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English, panacea or pandemic?

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The paper explores the key elements in the conference topic – universities, global, English, medium – in relation to current language policy trends and scenarios. It explores these central concepts by situating universities and globalisation historically, and assessing whether the continued use of English in postcolonial contexts and its current expansion in Europe is purely positive – the lure of the panacea – or life-threatening for other languages and cultures, a pandemic symptom. It argues for the maintenance of multilingualism, with English in balance with other languages. It begins with a set of statements that serve to clarify factors that ought to determine university language policy.

I am afraid our universities are the blotting-sheets of the West. We have borrowed the superficial features of the Western universities, and flattered ourselves that we have founded living universities here. Do they reflect or respond to the needs of the masses?
Gandhi, 1942, in Gandhi 2008, 463

Different cultures are thus interpreted in ways that reinforce the political conviction that Western civilization is somehow the main, perhaps the only, source of rationalistic and liberal ideas – among them analytical scrutiny, open debate, political tolerance and agreement to differ.... science and evidence, liberty and tolerance, and of course rights and justice. [...] Once we recognize that many ideas that are taken to be quintessentially Western have also flourished in other civilizations, we also see that these ideas are not as culture-specific as is sometimes claimed.
Amartya Sen, 2005, 285, 287

... the written English prose medium which, in some ‘standard’ form, is the staple of the global medium is hardly a neutral or innocent instrument. It defines a discourse whose conventions of grammar and use are heavily vested ideologically, affirming and legitimising particular ways of seeing the world, particular forms of knowledge and particular relations of power, all of which work decidedly against the best interests of the disadvantaged countries.
Thiru Kandiah, 2001

... the right to education, teaching and research can only be fully enjoyed in an atmosphere of academic freedom and autonomy for institutions of higher education ...

Recognizing the diversity of cultures in the world ...

Teaching in higher education is a profession: it is a form of public service ...

UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, 11 November 1997

... University Language Policy is based on the following strategic precepts:

Languages are a resource within the academic community

The University's bilingual and multilingual environment and internationalisation are sources of enrichment for all and are a necessity for the international comparability of its research performance.

Language skills are a means to understanding foreign cultures and for making Finnish culture known to others. The university promotes the language proficiency of its students and staff as well as supports their knowledge of different cultures. Multilingual and multicultural communities promote creative thinking.

University of Helsinki, Finland, Language policy, 14 March 2007¹

To provide a comprehensive education, developing fully the intellectual and personal strengths of its students while developing and extending lifelong learning opportunities for the community...

Take full advantage of the University's unique position as China's English-medium University.

Deliver courses and degree programmes in the English language, that are of the highest quality and in a comprehensive range of disciplines; where course content is up-to-date, relevant to community needs, and informed by current research; where teaching methods are appropriately student-centred; and develop skills and competencies that will enhance the graduates' contributions to society.

Strategic Development Plan 2003-2008, University of Hong Kong²

These glimpses of the complexity of higher education suggest that

- 1) universities should serve the entire society (Gandhi, Hong Kong)
- 2) the West should not be allowed to get away with claiming a monopoly of humane values, ideas, and 'civilisation' (Sen);
- 3) the use of English reflects and constitutes particular interests (Kandiah);
- 4) universities should function as a public good (UNESCO);
- 5) academic freedom and university autonomy are paramount (UNESCO);
- 6) universities should actively promote multilingualism (Finland);
- 7) English-medium education is a strategic asset (Hong Kong), but English needs to be seen in relation to multilingual competence (Finland) and cultural diversity (UNESCO) and is inherently problematical (Kandiah).

What the texts have in common is that they are available in English. This is as a result of the colonisation of much of the world by the British, of 20th century international organizations like UNESCO functioning in a limited set of politically influential languages, and of European universities increasingly functioning in English as well as national languages. The expansion of English worldwide has thus given it a special status in widely divergent contexts, to which many factors have contributed. It is therefore important for universities to know how this has come about, whose interests English serves, and what the implications are for other languages. We need to reflect on language policy past, present, and future.

The glimpses are not merely selected extracts from longer texts. They are also selective in that the *Finnish* university policy document is in three languages, with identical content also in Finnish and Swedish. The *Hong Kong* text is also in Chinese, though the Strategic Development Plan and Mission Statement make no mention of biliteracy, multilingualism, or any university language policy. The *UNESCO* document exists in the five other UN official languages. *Amartya Sen*, who has been Master of Trinity College, Cambridge and is currently at Harvard, is passionately committed to his mother tongue, Bengali, is a winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, and is deeply knowledgeable about the cultural links over three millennia between the Indian, Chinese and Arab scholarly worlds. *Gandhi* attempted to limit the way English was used and idolised by elites in India in the hope that greater use of Hindustani and other Indian languages would lead to a more democratic society, one not so polarised along lines of language, religion and caste. Gandhi succeeded in the political struggle for independence but failed to prevent partition or the consolidation of an English-speaking elite class and English-medium universities in independent India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The concept ‘university’ derives from the Latin *universitas*, referring to the whole, the entirety, the universe. Universities should be global in the sense that knowledge is sought after without constraint, taking the scholar into uncharted territory unimpeded by the dictates of the powerful, whether secular or religious. Students and their tutors need to create knowledge, and to know how and why it is created. There is a major challenge in maintaining universities of this sort when the institutions are increasingly regarded as businesses, and knowledge is treated as a commodity.

Is there a choice then between the panacea of English supposedly guaranteeing economic success, and the pandemic we are experiencing of corporate and military globalisation, environmental degradation, energy and food crises, and an intensifying gap between global Haves and Never-to-haves, mediated and constituted by the key international language, English? Is Gordon Brown’s plan to make British English the global language of ‘choice’ (announced on the occasion of his first visit as Prime Minister to China and India in February 2008) part of the problem or part of the solution to global language policy challenges? Is choice a reality, and if so, is it a ‘free’ choice, living as we do in a world in which English is the primary language of the discourse of ‘free’ trade, the unfree neoliberal market, and the new imperialism (Harvey 2005)? Do universities still enjoy *academic freedom* in the global higher education market³, with many constraints that conflict with the principles propounded in UNESCO’s *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*⁴? I work at a university in a country that projects itself as progressive and liberal, but the trade union for Danish academics sent a formal complaint to UNESCO on 22 May 2008, accusing the Danish government of failing to live up to the Recommendations, in particular by restrictions on freedom of research, on institutional autonomy, and on collegiate governance⁵. We could also ask whether academic freedom is also being

constrained by the expectation that virtually all Danish academics can function equally well in English and Danish, which is unreasonable.

‘Free’ universities in The Netherlands and Belgium are so designated because the particular institution is free of religious ties, affiliated neither with Roman Catholicism nor Protestantism, unlike many universities. How free is an ‘American’ university in the Arab world or a ‘Christian’ university in Japan? The Margaret Thatcher Center For Freedom, based at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC, is explicit about the way it understands freedom: its goal is to ensure that the US and UK can ‘lead and change the world’⁶? The ‘free’ of the Freie Universität Berlin means free of communism, so named because the university was established, with US funding, in the non-Soviet Union sector of Berlin⁷. Ironically the unfree university in communist east Berlin, the Humboldt University⁸, is named after the polymath scholar of the early 19th century whose higher education principles underpin the modern university ideal: university teaching should be delivered by active researchers, and academic freedom and the search for knowledge and truth should not be constrained by any orthodoxy. In the People’s Republic of China an ‘unwritten rule for academics is that there is no taboo for research but there are regulations governing what can be published and what cannot be published’ (Zhou and Ross 2004, 10), i.e. the search for truth is encouraged but not its dissemination.

The magnificent chapels of Cambridge colleges, like the names of many of them (Christ’s, Trinity) signify the close bond between the Church of England and scholarship in earlier centuries, others laud the state (King’s, Queens’) or mammon (Churchill, Wolfson) and occasionally science (Darwin). Christianity has been integral to the spread of Euro-American values and languages worldwide, and is at the heart of the Myth of America, the sense that the USA sees itself as having a Christian God-given right to spread its values worldwide by military and economic force, a warfare society, initially national, now global (Hixson 2008). Economic gospels underpin higher education activities in our more secular times, making it unlikely that universities are committed to the needs of the masses (Gandhi), to cultural diversity (Sen, Hong Kong), or to multilingualism (the University of Helsinki). What then of the ‘English-medium university’ – is it purely utilitarian, a practical necessity, a productive panacea? Or is English so imbued with the values and senses of an unjust world order that it needs to be controlled vigorously by well qualified people like any other infectious disease or pandemic⁹?

English-medium studies are a going concern in two senses: they are expanding in student numbers, and they are increasingly seen and run as businesses. Higher education is financially rewarding for the economies of the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. English-medium education is also a reality elsewhere:

1. of mature vintage in some *former ‘colonies’* (South Africa, the Indian sub-continent, the Philippines)
2. younger in *other postcolonial contexts* (Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Pacific)
3. well established for some *elites* (Turkey, Egypt)
4. recent in parts of the *Arab world* (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates)
5. even more recent in *continental Europe*.

This conference also has participants from the Chinese mainland, Lebanon, Spain, and Vietnam. But there are no papers on universities in former British colonies in west and east Africa, Latin America, many Arab countries, ex-Soviet Union countries, Korea, or Japan. A ‘global concern’

does not therefore mean that English-medium education is a present-day reality worldwide, even if academics everywhere may be concerned about scholarly publication in English and the acquisition of academic competence in English.

Category 5 is borderline, because there are no monolingual English-medium universities as such, whereas degree programmes are increasingly offered in English: in The Netherlands 774 in 2007, in Germany 415, Finland 235, Sweden 123, figures that are high but small as compared with degrees in national languages (Wächter and Maiworm 2008). Questions are being asked in Scandinavia about whether the move into English for ‘internationalisation’ purposes is wise if it means that vets or psychologists are being educated entirely in English rather than the local language.

I assume that in categories 1-4, many or most universities are monolingual. The designation ‘English-medium’ excludes other languages – maybe from the lecture room and course materials, but hardly from the heads of the students or of local teaching and administrative staff, who are bi- or multilingual. Is the ‘English-medium’ label in reality a coded way of indicating that the medium is a foreign or second language for the students and some staff? One would not describe a British university as English-medium, but how about higher education in Singapore, where English is the sole medium of instruction throughout education in the country, unlike earlier, when there was also a Chinese-medium university? Is there now an assumption that English is the default medium of higher education, hegemonically projected as being ‘normal’? Does the label only need to be used when the use of English is abnormal?

A recent survey of languages in Singapore concludes that after ‘more than 40 years of independence, English is now firmly established as (i) the premier co-official language; (ii) the universally accepted working language; (iii) the only medium of instruction (language of education) at primary, secondary and tertiary levels; (iv) the lingua franca for inter-community as well as intra-community relations; (v) as the international lingua franca for global outreach; and (vi) increasingly the language of identity for a nation that has quickly shifted to English’ (Pakir 2008, 194). ‘There is still ambivalence towards English, which ... is still seen as in some senses “foreign”. At official and unofficial levels, for example, it is not accepted that a large proportion of Singaporeans are native speakers of English: when the government discusses the use of “native speakers of English” in education, they mean people from countries such as the UK, USA and Australia’ (Gupta 2008, 109). We are clearly dealing here with perceptions of different Englishes and linguistic identities, and of the ‘ownership’ of English, some linguistic capital having wider currency than others¹⁰. Should Singapore now be seen as an ‘English—dominant country’¹¹ like the USA or Australia (Herriman and Burnaby 1996, 1), countries with a colonising heritage that ‘involved conquest of indigenous populations and denial, suppression or neglect of languages spoken by them in favour of English’ (1996, 1)? The re-linguification of Singaporeans has involved a comparable process of nation-building, entailing subtractive language learning and language shift¹².

Labelling the UK or the USA as ‘English-speaking countries’ denies the diversity and multilingualism of their citizens, a discourse of historical amnesia. British colonisation of Hong Kong entailed comparable deprivation of the residents’ culture and history (Tsui 2007). A First Nations scholar in Canada, Andrea Bear Nicholas (2007), describes this as *historicide*, which in their case was combined with *linguicide*.

The question of appropriation of English for national, regional, or international purposes is explored insightfully in the contributions to Lin and Martin’s *Decolonisation, globalisation: Language-in-*

education policy and practice (2005, reviewed in Phillipson 2007b) and in Tsui and Tollefson's *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts* (2007), with exemplification from many contexts and a systematic attempt to explore whose interests English is currently serving. Neither deals specifically with university language policy, which makes our conference timely and important. The integration of the linguistic dimension with cultural and economic globalisation is revealingly explored in Rassool's *Global issues in language, education and development* (2007). The case study of Pakistan, written jointly with Sabiha Mansoor (ibid., 218-241), shows that the use of English as the sole medium of higher education (for only 2.63% of the population) ensures the cultural alienation of the elite from the rest of the population. 'The global cultural economy is interdependent and, despite the dominant position occupied by English, in practice, it has an organically interactive multilingual base. A narrow monolingual nationalism (a reference to Urdu, RP), an under-resourced educational system as well as unequal access to English as international lingua franca, therefore, is counter-productive to national growth.' (ibid., 240). This confirms Tariq Rahman's analyses (1998).

The prevailing use of English in high-prestige domains such as scholarship has major implications, for democracy, a well-informed public sphere and population, and social cohesion, if local, more accessible languages are not *also* used. It is important not to think of democracy in purely western terms, as though patented in ancient Greece, and invariably the norm in western countries, which is simply untrue. Contact between China, India and Arabia flourished for two millennia, with translations between Chinese, Arabic and Sanskrit in many scholarly fields. The pre-eminence of Western science, in our unstable, inequitable, militarised world, is recent, and legitimated as though 'knowledge societies' are a late capitalist invention:

science, mathematics, literature, linguistics, architecture, medicine and music. [...] In so far as public reasoning is central to democracy ..., parts of the global roots of democracy can indeed be traced back to the tradition of public discussion that received much encouragement in both India and China (and also in Japan, Korea and elsewhere), from the dialogic commitment to Buddhist organization... The first printed book in the world with a date (corresponding to 868 CE), which was the Chinese translation of a Sanskrit treatise, the so-called 'Diamond Sutra' (Kumārajīva had translated it in 402 CE), carried the remarkable motivational explanation: 'for universal free distribution'. (Sen 2005, 164, 182-3).

Dispensing monolingual education can be considered as in conflict with linguistic human rights principles. UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education is on record, at a conference on the bilingual university, as stating that access to higher education in one's own language is, or can be considered, a basic human right¹³. This is a complicated area of international human rights law, sociolinguistics and language policy (to which a conference in Hong Kong in 1996 contributed, see *Language Sciences* 20/1, 1998), that I do not have the time to go into here¹⁴.

We can provisionally conclude that universities must be able to operate with full academic freedom and university autonomy (UNESCO), which includes historical grounding (Sen), university language policies should address the issue of how to actively promote multilingualism (Finland) and cultural diversity (UNESCO), and to address the tension between English-medium education as a strategic asset (Hong Kong) and what is inherently problematical about it for diverse societies (Kandiah). We need to reverse the historicide of colonial education (Tsui), in which the medium English played a decisive role.

Global capital, global English, local trauma

Well-funded US universities benefit by the fact that capitalism has reached its most extreme form in the US¹⁵. Along with a few universities elsewhere they are able to cream off top scholars from the entire world and give them exceptionally good working conditions. Their global impact is through the local language, English, which has consolidated more linguistic capital than any other language over the past two centuries. Capitalism was entrenched in the industrial revolution, colonial empires and global Europeanisation. The system

has set up that single unconscionable freedom – Free Trade. In a word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. [...] The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole face of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. [...] In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, a universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. [...] It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image. (reprinted in Mendel 1961, 15, 16, 17).

This was presciently described in *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels in 1848. It is thus historically incorrect to see globalisation as a recent phenomenon, even if some of its late 20th century forms were novel and its impact has been much greater. The bourgeoisie is no longer a privileged class in Europe and the USA but is more broadly and internationally based, the Haves with property, and an interest in the stock market. Financial globalisation has changed the rules of the game over the past 30 years, with the sinister consequences of casino capitalism now visible. Cultural and linguistic globalisation are aspects of what Marx already diagnosed as ‘intercourse in every direction, a universal interdependence of nations’. Central to the global market is ‘intellectual production’, though current global educational trends have more to do with producing consumers rather than critical citizens. Corporate influence on universities goes back to the USA in the 19th century. 80 years ago Bertrand Russell (1960, 166-8) expressed concern about the academic being limited by utilitarian constraints and an excessive influence on universities by business.

My ‘concern’ about universities as ‘concerns’ in the contemporary capitalist world is explored in an appendix in which I analyse the polysemy of the lexical item *concern*, so as to demonstrate that English is an intrinsically difficult language to learn and use unambiguously. The advocacy of English, the types of argument that are adduced, and how these relate to the power of English (innate, resource and structural power) is analysed in chapter 9 of Phillipson 1992. The primary focus of the analysis in the present article is not on the linguistic forms of English that make for its intrinsic complexity but on the political, economic and ideological dimensions of English, the functions that users of English perform. The appendix exemplifies the point that English is no panacea, but obviously the language cannot be ignored.

We need to clarify what the English in English-medium refers to, and how far it is global. Halliday (2006) makes a useful distinction between indigenized and standardised Englishes, which he categorizes as *international* and *global*:

English has become a world language in both senses of the term, international and global: international, as a medium of literary and other forms of cultural life in (mainly) countries of the former British Empire; global, as the co-genitor of the new technological age, the age of information. [...] It is important, I think, to distinguish these two aspects, the international and the global, even though they obviously overlap. English has been expanding along both trajectories: globally, as English; internationally, as Englishes.

Both of these expansions involve what I have called semogenic strategies: ways of creating new meanings that are open-ended, like the various forms of metaphor, lexical and grammatical. But they differ. International English has expanded by becoming world Englishes, evolving so as to adapt to the meanings of other cultures. Global English has expanded – has become ‘global’ – by taking over, or being taken over by, the new information technology, which means everything from email and the internet to mass media advertising, news reporting, and all the other forms of political and commercial propaganda.

His ‘international’ is an unfortunate label, since he is in effect referring to *local* forms and uses of English, comprehensible within a country, for instance. His terms also elide the anchoring of *global* English in the English-dominant countries, where it is the primary *national* language, one that also opens international doors. Terminology in this area is a minefield which obscures power relations and hegemonic practices, nationally and internationally. For instance, the University of London optimistically advertises itself as ‘the world’s first global university’ on the strength of administering examinations outside Britain for 150 years¹⁶.

Universities develop academic skills in the global, standard form, so far as *written* English is concerned, in order to generate graduates with international competence. This competence also represents linguistic capital nationally. In *spoken* academic English too, learning must be based on the lexis, grammar and much of the pragmatics of the global form, except for allowing considerable leeway so far as pronunciation or accent is concerned. This is precisely what David Li (2007) recommends. I agree with Anna Wierzbicka that too many ‘Publications on “global English”, “international English”, “world English”, “standard English” and “English as a lingua franca” ... neglect the Anglo cultural heritage ... the semantics embedded in the words and grammar.[...] In the present-day world it is Anglo English that remains the touchstone and guarantor of English-based global communication’ (2006, 13, 14)¹⁷. Conformity to Anglo English norms also creates pressure to conform to the paradigms of academic activity in the Anglo world, which has serious consequences for alternative approaches embedded in academic cultures elsewhere. A focus on global English forms and functions does not obviate the need for culturally appropriate pedagogy.

British analysts tend to endorse the increasing shift into English uncritically, even if they also celebrate its diversity and applaud multilingualism. I am not convinced by David Graddol’s argument (1997, 2006) that the large number of second- and foreign-language users of English has reduced the influence of US-UK norms and speakers. Likewise when David Crystal surveys education worldwide (2004, 37) he states that ‘English has become the normal medium of instruction in higher education for many countries – including several where the language has no

official status. Advanced courses in The Netherlands, for example, are widely taught in English. No African country uses its indigenous language in higher education, English being used in the majority of cases. The English language teaching business has become one of the major growth industries around the world in the past 30 years'. In fact it is only the final sentence of this triumphalist discourse that is correct¹⁸. There is nothing 'normal' about the way English has become established – it is a survival strategy dictated by economic and political pressures, which dovetail with linguistic imperialism. There are causal factors and particular interests behind the expansion of English in the neoimperial world. The Africa generalisation is patently false, granted the widespread use of Arabic, and some functions for Swahili and South African languages. The deplorable neglect of African languages is a direct result of colonisation, neo-colonial 'aid' policies, and World Bank schemes imposed on African countries, with the complicity of corrupt leaders, English serving to isolate elites from the mass of population.

South African experience (Webb 2007) is portrayed in an excellent survey of factors contributing to the dominance of English and the marginalisation of other languages, as well as of criteria for promoting multilingual universities that would serve the community and students better. Interview data reveal how the imposition of an English-only university zone in South Africa is experienced by multilinguals, and the clash of their identity with insensitive hegemonic teaching practices grounded in inappropriate native-speaker norms (Katunich 2006). The university's pedagogy clearly fails to promote the multilingualism that the state is officially committed to. It just so happens that the university's policies conform to World Bank loan policies that strengthen European languages and fail to allocate funding to African languages in education (Mazrui 1997). In this way, postcolonial education is functional for those that globalisation benefits.

One of the instruments for implementing change is evaluation. A comparison of such procedures in higher education in two countries, the UK and Finland (Vartiainen 2004, reviewed in Phillipson 2007a), which stresses the significance of the legitimacy of such exercises for academics, diagnoses that British procedures are punitive (ranking that hierarchises and rewards accordingly), whereas Finnish ones actually encourage bottom-up quality control, evaluation serving to strengthen an institution's mission, management and follow-up. A key conclusion from the study is that university autonomy is a virtue that is in effect the norm in Finland (a country with an exceptionally successful economy and school system), whereas in England it is the privilege of elite universities¹⁹. The 'international quality' that all universities are supposed to strive for is not a gold standard but one that can be reached by many routes, and that coercive policies counteract.

Thiru Kandiah of Sri Lanka sees countries in the postcolonial world as trapped in a major contradiction – one which raises ethical issues for English-dominant countries. On the one hand, postcolonial countries need the 'indispensable global medium' for pragmatic purposes, even for survival in the global economy: a *panacea* for the privileged. On the other there is the fact that the medium is not culturally or ideologically neutral, far from it, so that its users run the 'apparently unavoidable risk of co-option, of acquiescing in the negation of their own understandings of reality and in the accompanying denial or even subversion of their own interests' (Kandiah 2001, 112): *pandemic*. What is therefore needed in relation to English is 'interrogating its formulations of reality, intervening in its modes of understanding, holding off its normalising tendencies, challenging its hegemonic designs and divesting it of the co-optive power which would render it a reproducing discourse' (ibid.). Kandiah advocates authentic local projections of reality, and emancipatory action.

Angel Lin (2005) makes the methodological point that a ‘Periphery’ scholar should not merely take over ‘Centre’ epistemologies, and argues that our research approaches risk being self-referential - purely ‘academic’ - and lack self-reflection. Lin echoes the denunciation of unreflective positivism and academic exhibitionism a century ago by one of the key founders of social science research, Max Weber (see Kim 2007, 130-131). Lin eloquently shows how critical discourse analysis unmasks the legitimation of an inequitable social structure. Proficiency in English remains an elusive goal for the many, but the education system is functional for the local elite, for China, and for global commerce. Here as in Pakistan and South Africa, the gap between scholarship and societal change remains wide. She endorses a challenge from Allan Luke: ‘TESOL must do something other than what it currently does. Otherwise, it will remain a technology for domesticating the ‘other’, whatever its scientific and humanitarian pretences’ (ibid., 52, see also Edge 2006). Consulting the website of a successful and possibly representative British university with campuses in Malaysia and China gives the clear impression that what is being exported is not only the British English medium but also British content²⁰.

An empirical study of ‘Conceptions of a good tertiary EFL teacher in China’ (Zhang and Watkins 2007) invited students and teaching staff, local and foreign, to state what they saw as important traits of the good teacher. A considerable number of features of personality, professional knowledge and communicative skills are identified, but there is surprisingly little focus on an expectation that foreign teachers should display familiarity with Chinese language and culture²¹.

The pedagogical challenges are challenging, and differ at each level of the education system. The need to critically evaluate how English is used and learned, and to decolonise our minds, is a task for people from both the centre and the periphery. For instance, the slippery term ‘English as a *lingua franca*’ is open to abuse, since its everyday use is so multifarious, and research into it tends to decontextualise users. It seems to imply symmetrical, equitable communication, which is often not the case, and fails to make a clear distinction between receptive and productive competence. It conceals the actual functions that the language performs, English as a *lingua academica*, *lingua bellica*, *lingua cultura*, *lingua economica*, etc. (Phillipson 2008b).

As researchers we need to ensure that the ethical principles and value judgements that underpin our activities are made clear, as a necessary foundation for valid, objective and enlightened analysis. Each of us should aim at being an ‘interpretative specialist’, whose ‘virtues consist of passionate conviction, uncompromising intellectual integrity, and, most important of all, a Socratic knowledge of one’s own self’ - to cite the scholarly principles espoused by Max Weber (see Kim 2007, 130-131).

I would like to think that in our role as academics we can live up to Edward Said’s goal of ‘opposing and alleviating coercive domination, transforming the present by trying rationally and analytically to lift some of its burdens ... secular intellectuals with the archival, expressive, elaborative, and moral responsibilities of that role’ (Said 1993, 386). Said was dismayed by experiencing at a national university in one of the Persian Gulf states in the 1980s that the English Department taught orthodox British literature and practical language skills in an ‘anachronistic and odd confluence of rote learning, uncritical teaching, and (to put it kindly) haphazard results’ (ibid., 369). Students were learning the worldwide *lingua franca*, which ‘terminally consigned English to the level of a technical language stripped of its expressive and aesthetic characteristics and denuded of any critical or self-conscious dimension’ (ibid.). I fear that this sort of English teaching may still be with us, and that proficiency testing (TOEFL, Cambridge) does much to keep it that way.

If English learning is combined with a neglect of local languages, with these not being regarded as of equivalent significance, the likely result is cultural rootlessness, blind acceptance of the dominant world disorder, and an uncritical endorsement of more English, irrespective of the consequences for other languages. ‘*Global English*’ does not refer to the totality of the globe’s population. In popular and neoimperialist discourse, global English is a trope, a project, a representation that creates the impression that the language is universally relevant and that the whole of humanity should become proficient in the language. If *English-medium universities* are part of this ‘*global*’ project, they are unlikely to generate critical students with intercultural, multilingual competence. They are more likely merely to oil the wheels of the current inequitable economic system, contributing to social injustice and pandemic. I would claim that exclusively English-medium instruction, for instance a monolingual BA degree, in a former colony or in continental Europe, risks inculcating monolingual myopia and complicity in linguistic neoimperialism (Phillipson 2006b, 2008a)²².

The current expansion of English in higher education in Europe

European countries that consolidated ‘national’ languages as languages of instruction at all levels of education are currently under pressure to accord more space to English. There are a great many factors, structural and ideological, push and pull factors, influencing ongoing processes of Europeanization and Englishization (Phillipson 2003, chapter 3). The trend has created a good deal of alarm, even in countries where one would think that the main national language is impregnable. What does the expansion of English signify for the future of other languages of scholarship? How should the educational system create proficient users of English, and how can this goal be achieved in harmonious balance with proficiency in other languages?

An early pilot study (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1999, first published in 1996) of how the pressure to increasingly function in English at a Danish university was experienced by academics identified three main types of scholar, English-only, Danish-mostly, and Multilingual. The characteristics of the three groups relate to such variables as their subject area, national and international networks, languages of publication, choice of paradigm, and sensitivity to language policy issues (the English-only academics were the least reflective!). The study noted a diversity of positions and a range of views, and concluded that ‘multilingualism is entrenched in Danish higher education but that the general, although by no means sole, trend is towards a strengthening of English’²³.

The gradual move into English-medium teaching in European higher education is surveyed by Coleman (2006), who assesses to what extent English is progressively becoming ‘the language of higher education in Europe’. He correctly notes the paucity of research studies. As ‘drivers of Englishization’ he identifies Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL – in experimental practice at the secondary level in several countries), internationalization, student exchanges, teaching and research materials, staff mobility, graduate employability, and the market in international students. Coleman fails, however, to point out that the European Union (EU), which largely follows the agenda of the corporate world, has been actively promoting all of these symptoms of Englishization in its policies to strengthen European integration. I dispute his claim that there is a consensus about the likelihood of global diglossia with English as the exclusive language of science, and that ‘it seems inevitable that English, in some form, will definitely become *the* language of higher education’ (ibid., 11, italics added).

Coleman also notes that when English is a medium of instruction in some MA programmes, particularly in northern Europe, there are serious problems in ensuring the quality of the English of students and lecturing staff. Many northern Europeans are able to function supremely well in English as a second language. They have learned the language in school as a foreign language. It is almost never the medium of instruction in state education in, say, Denmark, Finland or Germany. Many Europeans are exposed to the language in personal and professional life. School has to equip undergraduates in the Nordic countries to be able to read texts in English. The learning task is smaller for those whose mother tongue is a related Germanic language, as compared with speakers of a Romance or Finno-Ugric language, let alone an Asian one.

The internationalisation of European higher education has gone under the label ‘the Bologna Process’ since 1999. The objective is ‘within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy - to consolidate a European Higher Education Area at the latest by 2010’. 46 European states are committed to it. The EU Commission largely sets the agenda, funds activities, and produces policy and planning documents. These are the foundation for the bi-annual Ministerial Meetings, which representatives of universities also attend. At the most recent ones (Bergen in 2005, London in 2007), the main focus has been on structural uniformity (a single BA, MA and PhD system), on quality control (nationally and internationally), student mobility, recognition of qualifications, and joint degrees – all of which are demanding tasks for most countries - and making European universities attractive enough to compete with the USA and Australia. These countries are Bologna ‘observers’, out of self-interest, since foreign students in higher education are big business for them, and Europe is potentially a serious competitor.

What is striking is that not once in the lengthy communiqués from the ministerial meetings is there any reference to languages (even if the EU has 23 official languages). There is nothing on bilingual degrees or multilingualism. The language of virtually all documents and deliberations is English. This can perhaps be justified for practical reasons at a conference – though this does not guarantee equality in communication - however what emerges unambiguously is that in the Bologna process, ‘internationalisation’ means ‘English-medium higher education’ (Phillipson 2006a).

This European process is a direct result of education being increasingly considered a service that can be traded, under the aegis of the WTO, the World Trade Organisation, and more specifically of GATS, the General Agreement on Trade in Services. Member states have been legally committed to this ‘liberalisation’ process since 1995, but there is a fundamental unresolved tension between education as a human right and trading in educational services²⁴. The pressures to reduce what are seen as national trading barriers are intense. Higher education is more vulnerable to international commercialisation than is basic education, though this is also increasingly seen as a market rather than a public service²⁵.

Prior to the bi-annual Ministerial Meeting taking stock of the Bologna Process in London, 17-18 May 2007, EU Commissioner Figel stated (press release IP/07/656):

Bologna reforms are important but Europe should now go beyond them, as universities should also modernise the content of their curricula, create virtual campuses and reform their governance. They should also professionalize their management, diversify their funding and open up to new types of learners, businesses

and society at large, in Europe and beyond. [...] The Commission supports the global strategy in concrete terms through its policies and programmes.

In other words, universities should no longer be seen as a public good but should be run like businesses, should privatise, and let industry set the agenda. The new buzzwords are that degrees must be ‘certified’ in terms of the ‘employability’ of graduates. ‘Accountability’ no longer refers to intellectual quality or truth-seeking but means acceptability to corporate-driven neoliberalism. A recommendation that there should be more ‘student-centred learning’ probably implies more e-learning rather than a more dialogic, open-ended syllabus. Before *European* integration has taken on any viable forms, universities are being told to think and act *globally* rather than remain narrowly European – and by implication use English rather than a national language. These ideas are insulting to higher education in general and to all universities that have been internationally oriented for decades, if not centuries.

I shall briefly cite a number of symptoms of English as pandemic. There has been talk for several years in *Scandinavia* about the risk of *domain loss*, when referring to an increased use of English in research publication, or as the medium of instruction for higher education, business, the media etc. Invariably the assumption is that any expansion in the use of English is at the expense of Danish, Norwegian, or Swedish, which is by no means necessarily the case. Such argumentation reflects a monolingual worldview, and is far from the reality of much higher education teaching, especially in the natural sciences. This is often bilingual, with textbooks written in English, and a Scandinavian language as the language of the classroom and examinations. The fact that natural scientists choose to publish scholarly articles in English does not necessarily mean that they are incapable of writing textbooks or popularising articles on the same topic in their mother tongue. How far domain loss is a reality in Scandinavia has yet to be researched adequately, and preliminary surveys are of limited theoretical and empirical validity. Existing efforts are hampered by loose terminology, in that ‘domain’ may refer to a vast range of activities or a narrow spectrum, and ‘loss’ is inappropriate in that it obscures the agency of both the losers and the gainers. In reality, domains are not ‘lost’: if and when it occurs, it is when specific spoken or written activities are subjected to linguistic capital accumulation by dispossession due to forces behind an increased use of English, the result being the marginalisation of other languages (Phillipson 2006a, 2008a).

Anecdotal evidence from Denmark suggests that less learning takes place when English is used, but there is a total absence of empirical studies. A small Swedish qualitative study of physics lecturing in Swedish and English indicates that pedagogical style and the quality of lecturing and of supporting activities are more significant than the medium of instruction (Airey and Linder 2006). While students do not see choice of language as important, their behaviour shows otherwise, and they are unaware of the differences.

In *France* a petition was signed by over 10,000 academics in the spring of 2008²⁶, aimed at persuading French authorities, l’Agence d’Evaluation de la Recherche et de l’Enseignement Supérieur (Agency for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education) that while publishing in English is a necessity, continuing to publish in French is essential for three reasons:

1. as higher education is funded through French national taxes, tax-payers have the right to access to research in French;
2. teaching through the medium of French requires that the writing of scholarly syntheses and textbooks in French should be seen as meritorious and necessary: ‘how can one love a

discipline by offering books only in English that are generally not at the right level or adapted to local teaching practices?’

3. learning to express oneself in a language other than one’s mother tongue with equivalent semantic subtlety and complexity is very demanding; there is no better way of dialoguing with an authority than in one’s own language.

The petition expresses concern that bibliometric research productivity exercises that give pride of place to publications in English disqualify research production in French (journals, books and textbooks). Petitioners insist that the assessment of qualifications for university appointments should not discriminate against publications in French.

German was the most influential language in the natural sciences and philosophy in Europe until the 1930s. German is the most important export language for Denmark, but its appeal to younger Danes has diminished as a result of the massive influence of English and Americanisation in the media and youth culture, and the privileged place accorded to English in political discourse and in education at all levels. A colleague of mine, an eminent Professor of German in Denmark, reports that applicants for a higher education post recently were instructed to submit publications only if they were written in English or a Nordic language²⁷. This is an example of the marginalisation of publications in other ‘international’ languages, traditionally French and German, that scholars until 20 years ago were expected to be competent in. My colleague also speculated on the possibility that if Danish decision-makers were more familiar with the political scene in Germany and France, and followed how international relations issues are covered in the media there, Denmark might not have gone to war in Iraq as an uncritical ally of Bush II.

Spanish is another language, like German, French and Russian, in which a vast amount of scholarly activity takes place, in speech and writing. But philosophers from the Spanish-using world are experiencing that the large publishing conglomerates that dominate the scientific journal world (Taylor & Francis, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Elsevier) which publish benchmark encyclopedias, in English of course, have been known to refuse any references to Spanish-medium publications. (Mendieta, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 2006).

A glance at the papers in a representative set of reference books, the nine volumes of the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, edited by Nancy Hornberger and colleagues (New York: Springer, 2008) shows that however multilingual many of the individual contributors may be, reference is seldom made to languages other than English. ‘Language’ has been largely conflated with ‘English’.

The Danish and Swedish governments have been promoting ‘internationalisation’ for decades, and have simultaneously been concerned to ensure the future of the national language while building up competence in English²⁸. In both countries, committees have been appointed to look into the language policy issues. The Danes have conducted modest investigations, mainly concentrating on Danish, and largely undertaken by philologists with little familiarity with sociolinguistics or the international language planning and policy literature²⁹. Danish Vice-Chancellors have advised strongly against any legislation that might restrict the right of universities to determine when each language should be used³⁰. The Swedes have been more thorough: a succession of parliamentary investigations culminated in a 2008 White Paper of 265 pages that articulates a case for legislating on the status of Swedish, and for consolidating the linguistic human rights of two sets of minority language users - speakers of five legally recognised minority languages, and users of Swedish Sign

language - as well as providing for the maintenance of the languages and cultures of immigrants³¹. The clauses of the proposed Swedish legislation relate to the following points:

- declaring Swedish the *principal* ('huvud' = main, chief) language of the country, a formulation that deliberately avoids the terms *official* and *national*, Swedish being the language that unites all residents of the country, irrespective of mother tongue;
- creating obligations for the society, including its agents in all sectors, its legislators and administrators, to see that language rights are realized;
- in higher education and in dealings with EU institutions, ensuring that Swedish should be used whenever possible;
- institutions having a duty to work out how best the pre-eminence of Swedish can be maintained (e.g. ensuring terminology development).

The Swedish White Paper refers to the risk of *capacity loss* when Swedes are obliged to function in English rather than their mother tongue, whether in higher education or in the EU system (p. 220). In other words people's linguistic or communicative competence may be reduced, and if this is allowed to take place, this erodes the main instrument of a well-functioning democracy, in speech and in writing. Effectively what is happening here is capacity dispossession of the individual, in the worst case in both languages. One means of combating this is to oblige budding academics who write a PhD thesis in an 'international' language to produce a detailed summary in the national language. This is generally required in the Nordic countries. Another example: two of my younger colleagues, whose PhD theses are in English, are writing a book on language testing - in Danish. There are plenty of examples in Europe of academics with eminent competence in at least two languages, one of which now tends to be English. English need not be either panacea or pandemic.

Towards the multilingual university?

Continued faith in monolingualism reflects a belief in what I formulated in *Linguistic imperialism* (1992, chapter 7) as five tenets that were influential in postcolonial education policy:

- English is best taught monolingually,
- The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker,
- The earlier English is taught, the better the results,
- The more English is taught, the better the results,
- Of other languages are used much, standards of English will drop.

The book documents in considerable detail that each is in fact a fallacy:

- the monolingual fallacy
- the native speaker fallacy
- the early start fallacy
- the maximum exposure fallacy
- the subtractive fallacy.

It is relevant to consider how far any of these fallacies are adhered to at university level, and with what consequences. Adherence to the five tenets contributes to former colonies remaining in a state of dependency on norms of the Centre, assists the British economy, and supports the myth that English is a panacea. There is therefore a need for explicit multilingualism policies, as recommended for all Nordic universities. Boosting the learning of a variety of languages should be part of a strategy for ensuring that national languages are not submerged under English and for openness to a variety of cultures and markets. Ensuring balanced cohabitation with additive (as opposed to subtractive) English is a real challenge for higher education worldwide. Policies for

strengthening competence in English must be one dimension of maintaining cultural and linguistic diversity, locally and globally, and resisting an unsustainable capitalist world 'order'.

If universities aim that their staff and students should be 'equally competent' in two or more languages, there need to be policies for attaining and maintaining 'parallel competence'. Whether this will be achieved widely in Nordic universities is an open question, and unpredictable. One dimension of explicit language policies must be raising awareness about functioning multilingually. There should be an incentive structure to reward those who are able to teach and publish in more than one language. The present tendency is to associate higher prestige and rewards for articles in 'international' in the sense of English-medium journals, this affecting careers, promotion prospects, and financial outcomes.

An issue that ought to be of considerable concern to any 'English-medium' university is that if competence in English is becoming more widespread, in similar ways to basic literacy and computer skills, it is likely that fluency in English alone will no longer represent a competitive advantage in the job market. It is a basic principle in economics that the market value drops for anything that is widely available.

The University of Hong Kong's mission statement and strategic development plan are laudable and visionary. Unlike Helsinki University, there is no commitment on language policy, despite the centrality of languages for all faculties - architecture, education, medicine, psychology, public administration, all. When the UHL offers 'courses and degree programmes in the English language', how can one ensure that this will 'enhance the graduates' contributions to society' if most citizens function in Cantonese? Precisely the same concern applies worldwide, where the risk is that elites will have an advanced command of English, and become increasingly detached from their ordinary citizens operating in Arabic/Bengali/Catalan/Dutch/...

The challenges of linguistic pandemic control are comparable worldwide. English has for centuries had some pandemic traits and consequences on several continents. It is no panacea in the modern world. If vibrant local cultures and languages are to continue, language policy efforts need to be concentrated on diverse local language ecologies and maintaining a healthy balance between English and other languages. Universities must contribute to this. Some national and international laws and practices serve to protect threatened minority languages (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, chapter 7) but there are no international law mechanisms for controlling dominant international languages. Perhaps we need a UN World Language Organisation along the lines of the World Health Organisation, a UNESCO with teeth for linguistic pandemic control. Such a body would need to be more effective than the UN, where the permanent members of the Security Council tend to act in what they see as the national rather than the universal interest. What will remain of greater, more decisive importance is what happens locally. In view of the major challenges that universities face, I believe that the efforts of academia and the participants at this conference are more needed than ever before.

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Appendix

*A semiotic interlude: why English is no panacea. An exploration by analysis of the word **concern** of the suitability of English to function as an international language.*

Criteria that should be met by any language in use for international purposes can be identified, as they have been by the inventors of planned languages like Esperanto. Smith (2005, 58) focuses on six features:

1. Maximum speakability, i.e. a range of phonemes as small as is feasible without restricting communicative capacity
2. Sensible orthography, i.e. words being spelt as they are pronounced, and vice versa
3. Regular inflection rules (such as no irregular verbs)
4. Uncomplicated grammar (that is, the absence of complexities which contribute little or nothing while making learning more difficult, as with the verbs *avoir* and *être* in French)
5. Freedom from ambiguity. [...]
6. The ideal *lingua franca* should be easy to learn.

The *Encarta World English Dictionary* (Bloomsbury 1999, also Microsoft) lists five semantic categories for **concern**. I have supplemented the examples in the dictionary with university-oriented ones in types 1 and 4:

Noun

1. WORRY OR STH CAUSING IT, a reason to worry, or sth that causes worry.
The changes in the university are giving rise to concern.
2. AFFAIR THAT SHOULD INVOLVE SB a matter that affects sb, or that sb has the right to be involved with. *It's no concern of yours.*

3. CARING FEELINGS, emotions such as worry. Compassion, sympathy, or regard for sb or sth. *I shall express my concern by sending some flowers.*
4. BUSINESS a commercial enterprise. *Universities may have been seats of learning once, but now they have to be run like commercial concerns.*
5. (*dated*; etymological information on semantic shift from Latin via French).

Verb

Four semantic fields, corresponding to 1, 2, and 3 (that the adjectival form *concerned* pairs off with), nothing corresponding to nominal 4, but has a fourth meaning: BE ON THE SUBJECT OF to be about a particular topic, *This concerns academic freedom.*

In short, the English lexical item *concern* has five distinct meanings.

The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1993) lists no fewer than nine distinct meanings, in two groups, for the noun, in one case requiring it to be in the plural, with considerable detail in explaining and exemplifying the headword.

Conclusions

- English is intrinsically a confusingly difficult language, especially for second language users.
- This complexity, and the polysemy of individual lexical items - English having many homonyms and homophones, generally grounded in the hybrid origins of modern English - means that the language is *prima facie* unsuitable for use as an international language. Its properties lead to misunderstandings and represent a huge learning task³².
- The flexibility of the same form functioning as both Noun and Verb (rather than these being categorically marked, for instance by a morphological form, as in many languages) is an additional complication for second language users.
- The current clout of English has nothing to do with any intrinsic properties, and everything to do with the power of its users, and the uses to which the language has been put.

As a multilingual, I am alert to the way other languages borrow from English (and vice versa, I learned a great deal about English through learning a post-Viking language, Danish). The word *concern* has been borrowed from English into Danish, but the meaning is subtly different. A standard monolingual reference work (*Politikens Nudansk Ordbog*, 15th edition, 1992) defines the noun, *koncern*, as exclusively meaning a group of companies, a cartel or combine, but in more recent years the term is used to refer simply to a company, alongside the older term *selskab*.

Living in Denmark as I do, it is possible that I am influenced by hearing the word ‘*koncern*’ used in a Danish context and sense, which could trigger other denotations than a monolingual English-user would initially bring into play.³³ In-depth familiarity with several languages is a major cognitive and cultural advantage, which our ancestors seem to have appreciated when Latin and Greek played a central role in the school curriculum.

English falls down on all of Ross’s six counts. My purpose in exemplifying the semiotic and grammatical complexity of English is to demonstrate that it is unlikely to function as an efficient or symmetrical language of international communication. It is no panacea. But even if English is no panacea, clearly the language cannot be ignored.

¹ http://www.helsinki.fi/inbrief/strategy/HYn_kieliperiaatteet.pdf.

² <http://www.hku.hk/strategic-booklet/english/fs-academic.htm>.

³ A petition in Denmark by academics (signed by over 1600 within three months in early 2008) calls for reform of a 2003 law governing higher education. Specific complaints are that university administration is now top-down management without proper consultation procedures, with the Ministry of Higher Education dictating what should be taught and learned, and which research areas should be given priority. Societal accountability has been replaced by dependence on the business world; research policy has been replaced by industrial policy, which is incompatible with the role of the university as a public good in a democracy, and with academic freedom for the individual researcher.

⁴ Academic freedom both for the institution and for the individual are enshrined in a 1997 declaration of UNESCO, declarations of the Council of Europe, and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. This states (Article II-73) that ‘The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected’, which it sees as ‘extensions of the freedoms of thought and expression’. The UNESCO declaration is very detailed (13 pp.):

Autonomy is the institutional form of academic freedom and a necessary precondition to guarantee the proper fulfilment of the functions entrusted to higher-education teaching personnel and institutions.

Higher-education teaching personnel are entitled to the maintenance of academic freedom, that is to say, the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results hereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies.

The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters published a report (in Danish) for its 2007 annual general meeting entitled ‘Freedom of research and expression at universities’. The report concludes that there is a general tendency for these freedoms to be constrained in western Europe, that the rights are protected better in legislation in certain countries than in Denmark. There is an increasing degree of control of teaching and research by the state and business interests (e.g. the Senates of Danish universities have a majority of non-academics), with less freedom of choice for the academic. The general climate in which universities are run and experienced is unfree. The report exemplifies through fictitious cases that build on actual experience that traditional values are being undermined through a variety of insidious and crude pressures.

⁵ The complaint is accessible on <http://www.dm.dk/>.

⁶ The website (<http://www.thatchercenter.org/>) states that it was established in 2005, following a substantial donation from the Margaret Thatcher Foundation to the Heritage Foundation. It claims to be the only public policy centre in the world dedicated to advancing the vision and ideals of Lady Thatcher. Its key aims are to focus on how the United States and Great Britain can lead and change the world, to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Great Britain, and link conservatives in the U.S., UK and Europe who are committed to the transatlantic alliance and the cause of freedom across the world.

⁷ The university was founded in 1948. Its website states that in the first decade the primary academic focus was on political science, sociology, Eastern European Studies and American Studies, a clear statement of its priorities. The website has photos of the Henry Ford building (I recently also saw one at Koc University, Istanbul), and of John F. Kennedy, see http://web.fu-berlin.de/chronik/chronik_Home.html.

⁸ The university was founded in Berlin in 1810, inspired by Wilhelm von Humboldt's concept of a "Universitas litterarum" which would achieve a unity of teaching and research and provide students with an all-round humanist education. This concept spread throughout the world and gave rise to the foundation of many universities of the same type over the following 150 years. See http://www.huberlin.de/ueberblick-en/history/huben_html.

⁹ I wrote an article with Tove Skutnabb-Kangas in 1994 entitled 'English, panacea or pandemic' (*Sociolinguistica* 8. English only? in Europa/in Europe/en Europe, 73-87). It expressed scepticism at the hubris of the way English was being marketed as a panacea in the post-communist world, along with the free market and human rights. English was conflated with democracy and all things good, backed up by fraudulent claims for what the language would achieve.

¹⁰ The 'ownership' of English in Singapore is explored in a study that challenges the conventional way in which the country is characterised (an 'Outer circle' country), granted that English has become the primary language of the younger generation and increasingly the language of both formal and informal situations (Rubdy et al 2008). The study elicits reactions to samples of language so as to verify the ability of informants to 'make confident judgements and their willingness to rely on their intuitions', proof of which is interpreted as indicating ownership of English. The study provides useful evidence of the limitations of our terminology (static concepts like the three circles and native speaker), and critiques the way politicians disparage local linguistic forms.

¹¹ The applied linguistic classification of Singaporeans hitherto has been as English-knowing bilinguals.

¹² There are several articles on the sociolinguistics of Singapore in Tan and Rubdy in press.

¹³ The 'Centre Européen pour l'enseignement supérieur' (CEPES) conference in 2000 on the bilingual university, its origins, mission and functioning, drew on the experience of universities in Finland, Canada, Switzerland and elsewhere (it noted that bilingual universities are becoming more widespread world-wide), identified the following principles: any bilingual university needs to take serious account of the influence of the specific political and social environment in which the university operates; the mission of bilingual universities should be community bridge-building, promoting a wider outlook, promoting bilingualism as an objective for all students, such policies permeating all university organisational matters.

¹⁴ See Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, Magga et al 2007, Dunbar and Skutnabb-Kangas 2008.

¹⁵ US national identity was forged through massive violence, the dispossession and extermination of the indigenous peoples, the myth of unoccupied territory, the surplus value extorted from slave labour, and an active process of national imagination to form a common identity, one deeply permeated by religion (Hixson 2008). The nationalist revolt of 1776 and the ensuing state formation and constitution privileged white male slave-owning Euro-Americans. These founding fathers devised a constitution in which ' "We, the people" elided hierarchies of race, class, and gender' (ibid., 39), the Other being stigmatized as sub-human and therefore exterminable. The architects of the American Revolution were highly literate, 75% were English-speaking, seeing themselves as involved in 'a sacred event ordained by God for the redemption of all of mankind. Even Benjamin Franklin, the leading scientific rationalist, declared, "Our cause is the cause of all mankind, and we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own. It is a glorious task assigned us by Providence" ' (ibid., 37). This Myth of America has been echoed continuously over three centuries, currently in the rhetoric of Bush II, and we are all affected by it, wherever we live: the Myth is being implemented universally. There is considerable debate within the TESOL organisation about the ethics of evangelisation when it is integrated, often covertly into English teaching.

¹⁶ In *The Guardian Weekly*, 30 May 2008, <www.londonexternal.ac.uk>. This is as bombastic and pretentious as the title of a related book, *Examining the world. A history of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate* (Raban 2008).

¹⁷ See the appendix for an example.

¹⁸ Neil Kinnock, Chair of the British Council, reports (in a Foreword to Graddol 2006): ‘The English language teaching sector directly earns nearly £1.3 billion for the UK in invisible exports and our other education related exports earn up to £10 billion a year more’.

¹⁹ On the commodification of education, and the marketisation discourses, see Holborrow 2006, reflecting experience in Ireland.

²⁰ Sensitivity to local cultural and linguistic factors seems to be totally absent from the content of the School of Education of the University of Nottingham’s Malaysia campus (<http://www.nottingham.edu.my/Faculties/Social/Education/Pages/default.aspx>), including the MA degrees in TESOL and in Teaching Content Through a Foreign Language. Courses are ‘elaborated in the UK and taught by UK staff’. The University of Nottingham at Ningbo, China states in its mission statement that its goal is ‘Academic Excellence in the Service of Global Citizenship’, and this means that the University of Nottingham Ningbo, China has committed itself to developing subjects that combine internationally ranked teaching and research excellence at the University of Nottingham UK with Chinese needs for internationalisation and globalisation. This allows Chinese students to enjoy a world-class international education without the major expense of studying abroad. All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Ningbo are conducted entirely in English with the same teaching and evaluation standards as at Nottingham UK.’ This means that there is UK content in the three MA programmes in English Studies. The Centre for Research in Applied Linguistics is an outpost of the Nottingham, UK centre.

²¹ Mainstream ‘development aid’ to education has an appalling track record, which ought to make one sceptical about whether the British English Language Teaching (ELT) sector can solve educational learning problems in India or anywhere else. Most British people are notoriously monolingual; ELT qualifications in the major ‘English-speaking countries’ typically do not require evidence of successful foreign language learning or experience of multilingualism. Educational language projects in Asia in the 1990s are surveyed in an admirable collection of papers *Language and development. Teachers in a changing world* (Kenny and Savage 1997). It contains a fund of reflective analysis of the factors contributing to the triumphs and, more frequently, the failures of development aid projects. But it is striking that the title of the book itself seems to assume that English is a panacea. ‘Language’ refers exclusively to English. All ‘teachers’ in our changing world are apparently teachers of English. This invisibilisation of the rest of the relevant languages is a re-run of much colonial and postcolonial language-in-education policy, which, as is well known, has served European languages well and other languages much less well. It reflects investment being put into English, an infrastructure and ideology that discursively construct English as the handmaiden of globalisation, the universal medium. Such is linguistic imperialism.

²² Phillipson 2008a. The article explores the transition from the linguistic imperialism of the colonial and postcolonial ages to the increasingly dominant role of English as a neoimperial language. It analyses ‘global’ English as a key dimension of USA empire. US expansionism is a fundamental principle of the foreign policy of the US that can be traced back over two centuries. Linguistic imperialism and neoimperialism are exemplified at the micro and macro levels, and some key defining traits explored, as are cultural and institutional links between the UK and the USA, and the role of foundations in promoting ‘world’ English. The article explores the role of language in corporate-driven globalisation and theorises linguistic neoimperialism by situating discourses and cultural politics in the material realities of neoimperial market pressures.

²³ A number of studies of Englishization in the Nordic countries are referred to in Phillipson 2006c, 70-71.

²⁴ Devidal 2004 is a very detailed analysis from the perspective of international human rights law of the implications of education falling within GATS, with many references to resistance, and a strong plea for all education to be excluded. De Siqueira 2005 is a thorough historical analysis of the GATS process with a special focus on education.

²⁵ For the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education of the UN's Commission on Human Rights, see <www.right-to-education.org>. For an analysis of the attack on universities as a public good, as falling within GATS and outside human rights law, for instance by the US-dominated European Association for International Education, see Phillipson 2006a.

²⁶ Lettre ouverte aux responsables de l'Evaluation Scientifique. Les scientifiques doivent-ils continuer à écrire en français? <<http://petition.hermespublishing.com/>>.

²⁷ Per Øhrgaard, at a language policy conference held at Copenhagen Business School on 9 December 2007. A report of the conference, plus recommendations for action has been published (Hansen and Phillipson 2008). A recording of the entire day's proceedings can be downloaded from www.cbs.dk/forskning_viden/institutter_centre/institutter/isv.

²⁸ Norwegian academics have produced a sensitive policy statement on maintaining a balance between Norwegian and English: *Framlegg til ein språkpolitikk for universitet og høgskolar i Noreg*, 2006. www.uhr.no/documents/Framlegg_til_ein_spraakpolitikk_for_UHsektoren_1.pdf.

²⁹ *Sprog til tiden. Rapport fra Sprogudvalget*, København, Kulturministeriet, 2008

<http://www.kum.dk/sw69654.asp>. It is a weakness of the Danish policy document that Danish and English are only seen as in competition with each other. The argumentation is entirely either/or, a zero sum game. This falsely reflects the reality that much BA level teaching is in fact hybrid or bilingual, with English-language texts being taught through the medium of Danish. The report also suffers from serious gaps: there is nothing on experience in other Nordic countries, on the Bologna process, on types of pedagogy, on bilingualism or language awareness.

³⁰ Press release from Danske Universiteter ('Universities Denmark'), 22 April 2008.

³¹ *Värna språken – förslag till språklag. Betänkande av Språklagsutredningen* 2008. Stockholm: Statens Offentliga Utredningar. SOU 2008:26.

www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/10/09/59/4ad5deaa.pdf. The White Paper also has substantial sections on many aspects of the use and learning of English. So far as higher education is concerned, the focus is on internationalisation (incoming students as much as the mobility of Swedish students), the need for quality in school and higher education, and the realisation that higher education institutions need to formulate explicit language policies. Reference is made to The University of Gothenburg, Sweden's language policy (2007), which states that

- The official language of communication of Göteborg University is Swedish...
- Göteborg University should strive towards linguistic diversity and see to it that competence in languages other than Swedish and English is seen as an additional qualification for employment at Göteborg University.
- Göteborg University should disseminate research findings to society in general in clear and intelligible Swedish and English.

³² Another example. When Chris Patten entitles his memoirs *Not quite the diplomat. Home truths about world affairs* (2005), he is playing on the way 'diplomacy' has positive connotations that the reality of functioning in international relations conflicts with. The core meaning of the noun *diplomat*, a functional ascription for a government representative, differs from the metaphorical meaning that the adjectival form *diplomatic* generally has, tactful considerate. 'Home truths' have nothing to do with the core meaning of a 'home', but imply revealing secrets that the public is not

aware of. His fascinating book describes how the Chinese treated him very differently when his role switched from Governor of Hong Kong (an ex-colony which he praises highly) to European Union Commissioner with responsibility for international or ‘diplomatic’ affairs. A primary thrust of his book is to denounce the policies of Bush II and Blair – although he is relatively uncritical of the USA’s global role – in the hope that more enlightened policies, a balance between American, European and Asian interests, may emerge in a multi-polar world.

³³ This reminds me of my only previous visit to Hong Kong in 1996, for an excellent language rights conference, when I was alarmed to see that my participation, according to the programme, was ‘*sponsored*’ by Oxford University Press. It is true that OUP covered my flight costs, but my sense of shock was due to a gut feeling that somehow my academic freedom was being impugned if my scholarly activity was sponsored by a commercial undertaking.