

**Being wise before the event: a prejoinder to Phillipson**

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‘Living backwards!’, Alice repeated in great astonishment. ‘I never heard of such a thing!’  
(Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, Chapter 5)

Prologue

Invited by the editors to respond to Phillipson’s (P) review of my book, *English as a Global Language* (EGL) in volume 20/2 (Phillipson 1999a), it is difficult to know what to do. P, breaking a cardinal rule of academic reviewing, did not tell the *Applied Linguistics* (AL) readership that his review had already been published, in all its essentials, in another journal a year previously, *The European English Messenger* (EEM) (Phillipson 1998). And, as I had already replied to his review in that journal (Crystal 1999a), I am now in the curious position of having to respond again to an item I had already replied to (in Spring 1999) before the current item appeared (in June 1999)! Alice would surely have been at home in such a strange, back-to-front state-of-affairs.

What I have done, first of all, is reproduce my response largely as it was, because P’s *AL* version keeps his own *EEM* text virtually intact,<sup>1</sup> then added an Epilogue which takes up a couple of fresh issues. I have incorporated a few further remarks into my original reply, each of which is distinguishable by being placed in square brackets. I have also added extra page references to the quotations from P’s review, so that they can be found in the corresponding *AL* pages; these too are in square brackets, as are any changes in phrasing which appear in the *AL* version. Page references in round brackets are always to *EGL*.

On trying to be Crystal-clear: a response to Phillipson

It is an axiom of contemporary linguistics that language events should always be seen in context. This applies to books as well as to the reviews they receive. And in accepting the editor’s kind invitation to respond to the review by Phillipson (P) of *English as a Global Language* (EGL) [in *The European English Messenger*, VII/2], I must begin by doing some contextualizing - some discourse analysis, even - for it is not otherwise possible to make sense of it. Only by careful reanalysis of the quotations used, and of the context in which they appear, can one identify the hidden agenda which motivates a review of this kind. I hope the

exercise will be useful to readers, who will undoubtedly encounter the ideology involved from time to time, and who may be wondering how best to deal with it.

*EGL*, how would you expect such a person to approach the review task? To begin with, any descriptive statement would be immediately suspect. An observation like 'English is a global language' would be automatically construed as triumphalist. Secondly, you would expect the book to be combative.

What mindset has P brought to the task? Here are two illuminating extracts from towards the end of the review. 'The idea [assumption] that experts from countries such as the UK or the US, deeply monolingual and with a very patchy record of foreign language learning, can contribute to policy on education and language matters in multilingual societies is completely counter-intuitive.' [271] And next: 'Linguistic hierarchies reminiscent of the colonial period, and master-minded by the type of linguistics and applied linguistics department that Crystal used to work for, still underpin much "aid" and World Bank [World Bank and IMF] policy'. [271] You might like to read these quotations again - yes, you from any linguistics or applied linguistics department anywhere - the man is talking about you, not just me. Simply by being professionally involved in linguistics you are, it seems, imperialist and triumphalist, and if you are from a department in Britain or the USA, your inherent monolingualism makes you incapable of saying or doing anything useful in relation to multilingualism. Ignore the fact that hundreds of linguists from monolingual countries have spent years working with minority and multilingual situations, are fluent in more than one language, and are worried sick at the moment by the endangered language situation in the world today. Ignore the vast amount of work that has gone on within sociolinguistics. None of that can help. Linguists are misguided, incapable, conspiratorial people, with a colonialist political agenda. That is the state of mind you have to recognize before you can possibly begin to see what is going on in the review of *EGL*.

P complains about me: 'his loyalty is to linguistics' [266] (ignore his reference to my page 113, where there is no mention of this issue). He's absolutely right - but the kind of linguistics he is thinking of isn't anything like the world I know. Apparently if you're a linguist, so says this review, your work is valueless when you come to study globalisation, education, or the media. Eat your hearts out, educational linguists, anthropological linguists, sociolinguists, clinical linguists, critical linguists, and others. You're all wasting your time. Personally, I think it is an insult to 30 years of sociolinguistic research to suggest that linguists have nothing to say about 'multilingualism, official, national and minority languages'. [266] In fact, where would such topics be today without sociolinguistics? 'Lack of any grounding in the social sciences is a major weakness of the work' (*EGL*, that is). [266] But to me, linguistics is a social science. When I was at Reading, the department of linguistics was in the Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences. Our next door neighbour was sociology.

Knowing only the above about a reviewer who was sent a copy of *EGL*, how would you expect such a person to approach the review task? To begin with, any descriptive statement would be immediately suspect. An observation like 'English is a global language' would be automatically construed as triumphalist. Secondly, you would expect the book to be combed for sentences which could be interpreted in a triumphalist way. You would expect them to be quoted out of context. You would expect remarks which didn't suit your position to be ignored. You would expect a concentration on only that part of the book which was relevant to the reviewer's ideological background. You would expect the use of loaded vocabulary. And you would expect there to be protest - oh how much, methinks, there would be protest! - that the reviewer was not being ideological at all, that all he was doing was identifying scholarly weaknesses. That is what you would expect to find. And that is exactly what you get. [You would also expect that any riposte would be construed as a personal attack on the author; this predictably turned up in a rejoinder to my reply, in *EEM* VIII/1, 1999, pp. 65-6.]

Let me begin by doing some basic discourse analysis to show how an ideologically fuelled selection of information works in practice, in a review of this kind. The account of *EGL*'s content is a good example. P's summary is in terms of chapters. Why? Because that suits his argument. If you look towards the beginning of his review, you will find the briefest of remarks about each chapter, with the whole summary taking up 20 lines in all; and of this 20, he devotes 10 to an account of Ch 5. [The line-lengths of AL are different, but the relative weight of content is unchanged, p. 266.] He states that 'nearly half of this chapter' is on US English, 'implying that Crystal's understanding is that the internal affairs of the present-day US are central to the future of "global" English'. It sounds impressive - half a chapter devoted to this topic. That sounds like real evidence of a right-wing plot lurking somewhere around.

But when we summarize the book in terms of pages, a very different picture emerges. Excluding the preface and further reading, *EGL* takes up 140 pages. Ch 1 (pp 1-24) asks why there is a global language; Ch 2 (pp 24-63) outlines the historical context; Chs 3 and 4 (pp 64-112) present the cultural context; and Ch 5 (pp 113-140) discusses the future. Note that only 27 pages - just over an eighth of the book - are devoted to Ch 5. And only just over 11 of these are devoted to the official English issue in the USA. I leave it to you to do the statistics. It is plain that the US English issue is not a major topic for me. Nor indeed, is the book chiefly about the future of English (an emphasis, incidentally, which distinguishes Graddol's

recent publication from mine). The bulk of my book is elsewhere. So, the obvious (rhetorical) question: why would anyone want to make it appear that it is not?

I put those pages about US English in, incidentally, because I had had an opportunity to learn a great deal about the official English movement while I was writing the book, and I had not found a summary of the arguments for and against it anywhere in my reading. Most people outside the USA are not aware of what has been going on there. References to the US situation are often wrong, and usually oversimplified. P is no exception. He says, 'the intellectual community in the United States ... is massively against English Only' and 'one would not suspect this' [271] from reading *EGL*. There are two points here. First, my exposition was chiefly about US English, not 'English Only': P is evidently ignorant of the differences between the different US protectionist movements - but it is important not to oversimplify what is a very complex situation. Second, I don't know what P means by 'the intellectual community in the United States', but I would have thought that my extensive quotation in *EGL* from the Linguistic Society of America's official statement on the matter, and some associated proposals, would do to represent that perspective. Ah, but I was forgetting. They're linguists, of course. They don't count.

It would indeed be an 'intuitively puzzling assertion' [in *EEM* only] if I had said that US affairs are 'central' [266] to the global English question. The most I would claim (as I do on p. 118) is that the issue is 'of some relevance'. Read my p. 117 for a fuller comment: 'Given that the USA has come to be the dominant element in so many of the domains identified in earlier chapters, the future of English must be bound up *to some extent* with the future of that country' (fresh emphasis). As official English worries have been heard in recent years in several other English-speaking countries, the relevance is obvious. (P seems not to be able to make his mind up on this one. At one point the thrust of his complaint is that I give space to US English at all; at another point he says I should have gone into the educational issues further. [270] Now that *would* have been stupid, given the different policies in the different states, the many changes of federal policy, and the many minority and pressure groups on both sides. It would take a separate book, and someone on the spot within the USA, to do justice to the situation. I know when I'm beaten. Even linguists have their limitations.)

The content summary of the book is just one example of the way P's political views have led him to misrepresent *EGL*. But the whole review is like this. The whole review? I tried to reconstruct P's method, for this response, identifying the quotations he used, looking at their

context, and seeing whether they were ideologically motivated. I was searching for fair comment. I found none. On the other hand, I found plenty of cheap points. You be the judge, as I work my way through them.

It is very important, in this kind of review, to try to discredit your opponent by as many means as possible. P begins with politics, quoting my observation that the book has been written 'without any political agenda'. [266] Out of context, it does sound silly, and this then allows P to impute political naivety: 'even the wish to be apolitical involves political choices'. [266] But the context of my remark, in the preface, was the competing agendas of the two positions outlined there. My observation refers to the fact that I was not adopting either of those agendas. It is well known that there are two senses of the word 'political' in English, one referring to a general concern for the state and its citizens, and the other for the partisan world of party politics (compare *OED political*, senses 1 vs 4). It is also standard polemical practice to blur those meanings - which is what P is doing here. I say I am not taking sides (sense 4). P tries to get you to believe that I am saying my book is outside politics (sense 1). Don't be fooled.

Having tried his hand at politics, P then moves on to history. Here's how he tries to justify his claim that my historical account is unimpressive. First, he notices that I head a section in my 'historical context' chapter (Ch 2) 'America'. 'Oops', he says, Crystal 'does not mean the two continents, but the USA - his synecdoche reflects a hegemonic preference'. [266] Well oops to you too, P. I chose that title for one reason only: the fact that the section begins with pre-US events, in 1584, and continues with pre-independence issues for two of its four pages. To have used the heading 'USA' - now that would have been a real cause for criticism. But has P told you in his review that my American section is so wide-ranging? Look very hard before you answer.

Second, he quotes my observation (in relation to the specifically US situation) that 'Rulings are needed to regulate conflict. If there is no conflict there is no need for rulings'. [267] He then adds: 'implying [suggest] that language issues have been free of conflict in Ireland, Scotland, [and] Wales, and North America [or the USA]'. [Interesting to note the final switch here, in view of the previous paragraph!] How he reads in that implication is beyond me, seeing as on the very next page I refer to the conflicts which have given rise to official language issues in Ireland, Wales, Quebec and New Zealand. But what you need to notice is that the contested proposition is *his* implication, not mine. This proposition then becomes the theme of the rest of the relevant paragraph in his review. And he concludes: 'There is a huge literature on these issues which flatly contradicts this position'. [267, last few words omitted

in *AL*] Which position? The one P has just made up, as an implication. And on that basis, I am condemned for poor history.

He also picks on my South Africa section, in Ch 2. This doesn't satisfy him either, because I don't use the word *apartheid*. [267] On the other hand, such phrases as 'political divisions', 'authority and repression', and the like are very much in evidence in that part of *EGL*. Plainly apartheid is being referred to, in spirit if not in name. The criticism turns out to be trivial. Similarly, he complains that I do not give the names of any African languages. True enough - but what is the force of that observation? Is he saying that when I say 'The 1993 Constitution names eleven languages' I should have listed them all by name? If that is all my poor history amounts to, then I am not impressed.

Several parts of the review compete for the prize of 'selective quotation of the year'. He complains that I don't describe past language policies in South Africa and have 'invisibilized' the blacks [267] - a typical piece of polemic, which quickly becomes nonsensical as you read the relevant pages. For there you will find such phrases as 'spoken by the black population', '[used] by increasing numbers of the (70 per cent majority) black population', 'a series of government surveys among black parents', and so on. The word 'black' turns up repeatedly. Why would anyone not see this? Only if they don't want to see it. But ask yourself: why would someone not want to see it? What hidden agenda must underlie this review?

Or again, 'There is no reference to the many African scholars who have pleaded for the upgrading of African languages and denounced "aid" that strengthens European languages'. [268] Yet in the next paragraph he acknowledges that I have referred to Ngugi, and if he had wanted to he could have mentioned my references to Chinua Achebe, and others. Chapter 5 in fact begins by referring to the rejection of English. Why would a reviewer not want to draw the reader's attention to this?

And when I do say something about South Africa that P wants to see - referring to the country's new multilingual policy, and the position of English in the new political situation - this is dismissed as a 'passing reference'. [267] So let's try another piece of discourse analysis here. The section on South Africa is 80 lines long. What would you expect a 'passing reference' to be? Answer now, before you read on. 'Passing' must mean what - 3 or 4 lines max? I begin my comments on these matters with the remark 'There is thus a linguistic side to the political divisions which have marked South African society in recent decades' - and developing the point from there to the end of the section takes 35 lines. Why call something

'passing', when it plainly isn't, or say there is no description of past language policies when there plainly is? What, you might wonder, is going on?

Another thing about political mindsets is that they tend to be obsessed with certain words and phrases, and if they are not present, the content they represent is deemed to be absent. Their owners look for the letter, and not for the spirit. So, P objects to the way my narrative 'avoids any upsetting talk of bloodshed ... capitulation ... domination ...'. [268] Evidently my use of such words as 'slavery', 'stealing our talents and geniuses' and 'humiliating experiences' (114-115) doesn't count as being part of the language of domination. Or again, P reduces my deeply felt concerns about dying languages to a word, picking 'anxieties' out of context, and allowing that to represent my position. [274] He might have selected other words I use - 'urgency' or 'tragedy' (18), for instance - but that of course wouldn't have suited his purpose.

Or again, when he notices that I do refer to other views, such as Gandhi's and Ngugi's, he says I have 'buried' their remarks 'in comments on the expense of bilingualism'. [270] If you look at the relevant quotations in *EGL*, you will find that they are spread over two pages, in a section prominently headed 'The rejection of English' (114), and that the reference to the cost of bilingualism occurs in a single sentence over a page later. Buried? That's the 'passing reference' syndrome again. Moreover, the sentence on bilingualism is immediately preceded by one in which I applaud 'the promotion of bilingual or multilingual policies'. P doesn't draw your attention to that, because that would go against the case he is trying to build up.

'Buried' is just one of several loaded terms scattered throughout this review. It is typical of the polemic approach. Here are a couple more examples. He says that 'some of the formulations ... are lifted verbatim' from my *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. [268] Note the shiftiness implicit in the term 'lifted'. P wants to convey the impression that I am doing it behind the reader's back. The only problem is that the reliance on *CEEL* is something I've already drawn the reader's attention to in my Preface. Or again, 'Crystal ... writes blithely' [269] that I overstate the role of America in my account of the growth of global English. Note the weasel word, suggestive of an uncritical carelessness. I stand by my phrasing - I said 'almost single-handedly' - and the book certainly doesn't ignore the British Council and ELT, for example (see pp. 103-4). But I remain convinced that, without America, English would not be a global language now; and that only America could have put English in this position. It may be a debatable view, but it certainly isn't a blithe one.

Here are some other P imaginings. '[Crystal] sees no causal relationship between the globalisation of English and the demise of other languages'. [265] P ignores my section on language death, in which I deplore such demise. I call it 'an intellectual and social tragedy' (17). That's pretty strong, wouldn't you say? I say quite clearly that we need a general perspective on language dominance and loss. Big languages have been killing off little languages throughout history. Today, thanks to decades of work in sociolinguistics, we stand a chance of becoming aware of what the issues are and doing something about it. But to make English the only bad guy, from a modern perspective, when the bad guys have been the languages of all the major expansionist nations - and I include Russian, Chinese, and many languages of Africa alongside such cases as English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French - is just more polemic, which I hope will fool nobody. I agree that as English becomes more global, there are increasing risks for some other languages, but the view that there is a 'causal relationship between the globalisation of English and the demise of other languages' is the kind of gross oversimplification that I want nothing to do with. English the cause of the death of languages in Australia? Certainly. In Brazil? I don't think so.

Or again, P notices that I refer to 'economic imperialism', but because I put it in quotes he sees me as finding it 'unpalatable' and wanting to 'distance' myself from it. [268] What I find unpalatable, in fact, is P's naive historicism, in which the past is interpreted through the mores of the present. The reason why I use quotes should, once again, be obvious from the context, where I am describing a historical sequence of events, and the quotes symbolise the novelty of the concept at the time.

Or again, 'Crystal notes that as soon as minorities achieve rights, the majority needs to have their rights affirmed' [272] - as if I was recommending this to be a desirable procedure. In fact, I am simply stating what has so often happened: 'In such cases, the dominant power would sometimes take measures to preserve it ... by giving it special recognition'. (76) Of course 'the guiding principle of human rights law is that it is the oppressed that need protection'. [272] *EGL* never suggests otherwise. Indeed I make several suggestions to the contrary. 'It is good to see' the endangered languages protection movements, I say at one point (18), and then: 'movements for language rights ... have played an important part ...'. A little later: 'Languages of identity need to be maintained' (22). P doesn't quote these sentiments, of course. They would militate against the stereotype he is attempting to create.



'Fundamentally,' P says, 'Crystal's story of globalising English is eurocentric and triumphalist, despite his protestations to the contrary'. [268] It is difficult to know what to say, when someone hides behind pompous language in order to call you a liar. Younger, better-built and more explosive linguists would probably go and punch him on the nose. Older, flabbier, and mild-mannered ones have to be content with simply restating their position. I am not triumphalist about English. Never have been. Never will be. Anyone who has read my work on language would know that. This is the point about context again: authors need to be taken as wholes. P purports to admire my earlier books, but this is flannel, for anyone who has actually done me the honour of reading my views over the years knows how much I value languages, and celebrate them in all their forms. I have spoken and written on behalf of minority languages for years. I have had an active interest in the position of my other language, Welsh. I could list my successes (and failures) in promoting Welsh in my corner of Wales. I was even once - I offer this point to P, no charge - called anti-English. So when I said, clearly and quietly, in my preface, that I have tried to write a book which is not triumphalist, I meant it. When I talk about 'the unpalatable face of linguistic triumphalism' (13), I meant it. I know that there are those around who cannot see a sentence such as 'English is a world language' without condemning it as triumphalist, so I took the trouble to spell out my position clearly. At the time I thought I was overdoing it. Now I realise that maybe I didn't stress the point enough. But I don't think however much I could stress it would enable me to penetrate a closed mind of P's calibre.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that P wishes I had written some other kind of book, in which his own bizarre views should have figured more largely. At one point, he thinks *EGL* should be a book on minority languages, in which the European Union situation would be fully explicated. [272-3] At another, he wants it to be about the American indigenous peoples and their languages. [266] At another, he seems to want it to be about language dominance in general: *EGL*, he says, 'ignores the fact that global (and local) inequalities are increasing, and that [the 'innovations' of] the global system is [are] having catastrophic ecological and cultural effects'. [265] I found that point especially ironic, because just after I had finished writing *EGL* I began work on two projects to do with endangered languages. One was a dramatic treatment of the catastrophe: it took the form of a play called 'Living On', which was completed in 1997. The other was a general academic account of the situation, on similar lines to *EGL*, which will be published by CUP in 1999 [sic] - or, at least, it will be if the perceived inadequacies of *EGL* do not generate any more time-consuming P-like red herrings! Perhaps my awareness of the impending projects kept me from including more on the endangered languages issue in *EGL*. I don't know. If it did, the imbalance has now been made good. [cf. further in the Epilogue below]

I can understand P wanting the position he espouses in his own book to be given greater prominence in mine. He'll be pleased to see that I added a reference to it, and a few others, when the Press gave me the opportunity to make some minor changes, earlier this year [1998], for the paperback edition (out in September 1998). But that's as far as I would want to go. When I read *Linguistic Imperialism*, I was unimpressed by the curious hotchpotch of political innuendo which it manifested.<sup>[2]</sup> I was unconvinced by the 'great plot' scenario painted there. Whatever truth there might be in the view that there is a correlation between linguistic and political hierarchy, I felt that the case was blown by its overstatement. There was nothing to be gained by attempting to restate or counter that kind of polemic, I thought. There are real issues of pain and tragedy caused by language policies around the world - P and I are agreed about that - but they are not helped by the one-sided, black-and-white picture which P presents. I think I can see - I certainly try to see - both sides of the coin. P does not even try. And along with all polemicists he condemns any attempt at a balanced statement, using the classic language of their trade to do so. All polemicists say of their opponents that they have been 'selective', that they use 'biased and ideologically loaded claims', that they 'trivialise' the issues. This is standard claptrap. They fail to see the ideological mote in their own eye. They fail to detect subtlety. P, for example, has totally missed the conventional irony implicit in my use of the phrase '[English being] in the right place at the right time'. [273] A bit more discourse analysis. When someone says this, they are typically reflecting on the unexpected and often undeserved good fortune of the recipient. If I say, when John turns up at the bar just as I'm offering to buy a round of drinks, 'John's always in the right place at the right time', I am not praising him, nor being triumphalist about him. The usage is ironic. Rather than trivialising the issue, the phrase adds a depth to it, which P has completely missed.

Did I get anything useful from this review at all? By hunting behind the verbal smokescreen ('inconsistency and errors') I did actually get something out of his remarks on Africa. I described Cameroon as multilingual, but not Nigeria (I certainly should have done that - in my other writing Nigeria is my main example of West African multilingualism). Mea culpa. Also, when I said 'Ghana was the first Commonwealth country to achieve independence, in 1960', I meant 'in Africa', and it was silly not to have made that clear. Mea culpa. Also, I didn't include separate sections on Namibia, Botswana and Lesotho, and I should have done so. Mea maxima culpa. This is the sort of helpful comment one likes to see in a review, as it can genuinely improve the quality of a work. If only there were more points like that in P's review. But most of the important linguistic issues which I do raise in *EGL* he passes over in silence. Is the possible emergence of a World Standard Spoken English a plausible scenario?

Is a global language such a unique event? Is there really a research advantage to those who have English as a first language (let us hear the views of those whose English is fluent - the *EEM* [or *AL*] is an ideal forum)? Are there other factors which have fostered the growth of global English in addition to the ones I list? Have I overestimated any of the ones I do list? P pays no attention to Chapters 3 and 4, which are (in my view) the core of the book, taking up a third of its pages. I hope the debate in the *EEM* [or *AL*], if it grows, will concentrate on such substantive issues, and not be sucked into the kind of anti-linguisticism which P believes in.

P concludes: 'My analysis of Crystal's book has tried to concentrate on its scholarly shortcomings rather than any assumed differences between his ideology and mine'. [274] Well, he has tried and failed. The review is a mass of ideology and innuendo. My favourite is 'Crystal's apparent assumption that English is exclusively for the good' [269], though a close second is the 'daunting challenge' I am supposed to have set myself, in writing this book, namely 'how a British view can present itself as universally relevant and appropriate'. [265] Such things are part of P's fecund imagination only. And then, after all the selective quotation and misrepresentation, P has the cheek to say it is me who is excluding types of information 'that do not fit into the world-view underpinning his narrative!' [271] It is me who is supposed to have 'unjustifiably over-simplified the complexity and reality of global English!' [271] Oy vay.

P would do well to take his own advice, from his final paragraph [in *EEM* only], and 'probe more deeply into fundamental issues of approach and validity in coming to grips with global English, in relating our value judgements and ideological preferences to the types of data we invoke and the generalisations about cause and effect that are permissible.' If he did so, he would see that his review of *EGL* is little more than a pastiche, in which a selection of pages (about a fifth of the whole book, I estimate) have been used to (mis)represent the book as a whole. It doesn't help me, nor the audience interested in world English issues, and confirms my original instinct that his position has little to offer.

#### Epilogue

P's review demonstrates a truth recently reiterated by Alberto Manguel: 'a reviewer is a reader once removed, guiding the reader, not through the book, but through the reviewer's reading of that book' (Manguel 1999: 217). His review, I have argued, tells you far more about P than it does about me. He has seen in the book only what his ideology lets him see,

and when he has not found what he expected to be there, he has read in meanings to suit. Reviewers who are not so blinkered have seen things differently. To take an example, chosen because it addresses P's basic accusation that *EGL* is 'triumphalist', one reviewer - reading the same book, mind - observes that 'the tone is not triumphalist' (Maley 1999). Another concludes that 'Crystal deplores the triumphalism in English articles about the spread of English' (Rogaley 1997). A third, having suggested the scenario that English is so far ahead of other languages that English speakers can relax, says: 'Actually, Crystal does not want us to relax, and urges against triumphalism. He warns of the resentment, envy, anger of the non-English mother-tongue speakers who feel disadvantaged. Or who, worse still, feel their mother tongue or identity threatened' (Hanson 1997). Plainly, there is more at issue here than glib judgements such as 'triumphalist' will permit you to see.

I do not share P's black-and-white view of life. I see the issues as more dynamic and multi-faceted. I also see problem-solving in a very different light. If you want to change someone's (or some organization's) ideas, I do not believe the best way to set about it is through a confrontation which sets up stereotypes and ignores context, in the manner of P's review. It takes a lot of time and ingenuity to find an alternative way, but I believe the effort in the long run is more fruitful. I take two examples, as they both turn up in P's remarks. First, in relation to the British Council. In a brief and characteristically abusive rejoinder to my *EEM* reply (Phillipson, 1999b) he adds a typical innuendo: 'Crystal's response [i.e. the one reproduced above] provides fascinating insight into the workings of the mind of those who are promoting the cause of English worldwide (a primary purpose of the British Council, on whose august board Crystal now sits).' (This is from someone whose rejoinder expresses a principled objection to 'personalised attacks', by the way. At least *EGL* kept to the general issues.) He doesn't think to ask the really interesting question, 'Now what would Crystal be doing on the Council's Board in the first place?' In his fantasy world, I expect he imagines it to be one triumphalist cocktail party after another. The truth is very different.

Maley comments, in relation to another book which he reviewed alongside mine, that 'if the [British] Council, among others, wish to maintain their position, they may have to adopt a less triumphalist and more consultative stance in their dealings with 'clients' worldwide' (Maley 1999). No 'may' about it. They must. And there is a paper which gives due prominence to this very point, chiefly with reference to the prestige attached to standard British English; it was presented to the Council's Conference on 'Innovation and Best Practice in ELT', held in July 1998 (an edited version of which was published in Kennedy (1999)). I know, because I wrote it. In the original version, it says, at one point: 'The biggest challenge facing British ELT in the millennium, and thus the Council - at least in its linguistic persona - is how to

come to terms with the new global situation' [in which new varieties of English are the norm], and I go on to say:

Our linguistic past has been shaped by recognizing the value of linguistic diversity; and I believe the same should be true for our linguistic future. ELT policy-making, accordingly, should make diversity its central principle - removing it from the periphery to which it has hitherto largely been assigned. ... But to do so may make many feel uncomfortable. Could the British Council ever stand up and say, openly, 'There is nothing wrong with teaching American and other varieties of English'? ... [Moreover,] in some parts of the world, the wisest advice would be to recommend that we divert some of our resources to maintaining the life of minority languages. Identity and intelligibility are both needed for a healthy linguistic life. And the responsibility of doing something to try to minimize the ongoing damage to the world's ecolinguistic environment - with a language dying somewhere in the world, on average, every fortnight or so - belongs to everyone, whether they are ELT specialists or not.

This sort of thing - I hope P would agree - needs to be said, firmly and repeatedly, insofar as there are opportunities to do so. And I have found myself with just such opportunities in the past two years, thanks to being a member of the Council's Board. In my paper I added, as an ironic aside: 'I am aware that this kind of talk is controversial - treasonable, probably. Perhaps I am already staking my claim to being the shortest-serving member of the Board in British Council history. I hope not. For we have to address these issues. They will not go away. We cannot stick our heads into the sand, and pretend they are not there.' Well, I am still a Board member, as I write, and the issues *are* beginning to be debated. I have since had several other opportunities to present a linguistic philosophy in which all the values of the 'ecology of language paradigm' [p. 274] are present. I am getting a good hearing, and certainly do not feel isolated in my views. I have no idea what the outcome will be, with respect to policy development, or how long it might take to see change taking place. But surely to beaver away at changing attitudes from within an organization is something to be applauded rather than sniped at?

And the same point applies to my second example - why I wrote *EGL* in the first place. It was, as my preface makes clear, in response to an invitation from US English to write a book explaining why English has achieved the global standing it has. I must say I nearly fell out of my tree when that invitation came through, and spent some time thinking about whether to accept it or not. I decided to go ahead, especially when I learned just how many members US English had - over a million.<sup>2</sup> The chance to put before such a membership an account which

draws attention to issues they would never normally encounter seemed too good an opportunity to miss. P has missed this point. Not so another reviewer of *EGL* (Wright in press) who sees the point and comments 'Whether a diehard 'English First' reader will change his or her mind as a result of reading it, I cannot hazard'. Nor can I. But maybe they are not all diehard. And maybe my approach will change some attitudes. I thought it was worth a try, at any rate. Certainly, I don't see that the alternative way has ever had much effect - haranguing official-English advocates as spawn of the devil, and the like (to take just one of the milder descriptions I have heard used). That gets you nowhere.

One of the extra bits that P puts before *AL* readers is the penultimate paragraph in which he affirms the validity of a two-paradigm view of the world, as labelled (by Tsuda): a 'diffusion of English paradigm' and an 'ecology of language paradigm'. (This is the black-and-white world-view again, in a new disguise. But paradigms don't operate or shift in that way, as we learned back in the 1970s when there was so much criticism of the 'self-contained' view of paradigms presented by Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*). P puts me 'squarely' within the former. If forced to think in this two-term way, I would place myself just as 'squarely' within the latter, citing various publications as evidence. My next book, *Language Death*, is totally within the latter, too. But perhaps here there is a clue as to what may have happened, rhetorically, with *EGL*, to explain how anyone could react in the way P has (a reaction which, I must admit, took me very much by surprise because it had never occurred to me that what I wrote could warrant such a perverse interpretation). It is a fact that I was planning this book, and other associated activities to do with endangered languages, at the same time that I was writing *EGL*. This may have led me not to include as much on the 'ecology' side as some readers might like me to have done, because I was anticipating a separate treatment of those issues in due course. In which case, all I can hope is that the 'monolingual English-speakers' whom P thinks will 'misuse' *EGL* [274] will also eventually encounter my other book, and make good the perceived deficiency as a result. But whatever happens, that book will need to be seen in its authorial context as much as *EGL* does - which, as I recall, is where I first came in.

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#### Footnotes

- 1 For readers who have not read the earlier version, the additions made for *AL* are: two-thirds of p. 265, a few extra sentences and references on pp. 267-8, the paragraphs focusing on Curtis and Kontra on pp. 269-70, the text surrounding the Mazrui quote on p. 271, the 'basic errors' section on pp. 272-3, the first three bullet points straddling pp. 273-4, and the penultimate paragraph.
- 2 In his rejoinder (Phillipson 1999b), P uses one of the most curious arguments I have ever heard to defend the position of a book. 'If I really was adrift in my analysis of contemporary global English, it is unlikely that my book would have already been reprinted three times, that people from China, Japan and Korea have offered to translate it, and that some people have told me that the book changed their lives.' An 'argumentum ex venditionibus', worthy of Tristram Shandy.
- 3 The decision produced a nice irony. Not wishing to profit personally from US English, I eventually agreed to write the book but only on condition that a fee should be paid to help support a bilingual charity in North Wales. Surprising as it may seem, they agreed. And, because in the *AL* review Phillipson makes the most contemptible remark of all, asserting that 'British academics have drawn considerable profit (in several senses)' [from the English language business], and hinting at 'serious ethical questions' to be addressed [269], I had better make it clear that all royalties from the sale of *EGL* were donated from the outset to the same bilingual centre. Not that it's any of P's business, but innuendo about ethics can only be countered by facts.