

# From awareness and wonder to strategies and materials: Integrating English as a global lingua franca in English language teacher education

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## Abstract

This practice-based account describes a task sequence that aims to enhance student teachers' awareness of the role of English as a global lingua franca and its implications for ELT today. Student teachers are encouraged to encounter English in their environment with a sense of wonder and apply this mindset to task design. The tasks included in this paper indicate that student teachers are taking the first steps towards connecting English as a global lingua franca with a more traditional ELT syllabus, as well as encouraging wonder in their learners as an impetus for autonomous learning beyond the classroom.

**Keywords:** English language teacher education; English as a global lingua franca; Teacher Language Awareness (TLA); Linguistic Landscape (LL); Extramural English (EE); Wonder pedagogy

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## Introduction

Over the last few decades, there have been enormous changes in the way English is used all over the world. It can now be regarded as the global lingua franca which many people use extensively in their everyday lives. In fact, lingua franca use is now the most common use of the English language:

It [English] is used as a second, or official, language in many countries and as an official, or de-facto, working language in many international organizations. English is the main language for scientific exchange and has become the main language of academia, international business, political exchange and international diplomacy. It dominates popular culture and international scholarship [...] (Galloway 2017, 2).

Consequently, both the needs of learners and the goals of English language teaching have changed (cf. Galloway & Rose 2018) as English can no longer be thought of as a 'foreign' language which learners study so that they can speak to native speakers of that language once they are proficient enough. However, "[t]ough research and publications have made noticeable headway in the direction of teaching English as an international language (EIL), teaching practices have largely lagged behind" (Rose et al. 2020, xii).

An understanding of English as the global lingua franca is not yet reflected in the teaching materials that are available to ELT professionals, much less in standardized language exams. Given this situation, it is not surprising that teachers have often simply continued to do what they have been doing despite all the changes in the way English is used today (cf. Matsuda 2012), but for a new generation of teachers, engaging with the current realities of how English is used will be inevitable as the spread of English is bound to accelerate further. Teachers need to pay attention to both the global role of English and the local context when teaching English today (cf. Patel et al. 2023), and it is an important goal of teacher education for ELT to equip student teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet this challenge.

The task sequence described in this paper was developed for student teachers in the ELT Master's programme at the University of Graz in Austria. It takes both the current role of English (globally as well as in Austria) and the specific characteristics of teacher education programmes in Austria into consideration. When they complete the task sequence, student teachers gradually transition from the learner to the teacher perspective regarding the role of English as a global lingua franca in contemporary ELT. In a three-step process, they engage with and make use of English in the linguistic landscape (LL) as well as extramural English (EE). In the following section, the relevance of these concepts for English language teacher education will be explained. A short overview of English language teacher education in the Austrian system will also be provided to contextualize the task sequence which will be described in the second part of this paper.

## English in the Linguistic Landscape (LL)

In our physical environment, various different languages are visible, for example on notices, billboards and posters. This “(potential) visibility [is] captured in the term ‘linguistic landscape’” (Roos & Nicholas 2019, 91). English is a prominent part of the LL in many countries, particularly in urban areas. For example, in Graz, the location of the university where the task sequence described in this paper was developed, the strong presence of English is particularly notable when compared to the near-invisibility of the languages of neighbouring countries. Graz is only about 50 km from the border of Slovenia, yet Slovenian is rarely visible in the LL. The same is true for Hungarian and Croatian, the other two minority languages in German-speaking Austria which are protected by the constitution of the Republic. By contrast, English, which has no official status in Austria, is very visible thanks to its global role (cf. Schrammel-Leber & Lorenz 2013).

When it comes to language teaching, engagement with English in the LL has been found to be beneficial for language learning (cf. da Silva 2023). LL English has been described as a rich source of “authentic, contextualized input” (Cenoz & Gorter 2008, 274) for language learning, offering “a comprehensive and nuanced approach grounded in real-world experiences and cultural understanding [...] while fostering [learners'] language awareness, multiliteracy, and critical thinking skills”

(Khan 2023, 1081). Moreover, engagement with English in the LL has the potential to shift the focus of ELT “from providing input to helping students learn from the input in the world around them” (Fürstenberg & Egger 2022, 136). It is therefore vital that student teachers should be given an opportunity to engage with LL English with a view to integrating it into their teaching later on.

## Extramural English (EE)

The term extramural English refers to the English which “the learner comes in contact with or is involved in [...] outside the walls of the English classroom” (Sundqvist & Sylvén 2016: 6). Research has found that this informal input by now far exceeds the input learners receive in their English lessons in school (cf. Smit & Schwarz 2020). In Austria, for example, a recent study shows that 15/16-year-old teenagers spend more than four hours per day engaging with English (e.g., gaming, posting on social media) on average (cf. Schwarz 2020). This means that English language teachers in secondary school (especially in upper secondary, ages 15–18) now often teach teenagers who are already confident users of English in their everyday lives, and they have to develop new teaching approaches and materials that fulfil the needs of today’s pupils (cf. Fürstenberg & Bicman 2023) if they want to ensure their students’ interest and motivation.

EE and its role in language learning are attracting considerable research interest at the moment. There is an emerging consensus among researchers that it is imperative to link language learning in the classroom to EE, but there are indications that this is not happening to a sufficient extent (cf. Schurz & Sundqvist 2022). However, incorporating EE is critical in a world where English is rapidly becoming a part of everyday life. Research from the Nordic countries indicates, for example, that “[s]tudents do not believe that they can learn more English in school than they do playing English-language video games or watching American television series” (Peterson & Beers Fägersten 2024, 68). If teachers want to avoid this situation, they have to meet learners where they are and engage with the English that is a part of their lives. Student teachers should therefore learn to see teachers as ‘facilitators’ of their learners’ engagement with EE rather than providers of input.

It should be acknowledged here that according to Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016, 6), “the learner might not even have a reason for coming in contact with or becoming involved in extramural English” and that the involvement is not directly initiated by teachers. However, this does not mean that teachers cannot encourage their learners to make use of the learning opportunities presented by the presence of English all around them and help them to take the first steps in the direction of autonomous learning from EE and the LL.

## English language teacher education in Austria

In the Austrian system, students who want to become secondary school teachers enroll in a combined degree. They study two subjects which they are going to teach once they graduate (e.g., mathematics, history or, in this case, English as a foreign language) as well as taking classes in pedagogy, didactics and methodology. In the case of English as a foreign language, this means that they are still learners of English (albeit very advanced ones as the exit level for the English BEd programme is CEFR C1) while they are already preparing to teach the language, for example, by completing teaching internships in local schools. This transitional phase from being a learner to being a teacher of English can be challenging, but it also offers opportunities as it allows student teachers to switch between the learner and the teacher perspectives more easily. The sequence of activities which will be described in the next part of this paper takes advantage of this dual role (as learners and teachers) of student teachers.

### Preparing student teachers for ELT in the age of English as a global lingua franca: A task sequence

The task sequence described in this part of the paper is part of the course Language Productive and Receptive Skills, Master's Level in the ELT Master's programme at the University of Graz. It aims to enhance student teachers' awareness of the roles and functions of English in contemporary society and support them in developing strategies of making use of English in their learners' environment for language teaching and learning. In addition to a detailed discussion of the three steps that make up the task sequence, samples of texts and tasks written by the student teachers will also be shared. These texts and tasks were all created by student teachers in the academic year 2023/24. All students were told about the possibility of some of their work being shared in anonymized form in conference presentations and publications and signed a form confirming their informed consent.

#### Step 1: Awareness

The first step of the task sequence aims to encourage student teachers to reflect in depth on the role of English in their own lives and in the world around them.

### English in the Linguistic Landscape

At the beginning of the task sequence, the student teachers leave the classroom for a 'treasure hunt' activity in which they document examples of English in the LL. They are given a list of guiding questions to help them select LL items which they then photograph and upload to Der Linguin (<https://derlinguin.uni-graz.at>), a tool developed at the University of Graz to document languages in the LL. This makes

it easy to share the most interesting examples of LL English in the classroom and analyse them, thus opening up a space for critical reflection.

First, the student teachers discuss their LL items based on the guiding questions they were given:

Where did your example of English in the Linguistic Landscape of Graz come from?

Is English combined with other languages? If yes, which languages?

Is the language used in a playful way? Is there humour?

Who is it for?

Why do you think English is used?

Then they are introduced to some theoretical concepts which they can use for further analysis, such as the following focal points and themes (adapted from Barrs 2020):

Focus	Themes
Heightened Awareness of English in the Linguistic Landscape	English in relation to German and other languages
The Form of English in the Linguistic Landscape	Why is English used (rather than a different language)? What is the intended effect?
The Intended Audience of English in the Linguistic Landscape	Locals, visitors, shoppers...
Linguistic Features of English in the Linguistic Landscape	Single words vs. text; loan words, German/English hybrids, false friends...

Another helpful concept for prompting reflection on the LL is the distinction between 'transgressive' LL items and 'official', mainly commercial elements. 'Transgressive' items are placed in the LL without authorisation (e.g., stickers, graffiti). According to research carried out in Vienna, they make up only 10% of the total of LL items (Soukop 2016). Moreover, "[o]ngoing analysis on the types of discourses featured on stickers evidences a clear trend towards commercialization of this medium (promotion of events, artists, services), to the point where even the transgressive LL is subjected to the mainstream logic of an economic marketplace" (Soukop 2016, 18).

These theoretical concepts encourage student teachers to engage with the examples of LL English they have connected and expand their awareness of the roles and functions of English in the physical environment. The most interesting LL items are then shared on the learning platform with the student teachers' commentary.

### Sample analysis of an LL item



Description: a beer mat, photographed at a pub near the university

Commercial or transgressive: it's not really either – it doesn't advertise a product (not commercial), but it is not transgressive either as it is used in a pub (i.e., not a case of lack of official permission)

Themes:

- a mix of English and German – the multilingual slogan is an eyecatcher (that's the intended effect of mixing the languages)
- there is playful language use in both languages: 'K.O. Tropfen' is how knockout drops are usually referred to in German, and the acronym is used in the word 'komm' (come) here; the rhyming slogan 'take care, be aware' is presumably borrowed from similar campaigns in English speaking countries – maybe there is no German slogan that is so succinct, so it's more practical to use the English one as there is not a lot of space
- the intended audience are young people who are out partying – it is obviously assumed that they can understand both languages well (although you would get the message even if you only spoke one of the languages); maybe English is also meant to make the message seem 'cooler'

### Extramural English

As mentioned before, English is not only visible in the physical environment, it also plays a growing role in people's free time activities. It is therefore necessary to draw student teachers' attention to the ways in which they use English in their own lives and link this to their own language learning experiences so that they can eventually include EE in their personal vision of teaching English. In the task sequence, a language diary activity is used for awareness raising.

In this activity, the student teachers keep track of their use of English for seven days. The instructions for the task (see appendix) make it clear that encounters with English at school (for example, during teaching internships) or university should not be included. The student teachers are told to write a short narrative account of all the activities they use English for every day, including a brief discussion of their thoughts and emotions.

Sample language diary entries:

“Interestingly, although I watch it [i.e., anime] in Japanese, which I have been learning for around a year, I always watch anime with English rather than German or any other subtitles. It is kind of funny how I receive input in two different languages simultaneously, and this fact has not come across to me prior to me starting this English Language Diary.”

“It also made me think about an experiment in which I would try to avoid English for a whole day and how difficult it would be to accomplish it, as not only do I listen to it all the time, but I need to use it in order to be able to communicate with my surroundings. It is fascinating how languages influence one’s life without one even realizing it.”

In class, the student teachers discuss their language diaries in groups and compare them. Based on their own experiences and reflections, they then read and discuss an academic discussion of the status of English in Austria in a book chapter. For example, in their conclusion, the researchers state that “[a]ll in all, it seems fair to say that, particularly for the younger generation, English has reached the de facto status of a second language” (Smit & Schwarz 2020, 310). The student teachers can now draw on their own experiences when they discuss whether they agree or disagree with this assessment.

Step 2: Wonder

In Step 1 of the task sequence, the student teachers are made aware of the role English plays in their everyday life, but they have not yet thought about using EE for language learning, either for themselves or their future students. This is addressed in Step 2 of the task sequence. In this step, the concept of ‘wonder’ is introduced as an impulse for autonomous learning.

In a pedagogical sense, “the state of wonder can be understood as an emotionally laden, rewarding mental state of pondering upon [one’s] discoveries with astonishment and excitement about embarking on further deeper enquiry into the phenomenon” (Bazhydai & Westermann 2020). This makes it useful for working with EE as English is so much a part of learners’ lives that they might just perceive it as background noise, rather than actively noticing it and engaging with it. It is helpful to think, then, that “[e]verything can become a source of wonder” (Hadzigeorgiou 2020, 191) – “even [...] the ordinary everyday phenomena that are rarely contemplated” (Gilbert 2020, 214). Wonder pedagogy is quite popular in science teaching, but the applications in language teaching to date are few and far between (for one example, see Plutino 2021).

Therefore, in addition to their language diaries, student teachers are also told to keep a log of any new or interesting words and expressions they encounter (‘new’ words are words they have never encountered before; ‘interesting’ words are words they know, but that spark their curiosity, e.g., if they find themselves won-

dering about their pronunciation or etymology). They are instructed to note down the questions they asked themselves when they encountered the word, plus what they found out about the word (see appendix for task instructions). In class, the student teachers share their favourite 'wonder words' with the group and decide which ones are most interesting.

### Sample Wonder Words

terraforming: Is this a real thing or just something I have heard in a lot of Sci-Fi stuff?

It is apparently a real thing, the word itself comes from the Latin for earth and the English word 'forming'. It refers to making other planets inhabitable like earth - so that the planet can sustain for human life.

I wonder where the word shampoo comes from?

What I found out: The English word 'shampoo' has its roots in the Hindi term shampoo (sometimes champi/champy or champna), which means 'kneading' or 'massaging'. People have always washed their hair and bodies, but washing accompanied by a therapeutic massage of the scalp and the body was imported into Europe, largely through Britain, from India. The word 'shampoo' did not take its modern meaning, limited to hair-washing, until the late 1800s. Before the 1860s, shampooing referred to therapeutic massaging – of not only the head but of the entire body – before bathing.

mangy: What does this word mean? Is this word related to "Manga"?

No! - meaning: (of an animal) suffering from mange; (informal) dirty and in bad condition

Is there an English equivalent for the German word "Geisterfahrer"?

Yes, in AE they are actually called ghost drivers. Sounds weird though.

To round off this step of the task sequence, the student teachers are then told to produce 'word portraits' of their favourite 'wonder words' and share them on the learning platform.

### Sample word portrait:

"Yob" - "Yob" is another term that I was not able to place. I found the solution to this conundrum all the funnier when I realised that it was a backwards slang word which, when read from the back, resulted in the now rather simple word 'boy'. This term was according to Merriam- Webster first used in 1908 and there is another version which is 'yobbo'. It is British informal slang and derogative. The Collins Dictionary names "thug" as a synonym.

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### Step 3: Strategies and materials

Having reflected on the role of English in the world and their own experiences with it, the student teachers are now ready to explore the teaching value of EE content. The final step of the task sequence thus allows the student teachers to apply the theoretical insights and reflections on their personal experiences from Steps 1 and 2 to task design. In step 3, they design tasks which facilitate pupils' learning from EE and the LL, using 'wonder' as a strategy to nudge learners in the direction of autonomous learning. The teacher takes on the role of a facilitator in these tasks and helps learners make the most of the input they receive from their environment.

Finally, the student teachers work in groups and create posters that showcase their tasks. These posters are then presented conference-style in a poster session and revised based on feedback from peers and the instructor. The final versions of the posters are shared on the learning platform so that the whole group has access to all the materials.

### Sample LL task

Task	Exploring English in Your Town
Level	A1
Language focus	Writing, recognizing English words
Language goals	Giving directions, English vocabulary in students' daily lives

Materials needed: Smartphone or camera for taking pictures; notebook and pen for taking notes; map of the local area

#### Procedure

#### Preparation

Students look for English words in their town / village and take pictures of them.

#### Instructions:

- 1 Walk around your town / village and look for English words. English words could be on signs, posters, shop names, menus, and billboards.
- 2 Take pictures of English words and phrases. Make sure that the words in the photos are legible! You need to have at least three pictures.
- 3 Look up the words you do not know.

#### In class

##### 1 Talk with a partner:

- What words did you find? What do they mean?
- Was it hard to find English words in the town?

2 Draw a map and write the words down where you found them. Example:

## Linguistic Landscape



4 Give your partner directions to one of your words (5-10 sentences). Use the vocabulary you have already learned for giving directions.

### Sample EE task

**Task** Language Learning with CSI

**Level** B2+

**Language focus** Noticing interesting language items in a TV show

**Language goals** Expanding learners' vocabulary

**Materials needed:** Access to CSI Season 10, episode 1, ideally with subtitles

### Procedure

1 Learners independently watch the TV show and answer as many of the questions on the worksheet as possible. The teacher can set a time limit, e.g. tell learners not to spend more than 30 minutes on the task, so that they do not feel overwhelmed. It is not the goal of the task to answer every question.

LANGUAGE LEARNING WITH



CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

Season 10, Episode 1

**JARGON/ JOB-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY**

- Write down words that fall into the categories "crime" and "medicine".
- Look up the words (meaning, collocation, German translation)

**FILLER WORDS**

Which filler words did you find? Make a list. Why are they used?

**IF-CLAUSES**

Write down two examples. Can you identify the underlying grammar rule?

Why are they used regularly in this genre (crime series)?

**ABBREVIATIONS**

Which abbreviations were used? Make a list and find out what they stand for. Why are they used?

**IDIOMS**

- Listen for idioms and make a list.
- Guess what they could mean!
- Find their origin by doing a Google search.

**INFORMAL LANGUAGE**

- Listen for words that are used in informal settings.
- Make a list, find out what they mean and their German translation.

2 In class, learners compare notes and discuss their answers. The teacher acts as a moderator and facilitator. A key for the worksheet with some sample answers can be provided if needed.

3 The learners put together their own questions which they can answer when they watch their favourite TV show.

## Conclusion

The task sequence described in this paper is based on the assumption that student teachers are more likely to incorporate approaches into their teaching which they have experienced themselves from the learners' perspective. In this vein, Gilbert (2020, 224) reports on a student teacher who experienced wonder pedagogy in his teacher education: "[H]is own joyful experiences with wonder served as the

catalyst for him to envision wonder-infused approaches as a viable means to build interest in content for the children in his classroom". The tasks designed by the student teachers which are presented in this paper seem to indicate that the task sequence might have led to a similar dynamic.

Both tasks (and many other tasks created in the course which cannot be shared here) show an increased awareness of the strong presence English in the learners' environment and lives. The LL task requires learners to find English words in their town or village, and the EE task encourages learners to use a hobby (watching TV shows in English) for language learning. Both tasks also show how student teachers try to use wonder as a strategy to encourage language learning. For example, the LL task encourages learners to look up words they don't know, and the EE task asks them to speculate about the uses of a specific grammar structure. Interestingly, both of these examples also show that when the student teachers design tasks, they have a 'classic' ELT syllabus in mind which is built around functions (e.g., asking for the way) and/or grammar points (e.g., conditionals). However, their tasks manage to link these staples of ELT to their learners' actual use of the English language and thus encourage language learning beyond the classroom.

Given the presence of English all around us, this should be an obvious direction to take in ELT, but a connection between the classroom and learners' language use in their free time is often lacking. The 'wonder' mindset and the EE and LL tasks that result from it when it is applied to task design take advantage of the omnipresence of English in learners' lives, but they can also easily be combined with more traditional approaches to ELT. Tasks that encourage 'wonder' as an impulse for autonomous language learning therefore seem like a promising idea to pursue in English language teacher education to give student teachers a starting point for integrating English as a global lingua franca in their teaching.

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## Appendix

### English language diary instructions

We all use English a lot in our daily lives. We watch films, game online, chat to friends, read blogs, write fanfiction in English and so on. As part of your MALPRS coursework, you are going to keep track of your use of English for seven days (they do not have to be seven consecutive days, but they should include a weekend or at least a day or two without classes). For each day, you will write an account of all the activities you used English for, including a brief discussion of your thoughts and emotions. (You might want to set an alarm for the middle of the day to remind yourself to pay attention to English in your life, jot down things you notice, take photographs...). You should write in an informal, narrative style (no bullet points), and no entry should be longer than 250-300 words.

### 'Wonder Words' instructions

In addition to your English language diary, you will also keep track of any words, phrases, idiomatic expressions, grammatical features, rhetorical devices etc. that make you wonder. For each entry on your list, add the reason why you wonder about that particular piece of language ('wonder questions'). For two of your wonder questions, find out the answers and add them to the list.