an exclusive focus on the *consumption* pole (Harwood, 2014, p. 2). From now on coursebooks would also be viewed as objects which "signify – through their content *and* form – particular

constructions of reality, particular ways of selecting and organizing that vast universe of possible knowledge" (Apple, 1992, p. 5, his italics). From now on coursebooks would also be viewed as the products and the carriers of political and cultural beliefs, among others. A sign of this shift in the field of ELT is detected in an article written by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). After identifying textbooks as cultural mirrors (1999, p. 196), the linguists list 7 words which are said to correspond to the features underlying EFL materials (1999, pp. 199-201). Unsurprisingly, a coursebook can operate "on several levels" as a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, or a de-skiller as it may reduce teachers' creativity (1999, pp. 199-200). Crucial is the seventh term completing the series, which is not listed above. Cortazzi and Jin indeed maintain that the textbook can be regarded as *ideology* too because "it reflects a worldview or cultural system, a social construction that may be imposed on teachers and students and that indirectly constructs their view of a culture", specifying that "[t]his aspect often passes unrecognized" (1999, p. 200). What emerges is that, as far as ELT is concerned, the noun "ideology" made its way into the literature devoted to the concept of the coursebook, and became an integral part of its description.

Apple's work, including "Textbook Publishing: The Political and Economic Influences" (1989) and *The Politics of the Textbook* edited in collaboration with Linda K. Christian-Smith (1991), has undeniably had a considerable impact on the development of the ELT discipline (e.g. Gray, 2010b; Harwood, 2014). The light which he shed on the essence of coursebooks has notably penetrated the work of a prominent researcher who has already been mentioned several times in this thesis – John Gray. The scholar indeed takes the view that "the ELT industry is an area of applied linguistics activity in which politics and political economy clearly come together" as teaching is "a highly politicised activity" and "commercially produced materials exert a powerful influence over what takes place in many classrooms around the world" (2013a, p. 11). Moreover, besides using the word "artefact" (Gray, 2000; 2013a, pp. 2-5), both Apple and Gray label textbooks as commodities (Apple, 1989, p. 282; 1992, p. 6; Gray, 2002, p. 157; 2013a, pp. 7-10), which highlights once again the coursebooks' production phase. It is no wonder, then, as the last quote shows, that "ELT" and "industry" tend to co-occur (e.g. Gray, 2002, p. 155; Littlejohn, 2011, p. 180). Littlejohn similarly argues that

although materials are aimed at use *inside* a classroom, they will always bear the hallmarks of the conditions of their production *outside* the classroom. This is particularly the case with materials which are produced in a commercial context, where the need to maximise sales, satisfy shareholders, and achieve corporate goals may have a direct impact on the design of materials, quite distinct from their pedagogic intent. (2012, his italics, quoted in Gray, 2013a, p. 7)

Harwood, who gives a detailed overview of recent ELT coursebook research, also underlines the main consequence of the emphasis placed on the *production* and *content* poles: the manner in which English language textbooks are *consumed* today tends to be neglected in this field of study (2014, p. 11). In contrast with mainstream – non-ELT – education, there are indeed "relatively few studies exploring how ELT teachers and students use textbooks inside and outside the classroom" (Harwood, 2014, p. 11). Gray deplores, for instance, "the scarcity of research on teachers' thinking with regard to materials", and calls on fellow scholars to investigate which meanings such materials may have for students in the classroom context (2010b, p. 190). Their appeal to correct this imbalance in ELT does not seem to have fallen on deaf ears. By way of illustration, Sue Garton and Kathleen Graves edited last year *International Perspectives on Materials in ELT*, which "focuses not only on materials but on their use, not only by teachers but also by learners" (2014, p. 2). To stress the importance of the consumption phase in ELT textbook research, Garton and Graves claim that "[a]ny view of materials that neglects their actual use by teachers and/or learners can […] only be partial" (2014, p. 2). Although I am in agreement with the researchers on this point, I am above all of the opinion that it is *first* imperative to know well *what* teachers and learners use *before* observing *how* they consume materials. As hinted at above, one aspect of ELT coursebooks has not been thoroughly explored yet; it is one of the main constituent parts of contemporary foreign language textbooks which now deserve attention.

3. The Language Coursebook

Keeping up-to-date with topical issues in textbook research seems virtually inconceivable. Readers should consequently be warned that what follows is not a comprehensive account of the latest articles and books related to the present subject

matter, but rather a selection. On the basis of these chosen sources, it appears that a language coursebook is not only fundamentally characterised by a linguistic dimension, but is also heavily dependent on a cultural one (Cunningsworth, 1995; Gray, 2000; 2002). The latter belongs to what is sometimes termed the "hidden curriculum", which consists of "the image of life presented by coursebooks, the attitudes they convey, consciously or unconsciously, and the social and cultural values that they communicate" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 86). In Gray's work, the words "cultural" and "artefact" even appear to form a collocation (2000; 2010b, p. 3; 2013a, pp. 2-5). Culture, Cunningsworth again insists, has to be taken into consideration in the language learning process because it is part of language use:

> Although language coursebooks are primarily a means for facilitating language learning, they cannot simply do that and no more, because language is used in real situations for real purposes. A study of a language solely as an abstract system would not equip learners to use it in the real world. As a consequence, coursebooks must and do represent language as it is actually used and therefore they contain subject matter and deal with topics of various kinds. (1995, p. 86)

Two leading proponents of this theory in the same period were Michael Byram (1989; et al., 1994) and Claire Kramsch (1993). The former likewise asserts that

> [w]hat has become more evident in recent decades is that language learning is insufficient; it leads to encoding of a message rather than communication and interaction with another person. There can be no negotiation of shared meanings and understanding of the world if interlocutors simply encode their own meaning without seeking to understand its relationship to that of others. (Byram et al., 1994, p. 39)

This quotation, it seems worth underscoring, comes from a book entitled *Teaching-and-Learning Language-and-Culture*, the hyphenation significantly suggesting a link between the last 2 concepts (1994, p. 1). The punctuation marks are in fact meant to mirror the "surge of interest" in cultural studies within the domain of language education at the time; they are "a reminder that this interest should not lead to [their] separation, either in theoretical discussion or in classroom practice" (1994, p. 1). Five years earlier, the same scholar had already stated that cultural studies had "a rightful place as part of language teaching, not just as an adjunct to language learning, not just as a means of creating better communication but as an integral component with appropriate aims and methods" (Byram, 1989, pp. 3-4). Considering

language use, Kramsch, in turn, claims in a similar vein that it is "indissociable from the creation and transmission of culture" (1993, p. 9). The linguist also offered to undermine the dichotomy "language versus culture" in language teaching, the latter being a feature, and not a medium, of the former (1993, p. 8).

This conception of language and culture common to Byram and Kramsch has considerably impacted on the research carried out into language education in general (e.g. Stern, 1992; Hinkel, 1999), and into ELT textbooks in particular (e.g. Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Gray, 2010b; Vettorel, 2010). Interestingly enough, in most of these studies, such a relationship appears taken for granted and is no longer explained to readers. By way of illustration, one can notice assumptions such as "It is nowadays a commonplace in language pedagogy to stress the importance of culture teaching and to say that language and culture are intertwined" (Stern, 1992, p. 205), and "It is generally expected that second or foreign language textbooks should include elements of the target culture" (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999, p. 196). It is vital to sketch out Byram's and Kramsch's views on the language-culture connection because they are comparable to "an attack on language teaching as it [used to be] conducted in much of western Europe and North America in the post-war period" (Gray, 2010b, p. 30). As a result of their research, foreign language learning is indeed no longer regarded as the assimilation of a code, but rather as the mediation of meanings which – more importantly – deeply affects the role played by native speakers in this learning process.

3.1. Language and Culture

In 1998, Kramsch authored a book especially devoted to language and culture. To account for the link between the 2 notions, the linguist relies from the outset on the theory of linguistic relativity and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (1998, pp. 11-14). The former was promoted by Johann Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt, 2 European intellectuals who lived between the 18th and the 19th centuries, and is founded on the belief that "different people speak differently because they think differently, and that they think differently because their language offers them different ways of expressing the world around them" (1998, p. 11).

From these thinkers was inherited the latter theory, which was developed a few decades later in the United States of America by the linguists and anthropologists Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1998, p. 11). In substance, they hold the view that "the structure of the language one habitually uses influences the manner in which one thinks and behaves" (1998, p. 11). Let us point out that Kramsch opts here for the verb "influence", typical of the weak version of this Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (1998, p. 13). The idea that language "determines" thought – known as the strong version – is in her own terms "absurd" (1998, p. 13). The scholar furthermore advances that language is a code which results from the translation of experience (1998, p. 15; p. 127):

> If speakers of different languages do not understand one another, […] [i]t is because they don't share the same way of viewing and interpreting events; they don't agree on the meaning and the value of the concepts underlying the words. In short, they don't cut up reality or categorize experience in the same manner. […]
>
> [T]here are cultural differences in the semantic associations evoked by seemingly common concepts […]. The way a given language encodes experience semantically makes aspects of that experience not exclusively accessible, but just more salient for the users of that language. (1998, p. 13)

Once a social group has "a broadly agreed set of common public goals and purposes in its use of spoken and written language", it corresponds to a "discourse community" (1998, p. 127). Belonging to a discourse community "that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting" is then what defines culture (1998, p. 127). As for Byram, the scholar adopts American anthropologist Clifford Geertz's "symbols-and-meanings" approach to culture (1989, p. 43). The notion becomes glossed as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (Geertz, 1975 quoted in Byram, 1989, p. 43). Although this approach to culture is not concerned with membership of a discourse community, language – "symbolic form" – still encodes, embodies, and expresses experience (1989, pp. 42-43). In Kramsch's opinion, language and culture consequently form a single universe of experience (1991, p. 218). It is in order to draw attention to their inseparability that she uses the term "linguaculture" coined by Attinasi and Friedrich (1988 quoted

in Kramsch, 1991, p. 218). Linguaculture is precisely the reason why culture in language education cannot be conceived of as "an expendable fifth skill" besides speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Kramsch, 1993, p. 1).

While I express deep reservations about the connection between language, culture, and thought which is at the core of linguistic relativity, Kramsch and Byram's Humboldtian perspective on language education seems unavoidable as it is believed to be a milestone in this discipline (e.g. Hinkel, 1999, pp. 5-7; Gray, 2010b, pp. 30-34; Richards, 2014, p. 26).[5] Going hand in hand with their standpoint is also a specific vision of "culture teaching" (2010b, pp. 30-34):

> Traditional thought in foreign language education has limited the teaching of culture to the transmission of information about the people of the target country, and about their general attitudes and world views. […] It has usually ignored the fact that a large part of what we call culture is a social construct, the product of self and other perceptions. (Kramsch, 1993, p. 205)

The alternative which is set out is based on the key notion of *interculturality* (1993, pp. 205-206). Interculturality is central to the analysis of *NH SB* because it is one of the objectives set by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which "provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe" (LPU of the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43; p. 1). In addition, it encourages for the first time the development of a *non*-native cultural model in foreign language coursebooks (Gray, 2010b, p. 32, my emphasis). Needless to say, the notion is worth describing at length.

3.1.1. Culture in Language Learning

In Kramsch's words, understanding a foreign culture is thought to require "putting that culture in relation with one's own", to depend on "a reflection both on the target [C2] and on the native culture [C1]" (1993, p. 205). In brief, language learners need to create a third perspective on C1 and C2, a "third place" where they can establish

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[5] It is worth bearing in mind that the theory is still subject to debate (Gray, 2010b, pp. 27-28). For instance, the Sapir-Whorf "hypothesis" was renamed "axiom" by American anthropologists Jane Hill and Bruce Mannheim 2 decades ago (1992, p. 383).

meanings which are not typically expressed by the native speakers of C2 (1993, p. 210; p. 236). Language learners, in other words, have to attempt not to accept the ready-made meanings characterising C2; they rather have to "struggle […] to find and carve out [their] own place within a speech community dominated by the myth of the native cultural speaker" (1993, pp. 236-239). Using Mikhail Bakhtin's polyphony theory as a starting point, Kramsch favours in this regard a dialogic educational process thanks to which learners can find "understandable and original" ways of articulating thoughts (1993, p. 27). It is in fact by means of conversations with native and non-native speakers of the language learned that students manage to discover the manners of talking and thinking which they do and do not have in common, therefore building the "third place" (1993, p. 27):

> By attending both to their own agenda and to that of their interlocutors, language learners can start using the foreign language not merely as imperfect native speakers, but as speakers in their own right. It is in this development of the foreign language learner as both a social and an individual speaker that we have to see the emergence of culture in the language classroom. (1993, p. 28)

As a consequence, mastering mere communicative competence is no longer the prime goal which students are asked to achieve; it has lately become intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997; Gray, 2010b, pp. 31-34). Byram, with his *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, is unsurprisingly another exponent of this theory. Introducing ICC, the linguist concurs that "the more desirable outcome [of foreign language education]" is a learner who has "the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, expressed in the same language […] which may be the interlocutors' native language, or not" (1997, p. 12). Communicative competence represents to his mind a misleading objective as it is derived from Dell Hymes' analyses of first language acquisition and interaction among native speakers (1997, pp. 7-8). As a result, the implicit model to copy in foreign language education is here the native speaker, which disregards "the significance of the social identities and cultural competence of the learner in any intercultural interaction" (1997, p. 8). Byram definitely rejects this native language speaker model, not only because it is viewed as an unattainable goal, but also because it implies linguistic schizophrenia – "abandoning one language in order to blend into another linguistic environment,

becoming accepted as a native speaker by other native speakers" – and the acquisition of native sociocultural competence and identity (1997, pp. 11-12). In conclusion, foreign language education should instead lead to shaping intercultural speakers who succeed in *mediating* between diverse languages and cultural perspectives (1997, p. 38).

After providing background information and expounding on the most influential theories revolving around foreign language education, I now turn my attention to the ELT global coursebook. More accurately, the next section of **Chapter I** is aimed to review the conclusions drawn by several researchers who carefully investigated its content: I first concentrate on the cultural aspects of the textbook, before addressing the issue related to the linguistic models on which it is based. What I ultimately wish to establish is that, while "ELT 'sits awkwardly at the intersection of linguistics and education' " (Edge and Richards, 1998 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 2), few in-depth studies of the English language taught through ELT global textbooks have so far been conducted. Interestingly enough, despite the substantial impact of Kramsch's and Byram's views of the inextricable link between language and culture on ELT, the concepts tend to be dealt with separately in coursebook analysis. Their interaction, in fact, hardly seems to have received any attention yet.

4. The ELT Global Coursebook

Lately, the ELT literature has abounded with articles and books whose focal point is the global textbook (e.g. Gray, 2000; 2002; 2010b; Kullman, 2013; Melliti, 2013; Harwood, 2014). Tomlinson, in his "Glossary of Basic Terms for Materials Development in Language Teaching", basically defines the concept as "[a] coursebook which is not written for learners from a particular culture or country but which is intended for use by any class of learners in the specified level and age group anywhere in the world" (2011, xii). Bell and Gower give a far more negative description, questioning the adjective "global". The course material is said to be "misleadingly called" as such because it is actually a textbook designed for "a restricted number of teaching situations in many different countries rather than all

teaching situations in all countries" (2011, p. 137). These conflicting opinions on the global coursebook do not solely stem from the term "global"; they principally result from the scholars' perceptions of what a textbook is. In the first case, the coursebook is characterised as "written" and is meant to be used by language learners. Once it can be used by any learner, once it is appropriate for any teaching situation worldwide, the textbook is labelled as "global". In the second case, the adjective has nothing to do with education. What is referred to as "global" is the commercial horizon of the coursebook, a coursebook which is first and foremost considered as a "brand" (Bell and Gower, 2011, p. 137).

As far as ELT is concerned, Bell and Gower's viewpoint on the global textbook turns out to be dominant. It was argued in the first section of this chapter that stress tends to be laid on the *production* and *content* poles of coursebooks in ELT research, "textbook" being more and more often associated with the terms "artefact" and "commodity" (Gray, 2013a, pp. 2-10). With regard to the word "global", it performs the function of indicating the area of consumption of ELT coursebooks. For instance, Harwood maintains that such materials are "published in the West and *marketed worldwide*" (2014, p. 1, my emphasis). Under the pen of Melliti, global textbooks are "coursebooks *produced to be disseminated around the world*" (2013, p. 1, my emphasis). A more detailed description of the teaching materials – which was previously mentioned – is Gray's. The linguist's large body of work is essentially concerned with "the financially lucrative and widely disseminated UK-produced English language teaching […] 'global coursebook', a term which refers to that genre of textbook which is produced as part of an incremental English language course *designed for the global market*" (2010b, p. 1, my emphasis). Echoing Bell and Gower's remark, Gray further adds that it is "an artefact which is predicated on the questionable assumption that 'one size fits all' – regardless of the social, geographical and educational context of use" (2010b, p. 3). It is this assumption which deserves consideration as it is thought to determine the cultural and linguistic content of the textbook, thus the representation of English and its speakers around the world. In the following subsections, the salient features of the English-speaking community depicted in the global coursebook are surveyed.

4.1. The Cultural Content of ELT Global Coursebooks

At this stage of the dissertation, it may be obvious that one of the most productive scholars in ELT textbook research is John Gray. Over the past 15 years, Gray has published a large number of articles and books centred on the ELT global coursebook as a cultural artefact (e.g. 2000; 2002; 2010a; 2010b; 2012; 2013a). As a point of departure, the linguist, following in Apple's and Christian-Smith's footsteps, contends that textbooks "seek to make English mean in specific and highly selective ways" (Gray, 2010b, p. 3; see also 2000, p. 275; 2013a, p. 5). Since culture precisely corresponds to "the ways in which meanings are created, and the manner in which they subsequently circulate in society", it is no wonder that the cultural studies perspective on coursebook analysis has been favoured in his work (2010b, p. 3). It is by adopting this approach that Gray has recently observed that the global textbook is

> a carefully constructed artefact in which discourses of feminism, multiculturalism and globalization are selectively co-opted by ELT publishers as a means of inscribing English with a range of values and associations that include individualism, egalitarianism, cosmopolitanism, mobility and affluence, in which students are increasingly addressed as consumers. (2010b, p. 3)

Gray's body of research is particularly pertinent to my study. Firstly, his cultural studies perspective, which has turned the spotlight on the ideological composition of this category of materials, has significantly permeated the domain of ELT (e.g. Vettorel, 2010; Kullman, 2013; Melliti, 2013; Richards, 2014). Secondly, while his research is generally concerned with the global coursebooks manufactured in the United Kingdom (Gray, 2000; 2012), it has repeatedly focused on the *NH* series (2002; 2010b). Prior to the analysis of *NH SB*, it appears worth giving an overview of the topics examined by Gray and his fellow scholars – ranging from gender to neoliberalism, from work to celebrity – which characterise the *NH* English course more particularly. These topics, it is claimed, are selected by publishers "against a background of increasing globalization" (Gray, 2002, p. 152).

4.1.1. The Impact of Globalisation

It might have occurred to readers that the adjective "global" in the phrase "global coursebook" also refers to globalisation. There is undeniably a growing tendency to couple English language education with this intricate phenomenon in the ELT literature (e.g. Gray, 2002; 2010b; Gnutzmann and Intemann, 2005; Blommaert, 2010; Crystal, 2012). Gray explains in this respect

> As a backdrop to my developing interest in the global coursebook as a particular kind of cultural artefact, two areas stand out as being of importance – ongoing debates about the role of culture in ELT and modern foreign languages teaching and the ways in which language (and by extension, ELT) is intimately associated with that complex set of interrelated phenomena known as globalization. (2010b, p. 12)

Although there is no accepted definition of globalisation (Gray, 2002, pp. 152-153; 2010b, p. 13; Gnutzmann and Intemann, 2005, p. 9), it is often identified as a web of diverse processes.[6] Gnutzmann and Intemann mention "global economy", "global communication systems", underlining the role played by the Internet, "global mass culture" represented by the brands McDonald's and Coca-Cola, "boundless mobility", in addition to "world-wide travel and transport of goods" (2005, p. 9). Gray prefers to talk about "economic neoliberalism", "increasing global interconnectedness" resulting from "technological developments", "the ascendancy of powerful transnational corporations", besides "flows of population, media and ideas" (2010b, p. 13). English, they decidedly advance, is connected to these processes (Gray, 2002, pp. 153-155; 2010b, p. 16; Gnutzmann and Intemann, 2005, pp. 11-12). Nevertheless, the manner in which globalisation and English are related to each other is not unanimously agreed on. The lingua franca is described by Gnutzmann and Intemann as "a *medium*" of Westernisation, as "a *vehicle* for the spread of a culture influenced by the USA and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe" (2005, p. 11, my emphasis). Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's economy of linguistic exchanges and Karl Marx's idea of commodification, Gray rather regards English as a symbolic *product* of globalisation:

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[6] What is at stake in this subsection is not the definition of this concept and its intricacies – to which an entire thesis could be devoted – but primarily its concrete impact on the content of ELT global coursebooks.

Against this background of profound imbrication in the processes of globalization, I would suggest that it makes sense to view English both as a form of linguistic capital, capable of bringing a profit of distinction to those speakers with the ability to access it (or, more accurately, its socially legitimated varieties), and as an increasingly commodified dimension of labour-power. (2010b, pp. 16-17)

According to Bourdieu's theory, which will be of relevance to the next section (**4.2**), language is compared to capital in a market place (see Gray, 2010b, p. 15). The command of the standard variety enables its users to gain "a profit of distinction" – that is to say symbolic or material profit (Bourdieu, 1991 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 15). Regarding commodification, Gray clarifies in a footnote that "a language can also be packaged, imaged and sold *as if* it were a commodity like any other" (2010b, p. 198, his italics). The commodity in its own right which "also serves to promote English as though it too were a commodity" is in fact the UK-produced ELT global coursebook, which is thus called a "promotional commodity" (Gray, 2013a, p. 8). It is the textbook as a commodity which constitutes the point of departure for Gray's reflection (2000, p. 274). As the scholar puts it in one of his first articles, these global teaching materials "are sources not only of grammar, lexis, and activities for language practice, but, like Levi's jeans and Coca Cola, commodities which are imbued with cultural promise" – namely "the promise of entry into an international speech community which is represented in what tend to be very idealized terms" (2000, p. 274). These idealised terms portray speakers whose lifestyle is characterised by success, mobility and egalitarianism, and which has lately been diagnosed as the promotional promise of English (Gray, 2010b, p. 134). The sales pitch of the English taught through the global textbook appears to depend on deterritorialisation, inclusivity, inappropriacy, and neoliberalism.

4.1.1.1. Deterritorialisation

A recurrent comment on the content of contemporary ELT global coursebooks is linked to deterritorialisation (Gray, 2002, p. 157; 2010b, p. 109). As anticipated above, it seems that these materials are no longer solely located in Britain as international settings occur as well (2002, p. 157). Buckledee, who examined the cultural content of *Straightforward Pre-intermediate*, *face2face Pre-intermediate*,

and *Total English Pre-intermediate*, concludes that "[n]aturally, there are topics related to the British way of life, British institutions etc. but these are counterbalanced by abundant material on other countries and cultures" (2010, p. 149). In another case study, Vettorel opted for the same approach to analyse a corpus of EFL textbooks used in Italy, some of which are published on an international scale (2010, p. 162). The linguist likewise notices "a more enlarged representation of culture", "an opening up towards a wider view, driving away from a totally N[ative]S[peaker]-reference, target-culture perspective" (2010, p. 178). More importantly, she writes, quoting Kramsch (1993), that this fresh angle on culture contributes to the creation of personal meaning and the expression of a voice – intercultural communication (2010, pp. 178-179). Whether deterritorialisation indeed allows intercultural communication will be investigated in the case of *NH SB*. Along with it, egalitarianism in the *NH* course will be of concern.

4.1.1.2. Inclusivity

Borrowed from Gray, the word is originally glossed as guidelines on textbook content which "refe[r] to the need for a non-sexist approach to the way in which men and women are represented throughout the coursebook" (2002, p. 157). Gender, let us note, appears to have been the main focus of interest in the scholar's textbook analyses (2000; 2002; 2010b). In 1997, Gray did a survey of 20 English teachers' attitudes towards the cultural aspects of a sample of global coursebooks (2000, p. 275). Some revealed that "they had sometimes felt uncomfortable with the reading exercises" in part owing to their "sexist content" (2000, p. 276). The following conclusion reached only 5 years later by the same Gray might consequently be baffling:

> Early surveys […] concluded that women were under-represented, trivialized and stereotyped in a wide selection of British and North American coursebooks. Even the most cursory look at a selection of modern global coursebooks produced in the UK shows that this is no longer the case. (2002, p. 157)

By way of example, women in the 1996 edition of *NH Intermediate* are "highly visible" and perform "a variety of roles" such as artist, TV presenter, and judge

(Gray, 2002, p. 159). The same goes for the male characters, who cook and wear aprons (2002, p. 159). British ELT global coursebooks, the linguist asserts, have been feminised (2002, p. 159; 2010b, p. 109; 2013a, pp. 5-6). By the feminising of textbook content, Gray means that "the representational practices deployed reveal the influence of feminism" (2010b, p. 109). After carrying out an autopsy on 4 global coursebooks published between 1979 and 2003, he pointed out that men and women were nowadays depicted on an egalitarian basis (2010b, p. 109). Women have become "as successful and independently minded professionals, as brave and initiative-taking individualists and as high-powered working mothers" (2010b, p. 109). Arikan's opinion on the 2003 *NH Student's Book* differs radically (2005, p. 36). What emerges from the Turkish linguist's close observation of visual materials is conversely gender bias (2005, pp. 36-37). Women are said to be still under-represented, portrayed stereotypically, and predominantly linked to child-rearing (2005, p. 36). Moreover, Arikan highlights a persistently sexist job distribution (2005, p. 36). Melliti, a Tunisian scholar who investigated exactly the same textbook, shares Arikan's views on under-representation and stereotypes (2013, p. 6). The term "ethnocentricity" is also mentioned in his article as "the coursebook primarily foregrounds Western women in Western situations" (Melliti, 2013, p. 6). Under the heading "inclusivity", a concept which he intentionally borrowed from Gray (2013, p. 4), Melliti chose to deal with the presence of ethnic communities in *NH* as well. The researcher gives damning evidence of racial bias, underscoring "the limited numbers and kinds of the roles and topics assigned for non-White minorities" (2013, p. 6). Concerning the same edition of *NH*, Gray simply remarks that "ten of the twelve units feature a wide range of phenotypically diverse characters" (2010b, p. 106). Of course, part of the study of *NH SB* will consist in settling this hotly debated question.

To Scott Thornbury's mind, "there is still room for improvement" as far as inclusivity is concerned (1999 quoted in Gray, 2002, p. 160). The New Zealander encouraged ELT textbook writers and publishers to insert, for example, "covert references" to homosexuality in their materials, such as "a smattering of same-sex flatmates" (1999 quoted in Gray, 2002, p. 160). His advice is nonetheless still topical. In "LGBT Invisibility and Heteronormativity in ELT Materials", Gray looked for clues which showed sexual diversity and LGBT characters in 10

contemporary ELT global coursebooks, among which *NH Elementary* and *NH Intermediate* (2013b, pp. 46-48).[7] "For those readers who are familiar with UK-produced textbooks for the global market", he admits, "it will come as no surprise that the analysis revealed that there is no reference to same-sex sexual orientation in any of the titles listed" (2013b, p. 49). What's more, any ambiguity regarding sexual identity – which might have resulted from Thornbury's "covert references" – is removed. Gray takes the example of Duncan and Nick, 2 male friends living together, who appear to be cooking (2013b, p. 50). The accompanying listening text clearly indicates that the meal which they are preparing is intended for their girlfriends (2013b, p. 50). At the root of this restricted inclusivity lies a "commercially motivated exclusivity" which is believed to sanitise ELT materials in order not to segment markets (Gray, 2002, p. 159; see also 2010b, pp. 112-128; 2013b, pp. 60-61). Part of this apparent neutralisation is determined by inappropriacy (Gray, 2002, p. 157; pp. 159-161).

4.1.1.3. Inappropriacy

Another concept borrowed from Gray is "inappropriacy" (2002, p. 157). It is a set of guidelines which groups "those topics which writers are advised to avoid so as not to offend the perceived sensibilities of potential buyers and users" (Gray, 2010b, p. 112). Within the ELT industry, Gray claims that inappropriate subject matters are gathered under the acronym PARSNIP, "a rule of thumb" which was divulged by some Oxford University Press[8] publishers in an informal interview (2002, p. 159; 2010b, p. 119; see also Melliti, 2013, p. 3). The abbreviation stands for politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms, and pork (2002, p. 159). Although PARSNIP is not an official list in its own right, several of the sensitive subjects it includes seem recurrent in ELT publishing. Informing readers about their personal experiences as materials writers, Bell and Gower indeed point out that

> It goes without saying that, like all global coursebook writers, we were also constrained by cultural sensitivities, so that there could be no, or only very oblique and upbeat, references to sex, drugs, death, politics and religion.

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[7] "LGBT" is the abbreviation for "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender" (Gray, 2013b, p. 41).
[8] Hereafter OUP.

It was clearly more sensitive to leave the decision to use these topics to the individual teacher and their particular circumstances. (2011, p. 143)

Unsurprisingly, the more diverse the learners' ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds – or the wider the commercial horizon (Gray, 2010b, p. 119), the more difficult the selection of acceptable topics. In the light of the mere assumption "one size fits all" underlying the global coursebook (2010b, p. 3), the idea of fully appropriate textbook content in fact turns out to be inconceivable. Bell and Gower confess in this connection that "you can only really judge what is 'appropriate' within the context of the teacher, the students, the institution, the prevailing culture, the day of the week, the hour of the day and so on" (2011, p. 144).

As I did not manage to communicate with OUP, I took the view that the topics found in *NH SB* would correspond to the subjects which, by contrast, are judged to be appropriate for foreign language students worldwide. As for now, after dealing with the themes which are included in and excluded from British ELT global textbooks, I would like to concentrate on a last phenomenon which is said to impact on the depiction of the characters encountered in these materials: neoliberalism.

4.1.1.4. Neoliberalism

Over the past 5 years, several studies principally conducted by Marxist scholars have focused on the influence of neoliberalism on the content of ELT global coursebooks (e.g. Gray, 2010a; 2012; Gray and Block, 2012; Kullman, 2013). Gray, who considers neoliberalism to be the essential component of contemporary capitalism (2010a, p. 717), and thus globalisation (2010b, p. 13), defines the notion as follows:

> Neoliberalism refers to the political and philosophical ideas originating in the work of Friedrich von Hayek who argued that an unfettered market economy was the only means of preserving "a free political order" and that "the whole conception of social or distributive justice" […] being pursued by many post-war social democratic European governments was the enemy of this version of freedom. (2010a, p. 717)

In the linguist's opinion, 2 of its concomitants are the emergence of a "highly insecure and stressful" world of work and what he calls "the reconfiguration of the self" (2010a, pp. 717-719). The latter is thought to result from the influential

work of Tom Peters, who maintains that "the way for individuals to survive in a neoliberal climate is effectively to brand themselves in order to stand out from the growing army of generic labour" (2010a, p. 718).[9] Both aspects of neoliberalism were again examined in 12 UK-produced global textbooks published between 1979 – *Streamline Connections* – and 2005 – *New Cutting Edge* and *NH* (2010a, p. 721). It appears that the world of work has consistently been represented in a positive manner since the 1980s, and that characters have "repeatedly display[ed] distinction, commitment and passion in relation to their chosen careers – in which they begin to achieve increasingly spectacular success" (2010a, p. 722). As regards *NH*, these characters even tend to be part of "choiceoisie", namely a group of people whose lifestyle choices are not heavily influenced by social, financial or personal constraints (Probyn, 1990 quoted in Gray, 2010a, p. 725). At the same time, they seem aware of job insecurity in the neoliberal context because references to redundancy, unemployment, and savings for a rainy day have recently sprung up in those materials (2010a, p. 725).

What is noteworthy is that the increasing individualism which is chiefly spotted in the depiction of characters in the latest coursebooks – "choiceoisie" by way of illustration (Gray, 2010a, p. 725) – coincides with the gradual centrality of the learner in the same textbooks (Kullman, 2013). Following the example of Gray, Kullman investigated the cultural content of 12 best-selling British global materials published between 1971 and 1999 (2013, pp. 23-24). The scholar notices that the student's personal life has been "the central organising narrative of the coursebook" since the end of the 1990s, the storyline being less frequently grounded in "others' (often fictitious) lives" (2013, p. 25). For instance, authors today design quizzes in which learners are asked to describe their character traits, and activities centred on their lifestyles (2013, pp. 27-32). Kullman concludes his article by warning readers that individualism is culture-specific (2013, p. 33). Assertiveness, for example, might be seen as a quality exclusively in Western society (2013, pp. 33-34). ELT global coursebooks, he finally insists, definitely "encode and

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[9] Generic labour is described as "exchangeable and disposable", and "co-exists in the same circuits with machines and with unskilled labour from around the world" (Castells, 2002 quoted in Gray, 2010a, p. 718).

embed particular culturally situated discourses and perspectives on the individual"
(2013, p. 38).

To Gray's mind, individualism is precisely the "mainspring of
bourgeois/capitalist philosophy" (O'Sullivan et al., 1994 quoted in Gray, 2012, p. 94)
defined as "a theory not only of abstract individuals but of the primacy of individual
states and interests" (Williams, 1976 quoted in Gray, 2012, p. 94). Individualism is
moreover the concept which binds together neoliberalism and celebrity (2012, p. 94).
Alluding to Peters' "Brand You!" philosophy (Gray, 2010a, p. 718), the researcher
writes that "the celebrity is the most recognizable type of branded individual in
consumer culture" (2010a, p. 727). It is no wonder that the treatment of personalities
in ELT materials is the focal point of a chapter of *Neoliberalism and Applied
Linguistics* (Gray, 2012). It emerges that celebrities started to populate the textbooks
in the late 1970s and have dramatically proliferated from the 1980s onwards (2012,
pp. 98-99). Initially, these personalities tended to "be presented to students as worthy
of their approval on account of their single-minded dedication to a chosen path in life
and distinction in their field" (2012, p. 99). The *NH* course constitutes a real turning
point in the representation of celebrity (2012, p. 99). In the second half of the 1990s,
one notes a shift "towards the deployment of celebrity characters who are typified by
their business acumen or by professional success" (2012, p. 99). Over time, celebrity
and business success have been blended in *NH* (2012, p. 103), the former being
progressively associated with the latter. It consequently comes as no surprise that,
over the same period, working-class characters have steadily been removed from
these ELT global materials in favour of an "overwhelming focus on consumerism
and the lifestyles of a cosmopolitan middle class" which, as Gray and Block put it,
"celebrat[es] neoliberal ideology" (2012, pp. 45-47).

As a direct result of neoliberalism, these British coursebooks have been
characterised by "aspirational" content, which was once informally described to Gray
as "something which [students] aspire to and therefore interests them and motivates
them" (2002, p. 161). It is this content which will be examined in the present thesis.
Nonetheless, the research will be conducted neither from a historical nor from
an exclusively cultural angle; again, I intend to adopt first and foremost a linguistic
approach to *NH SB*. In fact, it will be argued that aspirational content is not solely
the product of globalisation; it is also determined by the linguistic models which are

at the core of the English course. Therefore, I now pay attention to the most recent findings on the nature of these models in ELT global textbooks.

4.2. The Linguistic Content of ELT Global Coursebooks

As I signalled above, that is the weak point. Few studies have been devoted to the linguistic content of these materials (e.g. Buckledee, 2010; Gray, 2010b; Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013). In addition, when the linguistic issue is addressed, it is often analysed partially. For example, the ardent supporters of ELF who have turned the spotlight on the inappropriate native-speaker model prevailing in ELT global materials mainly focus on phonology (e.g. Buckledee, 2010; Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013). Phonology, Buckledee advances, is "the most thoroughly researched and codified aspect of English as a Lingua Franca" (2010, p. 150). To observe concessions to ELF, the linguist thus identified the accents of English, stress and rhythm found in listening exercises (2010, pp. 145-149). Received Pronunciation (RP), Estuary English, and General American being dominant in the textbooks, Buckledee simply concludes that "it is disappointing to find so few instances of non-native models of pronunciation" (2010, p. 150).

Vettorel and Lopriore offered to widen the scope of the linguistic research in the case study involving 10 English language coursebooks used in Italy (2013). This corpus comprised British global textbooks, UK-produced materials which were adapted to the Italian secondary school environment, and English language coursebooks manufactured in Italy (2013, appendix). Once more, the analysis partly consisted in detecting a shift towards ELF or varieties of English in their linguistic content (2013, p. 493). It turns out that this "shift is in the majority of cases only realized in terms of acknowledging the co-existence of varieties besides standard British English, of stimulating recognition of differences in vocabulary, in spelling or in pronunciation", and finally "in the use of varieties of English in the audio and video materials" (2013, p. 495). The representation of this co-existence – for instance, the contexts in which standard British English and these varieties of English are used – and its impact on the depiction of the English-speaking world are however not explored.

What is indeed noticeable in both studies is that the scholars keep language separate from culture. One section of their articles focuses on the salient linguistic features of each English course (Buckledee, 2010, pp. 145-149; Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013, pp. 493-495); another is concerned with cultural references (2010, p. 149; 2013, pp. 495-496). The interaction between those features and these references is not at all considered. It is in this regard that Gray's work may be seen as a step forward. When the linguist inspects the phonological content of global textbooks, he does not only content himself with identifying the accents of English and counting their occurrences; Gray also attempts to understand the way in which they are used to portray speakers of English (2010b, pp. 59-62; pp. 71-73; pp. 85-87; pp. 96-98). In the case of *Streamline Connections*, he remarks that

> the surface variation in the representation of English phonologically does not imply equality of status for all accents. […] [S]everal speakers whose jobs are not generally regarded as being particularly high status have [an RP accent] – thereby making the point that this accent […] does not automatically presuppose a high-status job – it is also clear that higher-status jobs *tend* to be accompanied by [an RP accent] and that regional UK accents are more clearly associated with blue-collar employment. (2010b, p. 61, his italics)

Let us underline that this quote nevertheless remains an observation as Gray does not provide any explanation for such an imbalance between accents of English. I would hold that it is exactly at this stage that an in-depth linguistic analysis becomes useful to account for these ideological associations. The types of accents, grammar, and lexis upon which the English course relies shape its cultural content because they are themselves far from neutral: some are considered to be more prestigious than others (Melchers and Shaw, 2013, p. 5). It is the case of the varieties which were codified in standard forms (2013, pp. 4-5), and which are thought to enable their users to gain "a profit of distinction" (Bourdieu, 1991 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 15). They are grounded in "standard language ideology" which is "a particular set of beliefs about language […] typically held by populations of economically developed nation states where processes of standardisation have operated" (L. Milroy, 1999, p. 173). Because ELT is "still largely based" on standard British English and RP (Preisler, 1999 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 49), I offer to draw attention to the beliefs to which they are tied. It will become apparent that neoliberalism only reinforces a pre-existing ideology underlying these standards.

4.2.1. Standard British English and RP

To begin with, defining standard British English is a major headache. As Tom McArthur puts it, it is "[a] widely used term that resists easy definition but is used as if most educated people nonetheless know precisely what it refers to" (1998, p. 133). Under the pen of David Crystal, standard British English corresponds to "a minority variety (identified chiefly by its vocabulary, grammar, and orthography) which carries most prestige and is most widely understood" (2003, p. 110). The linguist insists that it "is not a matter of pronunciation" as it can be "spoken in a wide variety of accents" (2003, p. 110). In Peter Trudgill's opinion, it is "a purely social dialect" which is "by far the most important [...] in the English-speaking world from a social, intellectual and cultural point of view", which is distinct from "other dialects of the language by its *grammatical* forms" and "does not have an associated accent" (1999, pp. 123-125, his italics). By contrast, Claus Gnutzmann claims that this dialect, which is "used by the educated in written and spoken form, and in both formal and informal contexts", "encompasses all linguistic levels, including pronunciation" (2005, p. 110). With regard to the present dissertation, I share Trudgill's conception of standard British English, which is characterised by specific grammatical patterns but which is not linked to any precise accent. As will be explained, the standard pronunciation was in fact codified centuries later (Melchers and Shaw, 2013).

A less controversial issue is the context in which standard British English was born. It is in the second half of the 15th century that language standardisation began in England (Melchers and Shaw, 2013, p. 5), a process whose purpose was "to fix and 'embaulm' (Samuel Johnson's term) the structural properties of the language in a uniform state and *prevent* all structural change" (J. Milroy, 1999, p. 28, his italics). It is vital to emphasise that, in Hayley Davis' words, this standard is far from being "a harmless descriptive term" and "has sense only within a strict form of prescriptivism" (1999, p. 85). Interestingly, prescriptivism – which, as opposed to descriptivism, centres on a finite set of almost immutable rules determining the so-called correct use of a language, without taking its actual use into account (Crystal, 2003, p. 461; p. 467) – appears to be a linguistic device designed to maintain the fixity of a language first established by the process of standardisation (J. Milroy, 1999). Prescriptivism, so it seems, preserves the linguistic ideology of correctness

embedded in the standard language (J. Milroy, 1999, p. 18), in addition to the values with which the variety was associated when it was codified:

> The developing standard was London-based – in particular, it reflected the language of the prosperous middle-class businessmen who had moved into London from an area north-east of the city. The influential University of Cambridge in that area is also believed to have played an important role here. (Melchers and Shaw, 2013, no pagination)

RP – initially referred to as Public School Pronunciation (PSP), commonly connected to the work of British phonetician Daniel Jones (Roach, 2004, p. 239), and defined as a model of correctness at the dawn of the 20th century (J. Milroy, 1999, p. 18) – is also said to characterise primarily educated male speakers from Southern England (Upton, 2004, p. 217). Clive Upton however advances that "[e]arly twentieth-century assumptions are not necessarily ours" because "education is now more democratic in respect of both gender and class, and Southern England no longer holds a grip on linguistic prestige which it had on Britain a century ago" (2004, p. 217). The scholar in fact recommends being "more relaxed about the [acknowledged] RP" and avoiding "mak[ing] the model too precious or confin[ing] its speaker-base to an elite" (2004, p. 218). Nonetheless, by means of this mere advice, Upton recognises that the words "precious" and "elite" are still inextricably intertwined with RP. Indeed, he eventually concedes that "a commonly-held view persists that RP is a very narrow class-based and region-based variety of English pronunciation" (2004, p. 218). Peter Trudgill and Jean Hannah similarly argue that RP is today a prestigious social accent all over the British Isles and British Commonwealth, which is used "natively by only 3-5 per cent of the population of England", and which remains strongly linked to England, the BBC, hence "BBC English", public schools, and the middle and upper classes (1997, p. 2; pp. 9-10).

On the basis of what has been theorised about the relationship between language, culture, and textbook, I hold the view that standard language and accent ideology must somehow influence the content of ELT global coursebooks. It is bound to contribute implicitly to the representation of the English language and its speakers, which – if applicable – is what I will endeavour to discover through a qualitative and quantitative linguistic study of *NH SB*. For the moment, it appears imperative to know what the course is overtly stated to consist of.

II. Introducing *New Headway*

1. Introduction

Still from a metaphorical perspective, **Chapter II** corresponds to the technical data sheet introducing briefly the 2014 edition of *NH*. More precisely, it collects the information on the series in general, and *NH SB* in particular, which is made available to any potential user. It is indeed the description of the ELT materials provided by their writers and publishers which is primarily of concern – in other words, the answers which they give to the basic questions "What is *NH*?", "What does it consist of?", and "What are language learners taught through this resource?" In this respect, I first retrieved data from the OUP web page devoted to the series of coursebooks (**2**). Subsequently, relying again on the "zoom in" technique, I studied the back cover and the table of contents of *NH SB*, as they usually offer a few glimpses of the course (**3**). It is imperative to specify that my prime objective in this chapter is not solely to compile some facts and figures about *NH SB*. Being very critical towards the explicit information on the textbook, I also wish to discover what lies behind the writers and publishers' definition of the course and how this may affect the content of *NH SB*.

2. The *NH* Web Page

Browsing the *NH* web page, the Internet user is bound to notice a certain amount of superlatives used to evaluate the series of English language textbooks. Liz and John Soars' teaching materials are described as "[t]he world's *best-selling* English course" whose methodology "combines *the best of* traditional approaches […] and newer approaches" (OUP, 2015b, my emphasis). From the outset, particular stress is laid on the adjective "best-selling". In fact, *NH* is not fundamentally presented as a set of linguistic and pedagogical resources here; it is rather treated as a "[p]roduct" to be bought (OUP, 2015b), or, in Gray's terms, as a commodity to be sold (2013a, p. 7). Few data covering the content of the coursebooks can indeed be gathered from this web page as the main information turns out to be the selling points of the collection. Interestingly enough, these are mentioned before the schematic

overview of the *NH* materials found under the headings "Key features" and "Read more …" (OUP, 2015b). The latter sections concisely indicate that grammar is a core element of the language teaching and learning process, and that great emphasis is put in the books on a large diversity of skills and exercises, including spoken English (OUP, 2015b). Readers are furthermore informed that *NH* is a "[s]ix-level general English course" (OUP, 2015b). It can be inferred from the OUP catalogue of ELT textbooks that "a general English course" means "not an 'English for Specific Purposes' course" (OUP, 2015a). Consequently, *NH* enables learners to use English in various domains and contexts, without focusing on a distinct field of interest such as English for Logistics and English for Aviation (OUP, 2015a).

Besides extra digital and online resources, each *NH* course consists of a *Student's Book* and its 4 Class Audio CDs, a *Workbook* with additional exercises and their keys, and a *Teacher's Book* (OUP, 2015b). Although separate, the *Student's* and *Teacher's Books* are complementary. The latter contains advice, suggestions, notes, comments, and the keys referring to the learning activities characterising the former (OUP, 2015b). All these ELT materials are moreover available for learners whose levels of competence in English correspond to "beginner", "elementary", "pre-intermediate", "intermediate", "upper-intermediate", and "advanced" (OUP, 2015b). While the first 2 levels define the "basic user", the fourth and the fifth represent the "independent user" (OUP, 2015b).[10] The "pre-intermediate" level of competence is located between these 2 categories of learners (OUP, 2015b). Finally, the users of advanced-level coursebooks are described as "proficient" (OUP, 2015b).

This complex hierarchical structure of linguistic competence is said to "[meet] the level requirements of the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages]" (OUP, 2015b). **Table 1**, which is taken from this document, details the profile of each language user. Designed by the Council of Europe, the CEFR, let us recall,

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[10] As shown in the following paragraph, the "independent user" covers the B1 and B2 levels of proficiency established by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe in the CEFR (2001, p. 23). The B1 or Threshold level is reached when the language learner has the ability to "maintain interaction and get across what [(s)he] want[s] to, in a range of contexts" and "cope flexibly with problems in everyday life" (2001, p. 34). The B2 or Vantage level, in turn, corresponds to "Limited Operational Proficiency", or "adequate response to situations normally encountered" (2001, p. 23). The latter level will be examined below.

provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency [**Table 1**] which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. (LPU of the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1)

Table 1. Common Reference Levels of Language Learners' Proficiency and Their Criteria.

Proficient user	**C2**	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent user	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic user	**A2**	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24.

It is worth succinctly commenting on the geographical dimension of the CEFR. On the basis of the description and the title of this official document, the Framework seems intended to be in force in Europe solely. Nonetheless, perusing the CEFR web page, one can spot that "[i]t is used in Europe but also in other continents and is now available in 39 languages" (Council of Europe, 2014a). Put differently, this educational structure is at present exported outside the borders of the European Union and the Council member states to reach other regions of the world.

The *NH* web page is corroborating evidence. On the upper right-hand side, a tab can be found which, once opened, lists the names of 244 areas of the globe (OUP, 2015b). It emerges from the "Buy from" page that the *NH* coursebooks are predominantly exported to these areas from the publishing house's headquarters in Oxford (OUP, 2015b), which is an intrinsic feature of ELT global textbooks (Gray, 2010b, p. 1; Melliti, 2013, p. 1; Harwood, 2014, p. 1). By way of example, the observation applies to all the African countries mentioned in the tab, except for Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa (OUP, 2015b). The latter are part of the 75 areas in which OUP sells "[its] titles through other *companies*" (OUP, 2015b, my emphasis). In Belgium, for instance, De Boeck and Papyrus Book Agency are in charge of the distribution of *NH* within the territory (OUP, 2015b). What is definitely noteworthy is that 35 areas out of the 75 previously indicated are member states of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2014b). Therefore, more than half of the 75 areas are not, but remain under the influence of the CEFR.

It is crucial to underscore that, save the reference to the level requirements of the CEFR and the commercial horizon of *NH*, the information given in the last 2 paragraphs is not available on the web page. As a consequence, the potential user of an *NH* textbook is not explicitly told that the language course conforms to the linguistic competences determined by a document initially in force in Europe. In **Chapter IV**, it will thus be worth investigating whether the content of *NH SB* tends to be Eurocentric. As for the next section, it is concerned with the data which can be gleaned from the back cover and the table of contents of *NH SB*. In fact, to avoid inferring information from tabs and bulleted lists with vague descriptions, a user of the *NH* coursebooks is likely to skim through them and find out more about the content of the course.

3. The Back Cover and the Table of Contents of *NH SB*

In addition to the usual praise addressed to the authors John and Liz Soars for their materials, one detects a single line referring to linguistic data on the back cover of the textbook. It is claimed that "Headway Upper-Intermediate, Fourth edition [s]tretches students towards a more complex and natural use of English" (Soars and Soars, 2014). Here is a sentence worth pondering. What does "a more complex and natural use of English" mean? Does the "natural use" of a language correspond to its everyday, spontaneous, instinctive, and probably unconscious practice? Is "natural use" a roundabout way to suggest "native-like use"? To interpret this short and obscure description, the above CEFR table becomes useful. Still on the back cover of *NH SB*, it is stated that "upper-intermediate" conforms to the B2 level defined by the CEFR (Soars and Soars, 2014). A language learner who has reached the B2 level

> [c]an understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation[;] [c]an interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party[;] [c]an produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. (LPU of the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

While the word "complex" also used in this quotation remains undefined, what the phrase "[a] natural use of English" conceals is revealed by the second goal achieved by the B2-level student: language learners are indeed said to make a "natural use of English" once they manage to communicate quite fluently and spontaneously with speakers of English as a mother tongue (ENL) on a regular basis (LPU of the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24). As a result, the native speaker appears to be the legitimising agency in the process of English learning at this level of competence, the persistent "yardstick against which [non-native speakers'] use is measured" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 45). Other questions then spring to mind. Who are these native speakers? Are they part of the common people or members of the elite? Are they principally white and middle class? What about the non-native speakers of English? Are they represented in *NH SB*, and if so, how? More importantly, which type(s) of English is (are) labelled as ENL in the coursebook? With which type(s) of English is (are) these native speakers associated? The opening pages of *NH SB* do

not help in this search for the profile of the course. Apart from the traditional "skills" ("listening", "speaking", "everyday English", "writing"), "language input" ("grammar", "vocabulary", "reading"), and the related themes covered in the 12 units of the textbook (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 2-5), there is no clue in the table of contents which might contribute to the definition of the linguistic point(s) of reference of *NH*. Language learners are informed that they will study narrative tenses, words with variable stress, and compound words (2014, p. 2), but the type(s) of English to which these tenses and words belong – such as Australian English and Canadian English – remain(s) unknown.

At this stage of my research, I could have sent an email to the OUP publishers and the authors of *NH SB* in order to know exactly the type(s) of English taught through their coursebooks. Anticipating their refusal to take part in this study, besides their possibly biased and incomplete responses, I chose to carry out a linguistic analysis of the textbook first, an investigation which is centred on 3 branches of linguistics – phonology, grammar, and lexis. What the previous paragraphs have indeed demonstrated is that the producers of *NH* are silent on the profile of the course, preferring above all to present coursebooks as merchandise. However, through the *NH* web page and the back cover of *NH SB*, they seem to give some hints about the content of the textbook, notably its shaping by the CEFR. The problem is that one has to make the effort to consult the Framework to discover that this content might be Eurocentric, and that the B2 level characterising *NH SB* is very likely to require competence in ENL. These hypotheses now have to be confirmed by sinking slowly to the depths of the material. In the next chapter, stress is laid on the linguistic aspect of the course.

III. The Linguistic Content of *NH SB*

1. Introduction

To diagnose the type(s) of English underlying the *NH* course, I perform in **Chapter III** an autopsy on 3 subfields of linguistics which are essential components of *NH SB*. Conducting a quantitative and qualitative study of the accents of English represented in the related audio material (**2**), an in-depth analysis of the approach adopted to grammar – prescriptivism and descriptivism (**3**) – and of the nature and function of lexis (**4**), I first plan to substantiate or invalidate the conclusions drawn by most ELT scholars which highlight the predominance of RP and standard British English in global coursebooks. Let us insist right from the start that the compilation of linguistic data is again not the sole purpose of this investigation. Because I share the view that "[materials] are cultural artefacts from which meanings emerge about the language being taught, associating it with particular ways of being, particular varieties of language and ways of using language, and particular sets of values" (Gray, 2013, p. 3), I also concentrate on the manner in which values are deliberately created in *NH SB* by means of linguistic strategies such as over-lexicalisation, and intentionally connected to the type(s) of English learned.[11] More specifically, I argue that certain values are selected to "make languag[e] mean in particular ways" (Gray, 2013, p. 2), that they are embedded in this (these) type(s) of English in order to restrict the body of speakers of English to one discourse community, and, as will be debated in **Chapter IV**, in order to depict one dominant target culture.

2. Phonology: Accents of English

An Englishman's way of speaking absolutely classifies him.
The moment he talks he makes some other Englishman despise him.
One common language I'm afraid we'll never get.
Oh, why can't the English learn to set
A good example to people whose English is painful to your ears?
The Scotch and the Irish leave you close to tears.

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[11] The concept of over-lexicalisation will be described in section **4**.

There even are places where English completely disappears.
In America, they haven't used it for years!
Why can't the English teach their children how to speak?
(Lerner, 1959, pp. 20-21)

Professor Henry Higgins' biting remarks on the pronunciation of English, expressed in the 1964 American musical *My Fair Lady* adapted from George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* (Lerner, 1959, p. 14), might appear out-of-date, anachronistic. Nevertheless, more than a reference, the character's sociolinguistic theory summarised below is a key to understanding the conception of English conveyed in *NH SB*.

Higgins manages to identify the hometowns of several pedestrians by listening to the way they speak (1959, pp. 16-18). With a tinge of pride, he explains to them that his secret is "[s]imple phonetics[,] [t]he science of speech" (1959, p. 18). Among these elegantly dressed people, Eliza Doolittle, recognisable by her worn out garments, sells flowers on the street (1959, p. 14). After paying attention to her pronunciation of English, Higgins lectures her on her Cockney accent, reminding the young woman that her mother tongue is the language of the writers William Shakespeare and John Milton, and that of the Bible (1959, p. 18). Not only does he assume that her accent sullies the English language, the professor advances that it is the cause of her poor living conditions (1959, p. 19). An accent, in the phonetician's own terms, is the linguistic tool which draws a "verbal class distinction" (1959, p. 19). An accent moreover reveals its speaker's level of education (1959, p. 19). To sum up, it indeed "*classifies*" a speaker (1959, p. 20, my emphasis). A turn worth considering in this connection is the challenge involving Eliza which Higgins intends to take up:

> You see this creature with kerbstone English; the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days? Well, sir, in six months I could pass her off as a duchess at an Embassy ball. I could even get her a place as a lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English. (1959, p. 21)

Professor Higgins offers Eliza the possibility of reaching an upper stratum of the English social scale. What is said to allow the flower seller's social mobility is the *improvement* of her pronunciation as, for instance, working as a shop assistant necessitates what is called "*better* English" (1959, p. 21, my emphasis).

Furthermore, with the mother tongue of the writers enriching the English literary canon, the language read in the Bible, the linguistic norm taught at school (1959, p. 18) is associated a finite set of sounds, stress, and intonation patterns which are labelled as "correct" (1959, pp. 52-57). By way of example, the manner in which Eliza utters the sentence "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain", transcribed into "The rine in spine sties minely in the pline", is regarded as unacceptable and incorrect by Higgins, and so is her H-dropping (1959, pp. 54-55). All these observations converge towards the same conclusion: there is one "correct" way to pronounce English. The sociolinguistic assumption that learning to utter the correct sounds, stress, and intonation patterns of English is concomitant with the improvement of a speaker's living conditions is not only the pillar of *My Fair Lady*; it also turns out to be a core value of *NH SB*.

The starting point for this theory is a quantitative and qualitative study of the sample of accents represented in the *NH* listening exercises. It is first designed to identify and classify them so as to underline the possible over/under-representation of types of accents such as RP. The additional qualitative approach consists in examining the authenticity of these accents, as I support McGrath's argument that

> [authenticity] gives learners a taste of the real world, an opportunity to "rehearse" in a sheltered environment, hence the less authentic the materials we use the less well prepared learners will be for that real world. (2002 quoted in Richards, 2014, p. 23)

Both aspects of this study will provide a more detailed description of the *NH* course, foregrounding the type(s) of accents of English which is (are) favoured on the basis of statistics and the quality values it (they) is (are) assigned.

2.1. A Quantitative Analysis

NH SB is accompanied by 4 CDs which include 143 tracks (Soars and Soars, 2014) – whose content is transcribed at the end of the textbook (2014, pp. 120-138). Each track was first of all scrupulously dissected in order to sort out distinct accents of English. These accents were afterwards categorised according to a principle inspired by the contrast between "word type" and "word token" (Biber, Conrad and Leech,

2002, p. 15). While the former is glossed as "a word considered as a distinct vocabulary item", the latter describes "each occurrence of a word in a text" (2002, p. 461). For example, in the sentence *The cat of the florist is on the roof*, there are 7 word types (*the*, *cat*, *of*, *florist*, *is*, *on*, *roof*) and 9 word tokens, the definite article "the" occurring thrice. A similar distinction between "accent type" and "accent token" was expressly drawn for this study. Welsh English therefore becomes an "accent type" whose "accent tokens" correspond to its occurrences in all the interactions covered by the 143 tracks. Conversational turns were not considered to be accent tokens here. In the case of a dialogue involving people who speak with a Canadian English accent, I noted 2 accent tokens related to this type, regardless of the number of turns per speaker. The pie chart below combines the accent types identified in the 4 Class Audio CDs, which are listed in the legend, with their respective tokens, represented by the figures in bold.

Graph 1.

Accents Emerging from the 4 *New Headway Upper-Intermediate Fourth Edition* Class Audio CDs
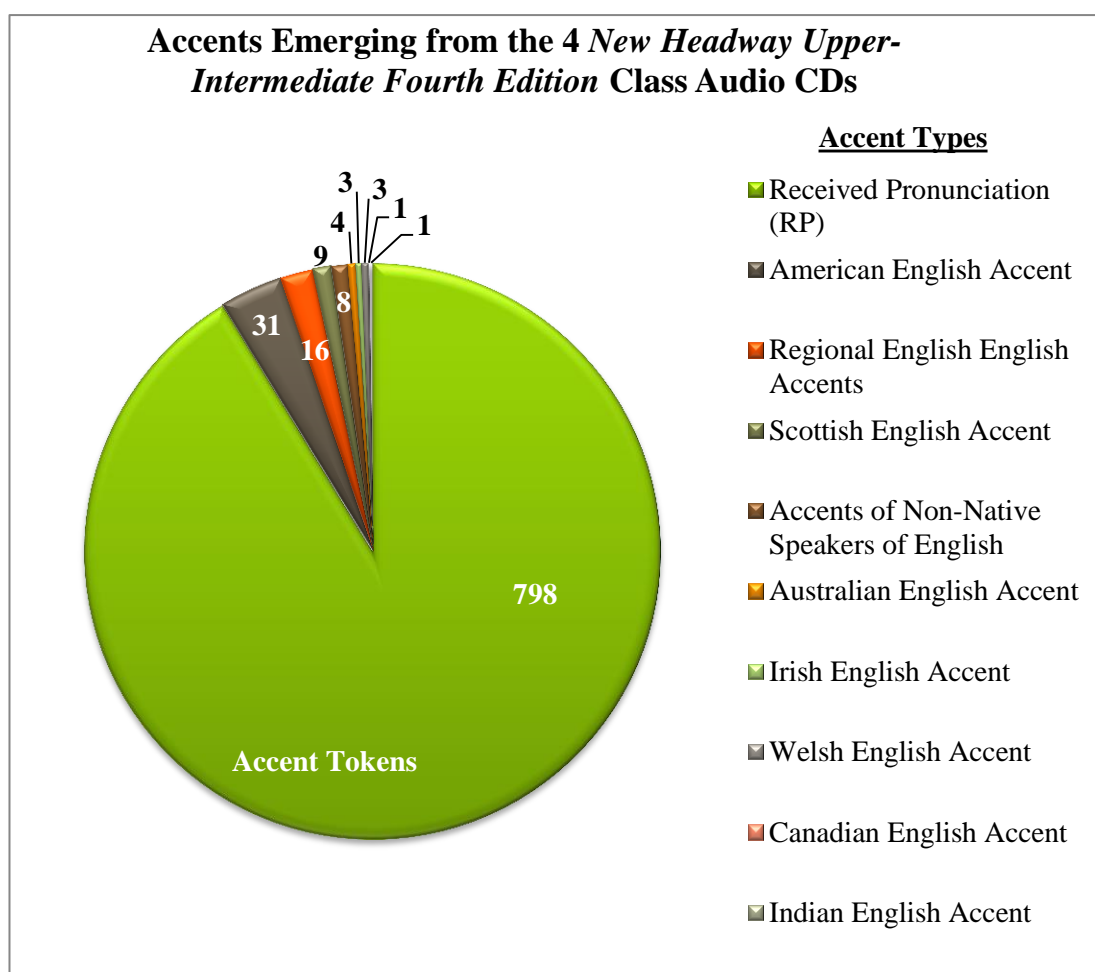
Unsurprisingly, RP occupies the leading position with 798 occurrences – that is to say 91.3% of the total accent tokens comprised in the tracks. The remaining 8.7% are divided into 9 accent types. Seven of them are associated with speakers of ENL, namely the American English, regional English English other than RP, Scottish English, Australian English, Irish English, Welsh English, and Canadian English types. With 3.55% of the total tokens, the American English accent type comes first in this set and precedes the regional English English one, which groups Yorkshire, Bristol, and Birmingham accents in addition to Scouse. Scottish English follows, represented by 9 occurrences. With regard to the last 4 accent types, they are numerically inferior, even negligible. Canadian English, for instance, is heard only once (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 5.8.2).[12] Indian English, occurring once as well (2014, T 7.7), is the sole accent linked to a variety of English whose status is termed ESL (Crystal, 2003, p. 107). Finally, 8 tokens refer to diverse accents of speakers of EFL, such as Chinese, Spanish, Slavic and Greek accents (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 1.5.10; T 4.14; T 1.7.5; T 5.8.3).

This quantitative study has led to 3 significant findings. Firstly, RP does remain the dominant accent of English in the audio material of *NH SB*. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of the non-RP accent types are commonly used by native speakers of English. As a consequence, lastly, non-native speakers are represented in less than 1% of the total accent tokens. In spite of the extremely low percentage of people who speak English with this accent in the contemporary English-speaking world, RP still prevails in the textbook over non-native accents of English. To account for the persistent supremacy of RP in UK-produced ELT global coursebooks, Gray espouses once more the logic of consumerism. In his opinion, "by exposing students to a very narrow range of accents, by consistently privileging [RP], […] English is not only simplified for the purposes of teaching and learning, it could also be argued that it is reified and stabilized […] for commercial reasons" (2010b, p. 137). English pronunciation would purposely be restricted to RP to make it invariant and turn it into "a marketable product" (Wajnryb, 1996 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 137). It is indeed believed that "the very act of acknowledging context as significant limits the currency of the language [considered]" (1996 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 137). I would rather contend that RP remains predominant in the *NH*

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[12] "T" means "track".

course because of the values it is assigned. In the second part of the following qualitative analysis of accent types and accent tokens, I will show how RP is implicitly equated with correct language use. Besides, in section **4**, I intend to expound the view that RP is first and foremost presented as "a desirable goal" to achieve by language learners, who thus "aspire to become native-like in their use of English" (Timmis, 2002 quoted in Adolphs, 2005, pp. 119-120). For the moment, emphasis is placed on the authenticity of the *NH* audio material.

2.2.   A Qualitative Analysis

What characterises the 143 tracks dissected above is a finite set of voices. As a result, while an accent type is illustrated by several voices, the same voice can also be used to perform different accent types. A striking example is the voice which exemplifies the Indian English accent type. It is said to be that of Pratima Kejriwal, a woman who entered into an arranged marriage (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 57). Owing to a picture showing a female Indian adult dressed in a gold and red sari (2014, p. 57), learners may expect to listen to an authentic Indian English accent. This same instantly recognisable voice nonetheless shifts to an RP accent in tracks 1.4.5, 1.9.2, 3.15.3, 4.10.3, 4.12.4, 5.2, 10.7.3, 11.6.6, 12.1, 12.4.8, 12.7.1, 12.7.3, 12.9.3, and 12.9.5 (Soars and Soars, 2014). Regarding the 2003 edition of *NH Intermediate*, Gray made an identical observation (2010b, p. 96). The scholar writes that "[t]he same voice, most probably that of an actor, appears to be used for a Japanese speaker in one unit and for a Korean in another" (2010b, p. 97). Another noticeable example reinforcing Gray's statement is the fictional character Luciana. Luciana was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, works in New York, and is visiting her friends in London while on her way to Amsterdam for a conference (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 4.14). In the initial turns of her conversation with Anna, Ben, and Henry, Luciana's accent seems Spanish English, whereas towards the end of the interaction, it morphs into a rhotic North American accent (2014, T 4.14).

As a direct result of these remarks, I decided to submit a sample of 16 tracks to Dr Romdhani, a native English speaker working in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Liège, in order to find out whether these instances of fictitious accents were isolated or recurrent. Beforehand, I had

divided the tracks into 3 categories. The first clustered rhotic and non-rhotic accents which were likely to be British. A single track was inserted in the second category. It corresponds to a series of tweets uttered by an American teenager, Tyler, who is travelling to London for a gap year (2014, T 1.1). Finally, the third category collected the tracks whose voices were clearly identified as neither British nor American in the related exercise instructions. Three instances are Loukas, a 26-year-old unemployed man coming from Greece (2014, T 5.8.3), Saroo Brierley, a young adult born in India who has lived in Australia for 25 years (2014, T 1.8), and Tetyana and Sem, who are said to be from the south of Ukraine and who have settled in England (2014, T 1.7.5). After listening to the tracks, Dr Romdhani confirmed my impression that the accents were artificial imitations. She added that the southern English speakers appeared to use what she impressionistically described as affected "radio voices". Significantly, she applied the phrase "radio voices" to the samples featuring make-believe *southern English* accents, which are instances of what was called in **Chapter I** "BBC English" – in other words, RP. As far as the "fake" accents are concerned, their *raison d'être* is puzzling. A plausible explanation is that the "untidiness" of authentic spoken English is "kept to a minimum" for pedagogical reasons (Gray, 2010b, p. 136). As McGrath puts it,

> [s]trictly speaking, an authentic listening text would be neither scripted nor edited; in practice, poor quality, length, and other pedagogical considerations lead to spoken texts being re-recorded and/or edited for use in classrooms. Written texts may similarly be retyped and edited. (2002 quoted in Richards, 2014, p. 25)

Saroo Brierley, a real-life figure who was adopted by an Australian couple at the age of 5 (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 10), is a case in point. The listening exercise in which his story is told – "Lost and found: Lost Indian boy finds his mother 25 years later" (2014, pp. 10-11) – is actually based on a BBC news report (BBC, 2012). [13] Comparing the *NH* track to the television interview with the young man, one soon realises that the voices are discrepant. Not only are false starts, pauses, and most fillers erased in the first audio track, the voice is also marked by slower delivery and is close to RP. If the interview was indeed adapted to meet some pedagogical needs, why would the authors of *NH SB* assure teachers that the "[reading and listening

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[13] I am grateful to Dr Daria Tunca for this pivotal information.

tasks] follow the *Headway* tradition of being authentic, taken from a wide variety of sources" (Soars, Soars and Maris, 2014, p. 4)?

Closely connected to the issue of authenticity is RP. In fact, even though its accent tokens are not bogus, they do not accurately reflect the manner in which English is pronounced outside the classroom (Trudgill and Hannah, 1997, p. 2). As I anticipated above, the presence of this accent type in an ELT global coursebook seems however justified by its status as a model of correctness. What's more, it is indirectly presented as the only possible model of correctness. Consider in this regard the first "Vocabulary and Pronunciation" section of *NH SB* (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 12). Learners are initially introduced to compound words, and are then asked to fill in the gaps in 8 sentences with some of them before checking their responses by listening to track 1.10 (2014, p. 12). Finally, they have to repeat the sentences "with *correct* stress and intonation" (2014, p. 12, my emphasis). It is worth specifying that, at this point in *NH SB*, the task is not preceded by any theoretical framework as regards phonology. Consequently, "correct" is an empty word because its referent is unknown. No model of correctness is indeed suggested in the preceding pages. This referential void may accordingly be filled thanks to the exercise itself. Without an explicit point of reference, the voices chosen to pronounce the 8 sentences become a surrogate model of correctness. The argument is supported by the additional advice offered in the *Teacher's Book*:

> Ask students in pairs to practise saying the lines in exercise 3 with correct stress and intonation. Monitor and check for pronunciation problems. If necessary, play selected lines of the recording again as a model and get students to repeat. (Soars, Soars and Maris, 2014, p. 18)

The voices uttering the sentences which are viewed as a model of correct stress and intonation are all instances of RP. RP is the accent type identified in another exercise whose instructions read "[c]heck [that] students are *imitating* the stress and intonation patterns" (2014, p. 51, my emphasis). Furthermore, the sole phonemic system of *NH SB* (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 167) groups the symbols which are generally used to describe RP (Roach, 2004). Of course, this model of English pronunciation is neither named nor introduced to learners as an accent which originated in Southern England and which is hardly heard elsewhere. Due to a lack of explicitness from the authors and publishers of the textbook, the "implication is that

there is a single model of English […] which is appropriate for all students in all contexts" (Gray, 2010b, p. 136). The *NH* course is said to be "renowned worldwide for its clear understanding of teacher and learner needs" (Soars and Soars, 2014, back cover). Does it mean that an ELT global textbook providing a predominant RP system and a sample of false non-RP accents conforms to what both target groups require? Relying on a single norm to teach a language appears understandable. Nevertheless, this should not entail defining it as the only possible model of correctness or avoiding a descriptive and comparative approach to the pronunciation of English. Spotting the similarities and differences between RP and the Indian English accent, for example, might also be part of teacher and learner needs.

2.3.   Conclusions

In line with Buckledee's (2010) and Gray's (2010b) findings, the above analysis demonstrates that the latest edition of *NH SB* does not manifest any concession to non-native models of English pronunciation. Let us concede that RP is not the sole accent of English diagnosed in the course, that some non-native accents are recorded on the Class Audio CDs. Still, it is the only one which is taught and learned. All the non-RP accents are numerically inferior, affected – even slightly caricatured – and do not appear to deserve the label of "correctness". Echoing Professor Higgins' strong conviction, *NH SB* conveys the message that there is one correct way to pronounce English, and it corresponds to RP.[14] As a consequence, I wish to further the linguistic investigation of *NH SB* to discover whether the grammar input of the course also mirrors Higgins' conception of English as grounded in a single model of correctness. More importantly, I once more aim to highlight the meanings which this input encodes: bearing in mind that "at the heart of the [ELT] textbook is a regime of representation, a way of constructing the world that suggests what it means to be a speaker of English in the world" (Gray and Block, 2012, p. 46), I will cast light on the manner in which grammar is used to paint the portraits of speakers of English.

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[14] Far from being sheer coincidence, it is claimed that the fictional phonetician was in fact largely inspired by Daniel Jones himself (Collins and Mees, 1999, p. 100).

3. Grammar

When it comes to dealing with this subfield of linguistics in textbook analysis, it appears difficult to examine it from a quantitative perspective. A device for conducting this study such as the distinction between accent type and accent token seemed impossible to conceive. Therefore, I originally laid stress exclusively on the qualitative description of grammar in *NH SB*. In my search for a model of correctness in the coursebook, I first looked for traces of prescriptivism (see J. Milroy, 1999, p. 18). I subsequently endeavoured to tag this model, or more exactly to relate it to a type of English on the basis of the little information provided in the course. Ultimately, I undertook an analysis – this time, in part quantitative – of the representation of this assumption of correctness in some grammar exercises of the textbook. My intent was to unearth a possible link between this notion and a particular category of speakers, similar to the connection between phonological correctness and RP speakers of English.

3.1.   A Qualitative Analysis

Flipping through *NH SB*, one becomes fully aware of the "strong grammar focus" announced on the *NH* web page (OUP, 2015). Each of the 12 units starts with a "Test your grammar" activity which is "designed to launch the target language" before a grammatical point is introduced (Soars, Soars and Maris, 2014, p. 4). Instances of the material covered in the course are the tense system, questions and negatives, expressions of quantity, modals and related verbs, relative clauses, participles, expressions of habit, hypothesising, articles and determiners, besides 12 "Spoken English" sections (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 2-5). Lastly, at the back of the textbook, a "Grammar Reference" chapter stretching across 14 pages supplies students with detailed explanations of the grammatical material of each unit (2014, pp. 139-152). It is imperative to point out that, to carry out this research, I followed the structure of *NH SB*, starting from Unit 1 and ending with the "Grammar Reference" section. As will be clarified below, the skeleton of the course turns out to play an important part in the encoding of meanings in the grammar input.

To detect a model of correctness, I thus first scrutinised the grammatical content of the 12 units of the coursebook. My prime concern was not to understand the rationale behind it; rather, I sought to find signs of prescriptivism. It soon emerged that the exercise instructions were characterised by the repeated occurrence of the lexeme "correct", which betrays this approach to grammar. According to Braj B. Kachru, "correct", along with the idea of "error/mistake", is indeed one of the "sacred cows" of prescriptivism (1992 quoted in Bolton, 2004, p. 195). To give some examples, students are asked in one task to "[p]ut the verbs in the correct tense" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 16), in others to choose "the verbs or phrases [which] can fill the gap correctly" (2014, p. 55), and "[c]omplete the sentences with the correct demonstrative" (2014, p. 96). Much evidence of prescriptivism could then be found in the "Grammar Reference" chapter of *NH SB*. What is viewed as incorrect is not only preceded by an asterisk; it is also crossed out. Instances are "*~~I wonder what is she doing~~*" (2014, p. 143), "*~~Less people go to church~~*" (2014, p. 146), and "*~~We used to have a holiday there for 10 years/three times~~*" (2014, p. 150). In addition, the modal auxiliaries used by the authors often steer learners towards the path of correctness. Students are told that "[w]e cannot say a sentence such as *~~I've been crashing your car~~*" (2014, p. 140), that "we must use the simple, not the continuous, if the sentence contains a number that refers to 'things done'" (2014, p. 140), or that "[w]e cannot use *used to* with a time reference + a number" (2014, p. 150). Noteworthy was also the repetitive use of the personal pronoun "we" in these rules. "We", as Apple indicates with regard to the production of textbooks, is a misleading word as it conveys the message that the rules which it introduces are universally shared:

> [It] is not a "society" that has created such texts, but specific groups of people. "We" haven't built such curriculum artifacts in the simple sense that there is universal agreement among all of us and this is what gets to be official knowledge. In fact, the very use of the pronoun "we" simplifies matters all too much. (1992, p. 5)

The education researcher concurs with Fred Inglis, who supports that the pronoun "we"

> smooths over the deep corrugations and ruptures caused precisely by struggle over how that authoritative and editorial "we" is going to be used. The [text], it is not melodramatic to declare, really is the battleground for an intellectual

civil war, and the battle for cultural authority is a wayward, intermittingly fierce, always protracted and fervent one. (1985 quoted in Apple, 1992, p. 5)

"We" in fact corresponds to "small elite groups", to "guardians [who] feel further entitled to prescribe what constitutes the 'grammar' of the language" (J. Milroy, 1999, p. 21). Moreover, this model of correctness prescribes "the discourse of one class of speakers by proscribing the discourse of others" (Crowley, 1987 quoted in Davis, 1999, p. 85). It is eloquently illustrated – still in the "Grammar Reference" section – by a comment on the modal auxiliaries "may" and "might" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 147). It is assumed that "[l]earners of English often express these concepts of future possibility with *perhaps* or *maybe ... will* and so avoid using *may* and *might*" (2014, p. 147, their italics). "However", the remark continues, "these are widely used by native speakers, and you should try to use them" (2014, p. 147). Obviously, the use of English by native speakers is here highly recommended and is established as a point of reference, to the detriment of the manner in which learners of English tend to use the language. It becomes explicit as a result of this note that the grammatical model of the *NH* course is indeed ENL.

What is nonetheless less evident is the type of English which was selected by "we" to embody correctness.[15] One lights upon it by accident in the final comment on the present perfect:

> American English is different from British English. In American English, these sentences are correct.
>
> *Did you hear the news? The President resigned!*
> *Did you do your homework yet?*
> *Your father just called you.*
> *I had breakfast already.* (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 141, their italics)

Two ENL varieties are identified in this comment, features of American English are even associated with the adjective "correct", but the model of correctness in the textbook is definitely standard British English. It can be inferred that, although combining the past simple with "yet" or "just" is correct, it *diverges* from the model

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[15] As regards *NH SB*, "we" might represent the publishers of the *NH* series. Indeed, the CEFR does not specify any model of correctness for English teaching (LPU of the Council of Europe, 2001). The phrase "standard dialect" is mentioned several times among the linguistic goals to achieve by language learners (e.g. 2001, p. 24; p. 26; p. 27; p. 62), but its referent remains undefined. Publishers may be given carte blanche to determine it.

which is established as the grammatical framework of the course. Put differently, this rule is correct in American English, but incorrect in standard British English. As a consequence, Higgins' deep conviction does not apply to the field of grammar: 2 types of English are regarded as correct. Nevertheless, only one is defined as a point of reference.

To sum up these considerations, standard British English is not only equated with correctness, it is also the ENL variety which learners have to copy. At this stage of the investigation, I attempted to discover whether prescriptivism, which is at the root of this equation, and the representation of non-native speakers of English were correlated in *NH SB*. To do so, I managed to carry out a quantitative analysis: I counted for each unit the occurrences of the lexeme "correct" in the exercise instructions of the grammar section, and the characters clearly described as non-native speakers of English. The results are reported in **Graph 2** below.

Graph 2.
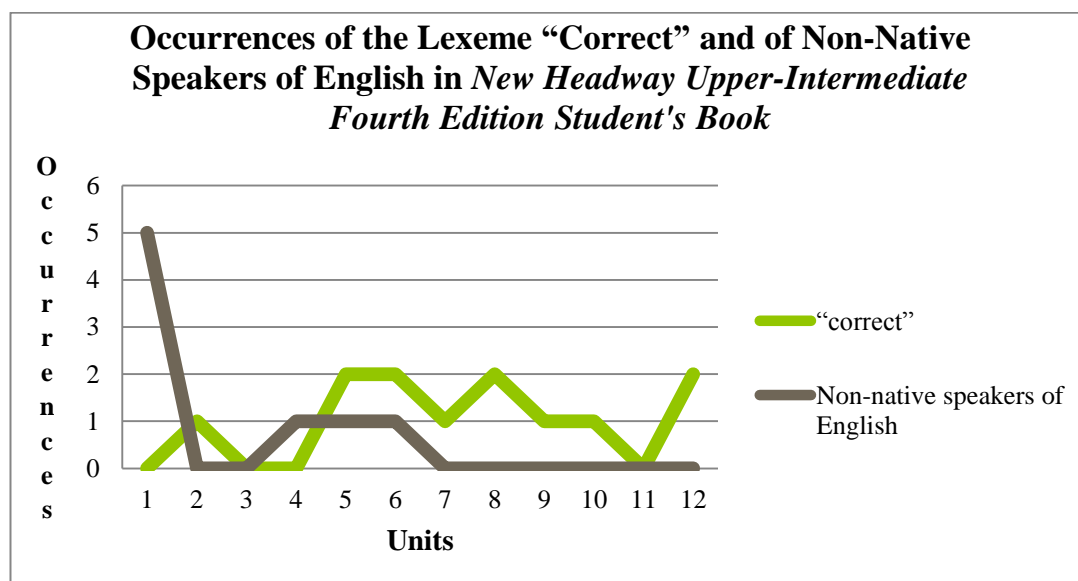
Significantly enough, references to non-native speakers of English steadily disappear in the textbook as prescriptivism becomes more perceptible. In fact, 5 non-native speakers out of the 8 spotted in the course are grouped in the first unit. Another can be found in Unit 4, the seventh in Unit 5, and the last one in Unit 6. Concerning the occurrences of "correct", the first one appears in Unit 2, the second and the third in Unit 5. Save Unit 11, there is at least one occurrence per unit from Unit 5 to Unit 12.

What the first and last non-native speakers of English say also merits careful attention. Track 1.5.9 corresponds to a conversation between 2 characters whose – affected – accents define them as non-ENL speakers (Soars and Soars, 2014). The first voice explains "In my very first English lesson I was taught to introduce myself and say 'hello' ", to which the second reacts "I was taught to say 'The cat runs after the mouse', and stuff like that – useful, eh?" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 120). The last non-native speaker, who is characterised by a fake Chinese accent, asserts "I'm very pleased with my English. I'm making a lot of progress" (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 6.6). Interestingly, all 3 voices tell listeners about their experiences as learners of English. They seem to address directly language students, and represent them in the first half of *NH SB*. They furthermore accompany them in the process of English learning, stimulating them to progress. The last enthusiastic message communicated to learners is particularly meaningful. The Chinese non-native speaker is delighted to improve his English as prescriptivism becomes more apparent in the course. What is consequently implied is that "making progress in English learning" means "assimilating standard British English". The 2 writing tasks which immediately follow Unit 12 establish once and for all this equation.

As **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** show, the tasks revolve around informal and formal writing (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 103-105). In "Informal Writing – Correcting mistakes", which straightforwardly signals prescriptivism, students are first asked to correct mistakes in 8 sentences (2014, p. 103). It is worth underlining that, among these "incorrect" sentences, 3 are pretend constructions written by people identified as non-native speakers of English, 2 of whom are learners of English. These are "I born in 1991 in one small town in Mexico", "I learn English for five years. I start when I had eleven years", and "I do a evening course in English. I enjoy very much to learn languages" (2014, p. 103). Similarly revealing is the next exercise. In pairs, students have to read the content and correct the form of a letter which is said to have been sent by Fernando (2014, p. 103). Fernando, undoubtedly a fictitious character, lives in São Paulo, Brazil, and is about to travel to England where he will be hosted by James, the addressee. The main purpose of the young man's trip to England is stated in the concluding paragraph of his letter: living with James and his family, Fernando hopes to improve his English (2014, p. 103).

Figure 1. A *New Headway Upper-Intermediate* Writing Task Devoted to Informal Writing.

UNIT 1 INFORMAL WRITING – Correcting mistakes ◄◄ p8

1 Teachers sometimes use these symbols when correcting written work.
   Correct the mistakes in these sentences.
   1 I born in 1991 in one small town in Mexico.
   2 My father is diplomat, so my all life I live in differents countries.
   3 After the school, I went for four years in a busyness college.
   4 I'm married since five years. I knew my wife while I was a student.
   5 My town isnt as exciting than London. Is very quite at the evening.
   6 I learn English for five years. I start when I had eleven years.
   7 My father wants that I work in a bank becaus is a good work.
   8 I do a evening course in English. I enjoy very much to learn languages.

WW	Wrong word
Sp	Spelling
T	Tense
Gr	Grammar
⅄	Word missing
P	Punctuation
Prep	Preposition
WO	Word Order
/	This word isn't necessary

2 Read the letter. Answer the questions.
   1 Where was the letter written?
   2 Who is the guest? Who is the host?
   3 Which city is described? What is it like?
   4 What season is it?

3 Work with a partner. Find the mistakes and put the symbols on the letter. Then correct the mistakes. The first line has been done to help you.

4 Write a letter (about 250 words).
   Either …
   You are going to stay with a family in an English-speaking country.
   Or …
   An English-speaking guest is coming to stay with you.
   Give some information about yourself – your family, interests, school, your town.
   Check your work carefully for mistakes!

Avenida Campinas 361 ap. 45
01238 São Paulo Brasil
23 December

Dear James,

Thank you your letter. I receive it the last week. Sorry I no reply you before, but I've been very busy. It's Christmas soon, and everyone are very exciting!

In two weeks I am with you in England. I can no belief it! I looking forward meet you and your familly very much. I'm sure we will like us very well.
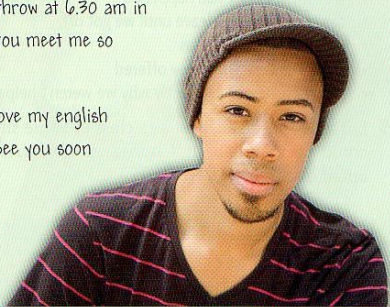
My city, São Paulo, is biggest and noisyest city in Brasil. Is not really for tourist. Is a centre commercial. Also it have very much pollution and traffic. But there is lot of things to do. I like very much listen music. There are bars who stay open all night!

My friend went in London last year, and he has seen a football match at Arsenal. He said me was wonderfull. I like to do that also.

My plane arrive to Heathrow at 6.30 am in 3 Janury. Is very kind you meet me so early morning.

I hope very much improve my english during I am with you! See you soon and happy New Year!

Fernando

Writing Unit 1 103

Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 103.

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Figure 2. A *New Headway Upper-Intermediate* Task Focusing on Formal Writing.

47 Cassiobury Close
Brighton
BN1 6NZ

Customer Services
QFly Airways
PO Box 611
Slough
SL5 1NP

3 March

BOOKING REFERENCE: 4YFHTT (Benjamin and Susan Potts)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to complain about a most distressing travel experience, which we believe was the direct result of your airline's mishandling of the situation.
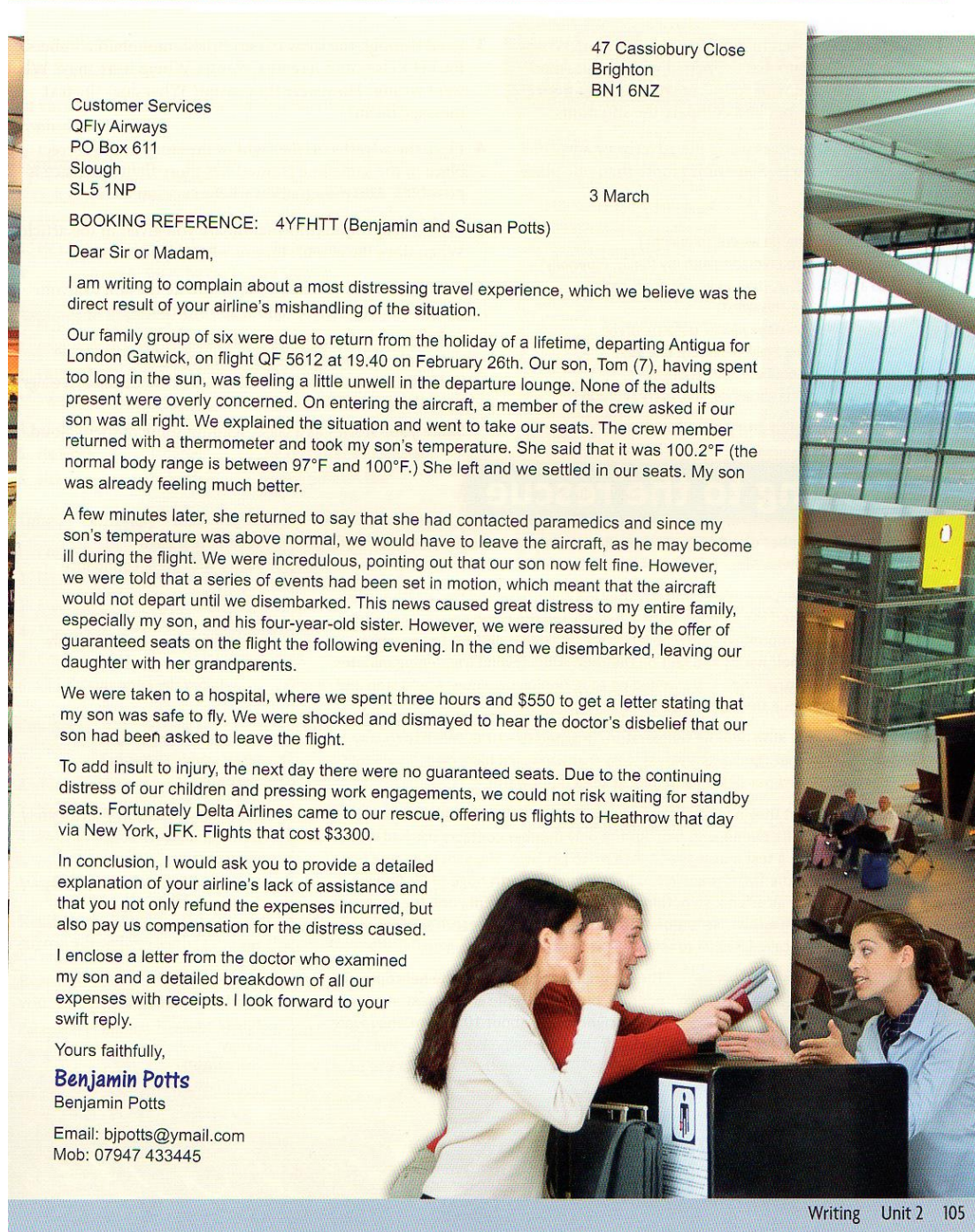
Our family group of six were due to return from the holiday of a lifetime, departing Antigua for London Gatwick, on flight QF 5612 at 19.40 on February 26th. Our son, Tom (7), having spent too long in the sun, was feeling a little unwell in the departure lounge. None of the adults present were overly concerned. On entering the aircraft, a member of the crew asked if our son was all right. We explained the situation and went to take our seats. The crew member returned with a thermometer and took my son's temperature. She said that it was 100.2°F (the normal body range is between 97°F and 100°F.) She left and we settled in our seats. My son was already feeling much better.

A few minutes later, she returned to say that she had contacted paramedics and since my son's temperature was above normal, we would have to leave the aircraft, as he may become ill during the flight. We were incredulous, pointing out that our son now felt fine. However, we were told that a series of events had been set in motion, which meant that the aircraft would not depart until we disembarked. This news caused great distress to my entire family, especially my son, and his four-year-old sister. However, we were reassured by the offer of guaranteed seats on the flight the following evening. In the end we disembarked, leaving our daughter with her grandparents.

We were taken to a hospital, where we spent three hours and $550 to get a letter stating that my son was safe to fly. We were shocked and dismayed to hear the doctor's disbelief that our son had been asked to leave the flight.

To add insult to injury, the next day there were no guaranteed seats. Due to the continuing distress of our children and pressing work engagements, we could not risk waiting for standby seats. Fortunately Delta Airlines came to our rescue, offering us flights to Heathrow that day via New York, JFK. Flights that cost $3300.

In conclusion, I would ask you to provide a detailed explanation of your airline's lack of assistance and that you not only refund the expenses incurred, but also pay us compensation for the distress caused.

I enclose a letter from the doctor who examined my son and a detailed breakdown of all our expenses with receipts. I look forward to your swift reply.

Yours faithfully,

Benjamin Potts
Benjamin Potts

Email: bjpotts@ymail.com
Mob: 07947 433445

Writing   Unit 2   105

Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 105.

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What emerges from both exercises is that the notion of "mistake" tends to be associated with non-native speakers – chiefly learners – of English. Linguistic improvement, as mentioned in the second task, stems from contact with an English native speaker. The final exercise instructions suggest that Fernando's letter illustrates the mistakes which students should avoid (2014, p. 103), encouraging learners of English to distance themselves from the writer of the letter, whereas in the following writing task, the letter of complaint to an airline is an instance of formal writing to copy (2014, pp. 104-105). Owing to a travel misfortune which occurred before taking off from Antigua, fictitious Benjamin Potts sends a letter to the Customer Services of QFly Airways located in Slough, England (2014, p. 105). The writer provides a detailed account of his "most distressing travel experience" (2014, p. 105). This letter of complaint, written by an English native speaker of English (2014, p. 105), does not contain any "mistake", and therefore does not have to be "corrected" or modified to some degree. It may be regarded as a prototypical example of formal writing in English, a source of inspiration for learners, who are then asked to write a letter or email of complaint (2014, p. 104).

A noticeable exception to the correlation between "mistake" and "non-native speaker of English" is Abi, a fictional girl who speaks English with an RP accent (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 12.6). In a listening exercise, Abi describes her sister as "more older" than her (2014, T 12.6), infringing the rule of the comparative form in standard British English. Teachers are informed in this respect that, "[a]lthough not strictly correct, this type of error is characteristic of young children's speech" (Soars, Soars and Maris, 2014, p. 170). Abi's use of English is here presented as realistic since it reflects real-life speech. It can be argued that the function of this unique comment in the *Teacher's Book* is to give the impression that a descriptive approach to grammar is also adopted in *NH SB*, that the coursebook also mirrors the manner in which English is used by native speakers in everyday life. The focus on spoken English grammar in each unit may support the idea of descriptivism in the textbook. Nonetheless, the untidiness of spoken English is again kept to the lowest possible level (see Gray, 2010b, p. 136). The writers' conception of spoken grammar, which is not overtly stated, could in fact be expressed as follows:

> All the grammatical features exemplified […] are taken from descriptions of standard, nondialectal conversational English […]. Nor are we considering

planning errors in speech, such as false starts or *mixed structures* (i.e., where speakers begin an utterance planning one grammatical structure and change in midsentence to another closely associated one, e.g., *There's not necessary to introduce to a new law*). (Cullen and Kuo, 2007, pp. 362-363, their italics)

Recasting, clausal blends leading to grammatical inconsistencies, and other characteristics of real-life speech are not taken into account in *NH SB*. Spoken English grammar is decidedly neat and not at all grounded in reality. Except for fillers and informal language, spoken grammar is actually a "replica" of written grammar (see Cullen and Kuo, 2007, p. 381). Learners appear fooled into believing that the sample of spoken English to which they listen is, once more, authentic. To come back to Abi's speech, the girl's "error" appears less wrong than the grammatical and spelling mistakes made by the non-native speakers in the exercises previously examined as it is precisely said to be realistic. Without any comparable remark on the use of English by non-native speakers, their mistakes seem categorised as unrealistic: they should undoubtedly be avoided because, in contrast with "more older", they are not detected in native speaker speech. Consequently, native and non-native speakers of English are not even on an equal footing when they make mistakes.

3.2. Conclusions

Predictably, the cornerstone of grammar in *NH SB* is a native-speaker type of English (Gray, 2010b, p. 107) which, due to prescriptivism, is arbitrarily labelled as a model of correctness. The study has nevertheless uncovered the subtle associations between "non-native speakers of English" – especially "learners" – and "mistakes to avoid", between "mastering standard British English" and "progress" which pervade the course. In the light of these encoded values, it comes as no surprise that the native-speaker model remains for language students a "desirable goal" to achieve (Timmis, 2002 quoted in Adolphs, 2005, p. 119). The problem is that, owing to the invariant written grammar and tidy spoken grammar, this native-speaker model, "as it is perceived by non-native speakers, is largely based on such teaching materials rather than on English in use" (Adolphs, 2005, p. 121). Putting the lexical content of *NH SB* under the microscope, I became aware that English was not the only element

of the ELT material which was presented as immaculate; some native speakers of English were likewise portrayed in an idealised fashion. The last section of **Chapter III** is designed to demonstrate that this biased depiction is another major reason why learners still strive to emulate the model which those native speakers symbolise.

4. Lexis

The final step of the linguistic autopsy performed on *NH SB* initially consisted in diagnosing the nature of lexis. The lexical investigation of the textbook was not restricted to the vocabulary input of each unit, and thus went beyond the compound words, the so-called "hot" verbs and nouns, the antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, homophones, adverb collocations, and word pairs on which the course focuses (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 2-5).[16] As usual, I scanned the words which were used in the listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks in order to identify the type(s) of English which was (were) represented in the global textbook. In so doing, I realised that several words and topics recurred throughout *NH SB*. What's more, they tended to be solely associated with RP speakers of English. This observation reminded me of a concept relevant to the fields of stylistics and discourse analysis – namely *over-lexicalisation* (Wales, 2011, p. 298). In Roger Fowler's words, it is "the availability, or the use, of a profusion of terms for an object or concept" (1996, p. 218). Over-lexicalisation is not limited to synonymy and includes "other, similar, lexical processes" which lead to the foregrounding of the ideas linked to the extensively repeated items (Fowler, 1996, pp. 218-219). This notion is particularly thought-provoking as "[a] proliferation of terms in some semantic field indicates an unusual preoccupation with a part of the culture's, or the writer's, experience" (Fowler, 1996, p. 219). As a result, I attempted to determine the function of such recurrences in relation to the category of RP speakers. While I was exploring the issue, I suddenly began to hum the tune of Higgins' *Why Can't the English?*

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[16] "Hot" words are "very common words which combine with nouns, phrases, and particles to produce new meanings, for example, do away with, take your time, get in touch" (Soars, Soars and Maris, 2014, p. 5).

4.1.   A Qualitative Analysis

As the nature of the lexis found in *NH SB* was – again – not stated, I was compelled to deduce it from several learning activities. Indeed, the tasks involving characters who are clearly identified as American gave some clues (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 6; p. 9; p. 80; p. 113). Two examples are Tyler, who sends tweets while in London (2014, p. 6), and Donna Goldberg from Wisconsin (2014, p. 80), whose metalinguistic comments are worth considering. Through his tweets, the American adolescent shares what could be called the "lexis shock" he experienced when he met his English host family:

> [Dave's relatives] have a large apartment in a big old house. They call it a "flat". I asked for the "bathroom" – they thought I wanted a bath. I'm learning fast.
> […] Also, people say "cheers" all the time. Isn't that for making toasts? A guy just said it to me because I'd let him pass. (2014, p. 6)

From these comments and the context in which they are made, learners may infer that "apartment" and "bathroom" are the American English counterparts of British English "flat" and "toilet", and that "cheers" is used in England to thank someone. As for Donna Goldberg, her telephone conversation with Robert Johnson, an RP English speaker who is said to live in London, has an identical effect. Claiming "We met on vacation – or 'holiday' as you say" (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 10.6), Donna draws a distinction between American English "vacation" and British English "holiday". It is vital to stress that similar metalinguistic remarks are not expressed by any of the figures characterising other varieties of English in the coursebook. Pratima Kejriwal (2014, T 7.7), for instance, does not use in her interaction with an RP speaker of English a word typical of Indian English which she would explain to this interviewer. Teresa Sayers, a white native speaker of English who is working in Tanga, Tanzania (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 7), does not mention in the email she sends to her parents any possible "lexis shock" arising from her meeting with speakers of Tanzanian English. Furthermore, as was the case for grammar, it is principally American English which is described as divergent, as different from British English. In fact, both Tyler and Donna notice these lexical peculiarities while they are in London (2014, p. 6; 2014, T 10.6).

Spelling is corroborating evidence: despite a few instances of American English, the type of lexis which is taught through *NH SB* is "largely invariant" (see Gray, 2010b, p. 137), is a monolith made of British English. The audio material covered by the 4 Class CDs is transcribed in accordance with British English spelling, regardless of the linguistic identity of the voices (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 120-138). By way of illustration, 2 voices converse in track 8.3, one marked by an RP accent, and the other by a North American one (Soars and Soars, 2014). Scanning the transcribed dialogue, one observes that the word "[wildlife] programme" uttered by the American voice is written in British English (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 131). The American English noun "program" is thus avoided. I will advance in the next section that British English lexis prevails in the course over any other type of lexis because its prime objective is to materialise the abstract ideology underlying the related RP linguistic model. At the root of this process is over-lexicalisation.

4.2.   Over-lexicalisation

The textbook does not have to be subjected to close scrutiny to single out 5 recurring topics. Sets of words indeed pertain to the themes of work (see Gray, 2010a, p. 715), education, money, leisure activities, and cars. As I announced above, these themes appear to draw a line between RP speakers and other native and non-native speakers of English. In the next paragraphs, stress is laid on the values which they associate with the predominant and "correct" accent of the course, in addition to its speakers.

As a point of departure, let us highlight that "work" is the most frequent word in the coursebook. It is found in multifarious tasks: "work" has to be conjugated in a grammar exercise (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 8), and is used in innumerable illustrative sentences such as "He's been working such long hours recently. He never sees the children" (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 1.4), "Didn't you work in New York for a while?" (2014, T 4.3), "She works in our Paris office" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 64), and "My sister works in a bank" (2014, p. 71). In one task, students are asked to listen to "a telephone conversation between two work colleagues, Andy and Barry" (2014, p. 45), in another to write a CV and a covering letter for a job (2014, pp. 108-109), and in yet another task to write a consumer survey pretending to work for "a firm of marketing consultants" (2014, p. 111). From the outset, these few

examples tend to support Gray and Block's conclusion that the *NH* material is a "textbook in which the actual number of working class characters is shown to be on the decline" (2012, p. 66) as the world of work seems restricted to a specific category of people, namely "white-collar workers" (Gray, 2010a, p. 728).

It is indeed evidenced by the omnipresent references to business. The "Everyday English" activity of Unit 6 is for instance devoted to "Business expressions and numbers" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 53). In the same chapter, learners have to imagine opening a restaurant, and answer questions, among which "How will you raise money to start it?", "How will you advertise your restaurant to these customers?", and "How many workers will you hire and how much will you pay them?", before giving a "[b]usiness presentation" of their property (2014, p. 52). Another curious task is the Cluedo-like murder game in which students are required to solve a crime (2014, p. 81). While this brief description bears no apparent relation to "business", the exercise instructions are accompanied by revealing advice:

> The best way to [find the murderer] is through organization and co-operation, knowing when to speak and when to listen.
> If you work together well, you should solve the murder in about twenty minutes. If you don't work together, you'll never solve it!
> […] Games such as these are used on management training courses. (2014, p. 81)

Cooperation in this context does not correspond to interpersonal communication or understanding; rather, it is linked to the concept of efficiency.[17] Time, from a typically (neo)capitalist perspective, is "a limited resource" – therefore "a valuable commodity" – which should not be wasted (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, pp. 8-9).

In view of these activities centred on business and management, a question comes to mind: what is the *raison d'être* of such a focus on the topic? A potential objective would be to prepare students for managerial responsibilities or career options. I prefer to contend that the excessive attention drawn to this sector is meant to reinforce the neoliberal idea that English is "the medium for many of the new service industries such as business process" (Holborow, 2012, p. 16). More specifically, it is British English which is meant to be this medium in *NH SB* as numerous voices defined by an RP accent are said to be businesspeople. Consider for

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[17] I am grateful to Dr Tunca for this remark on the meaning of "cooperation".

example this conversation between 2 female voices: "Julie, have you heard? Anna's just been made Managing Director of the UK branch of her firm, so she's coming back from the States! / Oh, that's great news! Let's give her a spectacular homecoming party when she gets back. Hmmm. She's certainly the career girl of the family" (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 1.9). The term "business" is cited in this dialogue between Mike and Jeff: "Mike! Long time no see! How are things? / Good, thanks, Jeff. Business is booming. What about yourself?" (2014, T 6.9). Another instance uttered by an RP voice is "My business really took off after I picked up six new clients" (2014, T 5.10). A last fictitious character worth mentioning is Theo. The young man works in the City in London, and intends to be "even more successful" in the next few years, "earning twice what [he's] getting now" (2014, T 5.1). "Before I'm 25", he presumes, "I'll have made a million" (2014, T 5.1). I would first maintain that the neoliberal ideology is here purposely connected to the phonological point of reference of the course as they rely on common values – "the middle class" and "white-collar workers" (Upton, 2004, p. 218; Gray and Block, 2012, pp. 45-47). Neoliberalism, it can be claimed, is deliberately used to emphasise the standard accent ideology underlying RP. Moreover, because business is represented in a positive light, as a source of achievement, pride, and satisfaction (see Gray, 2010a, p. 722), RP – which, let us repeat, characterises these businesspeople – is equated with both personal and business success.

Education, a second recurrent theme, is another feature describing RP voices. By way of illustration, Laura, who passed her A-levels with flying colours, is about to study geography at Cambridge University (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 5.1). As for Janine, she is going to spend a year in France to study literature at the Sorbonne (2014, T 5.1). An RP voice named Sean is thought to have studied philosophy at university, a "Samantha" works as a barrister, and "Rupert" managed to get into "a good university" after retaking mathematics (2014, T 9.5). It is manifest that employment – particularly in the field of business – and education widen the gap between English native speakers of English defined by an RP accent on the one hand, English speakers of English with non-RP accents, non-English native speakers of English, and non-native speakers of English on the other. A crucial listening exercise in this regard is "A NEET solution", the acronym standing for "Not in Employment, Education, or Training" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 41).

Three fictional young people express the reasons for their uphill struggle to find a job (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 5.8). Darrell, who is 21 years old, left school at 16 because "sitting at a desk just wasn't [his] kind of thing" (2014, T 5.8). The then adolescent soon realised that the main problem was that "[he] didn't have any qualifications and there weren't any jobs", adding "Can't believe how stupid I was, really" (2014, T 5.8). Joining a NEET programme, Darrell was offered the opportunity to become an apprentice in a car factory after starting back into education (2014, T 5.8). What is vital to indicate is that Darrell speaks English with a bogus Birmingham accent. A voice marked by a rhotic accent represents 22-year-old Kara, who comes from Canada, "an unemployment black spot" in her view (2014, T 5.8). She has been unsuccessfully looking for a job in her subject area since she graduated in journalism and economics, complaining "So, all those exams and three years at university to be an unpaid slave!" (2014, T 5.8). As an alternative occupation, Kara plans to work on a literacy programme in Malawi (2014, T 5.8). Lastly, Loukas, whose accent is fake Greek-English, does a course in farming at the American Farm School in Thessaloniki (2014, T 5.8). Although he has a degree in business, Loukas does not succeed in finding a "proper full-time job" and thus regards farming as "an opportunity", wishing to "make it a success" in order to repay his parents (2014, T 5.8). These 3 profiles, however fictitious, drastically contrast with the aforementioned "successful" English businesspeople notably identified by the RP accent. What results from these observations is the idea that RP, as Higgins advocates, is a means to reach an upper stratum of the social scale, a requisite for the improvement of a speaker's living conditions. The last 3 recurring topics – "money", "leisure activities", and "cars" – are in fact social markers which ultimately contribute to this depiction of the English RP speakers of English.

"Money" and "cars" definitely draw a distinction between British speakers of English. For example, the sole Scottish businesswoman seems to have an irresponsible attitude towards money (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 12.9). To answer an RP voice inquiring how she can afford to buy fabulous clothes, the worker explains "Hopefully, I'm going to get a bonus this month. My boss has promised. After all, I did earn the company over £100,000 last year. Basically, I deserve it" (2014, T 12.9). The Scottish English speaker indeed spends money anticipating a bonus which she may not receive. Two more cases involving Scottish English

voices are noteworthy. A Scottish woman confesses that she is not going to have a holiday because "[she] just can't afford it" (2014, T 1.11), and in another dialogue, a man defined by a Scottish English accent realises that he left his "briefcase on the bus" (2014, T 1.5). What can be inferred from the words "briefcase" and "on the bus" is that this character uses public transport to go to work, which is surprisingly not the case of any of the English RP speakers. By contrast, the latter tend to drive and own cars. Illustrative sentences are "You must have hit the roof when she crashed your car. / Well, yes, I was a bit upset" (2014, T 7.10), "Do you like my car? It's brand new" (2014, T 9.6), and "Look, I have two cars. Borrow either one, I don't mind. I probably won't be using either anyway" (2014, T 12.3). In addition, the first pages of Unit 7 show 2 male RP speakers wearing suits and driving cars – one of which is a convertible – arguing over the Highway Code (2014, T 7.1). It is imperative to note in this connection that cars, which are "status-conferring objects", "indicators of social and economic worth as well as key markers of identity" (Best, 2006, p. 4), are not associated with other categories of speakers of English.

Finally, contrary to the old adage, money is believed to guarantee happiness in *NH SB*. In a "Language Focus" task, learners have to choose the happiest person among A and B on the basis of the sentences "I have a few friends and a little money" (A) and "I have few friends and little money" (B) (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 47). The answer available in the *Teacher's Book* is unequivocally A (Soars, Soars and Maris, 2014, p. 82). This might account for the concern expressed by speakers of English with an RP accent about money raising and savings. Noticeable instances are "What does she do for a living? / She's a corporate lawyer. / That sounds boring. / Humph! Boring it may be but it's really well paid!" (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 2.6), "My grandad's so generous, he gives me a £20 note every time I see him. / Lucky you! My grandad's famed for his meanness. A fiver every birthday, if he remembers" (2014, T 4.9), and "I've just sent my nephew £10 for his birthday. / Well, I have five nieces, I gave £10 to each one for Christmas. Cost me a fortune. / I only have the one nephew at the moment. Thank goodness" (2014, T 12.3). Savings may then be spent partying, another word extensively heard from the mouths of adolescents and young adults (e.g. 2014, T 1.9; T 1.11; T 1.13; T 4.10; T 4.12; T 6.3; T 11.2), going to the cinema (2014, T 3.13; T 6.2; T 10.4), or shopping (2014, T 7.3; T 12.7), while

businessmen such as Andy and Barry prefer playing golf (2014, T 4.1; T 5.13). In Gray and Block's own words, the "activities [engaged] in are indexical of middle class leisure activities and consumption patterns" (2012, p. 58). Besides, they typify Brown's "cosmopolitan English" defined as "[t]he kind of English contained in coursebooks [which] assumes a materialistic set of values" (1990 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 169).

NH SB – may readers forgive me for this dreadful pun – is a textbook example of over-lexicalisation as "a pragmatic strategy of encoding ideology in […] discourse" (Fowler et al., 1979 quoted in Talbot, Atkinson and Atkinson, 2003, p. 45). The profusion of words related to the themes of business, education, cars, money, and particular leisure activities is designed to portray RP speakers of English. Not only does this linguistic process foreground the standard accent ideology, it also contributes to the "strong celebratory strand" of the course as RP speakers' lives, "whether fictional or non-fictional, are celebrated in terms of personal and professional success" (Gray, 2010b, p. 109). Indeed, the major motivation behind over-lexicalisation is to associate RP with this notion of success and achievement so as to create aspirational content. Speaking English with an RP accent is consequently believed to enable language learners to be part of this idealised speech community, which is what Gray calls the cultural and promotional promise of English in global coursebooks (2000, p. 274; 2010b, p. 134).

4.3. Conclusions

As was probably easy to foretell on the basis of the previous analyses of phonology and grammar, the *NH* course relies almost exclusively on British English lexis. Interestingly enough, it is only once the function of lexis is revealed that its invariant nature can be understood. I indeed take the view that the process of over-lexicalisation which connects RP to the specific values detailed above could solely have occurred through British English words; Pakistani English or Jamaican English words would have been irrelevant here. I would hold that British English lexis was intentionally selected to form "a single universe of experience" with RP and its associated values – that is to say create "linguaculture" (Kramsch, 1991, p. 218).

It is this issue which will be addressed in the concluding paragraph of this chapter, and which will lead to the study of culture in *NH SB* (**Chapter IV**).

5. General Conclusions

At the risk of repeating myself ad nauseam, I would like to insist on the inappropriateness of teaching a largely invariant English language. Despite the claim that *NH* "is renowned worldwide for its clear understanding of teacher and learner needs" (Soars and Soars, 2014, back cover), learning a single type of English undeniably "fails to equip […] students for real-world needs" (Canagarajah, 2005 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 184). Instead, in Canagarajah's view, "teachers have to develop in the students the competence in a repertoire of codes to manage postmodern communication" (2005, xxvi). "Furthermore", the linguist explains, "in a context of diverse norms and conventions in the system of English language, it is important to understand the relativity of notions of correctness", as "what is nonstandard in one community could be standard in another", and thus "teach students how to negotiate appropriate usage for the different contexts" (2005, xxvi). In the light of these considerations, I decided to contact the authors of *NH SB* and the OUP publishing house, my sole concern being to know the reason for the use of exclusively British English models of correctness in the *NH* course. After trying in vain to reach them, I sent an email to Ms. Alex Riccio, ELT OUP Consultant for Belgium, and Ms. Suzanne Brinkman, Area Manager for the Benelux and ELT Consultant for OUP Luxembourg. I was told that, "due to busy writing schedules", the authors could not take part in this study. Ms. Brinkman moreover assured me that the *Teacher's Book* provided a detailed account of the methodological approach to the course. Facing their unwillingness to help, I felt constrained to suggest hypotheses to account for this native-speaker model.

I would claim that British English is the reference point of the *NH* course because "the ownership of English is changing" (Canagarajah, 2005, xxiii). By maintaining the arbitrary link between RP, standard British English and correctness, the producers of *NH SB* convey the subliminal message that its speakers – portrayed in the previous analytical section – remain the custodians of the linguistic norm. It is the main reason why standard language and accent ideology is associated with

positive values: learners are encouraged to emulate the native-speaker model, to which they indeed "aspire" (Timmis, 2002 quoted in Adolphs, 2005, p. 119), and which in turn is an argument used to account for its relevance to ELT. To my mind, it is this vicious circle which hinders ELF in its efforts to make its way into the ELT industry. The inconvenient truth seems that the purpose of the global textbook is to create a discourse community copying the British community. By means of aspirational content, membership of this community is promoted, which defines culture (Kramsch, 1998, p. 127). In the next chapter devoted to the study of the cultural framework of *NH SB*, I will show that this content again stimulates membership, which is possibly aimed to reinforce the connection between language and culture.

IV. The Cultural Content of *NH SB*

1. Introduction

Right from the start, readers should be informed that **Chapter IV** does not correspond to an exhaustive account of the cultural references contained in *NH SB*. Instead, it first focuses on several of the issues addressed in **Chapter I** which, in my humble opinion, need to be reassessed in the case of the latest edition of *NH*: gender, sexual and cultural diversity will be tackled in this respect under the heading "Inclusivity" (**2**). In the second section of this chapter, I consider the manner in which interculturality is dealt with in the coursebook (**3**) as, it is worth insisting, developing intercultural communicative competence is one of the prime goals set by the CEFR (2001, p. 43; p. 103). More importantly, I wish to check that the native speaker of British English is actually no longer the cultural model which language learners have to copy (see Byram, 1997, pp. 11-12). To do so, I sketch out the cultural framework of the course, introducing another teaching resource accompanying *NH SB*. Without divulging too many details, I will demonstrate that, similarly to standard British English and RP speakers, it is depicted in an idealised fashion. Inappropriacy and celebrity will turn out to play an important part in this sanitised representation.

2. Inclusivity

Let us recall that, in Gray's view, "the most cursory look" at a present-day UK-produced global coursebook would show that women are no longer under-represented and portrayed stereotypically (2002, p. 157). At first sight, gender discrimination indeed seems to be a thing of the past: young Teresa Sayers is photographed sitting on a motorbike (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 7), fictional Robert Johnson is cooking biscuits with his son (2014, p. 80), and a writing task is centred on real Iraqi-British Zaha Hadid, "the first woman architect to win the important Pritzker Prize for Architecture" (2014, pp. 118-119). Scratching beneath the surface of these pictures and exercises, one nonetheless reaches a persistent layer of sexism. I intend to prove in the first part of this section that the apparent shift in *NH SB*

towards the depiction of independent women and working mothers (Gray, 2010b, p. 109) is counterbalanced by traces of gender bias. Subsequently, I will briefly concentrate on the presence of LGBT in the coursebook, also contending that "there is still room for improvement" (Thornbury, 1999 quoted in Gray, 2002, p. 160). In the second part of this section, I finally aim to settle the question of the multicultural (e.g. Gray, 2010b, p. 106) or ethnocentric (e.g. Melliti, 2013, p. 6) content of the ELT textbook.

2.1.   The Feminising of Textbook Content

It must first be conceded that several learning activities revolve around strong female protagonists. Besides Zaha Hadid, students are introduced in Unit 12 to Frances, a divorced and retired old lady who has a globetrotting lifestyle, travelling from Italy to Indonesia on her own (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 12.6). On the subject of retirement, she asserts that the word "sounds so negative", adding "I gave up full-time work years ago, but I didn't give up on life [and] since I stopped, I've been busier than ever" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 137). In Unit 7, an article entitled "The Peter Pan Generation" is written by and focuses on Marianne Power, a 34-year-old working woman (2014, pp. 58-59). She defines herself as a Peter Pan, as a member of "a sizeable group of 25 to 40-year-olds who are avoiding the responsibility of marriage, mortgage, children for as long as possible", and confesses that her life plan "goes as far as this weekend" (2014, p. 59). These female characters, however, remain numerically inferior to men in the coursebook. Working out the total number of protagonists in the listening, reading, writing, and speaking tasks and excluding the anonymous voices recorded on the audio material, I counted 75 women and 89 men. Furthermore, not only are the former statistically under-represented, they are also assigned roles which are not shared with the latter.

In fact, as Arikan notices in the 2003 edition of *NH Intermediate* (2005, p. 36), only women take care of their homes. To the question "Doing anything interesting this weekend?", a female voice responds "Yeah, if you call housework interesting. I've just got to tidy my flat this weekend" (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 1.6). For another woman, moving into a bigger house implies that "there's much more housework to do" (2014, T 1.9). A third female speaker complains that "Mike's

away on business", and that she consequently has to "do the lot. School, shop, kids, cook, clean" (2014, T 5.11). An example of a man compelled to run an errand, fetch his children from school, or do the hoovering because his wife is "away on business" cannot be found in any section of the coursebook. Female characters are moreover associated with child-rearing which, interestingly enough, connotes sacrifice and burden. For example, in Unit 7, "Getting along", learners have to listen to 2 dialogues, and spot the modal verbs (2014, pp. 54-55). In the second, 2 women converse:

> **A** If I were you, I'd swallow my pride and forgive and forget.
>
> **B** Never! I refuse to.
>
> **A** You'll have no choice in the end. You won't be able to ignore each other forever.
>
> **B** Maybe I'll forgive him but I'll never be able to forget.
>
> **A** Surely it's possible to talk it over, and work something out. You have to for the sake of the children.
>
> **B** Oh dear! I just don't know what to do for the best. (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 7.2)

B is strongly advised against standing up to "him", most probably her partner or husband, in the interests of her children. In other words, her status as a mother has to take precedence over her feelings, which seriously undermines the image of independent and individualistic women and would make an unrelenting feminist react angrily. Another striking instance of desperate mothers in the textbook is the following:

> **A** If only we could just fly off to that island.
>
> **B** That would be fantastic. I'd sit on a beach, and read all day.
>
> **A** I'd just sleep forever. I can't remember a full night's sleep.
>
> **B** Yeah. Sometimes I wish I'd never had kids. I mean, not really, but …
>
> **A** I know what you mean. [Addressing her child in tears] No – you can't have an ice cream. I said NO! (2014, T 11.2)

Once more, mothers are marked by subordination and family commitments. In addition to housework and child-rearing, shopping, essentially for clothes, is a

female activity (e.g. 2014, T 7.3; T 7.8, T 7.11; 2014, p. 69). As regards job distribution, a woman in *NH SB* can be a writer (2014, p. 25), a carer (2014, pp. 42-43), a businesswoman (2014, T 1.9), a barrister (2014, T 9.5), or an advertiser (2014, T 12.6), while a male character can work as a stuntman (2014, p. 24), a car mechanic (2014, T 5.8), a chef (2014, pp. 46-47), or an arborist (2014, pp. 66-67). Nevertheless, business remains predominantly men's business. It is evidenced by listening and reading exercises which are concerned with non-fictional tycoons such as the billionaire mobile phone magnate John Caudwell (2014, T 3.4), young app entrepreneur Nick D'Aloisio (2014, pp. 42-43), the founder of Apple, Steve Jobs, and the CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz (2014, pp. 50-51), besides American entrepreneur Brandon Chicotsky (2014, T 6.4). A picture of 2 men wearing suits even illustrates the "Business expressions and numbers" section of Unit 6 (2014, p. 53). Only one grammar exercise features a real businesswoman, Maureen Wheeler, the founder of the *Lonely Planet* travel guides (2014, pp. 16-17). She is however not the sole focus of this learning activity: her husband is also said to be involved in this "outstanding publishing success" (2014, p. 16).

As far as the LGBT issue is concerned, there is absolutely no reference – not even covert – to sexual diversity in *NH SB*. When 2 same-sex characters are represented in the artwork of the textbook, they are clearly identified as friends. The first picture of Unit 1 shows Tyler and his "buddy" Dave (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 6), while fictional Alison Makepeace is photographed sitting next to "an old school friend" (2014, pp. 70-71). A last example which merits attention in this perspective is the listening and speaking exercise "Getting married" (2014, p. 57). It is accompanied by 5 pictures which are aimed to illustrate diverse types of wedding ceremony (2014, p. 57). These are the "white" wedding, the "destination" wedding, or "a wedding held abroad, often in an exotic location at a holiday resort/venue", the "theme" wedding, "based around a set of characters or a theme, often from a book, film, or TV programme", and the arranged marriage, here associated with Pratima Kejriwal (Soars, Soars and Maris, 2014, pp. 98-99). All the couples in the pictures are irrevocably made of a woman and a man, of a bride and a groom (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 57). Obviously, the opportunity is not taken to discuss same-sex marriage.

As a result, the status quo has been maintained in the latest edition of *NH SB*: LGBT characters are still not welcome, and women and men are not on an equal footing. Appearances are decidedly deceptive: while the female protagonists of some reading, listening, and speaking activities are "initiative-taking individualists" (Gray, 2010b, p. 109), the background of the course remains loaded with sexist values. The distinction between foreground and background is also relevant to the issue of cultural diversity in the textbook. Examining both aspects of *NH SB*, I will show under the heading "Deterritorialisation" that an apparent shift towards more international settings (e.g. Gray, 2002, p. 157; Buckledee, 2010, p. 149; Vettorel, 2010, p. 178) does not entail multiculturalism.

2.2. Deterritorialisation

In his historical study of 4 British ELT global coursebooks, Gray observes the "progressive multiculturalizing of content" (2010b, p. 109). Fleshing out this argument, the scholar explains that

> there is a move away from the use of black and Asian characters to signal that the scenes depicted take place "abroad" (*Connections*) to one in which such characters […] are the main focus of the unit (*Headway*). […] Linked to this is a concomitant globalizing of content which is most noticeable in *Headway Intermediate*. (2010b, p. 109)

Among the 164 people counted above who are "the main focus of the unit" in *NH SB*, only 14 are non-white, 2 of whom – Luciana (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 37) and Fernando (2014, p. 103) – being non-native speakers of English. Except for Saroo Brierley and his biological mother Fatima (2014, pp. 10-11), Luciana (2014, p. 37), Theo (2014, p. 38), Pratima Kejriwal (2014, p. 57), and Zaha Hadid (2014, pp. 118-119), the characters are all black (2014, p. 9; p. 13; p. 55; p. 68; p. 77; p. 97; p. 103). Non-white people therefore appear under-represented (8.54%) in the English-speaking world depicted in the coursebook. As was the case for the portrayal of independent women, multiculturalism turns out to be a façade. Indeed, it is primarily the artwork which conveys the image of cultural diversity. For example, a photograph of Tanzanian children accompanies the email written by Teresa Sayers (2014, p. 7), the picture of a Japanese couple represents the "theme" wedding

ceremony (2014, p. 57), 8 Russian people working for Starbucks are photographed in Unit 6 (2014, p. 50), and another picture of a Latin American woman is the background of the article "The Peter Pan Generation" (2014, p. 58). All these people surround learning activities and are silent. Put differently, they are present but not invited to speak English. While their presence is certainly intended to symbolise the global spread of the language, their silence contributes to the immutability of English. In fact, the British English linguistic model of *NH SB* is thus not challenged by too many instances of native and non-native types of English and remains predominant. What's more, silence gives consent: it may also be suggested that these speakers have a command of British English, consequently that the type of English which they embody and which is diffused worldwide is the model of the course.

In a similar vein, the prime objective of deterritorialisation seems to signify that British English is used globally. It is evident that the learning tasks of the textbook are not exclusively located in Britain. Examples of international settings are Tanzania (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 7), Germany, Spain, France (2014, T 1.7), Southeast Asia (2014, p. 15), Hawaii (2014, pp. 18-19), Egypt (2014, T 8.10), Russia (2014, T 8.11), and Vanuatu (2014, T 11.3). What is above all worth specifying is that all these locations are solely visited by native speakers of English from Britain. Margaret comes from Yorkshire and has lived in Germany for 30 years, whereas Mairie, who is from Scotland, has just settled in Madrid. Rob arrived in France 20 years ago (2014, T 1.7). RP speaker Simone went to Egypt on holiday while Anna used to work in Russia (2014, T 8.10; T 8.11). English TV adventurer Simon Reeve is in Hawaii in order to raise public awareness of the effect of plastic upon the environment (2014, pp. 18-19). The case of a Costa Rican woman who works in China and who uses English to interact with the local population cannot be detected in the coursebook. Rather, these instances are designed to equate "British characters" with "globetrotters" in order to give the subliminal message that British English is spoken on a global scale.

It must be confessed that the non-native speakers represented in *NH SB* tend to travel as well. Contrary to the British speakers of English who discover the 4 corners of the globe, these characters head straight for England, and London in particular. Tetyana and Sem, who come from the south of Ukraine, live in England (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 1.7), while Luciana visits some friends in London (2014, T 4.14).

London is also the place where Fernando wishes to "improve" his English (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 103). Revealingly, the city which is connected to the linguistic models (Melchers and Shaw, 2013) – again, standard British English and RP – of the ELT material is defined as the place to go to improve one's English. London is moreover believed to be a doorway to the world. This new ideological equation is established in the text devoted to the travel guide company *Lonely Planet* (2014, pp. 16-17). Maureen Wheeler, who was born in Belfast, settled in London when she was 20 "*because* she wanted to see the world" (2014, p. 160, my emphasis). The conjunction "because" expresses causality, the *because*-clause corresponding to the cause, the main clause to the effect or result (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2000, p. 120). In other words, Maureen Wheeler wanted to see the world. As a consequence, she went to London. By means of this causal relationship, a link is made between the 2 clauses, more specifically between "want to see the world" and "go to London". One can infer that learners have to go to the capital city of the United Kingdom to master the type of English which is presented as the global language – that is to say British English – and which is the prerequisite of travelling around the world.

In this perspective, multiculturalism and deterritorialisation are not meant to portray the current English-speaking community; they are only strategies used to assign British English the status of "global language". Furthermore, by referring to learners of English who aspire to become native-like in their use of the language, the authors and publishers of *NH SB* "create identification and summo[n] students to membership of a community of speakers of English who are characterized by […] success, [and] mobility" (Gray, 2010b, pp. 110-111). It is nonetheless imperative to remember that identification with the native speaker of a foreign language goes against intercultural communicative competence (ICC), according to which learners have to mediate between different languages and cultures (Byram, 1997, p. 38). In the remaining section of this chapter, I argue that interculturality is only partially addressed in the coursebook as aspirational content favours identification with British native speakers of English over the creation of a third perspective on C1 and C2 (Kramsch, 1993, p. 210).

3. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Alluding to English, Byram claims that "where it is known that learners will use a language mainly or even exclusively as a lingua franca, study of the cultures of native speakers is not necessary" (1997, p. 112). However, since the *NH* course is based on British English and not ELF – although the former is passed off as a global language – it comes as no surprise that culture teaching focuses on British culture. To borrow Gray's expression, a "cursory look" at the table of contents of the *Culture and Literature Companion* comprised in the *NH SB* pack attests to it. Even though the back cover mentions "interesting texts relating to the culture and literature of the English-speaking world" (May, Wheeldon and Williamson, 2014), the course essentially deals with "Multicultural Britain", "Binge-drinking Britain", Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, William Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*, and William Shakespeare (2014, p. 3). Two pieces of literature are American – Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love* and Maya Angelou's *Still I Rise* – while one is Canadian – Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2014, p. 3). In fact, as regards the target culture of English learning, the information provided in both *NH SB* and the companion is almost exclusively about British historical data – such as the death of Richard III (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 78-79) and the Vikings' "voyages of discovery and colonization" (2014, pp. 82-83) – and behaviour – for instance, English conversation conventions (May, Wheeldon and Williamson, 2014, pp. 28-29). Non-British speakers of English, who could be part of C2, do not tell language students about their own cultures; instead, they are used, so to speak, to disclose more details about Britain. A noteworthy example is the listening and speaking exercise "Things I miss from home" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 9). Listing the objects, services, customs, and spots they miss from their country, fictional Rob and Joe describe British lifestyle:

> [F]irst of all the obvious things, like every Brit living abroad I [Rob] miss some typical English foods – for me that means curry, digestive biscuits, brown sauce, porridge, and of course good English bitter beer.
>
> […] Socially, I think I miss the way that people go out together in Britain. I miss the chat, the banter. I miss meeting friend in pubs […] or the way that people talk to each other at football matches. I miss […] that sparky British humour on a day-to-day basis. (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 1.7)

As far as Joe is concerned, the character principally insists on the differences between working in the United Kingdom and working in the United States:

> I've found working in the US surprisingly different from the UK. In the US, it's very important to be very upbeat and positive about what you can do. Which, you know, is true to a certain extent in the UK, but I think in the UK it's kind of OK to be good at what you do, and just get on with it. […] I guess in a way the Brits are just a bit more modest at work. (2014, T 1.7)

In this same exercise, Ukrainian expatriates Tetyana and Sem only briefly explain that they do not manage to find in England fresh cottage cheese, apricots, melons, and tomatoes which taste as good as the seasonal products they used to buy in the south of their country of origin (2014, T 1.7). The opportunity to introduce learners to the Ukrainian way of life is here not taken. Tetyana adds that it is "hard to be away from home on national holidays" as some of her "traditions are just impossible to recreate" (2014, T 1.7). While the words "national holidays" and "traditions" are cited, they are not detailed. An identical remark can be made in the case of Tyler, the American adolescent who sends tweets in Unit 1 (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 6). What the teenager posts on the Internet is not an account of what he may miss from home, such as the weather, American social life, and humour. Tyler rather reports some English peculiarities: he notes that the English drive on the left side of the road and travel on double-deckers (2014, p. 6). The same goes for Luciana, who comes from Argentina, works in New York, and visits 2 friends in London (2014, p. 37). The answer to Henry's questions "And how do you find London, Luciana? Is it like home, or is it very different?" is a flat "Well, it is very different from Buenos Aires and New York! I know London quite well, actually, I always love it here" which is interrupted by Ben's "Now, Luciana. What would you like to drink?" (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 4.14). What about Argentinian culture? Naturally, as Byram puts it in relation to a lingua franca, "learners cannot acquire knowledge of all the national identities and cultures with which they may come into contact" (1997, p. 20). Nevertheless, as was the case for the linguistic models of *NH SB*, language students can become familiar with a repertoire of cultures which they "are likely to encounter or which they themselves may feel the need to [know]" (Gray, 2010b, p. 184).

With regard to learners' native cultures or C1, *NH SB* and the companion contain numerous exercises in which students have to compare their own lifestyles with the

one introduced to them in the course – which, incidentally, supports Kullman's remark on their increasing centrality in ELT global textbooks (2013, pp. 25-32). By way of illustration, in a section concerned with "Teenagers at work", they are asked "What do you know about labour laws in your country? Are they similar to the ones in exercise 2?" (May, Wheeldon and Williamson, 2014, p. 22), in another centred on British schools, "How similar is the education system in your country?" (2014, p. 32), or "Why do more and more young adults still live with their parents? Why more men than women? Is this true in your country?" in the "What do you think?" section related to "The Peter Pan Generation" (Soars and Soars, 2014, p. 58). Comparing C1 with C2 is, let us repeat, the key to creating what Kramsch calls a "third place" which is essential to interculturality (1993, p. 210; p. 236). Indeed, in Byram's terms,

> by replacing the native speaker by the intercultural speaker as a model for learners, the implication that they should submit themselves to the values of the native speaker and try to imitate native speaker behaviours just as they imitate a native speaker standard grammar and pronunciation disappears. *Imitation is replaced by comparison*, establishing a relationship between one's own beliefs, meanings and behaviours and those of the other, whoever that happens to be. (1997, pp. 112-113, my emphasis)

The comparative approach to culture is nonetheless offset by the idealised representation of Britain and some of its inhabitants – celebrities – which encourages students to aspire to belong to this community. As I signalled above, inappropriacy is a crucial factor in this process. A text deserving careful consideration in this regard is found in "Unit 1B – Culture: Multicultural Britain" of the *Culture and Literature Companion* (May, Wheeldon and Williamson, 2014, pp. 6-7).

In "A nation of immigrants", the author, whose identity is not revealed, claims that "[i]f you walk down a street in Britain, especially in the biggest cities, you will usually see a very diverse mix of people […] of different races and colours [who] are all part of multicultural Britain" (2014, p. 6). Britain is indeed defined as "a mixed-race society" which is first and foremost depicted as a refuge for immigrants (2014, p. 6): Russian Jews "came to Britain to escape prejudice", Irish settlers, in order to "find a new way of life away from […] poverty and famine", men and women from Uganda, Bosnia, Somalia, and Albania, because of wars and persecutions in their homelands (2014, pp. 6-7). The country is furthermore said to have welcomed with open arms people from China, India, the Caribbean, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and

Poland over the past 3 centuries (2014, pp. 6-7). What has to be underlined is that the sensitive subjects related to immigration which can show the British in a bad light are either toned down or avoided. As a result of the expansion of the British Empire, it is for example assumed that "many aspects of British culture, such as sport, were imported [into India, several African countries, and the West Indies], and the people learnt English" (2014, p. 6). The slave trade, for its part, "began to bring many people from Africa to work in the houses of rich British families" in the 17th century (2014, p. 6). Particularly striking are the seemingly neutral and harmless verbs "were imported", "learnt", and "bring". The first verb simply indicates that cultural aspects from Britain were introduced into other countries. Moreover, the agentless passive form shifts emphasis from the agent to the process. Consequently, the people who "imported" those cultural aspects, and the manner in which the action was performed – mostly violently – remain unstated. Although the clause "the people learnt English" is not in the passive voice, the conditions in which English learning took place in British territories are not divulged either. Finally, it is the slave trade which is believed to have "brought" African people to Britain, not the British. Once more, the circumstances surrounding the slave trade in the British Empire are not specified at all.

Significant in this connection is the fact that the highly connoted terms "colonise", "coloniser", "colonisation" and "colonialism" do not appear in the text. Instead, one can spot clauses such as "Britain's trading empire grew" and "The British Empire during the 1700s and 1800s was very powerful […] [and] controlled many places across the world" (2014, p. 6). Neither can the word "racism" be detected in the article: in the 1950s and 1960s, there were only "*tensions* between some of the new immigrant communities and the white British population" (2014, p. 7, my emphasis). The preposition "between" and the coordinating conjunction "and" are also of concern as they suggest that the parties involved in these "tensions" were on an equal footing.[18] The author skirts, for instance, Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech and Margaret Thatcher's views about immigration. Had PARSNIP been the reason for their erasure, a chapter of the companion – which is discussed below – would not have been devoted to "Binge-drinking Britain" (2014, pp. 34-35). In addition, racial discrimination becomes evident in African-American writer Maya

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[18] Again, I am grateful to Dr Tunca for this pivotal observation.

Angelou's poem *Still I Rise* and is even the theme of the associated "What do you think?" section (2014, pp. 20-21). In the short biography accompanying the text, it is mentioned that Angelou was born in "segregated Arkansas" and later became a prominent figure in the African-American Civil Rights movement (2014, p. 21). The implication might be that, in contrast with the United States of America, Britain is a pleasant place to live, where immigration and the relations between the country's ethnic groups are not bones of contention:

> Being a multicultural society has had an enormous impact on Britain's history and identity: its immigrants have established the systems of government, added to its wealth, commerce, and industry, and influenced music, art, sport and diet (many people now consider curry to be Britain's national dish!). Everyone in Britain is descended from immigrants – it's just a question of how far back you want to go. (2014, p. 7)

Together with this seemingly picture-postcard country, the inhabitants tend to be portrayed in a positive light. Various learning activities covering double-page spreads are indeed devoted to successful British personalities, such as the "overnight success" Jamie Oliver (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 46-47) and the "YouTube sensation, viewed by 66 million people worldwide", Susan Boyle (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 8.1), besides businesspeople, among whom the already cited Tony and Maureen Wheeler (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 16-17) and John Caudwell (Soars and Soars, 2014, T 3.4). Consider by way of illustration the reading and speaking exercise entitled "Inspirational teenagers" (Soars and Soars, 2014, pp. 42-43). The text, which focuses on the 3 celebrities Nick D'Aloisio, English singer and songwriter Jake Bugg, and English carer Sarah Thomas, is preceded by a preamble which reads:

> Today's teenagers often get a bad press but they are not all hanging about street corners or sulking in their bedrooms. The ones featured here – like most of the UK's five and a half million teens – are ambitious, talented, and making the most of their lives, often against the odds. (2014, p. 43)

More than motivating, the content of this exercise becomes explicitly aspirational thanks to the related "What do you think?" section in which students are asked 4 questions: "Who do you think is the most successful now? Who will be most successful in the future? Which teenager do you most admire? Why?" (2014, p. 42). It appears clear that this task is not solely designed to interest students: not only does

it equate English with success (see Gray, 2012, p. 104), it also subtly activates the process of identification with an English native speaker of English. These speakers, whose lifestyle is defined in idealised terms by success, embody the promotional promise of English (see Gray, 2010b, p. 134), a promise which – as one of Gray's informants critically expressed in an interview – is purely illusory:

> The life of a celebrity is so far removed from reality and how most "ordinary" people live in the UK. It is a dishonest portrayal of life in the UK. It creates false dreams and aspirations in the minds of language learners. Instead, I would argue for use of more realistic characters, like the average Joe and what he has to go through in everyday life to feed his family. (Ahmed quoted in Gray, 2012, p. 108)

There is however one article in the companion which may besmirch the reputation of British people, namely "Binge-drinking Britain" (May, Wheeldon and Williamson, 2014, pp. 34-35). The text begins with an undeniably negative description of this ancestral British drinking style, referring to "[m]en and women staggering along the public streets, fights [and] brawls of the most barbarous character" (2014, p. 34). Nevertheless, the last paragraph highlights that "a rapid rise in beer consumption" can be noticed in other European countries, whereas Britain has lately been marked by a "shift in drinking behaviour away from the drunken 'swill' to a more 'civilised' and 'moderate' pattern of consumption" (2014, p. 34). The article, put differently, ends on a positive note. It is precisely this idealised depiction of the British which heavily undermines ICC as students are encouraged to identify with them. As a consequence, language learners do not manage to "find and carve out [their] own place within a speech community dominated by the myth of the native cultural speaker" (Kramsch, 1993, pp. 236-239).

4. Conclusions

Three major findings emerge from this analysis of several cultural aspects of *NH SB*. Firstly, the latest edition of the *NH* course does not show any sign of evolution as sexism, heteronormativity – or heterosexuality as a norm (Gray, 2013b) – and Western ethnocentricity – Eurocentrism fundamentally – still prevail. Secondly, these ideologies pervade the background of the textbook, whereas the foreground gives the erroneous impression of feminising and multiculturalism. Thirdly,

intercultural awareness is only raised partially. In spite of comparative tasks, language learners are indeed stimulated to identify with the British community of speakers. In the next and final chapter of this thesis, the impact of this almost utopian representation of Britain, its inhabitants, and its standard language and pronunciation will be explored briefly. As for these last 2 chapters, I would like to conclude the linguistic and cultural investigation of *NH SB* by underscoring that learners of English still do not have "the right to behave and to sound foreign" (Gray, 2010b, p. 32).

V. Perspectives on the ELT Global Coursebook

Whose English Does the New Headway Upper-Intermediate *Global Coursebook Spread?* is a research question whose answer definitely goes beyond the simple "RP and standard British English users' ". Indeed, the investigation of *NH SB* has moreover shown that this type of English will form the basis of the course as long as it is associated with the values of "correctness", "progress", "success", and "global language". It also enables me to offer in this concluding chapter a fresh angle on the nature and the function of UK-produced ELT global coursebooks.

Adopting a cultural studies perspective, John Gray contends that the type of English spread worldwide by means of these teaching materials is purposely made invariant due to the "one size fits all" assumption underlying them (2010b, p. 3). The language, following the logic of consumerism defining the global coursebook (2010b, p. 137), is turned into a "marketable product" whose currency is not limited by variation (Wajnryb, 1996 quoted in Gray, 2010b, p. 137). In other words, the essence of the textbook determines the type of language learned. I would preferably advance that it is the other way around: it is the invariant, standard language which is the *raison d'être* of the ELT global coursebook. The latter does not mirror – as it does in the case of neoliberalism – a discourse upon the English language; rather, the textbook is the discourse. In order to highlight the impact of this discourse on language learners, I wish to quote Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who delivered a talk in 2009 on "The Danger of a Single Story" (TED). The Nigerian writer drew her audience's attention to the fact that one is "impressionable and vulnerable […] in the face of a story" (TED, 2009), sharing her own childhood recollections:

> So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books. I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out. […] My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was. (TED, 2009)

Adichie, as a young girl, had one single story of literature, which corresponded to what she used to read. The danger of the discourse which the ELT global coursebook represents lies in providing one story of the English language, which may have the same effect on language learners as the one experienced by the novelist in the case of literature. As this dissertation draws to an end, I realise that I am myself a product of the *NH* discourse. I now understand the reason why, after I graduated from secondary school and before I went to university, I spent 4 weeks in Kingston upon Thames, in southwest London, to improve my English. I now understand why I was convinced that I could travel around the globe thanks to the English which I had been taught at school. I now grasp the motive behind my Erasmus stay in England. What is worth indicating is that Adichie started to question her single story of literature when she read African pieces of writing (TED, 2009). I personally began to challenge my conception of English when I first conversed with a Yorkshireman. Put differently, language learners have to be told different stories of English.

Here I concur with Gray who "questions the continued viability of the global coursebook" and who asserts that "more regionally based publishing projects […] may offer a way around the 'one size fits all' principle on which [it] is based" (2010b, p. 3; p. 188). While I would opt for the eradication of global textbook publishing, the linguist is a proponent of the "glocal coursebook", a phrase based on the coinage "*glocalization*" which "attempts to capture something of the complexity inherent in globalization by conflating the terms global and local" (2002, p. 166, his italics). Another alternative to the global textbook might be the English language coursebook "produced at a national level for particular countries, that mirror the source culture, rather than target cultures, so that the source and target cultures are identical" (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999, p. 205). In this connection, a friend of mine recently talked to me about an English language textbook produced in Belgium and intended for Belgian students. Eager to discover its alternative approach to ELT, I was given a copy of *Step Up* (Bonnet et al., 2014). Should I specify that the Palace of Westminster, a telephone booth, and a red double-decker illustrate the front cover (Bonnet et al., 2014)?

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