The Present Perfect in Non-Native Englishes

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A Corpus-Based Study of Variation

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Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

1.1. General background

The overarching aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive account of the category of the English present perfect (also referred to as the perfect or HAVE-perfect) in the light of data obtained from non-native varieties of English, both second-language (or L2) varieties such as Indian English (Ind-Eng), East African English (EAfEng) and Singapore English (SingEng) as well as foreign-speaker varieties of English exemplified by the English spoken in Russia and Germany (RusEng and GerEng respectively). We focus on the present perfect because "the sheer complexity and abundance of grammatical apparatus concentrated in this area of the grammar make it an excellent site for examining the differences and similarities amongst related [forms of English]" (Tagliamonte 1996: 351).

   In more concrete terms, the study aims at investigating the perfect and other surface variants in what has become known as present perfect contexts in the relevant theoretical literature. Thus, some scholars distinguish as many as three dominant contexts for the present perfect (cf. Jespersen 1924; Zandvoort 1932; Bauer 1970; Fenn 1987; Winford 1993; Tagliamonte 2000). These contexts are (i) resultative contexts, (ii) extended-now or continuative contexts and (iii) experiential contexts. They are illustrated in (1) through (3).

(1)   resultative context
       *He **has broken** his arm.*

(2)   extended-now context
       *I **have lived** in Hamburg since 2001.*

(3)   experiential context
       *I **have** never **been** to Russia.*

In addition, some researchers single out a context of recent past and its subtype, a hot-news context, as a distinct semantic environment requiring the present perfect in Standard English (Leech 1971a; McCawley 1971; Comrie

1976; Brinton 1988; Klein 1994; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Siemund 2004; Radden and Dirven 2007), as exemplified in (4).[1]

(4)   context of recent past
       *The Prime Minister **has resigned** recently.*

In a nutshell, the resultative context suggests that a past action results in a change of state at the moment of utterance, whereas the extended-now context implies that a situation that started in the past still obtains at the moment of utterance. In contrast, the experiential context typically refers to a situation or an event that occurred once or several times prior to the moment of utterance. Finally, the context of recent past is taken to describe a recent event. (A meticulous description of these semantic environments is given in Chapter 4.)

   The project was initiated by the basic empirical observation that forms other than the present perfect surface in present perfect contexts across non-native varieties of English. These forms are the present tense, the simple past tense, the past perfect, lone past participle, etc. Moreover, the previous research has revealed that the only other form which alternates with the present perfect in *all* present perfect contexts across all above-mentioned varieties of English is the simple past tense, otherwise known as the preterite (cf. Davydova 2008). Even in standard varieties of English, namely British English and American English, there is always a considerable amount of variation between both forms in present perfect contexts despite clear preferences in favour of either one form or the other in a specific context in a given standard variety.

   Such a robust variation between the present perfect and other forms does not seem to be a matter of a mere cross-varietal coincidence. Rather, what we deal with here is a subtle phenomenon that needs to be elaborated on. Along these lines, the study proposes to consider the matter by adopting a second- (and foreign-) language learner perspective and to examine the variation between the perfect and other verb forms in varieties that have been labelled together as non-native Englishes.

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1 We use the term 'Standard English' to refer to the variety of British English promoted by normative pressures and codified in various (grammatical and typological) descriptions of English (e.g., Leech 1971a, 1971b; Comrie 1976, 1985; Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Radden and Dirven 2007, etc.).

But why should one study variation in non-native varieties of English? To start with, variation in non-native Englishes has remained a much neglected issue because for a long time non-native English was thought of as simply wrong English. The present study is thus supposed to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive description of the category of the English present perfect across different forms of non-native English. Moreover, the existing studies dealing with non-native forms of English (mostly indigenised varieties) are largely descriptive, thus frequently failing to provide a differentiated account of various morpho-syntactic phenomena. The present study is therefore concerned with working out a methodologically sound and theoretically insightful framework within which non-native varieties of English (both second-language varieties and foreign-speaker varieties) can be examined and compared across the board.

Since many morpho-syntactic peculiarities of non-native varieties of English have been described as having emerged as a result of (imperfect) second-language acquisition, studying non-native variation of English may help us to understand what co-occurrences are results of the processes frequently claimed to underlie L2 acquisition (e.g., transfer or substrate influence) and are thus of a specific and localized nature, and what patterns of variation can be claimed to possess a more general character. Thus, studying non-native Englishes should ideally lead us to a better understanding of cross-varietal patterns, their pervasiveness as well as their limits. By the same token, studying variation across non-native varieties of English seems to be a promising approach since it may provide us with additional insights and clues leading to a better understanding of mechanisms governing language variation because variation attested in second-language output is arguably just as rule-governed as the native-speaker variation.

Finally, the spread of English as a global lingua franca has repercussions for its non-native users, who – to put it in Berns' (1995: 10, cited in Jenkins 2003: 43) words – find themselves "in the midst of an exciting, challenging, and creative social and linguistic phase of their history". Studying this "sociolinguistic history-in-the-making" becomes particularly important as empirical evidence becomes increasingly available through, for instance, the Internet and other advanced communication technologies (cf. Jenkins 2003).

Since most non-native Englishes are to a large extent products of educational systems, language-internal variation observed in non-native varieties is compared to the variety of Standard English English (StEngEng), a form of English spoken by the educated native speakers in England. This perspective on studying non-native variation is very attractive for two major reasons. First, it provides a researcher with a straightforward design for

empirical work. Thus, it seems to be natural to "take some norm as a base of reference and to investigate how and why the learner misses it" (Klein and Perdue 1997: 307). Second, it allows a researcher to establish the degree of affiliation between a reference variety (which serves as a yardstick against which the data is measured and compared) and a respective non-native variety. This procedure might in its turn enable us to reveal patterns of pervasive regularities across different varieties of English which might lead to a better understanding of the systematicity of processes underlying the occurrence of the present perfect across non-native Englishes.

1.2. Research questions and goals

The perfect is one of the most intricate phenomena of the English morpho-syntax primarily due to its formal and functional complexity. Its full use is one of the last features of English acquired by native learners (cf. Van Herk 2008). It therefore should not come as a surprise that a non-native speaker frequently substitutes this structure with other variants in the process of language learning what often gives rise to a robust variation of forms in contexts that require the perfect according to the traditional descriptive accounts of English grammar.

Hence, from a wide perspective, the major question addressed in the study can be formulated as follows: How can we explain variation between the present perfect and other verb forms in present perfect contexts in theoretically insightful ways?

In order to account for the patterns of variation observed in the data, we rely and elaborate on the notions of complexity employed in linguistics. We first of all show that the English present perfect is a linguistically complex category whose full system of uses is mastered only by the most advanced learners of English. Second, we demonstrate how variation of morphological variants populating present perfect contexts can be studied in terms of varying complexity levels across non-native Englishes.

The other issue dealt with in this study concerns the mechanism that underlies variation between the perfect and its major rival: the preterite. Relying on the results of previous research (cf. Davydova 2008), we seek to ascertain in how far the co-occurrence patterns of these verb forms can be explained in terms of the notion of current relevance. To that end, both distributional and multivariate evidence is put into a comparative perspective.

While describing and explaining patterns of variability, we rely on the results of the distributional and multivariate analyses, which help to uncover

the area of the present perfect marking in a (non-)native English grammar. The goal of the distributional and multivariate analyses is to find out what the studied varieties have in common and along what dimensions they differ. Together, both analyses allow a researcher to establish shared and idiosyncratic patterns, elucidating common linguistic variables (or factors) conditioning the occurrence of the present perfect form. Such internally differentiated comparisons across varieties should shed some light on the mechanisms shaping variation in present perfect contexts (cf. Davydova et al. 2011).

Yet another question addressed in this study concerns the provenance of nonstandard verb forms used in present perfect contexts in place of the perfect. Where do they come from? Are they a result of a substrate/mother-tongue influence or have they emerged due to some general mechanisms involved in L2 acquisition? Alternatively, can these forms be explained in terms of contact with native varieties of English?

Carried out within the sociolinguistic (variationist) paradigm, this study aims at assessing the role of the sociolinguistic variable of sex in the production of the HAVE-perfect across non-native Englishes. More specifically, females are assumed to use the more "correct" HAVE-perfect more frequently and consistently than males (see also Chapter 7, section 7.1.2.1. for the elaboration of this hypothesis).

Furthermore, non-native speakers use the perfect in contexts from which it is banned in Standard English, at least according to the descriptions available in modern reference grammars (cf. Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002). To provide an example, Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) report the occurrence of the HAVE-perfect with definite past time adverbials such as *last month*, *many years ago*, etc. across various "New Englishes", a finding which is in line with our results. Given the keen academic interest that this feature of non-native Englishes has evoked in the past few decades, these tokens were included in the study but analysed qualitatively rather than quantitatively due to low token counts, which often jeopardize a quantitative (i.e. multivariate) analysis. The central issue surrounding these forms concerns their origin. In other words, we seek to discover whether the occurrence of the present perfect in definite past time reference contexts is better analysed in terms of processes underlying second-language acquisition (i.e. transfer, overgeneralisation) or whether they are triggered by other factors such as pragmatic constraints imposed by the speaker on an utterance in the discourse.

Last but not least, one of the goals of this study is to show how studying variation attested in non-native Englishes can be informed by the findings

from the fields of Second-Language Acquisition (SLA) and contact linguistics. In other words, while analysing variation between the perfect and other verb forms in the same contexts, we take recourse to various concepts traditionally employed within both disciplines (e.g., transfer, or substrate influence, substrate-independent learner strategies such as overgeneralisation, simplification, etc.). We furthermore rely on the major findings concerning the development of the tense and aspect system in a second-language learner of English (e.g., Inherent Lexical Aspect Hypothesis). In doing so, an attempt is made to bridge the "paradigm gap" (Sridhar and Sridhar 1986) that has existed between the SLA studies and the studies of English for quite some time now (cf. Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008: 156). Though not longitudinal in its design, the study nevertheless comprises "synchronic snapshots" of data, which enable us to trace the trajectory of the development of the English present perfect in a non-native grammar.

1.3. Previous studies on the present perfect

This section provides an overview of the literature dealing with category of the English present perfect. The English perfect has been a subject of enormous interest to linguists of various affiliations. Early structuralist accounts of the perfect can be found in Jespersen (1924) and Zandvoort (1932), whereas more recent descriptive reports are represented by Bauer (1970), Quirk et al. (1985), Huddleston and Pullum (2002) as well as Declerck, Reed, and Cappelle (2006). A typological perspective on the English perfect is provided in Comrie (1976), Dahl (1985) and (1999), Dahl and Hedin (2000) and Haspelmath et al. (2005). A meticulous semantic-pragmatic account of the category can be found in Fenn (1987), whereas its description from the cognitive perspective is given in Radden and Dirven (2007). The historical development of the HAVE + participle construction has been extensively studied by various authors (cf. Visser 1963-73; Brinton 1988; Denison 1993).

The present perfect has received much attention in the sociolinguistic literature on non-standard varieties such as African-American Vernacular, Trinidadian English and Samaná English (cf. Winford 1993; Tagliamonte 1996, 1997, 2000 and Van Herk 2008). Studies on the so-called shift variety of Irish English have on the other hand focused on what might be termed as the functional equivalents of the English perfect, i.e. verb forms used in place of the perfect (cf. Harris 1984a, 1984b; Filppula 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Siemund 2004; Pietsch 2005b, 2007, 2009; Hickey 2004b,

2007; Kirk and Kallen 2006). Elsness (1997) is a large corpus-based study focusing on variation between the present perfect and "its chief rival, the preterite" in British and American English (Elsness 1997: 1).

Last but not least, emergence and development of the category of the English present perfect has been closely examined in accounts on both first- and second-language acquisition. Hence, Chomsky (1969), Nussbaum and Naremore (1975), Gathercole (1986) and Slobin (1994) deal with the acquisition of this structure in a native English grammar, whereas Felix (1978) and Housen (2002) report the development of the English perfect in a non-native grammar. Furthermore, Odlin and Alonso-Vázquez (2006) discuss the role that the native language exerts on the acquisition of the present perfect by a second-language learner. Finally, Agnihotri, Khanna, and Mukherjee (1998) is a sociolinguistic study designed to crystallize socio-psychological variables underlying the acquisition of the tense and aspect system including the English perfect by second-language learners in New Delhi.

As is clear from this quick overview, researchers working within the sociolinguistic paradigm have focused mainly on those varieties of English which are spoken natively. By contrast, very little variationist research has been conducted on non-native varieties of English. This study attempts to fill this gap by giving an exhaustive description of the English present perfect across non-native Englishes of various types.

1.4. Principal definitions of the study

This section elaborates on some key concepts and important terminological distinctions drawn in the present study.

1.4.1. Working terminology

There is no unanimous agreement in the relevant literature on how to refer to the category of the English present perfect, its surface realisations as well as its semantic readings or use types. This study employs the terms "the perfect", "the present perfect" and "the HAVE-perfect" interchangeably to refer to the morphological variant consisting of the auxiliary HAVE and a past participle of the main verb (e.g., *have talked*, *have spoken*, etc.). It also uses the terms "resultative perfect/context", "extended-now perfect/context", "experiential perfect/context", "perfect/context of recent past" to refer to the major functions or semantic environments of the English present perfect.

The alternating variants of the present perfect are labelled as follows. The terms the "preterite" or the "simple past tense" are used to refer to verb stems inflected for the past tense (e.g., *asked, said,* etc.). The label "past perfect" is employed to designate constructions of the type 'had + past participle'. The label "lone past participles" is related to forms such as *gone, been,* etc., and "lone present participle" to forms such as *going, smoking,* etc. Constructions comprising the auxiliary BE and a past participle are referred to as the "BE-perfect", whereas the label "present (tense)" is used to describe both the inflected simple present forms (e.g., *he goes, she does* etc.) and the present progressive forms (e.g., *he is going, I am swimming,* etc.). Moreover, "bare verb stems" are invariant verb forms such as *come, travel, like,* etc., whereas "three verb clusters" are constructions of the type *am done spent,* etc. Finally, the terms "morphology" (e.g., perfect and preterite morphology) and "morpho-syntactic form" are used to refer to surface realisations, or variants, of the linguistic variable studied here.

1.4.2. Native speaker vs. non-native speaker

Relying on traditional accounts, Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 36) draw the following distinction between a native and a non-native speaker of a language:

> Traditionally a native speaker is assumed to be one who has learnt a language from birth without formal instruction. By contrast a non-native speaker of a language has learnt it as a second (or later) language some time after being initiated into his/her native language.

The most important characteristics of non-native speakers of English is that they (i) do not use English as a (primary) means of communication in the family and (ii) live in an environment where English is not a prevailing means of communication.

Given the obvious differences in the acquisitional contexts obtaining between second-language varieties and foreign-speaker varieties on the one hand and (monolingual) native-speaker varieties on the other, a distinction between native and non-native English in the sense of Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 36) is maintained in this study.

1.4.3. Second language vs. foreign language

Since this study deals with variation observed in second-language and for-eign-speaker varieties of English, we should also look at the differences between a second language and a foreign language.

Traditionally, a second language plays an important role as a means of instruction at school and in the academic environment, and as a means of interethnic communication. By contrast, a foreign language is used for inter-national communication, teaching and research and is not used in everyday life (cf. Ali 1999: 4). Thus, Englishes spoken in India, Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Pakistan, etc. are good examples of a second language in con-trast to Englishes spoken in China, Japan, Russia and most European coun-tries, where they perform a function of a foreign language. In this study, we will use the terms 'non-native varieties of English' or 'non-native Eng-lishes' to refer to second-language and foreign-speaker varieties of English.

1.4.4. Language acquisition vs. language learning

In studies on language acquisition a distinction is usually drawn between the process of language acquisition and that of language learning. The for-mer is postulated to be a "natural process of internalizing linguistic rules without formal instruction or conscious efforts" (cf. Ali 1999: 5). It is be-lieved that children learn their native language this way. The latter on the other hand is a process requiring a conscious effort on the part of the learner. Hence, a first (native) language is *acquired*, whereas a non-native language (be it a second language or a foreign language) is *learned*. Having said that, we must add that such a rigorous terminological distinction is not always maintained in the relevant literature and both terms may be used interchangeably to refer to the processes and outcomes of second-language acquisition (cf. Edmondson 1999: 7).

From the perspective of second-language acquisition theory the processes underlying the acquisition of a second language as well as a foreign lan-guage are considered to be essentially the same, with no distinction being drawn between the two (cf. Winford 2003). It follows that the major cogni-tive mechanisms underlying the emergence of second-language and foreign-language varieties can be argued to be by and large identical. Second lan-guage (acquisition) is thus understood as both second and foreign language (acquisition).

It has been noticed in the relevant literature that language learners make various 'errors' (omissive, additive, substitutive errors or errors related to

word order) in their L2 production. Here are some examples illustrating these 'errors':

(5)   Learners' errors
    a. *I askØ him yesterday.* (omissive error, simplification)
    b. *James and Henry like quarrelling with themselves.*
       'each other' (substitutive error, overgeneralisation/reanalysis)

The term 'error' focuses on the outcome of L2 acquisition. The processes that produced these errors are simplification and overgeneralisation (or reanalysis) amongst others. These processes are also referred to as a set of principles that inform second-language acquisition (Winford 2009: 205). In the ensuing chapters we will use the generic terms "cognitive (or learner) strategies", "universal strategies of second-language acquisition", "universal (language) learning strategies" or "universals of language creation" to refer to the processes and the outcomes of second-language acquisition of this type.

In fact, all these cognitive strategies have been argued to be the most influential factors in adult language learning (King 1969), accounting for the generally simplified outcome of most L2 systems. The follow-up studies will make it clear that second-language learners' systems are not always 'simpler' than those of native speakers of English. In fact, the learners' attempts to come to terms with a linguistically and cognitively unusual phenomenon of the English present perfect may give rise to quite complex systems of variation between the perfect and other verb forms in present perfect contexts across non-native varieties of English. We shall elaborate on the notion of complexity in the following chapters.

To sum up the preceding discussion, no strict distinction between a foreign language and a second language is drawn in this study as it is assumed that the cognitive mechanisms underlying the acquisition of a second language and a foreign language are fairly similar (cf. Winford 2003). Following Edmondson (1999), we will use the terms *learn* and *acquire* interchangeably to refer to the processes and outcomes of second-language acquisition.

1.4.5. Simplification

Perhaps the most important process (i.e. strategy) "employed by learners as compensation for partial or incomplete acquisition is simplification" (Winford 2003: 217). It therefore requires a special word of explanation here. Simplification generally refers to the non-realisation (i.e. reduction, omission or deletion) of morphological markings and grammatical words, a strategy designed to ease the learner's perception and production. Consider, for instance, the case where a non-native speaker uses forms such as *gone*, *come*, *done*, etc. instead of *have gone, have come, have done*, etc. in the target language. Furthermore, bare verb stems (e.g., *But other state never visit*) are frequently outcomes of inflection reduction.

More importantly, simplification is a process whereby an L2 learner re-places a complex form of the target language with a simpler one. For in-stance, a German speaker using the simple past tense in a context where Standard English and spoken German vernacular require the present perfect can be conceived of as simplification.

(6)   Mesolectal German English (HCNVE: GE08)
       a. I **visited** *French lots of times.*
          'I have visited France many times.'

       German
       b. *Ich habe Frankreich mehrmals   besucht.*
          I   have France   many times visited.
          'I have been to France many times'

Additionally, non-native speakers tend to use the structurally and semanti-cally simpler present tense in contexts where a native speaker of English is very likely to employ the HAVE-perfect. Such cases can also be accounted for in terms of simplification strategies. Consider, for instance, (7).

(7)   Indian English (ICE: S1a-030)
       No, initially it [the climate] didn't affect me but now my resistance is much less.
       '...my resistance has subsided (decreased).'

Thus, simplification is understood as a very general (and largely substrate-independent) strategy, whereby learners use the semantically and morpho-syntactically simpler, i.e. "least marked" (Housen 2002: 160) or more "natural" (Davydova et al. 2011), variant in their L2 production where the

target language requires a semantically and a morpho-syntactically more complex form.[2]

1.4.6. Avoidance strategies

Avoidance strategies (Edmondson 1999: 96) is another key concept in SLA studies used to refer to a process, whereby learners tend to avoid producing those forms in their target language that they perceive as difficult. To provide an example from Edmondson (1999), learners of German tend to produce diminutive forms of nouns with the *-chen* suffix, which always signals a neuter form, if they are not sure what gender they should assign to the corresponding noun. So they might say *das Tischchen* instead of *der Tisch*, *das Stühlchen* instead of *der Stuhl*. The ensuing chapters will clarify how the rare occurrence of the HAVE-perfect in some varieties of English can be viewed as a result of speakers using avoidance strategies in order to come to terms with the complex phenomenon of the English present perfect.

1.4.7. Transfer

For the purposes of the present study it is also crucial to draw a distinction between learner strategies and language transfer. The former were treated in some detail in the foregoing sections. What still needs to be elaborated on is the notion of language transfer. First and foremost, language transfer can be described as reinforcing influence of the mother tongue on the second language, resulting in a language change (cf. Winford 2005: 373; Kirk and Kallen 2006: 88; Odlin 2009: 265). Other labels (i.e. 'interference', 'substratum influence' 'imposition') have been used to refer to this type of linguistic phenomenon. There seems to be consensus that learners employ features of their mother tongue to compensate for their limited proficiency in a second language (cf. Winford 2005: 379). Such direct mappings include vocabulary and semantics but can also extend to phonology, morphology and syntax.

In more concrete terms, transfer means that certain structures of one's L1 can be used to express an L2 meaning. To provide an example, a German speaker of English may say *Peter probably sings tomorrow* meaning

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2   It must be noted here that simplification may also refer to other processes such as rule regularisation (see also Winford (2003: 217–219) for a detailed discussion).

Peter will probably sing tomorrow. The "incorrect" sentence is the result of a direct influence from German, in which one can use the present tense to express futurity (e.g., *Peter singt wahrscheinlich morgen*). What is apparently happening here is a speaker employing an L1 structure (present tense) to express an L2 meaning (futurity in English) in analogy to German.

German (L1)

Semantic domain:
Future reference

Structure:
Present tense

English (L2)

Semantic domain:
Future reference

Structure:
Present tense
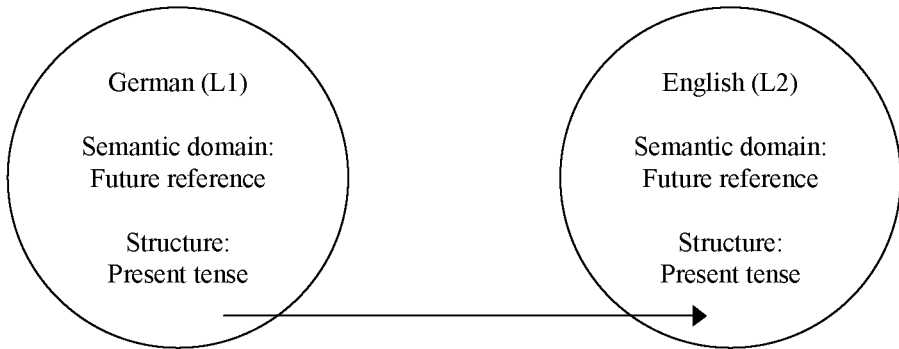
Figure 1.1. The process of language transfer

The speaker thus mentally projects the structure available in the semantic domain of her mother tongue (i.e. present tense for future reference) onto the corresponding semantic domain of her second language (i.e. future reference). The result of this direct mapping is the use of the present tense to express future meaning in English. For this process to become possible the speaker also needs a structure in her L2 that can be analysed as a corresponding L1 structure (for instance, present tense in English and German). To put it differently, transfer requires cross-linguistic identification of two linguistic forms in L1 and L2. When the connection between an L1 and an L2 form has been established, a whole set of L1 structure-meaning correspondences is activated within the speaker's mind. These structure-meaning mappings available in L1 are then projected onto L2.

In this study, the terms "language transfer", "mother-tongue interference" and "substrate influence" are used interchangeably to refer to the process as well as its outcomes outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

The approach used in this study to detect substrate influence on non-native English is to contrast learners' interlanguage performances with respective native languages such as Hindi, German, Russian, etc. While describing contrasts and similarities obtaining amongst distinct language forms, we rely on actual data produced in the interlanguages labelled col-

lectively as non-native Englishes (cf. Odlin 2009: 266). By contrast, patterns of mother-tongue use draw on the structural descriptions of the native language provided in grammar books. We will also use the introspective method, relying on the native speakers' translations of the English sentences, in order to elicit what verb structures are used in the speaker's mother tongue in contexts where Standard English requires the HAVE-perfect (see also Appendix 1).

1.4.8. Varieties vs. interlanguage

Variety is one of the key concepts in this study and is in need of an explanation. To start with, a variety is a distinct form of language spoken by a particular group of people or in a particular region (sociolect vs. dialect). A time dimension could be added to introduce historical varieties of a particular language (for instance, the 19th-century Irish English). In addition, all recognised varieties are rule-governed and relatively homogenous, i.e. they exhibit a number of fixed idiosyncratic features of their own in the area of phonology or morpho-syntax what accounts for their unique flair when contrasted with other varieties of the same language.

Interlanguage on the other hand has traditionally been described as a linguistic system developed by a non-native language learner who has not yet become fully proficient in the target language, her non-native output constantly approximating to native speakers' proficiency. Moreover, interlanguage developed by each speaker has generally been characterised as a variety in its own right exhibiting a number of idiosyncratic characteristics coming about as a result of the learner's unique experiences with the L2.

More importantly, non-native language learning is constrained by processes and principles that are universal in nature. In other words, learners make use of similar strategies or take recourse to some general mechanisms while learning another language. Additionally, non-native language learners sharing the same mother tongue and an equal exposure to the target language tend to form a relatively homogeneous community of speakers whose interlanguage exhibits a number of relatively fixed peculiarities in the area of phonology and morpho-syntax. From the perspective developed in this study, interlanguage is a language variety shaped by mother-tongue influence, substrate-independent learner strategies as well as input from native-speaker varieties (see also Chapter 2).

1.4.9. Acrolect, mesolect, basilect

Since varieties discussed in this study reflect various stages of the longitu-
dinal development of the interlanguage grammar, the notions of acrolect,
mesolect and basilect are also in need of an explanation.

To start with, the three terms originate from the studies on decreolisa-
tion (cf. DeCamp 1971; Bickerton 1975 cited in Schumann and Stauble
1983). Being a situation in which a superstrate language (i.e. the socially
and politically dominant language) and a creole exist side by side, decreoli-
sation gives rise to a variety of lects that form a post-creole continuum.
Hence, the lect closest to the creole is called a basilect, the one closest to
the superstrate language is referred to as acrolect. Finally, the intermediate
varieties of the creole are known as mesolects in the relevant literature (cf.
Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008: 226). Bickerton (1975, cited in Schumann and
Stauble 1983: 261) was the first to suggest that the developmental stages
exhibited in the process of second-language acquisition may parallel those
exhibited in the process of decreolisation since in both cases the speakers'
position along the continuum is motivated by the degree of contact they
have had with the target language.

Drawing on the analogy of decreolisation continuum, non-native Eng-
lishes can therefore be systematically described if we conceive of these va-
rieties as exhibiting various degrees of conformance to the standard pattern.
We can thus frequently encounter different sub-varieties within a non-
native variety of English (for instance, IndEng). Depending on the type of
the learner, some of these varieties can be described as closely resembling
Standard English, whereas others deviate from the standard pattern to such
a considerable extent that they are virtually incomprehensible to a native
speaker of English. Yet other varieties fall somewhere in between these two
extremes. Non-native varieties of English can be said to form a continuum
on which basilectal forms are most distantly located from the standard lan-
guage and acrolectal forms are most closely approaching it. Mesolectal va-
rieties occupy an intermediate position on this continuum.

Acrolect, mesolect and basilect can in principle be construed as inter-
language systems (or varieties) within which the observed variation is con-
strained by speakers' mother tongue, universal processes of second-lan-
guage acquisition and the amount of exposure to the target language in both
classroom and natural environment among a few other factors. Basilectal
varieties are represented by speakers with very little exposure to the target
language. By contrast, speakers with intensive exposure to the target lan-

guage constitute acrolectal varieties of a language. Mesolectal speakers demonstrate a moderate amount of contact to the reference variety.

The boundaries between one form and another on this continuum are not always clear-cut and in fact speakers may gradually move from one point on this continuum to another as their knowledge of English expands. Moreover, the speakers' position on that continuum can be said to mirror their level of competence (i.e. knowledge of grammar) in Standard English. But how do we know what level of competence a particular group of speakers has in English? The most straightforward answer to this question appears to be that linguistic competence is presumably reflected in the patterns of language use (cf. Cedergren and Sankoff 1974: 333–334). In order to elicit the level of competence of a non-native speaker we need to establish the patterns of use of the present perfect in the standard variety of English which will then serve as a point of comparison against which to compare variation of the present perfect in non-native varieties of English. The level of L2 competence is then a function of the degree of conformance to the standard pattern.

1.5. Outline of the book

The issues mentioned in this introduction will be elaborated on in the ensuing chapters of the monograph. Having developed a general perspective on studying non-native Englishes (Chapter 2), we shall turn to a more theoretical discussion of the English present perfect. Chapters 3 and 4 present a comprehensive analysis of the English present perfect in the light of the current theoretical accounts of tense and aspect. Chapter 5 elaborates on the contention that the English present perfect is a linguistically and cognitively complex phenomenon, whereas Chapter 6 shows how variation observed in present perfect contexts across non-native Englishes can be studied and explained in terms of varying complexity levels. Chapter 7 introduces the empirical design of the study and its methods; the major criteria (or independent variables) according to which the corpus data will be analysed in the subsequent analyses as well as the hypotheses underlying the choice of these variables. In what follows, data analyses are presented. Thus, Chapter 8 discusses the patterns of occurrence of the present perfect in the standard variety of English. Chapters 9 through 14 present analyses of variation attested in second-language varieties of English exemplified by different varieties of IndEng as well as upper-mesolectal varieties of EAfEng and SingEng. Chapters 15 and 16 deal with foreign-speaker varieties of English

spoken in Russia and in Germany. Chapter 17 develops a bird's-eye perspective of the variability of the present perfect across non-native Englishes. It provides a synthesis of the results of this study by taking recourse to the concepts elaborated on in the theoretical part of the book. Chapter 18 provides some concluding remarks about the most important findings of this study, pinpointing their relevance for the ongoing and future linguistic research.

2. Non-native varieties of English

This chapter focuses on developing a perspective that would help to bring the existing differences between second-language (or indigenised) and foreign-speaker varieties of English to a common denominator. Taking the variety of IndEng and the English spoken in Russia as examples, we will demonstrate what these different varietal types have in common and along what dimensions they may differ. The procedure will enable us to develop a common ground allowing for a comparison of these quite distinct forms of English.

2.1. Foreign-speaker varieties of English

As a global language, English boasts a multitude of speakers that use the language for different purposes and in different forms (cf. Crystal 2004). Despite this heterogeneity, three principal groups of speakers of English speakers have been distinguished (cf. Quirk et al. 1985; Kachru 1985, 1986; Crystal 2004): those who speak English as a native language and thus belong to countries of the inner circle; those who speak English as a second language and hence inhabit countries of the outer circle, in which English enjoys the status of an official or co-official language; and, finally, those who use English mainly as a foreign language and belong to the countries of the expanding circle, where English is not recognised on the official level and is mainly used as a means of communication with foreigners.

The immediate questions arising from the preceding considerations are twofold. First, one might wonder if it is justified to accord a variety status to those non-native forms of English that are spoken in countries where the language does not have an official status. Second, one might also ask why we need to study foreign-speaker varieties of English.

Since the answer to the second question seems to be more straightforward, we shall consider it first. To start with, as the process of globalisation proceeds, English is becoming a common "linguistic denominator" worldwide. It is one of the very few features that a Korean executive in Russia, a German Eurocrat in Brussels and a Chinese geneticist at an international symposium in Sweden have in common (cf. Power 2005: 65). Native speakers of English tend to become more and more disadvantaged by this phenomenon, failing to communicate their message to foreigners and thus

losing out on deals when they do not fully understand how English is being used by non-natives (cf. Power 2005).

Furthermore, non-native speakers of English (including foreign speakers) outnumber native speakers 3:1 (cf. Crystal 2004). This trend is likely to continue, as English has become a language of technology and commerce and is a target language for an ever growing number of population groups. Consider the following figures from Graddol (1997: 10):

First-language speakers: 375 million
Second-language speakers: 375 million
Foreign-language speakers: 750 million

The following citation illustrates the impact the English language has had on various spheres of life in different countries all over the world:

One out of five of the world's population speak English to some level of competence. Demand from the other four fifths is increasing … By the year 2000 it is estimated that over one billion people will be learning English. English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising.
Graddol (1997: 2)

Thus, some thirty years ago English was used for work only by elites such as diplomats and CEOs. Nowadays English has spread into other social strata, gaining in importance among staff of workers, guides, taxi drivers and ordinary citizens in countries such as China, Russia, the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and many others. The situation is very similar in Western European countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, etc., i.e. countries that boast long traditions of teaching and learning the English language. It is probably for this reason that English is taught and learned at an increasingly earlier age in these countries. To provide an example, English is now taught starting at the age of 6 in many schools in Russia. In 2004, primary schools in major Chinese cities began offering English in the third grade, rather than in middle school (cf. Power 2005). English is taught as a first foreign language in schools in all of above-mentioned countries, which accounts for its special status in these countries (cf. Crystal 2004). A similar idea is expressed in Melchers and Shaw (2003):

> Once a language becomes widely known, schools tend to make its dominance self-perpetuating. If it is observed that English is a useful language on the world stage, then schools start to teach it. Once more people in more countries have learnt it at schools, it becomes more useful because there are more foreigners with whom it can be used. So, if following the wishes of parents and pupils, schools teach the language even more, so even more people learn it, it becomes even more useful. […]

> At present the world's schools are forces to strengthen the position of English. English is the main foreign language taught in Japan, China and other Asian countries. The EU issues education figures for 26 expanding circle European countries which are members of the EU or EEA or candidates for that status (Pilos 2001), and in all but two English is the most studied foreign language. … The age of beginning English study is gradually being lowered and it is not unusual to start before the age of 10 (Pilos 2001).
>
> Melchers and Shaw (2003: 180)

Finally, English is spreading not only in the top-down direction, i.e. through educational institutions, but also bottom-up, i.e. through individuals representing subcultures in countries all over the world. In such social contexts, English is used as a lingua franca by the members of subcultures associated with computers and hip-hop, heavy-metal and rock music (cf. Melchers and Shaw 2003). These subcultures enjoy covert prestige and often represent a network of knowledgeable individuals that make use of English for communicative purposes. Interestingly enough, the English spoken within such subcultures is characterised by a standard conformant (technical) vocabulary but varied grammar.

As can be seen, a whole new world of Englishes has been emerging, a world that needs to be investigated in 'real-time'. Since no in-depth descriptions have been provided for the varieties of English of the expanding circle so far, future research should focus on studying these forms of English.

While approaching a more complicated issue as to whether or not foreign-speaker Englishes can be classified as self-contained varieties of English, we might want to consider a few general factors that shape variation of both foreign-speaker varieties and second-language varieties of English. First, similar to speakers of second-language varieties (e.g., IndEng), speakers of the expanding circle are exposed to the input from the native-speaker varieties (mostly British English and American English) – by and large through the media – and can thus be said to be native norm sensitive and – in many cases – native norm dependent. Second, just like speakers of the outer circle, speakers of the expanding circle learn English from non-native

speakers of English. For instance, in Russia secondary school students learn English from native speakers of Russian that have had a professional training in the English language; the same applies, by and large, to secondary school students in Germany. We can conclude, therefore, that the English spoken in an ESL classroom in Russia and in Germany but also in France, the Netherlands, etc. is indeed characterised by a number of idiosyncratic features of its own in the areas of phonology, lexicon and grammar, this specificness being due to the influence from the teachers' and students' respective mother tongues. We should, however, bear in mind that foreign-language learning is always standard conformant in that the foreign-language learner is always, or at least most of the time, native-speaker competence oriented.

However, despite their striving for native speakers' competence, most foreign-language learners are bound to make errors as a result of native language transfer processes and universal mechanisms of second-language acquisition, which become activated in a language learning situation. Interestingly enough, a considerable number of peculiarities exhibited by the second-language varieties of English are, to a great extent, the result of the substrate influence and learners' strategies employed during second-language acquisition. Here the question is to what extent foreign-speaker and second-language varieties of English are shaped by substrate influence and what linguistic features can be ascribed to (the) 'universal', i.e. cognitively salient, mechanisms of second-language acquisition. The case studies in the ensuing chapters address this question.

Finally, similar to second-language varieties, foreign-speaker varieties of English can be described as extremely heterogeneous forms of English, as speakers master their English to various degrees. This difficulty notwithstanding, many (if not all) second-language varieties of English, also referred to as New Englishes (cf. Schneider 2007; Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008), have been frequently described in the relevant literature as possessing relatively consistent forms in the area of phonology, lexicon and even grammar. By contrast, no attempt has been made so far to provide a systematic description of the linguistic properties of foreign-speaker forms of English. It is, however, important to realise that varieties of both types share one essential characteristic, i.e. they come into existence as a result of 'imperfect' second-language acquisition and are thus subject to similar constraints that shape the linguistic systems of non-native speakers of English.

Factors constraining the variation found in non-native varieties of English are summed up in Figure 2.1.

Input from the standard varieties
of English (British English and
American English) /
Superstrate influence

⇓

| Universal (learner) strategies of L2 acquisition | ⇒ | **Non-native grammar of English** | ⇐ | Degree of proficiency in (or amount of contact with) the target language |

⇑

Language transfer/
Substrate influence
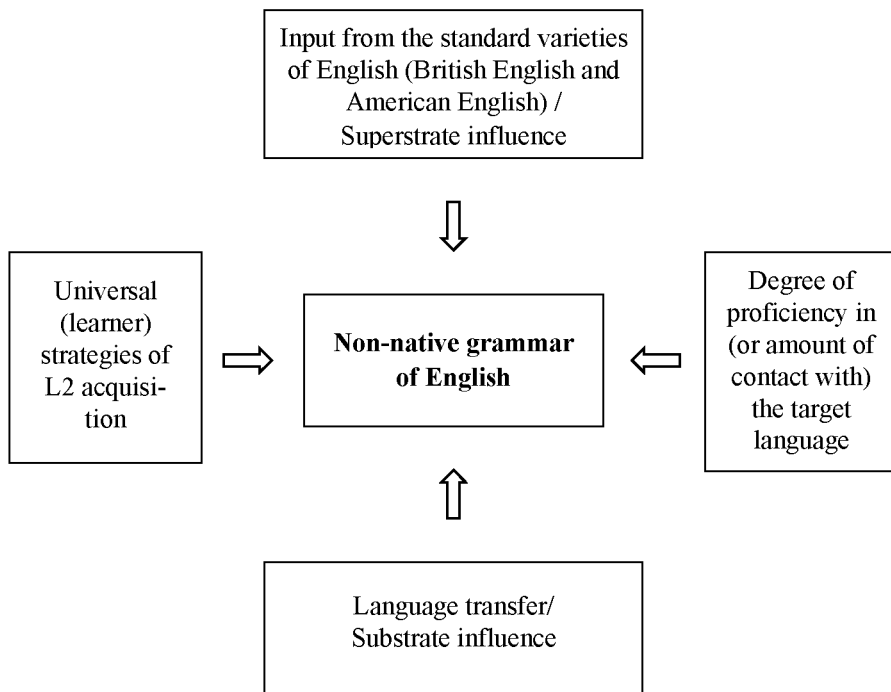
Figure 2.1. Factors shaping non-native forms of English

Other factors constraining non-native variation include the motivation of learners and the social function of the second language (cf. Winford 2009: 223). Being by and large compatible with the analyses of constraints on non-native-speaker variation provided in Klein and Perdue (1997) and Winford (2006, 2009), the account presented above establishes a general perspective on studying non-native varieties of English: variation attested in non-native varieties of a language is just as rule governed as variation attested in fully-fledged languages (for instance, native English). More importantly, this analysis allows us to grant foreign-speaker Englishes a variety status. To be more exact, all non-native Englishes (be it second-language or foreign-speaker varieties) are systematically shaped by similar factors such as speakers' mother tongue, speakers' proficiency, degree of input from the standard varieties of English and universal mechanisms of L2 acquisition. It follows that language forms constrained by identical parameters should in principle be comparable across the board. It is thus a highly interesting task (as well as a challenge) for the analyst to assess the exact role of each factor in the formation of non-native Englishes.