

Native speakers in linguistic imperialism

Robert Phillipson

Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

Abstract

An investigation of Native English Speaking Teachers' performance in schemes in six Asian contexts, commissioned by the British Council, and undertaken by three British academics, is subjected to critical evaluation. Key issues for exploration are the issue of a monolingual approach to English learning and teaching, and the inappropriate qualifications of those sent to education systems when they are unfamiliar with the learners' languages, cultures, and pedagogical traditions. Whether the schemes involved constitute linguistic imperialism is analysed. Whereas the need for multilingual competence is recognised as desirable by some British experts, the native speakers in question seldom have this key qualification. This is even the case when the host country (Brunei) aims at bilingual education. It is unlikely that the host countries are getting value for money. Whether the UK and other 'English-speaking' countries have relevant expertise is questionable. There is therefore a definite need for a change of paradigm, one based on principles for effective foreign language teaching. Some but far from all Western 'experts' recognize this need, whereas scholars and teachers elsewhere do. Five fallacies that underpin the linguisticism of British pedagogical expertise are generally involved in native speaker export businesses. They underpin a hierarchy with under-qualified native speakers projected as superior to local teachers who are seen as in need of foreign 'aid'. In view of the British bodies involved openly declaring the economic and geopolitical agenda behind this English teaching business, there is clear evidence of linguistic imperialism in the functions of this global professional service. These activities serve to strengthen Western interests.

Keywords: *bilingual education, communicative language teaching, English Language Teaching, globalisation of English, linguistic imperialism, native speakers*

Introduction

This study assesses the role of native speakers of English in school systems in Asia and reviews British involvement in support for English Language Teaching (ELT) of this kind. The activity has been researched in depth in a book that the article reports on. My analysis explores whether a monolingual approach is appropriate in foreign

language teaching., and whether applied linguistics and the professional worlds of English Language Teaching (ELT) in ‘English-speaking’ countries need a radical re-think. It assesses whether schemes for the dispatch of relatively under-qualified native speakers can be seen as constituting linguistic imperialism, and the goal and role of British organizations in facilitating such schemes. It concludes with seeing ‘global English’ promotion as a key dimension of corporate-led globalisation.

The book in question describes the experience of Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) in Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan, their roles in school education, and their collaboration with Local English Teachers (LETs). The book was commissioned and published by the British Council, and edited by three British scholars (Copland, Garton, and Mann, 2016).

The designations NEST and LET have been coined as an alternative to the familiar Native and Non-Native labels, because it is inadmissible to define one group negatively in relation to the other, as deficient. ‘Local’ stresses that such English teachers are nationals of the countries in question, whereas the NEST label implicitly endorses the notion that the presence and expertise of native speakers is of universal relevance. This is an assumption that the book appears to take for granted.

The book consists of 14 chapters that analyse experience in Asia over the past half-century, a recent expansion into Latin America, and chapters with a more general focus, on professionalism and myths in ELT, cross-cultural challenges in team teaching, project management, and racist perceptions of NESTS of different origins. Authors from both the sending and receiving countries are strongly represented. The main body of the book is thoughtful chalk-face self-evaluation and monitoring, followed by generalisations on issues of principle. The final chapter, ‘Opinions and positions on native-speakerism’, includes short opinion pieces, vignettes, which influential scholars were invited to write independently of the LETs and NESTs studies. Kirkpatrick, Phillipson, Leung, Kramersch, Jenkins, Llundu, Mahboob, Matsuda, Edge, Coleman, and Pennycook therefore do not figure in the List of Contents of the book or merit bios as contributors.

A Foreword written by ‘John Knagg OBE, Senior Adviser, English, British Council’ (pp. 3-4¹) states firmly that NESTS should not be ‘monolingual and unqualified but increasingly multilingual, multicultural and expert’. This is considered an essential professional requirement. However, the chapters confirm that it is seldom the case at present, quite the opposite. Most NESTs are not equipped linguistically, culturally, or pedagogically for their task.

Knagg also states that the goal of British efforts in this field is to promote a ‘friendly knowledge and understanding of the United Kingdom and to build trust through a variety of activities and programmes around the world’. The goal for British worldwide English teaching promotion is an ‘appropriate linguistic model’ of British English for a ‘global ELT profession’ based on ‘professional exchange between the UK and other countries’. The assumption is that the UK - presumably in parallel with Australia², Canada, and the USA -has the relevant expertise for this task. Since the native speaker concept has been debated vigorously for several decades, the clarification of NEST professional activities presented in this book is welcome.

A separate issue that Knagg, perhaps not surprisingly, does not refer to is the importance for the British economy and British soft power of the ELT industry, for universities, publishers, language schools, ‘aid’, consultancy et al. Nor does Knagg reveal that the British Council has been transformed over several decades into a body that funds most of its work through English teaching, language testing, consultancy, and projects, as detailed in its Annual Reports and Corporate plans³. It is also deeply involved in supplying native English speakers as teachers of English for Military Purposes in a very large number of countries worldwide⁴. The British Council is increasingly run as a business, with its managerial staff recruited from the commercial world. The book does not investigate the economics of NEST schemes, apart from noting that they are extremely expensive for the governments of the Asian countries involved. Several of the chapters query whether this is in fact a good investment.

The learning task

The editors of the volume (Copland, Garton and Mann, 5) note that while academic analysis of ELT has thrived for many years, ‘in classrooms perhaps little has changed’. This observation presumably refers to the work of both NESTs and LETs, and the reality that the schemes under review have seldom resulted in any significant improvement in English learning. The editorial trio cite ‘valuable contributions to our understanding of native-speakerism, linguistic imperialism, team teaching and related issues’ (ibid.), but the focus in the chapters is almost entirely on teacher qualifications, classroom behaviour, planning for it, relations between LETs and NESTs, and the implications of native speakerism. They draw the conclusion that the qualifications of LETs and NESTs, their training and functioning, need to be improved.

English is definitely a *foreign* language in Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea, for which good *foreign* language learning practices are needed. The book makes scarcely any mention of what are widely seen as key constituents of well-qualified foreign language teaching. These include contrastive analysis of the learner’s language and the target language (in areas like morphology, syntax, and phonetics),

metalinguistic, metacommunicative, and cultural knowledge, discourse, pragmatic, and strategic competence, bilingual dictionaries and translation. Pennycook rightly notes (262) that translation is banned in the ELT industry. ELT pedagogy also ignores the major importance of differences of script between English and Chinese or Korean scripts, and the major semantic and cognitive differences between English and these linguistic cultures (Bunce 2016).

In Scandinavia, where I have lived for over 40 years, *communicative language teaching* has been well established for decades. The teaching materials that I see my grandchildren using in their initial years of English and French learning are produced locally rather than by transnational companies. The textbooks have vivid, culturally appealing texts that provide models of communicative practice. In addition there are translations of all new lexical items, explicit metalinguistic and metacommunicative explanations, and regular procedures for learners to check the progress of their learning. The learning task for an Asian child is much greater than for nearly all continental European learners on virtually all such parameters.

The learning of English in Scandinavia is relatively successful, for a wide range of reasons, among them that cognitive skills in the mother tongue are well established (English generally has similar language family origins as the mother tongue of learners), teachers are well qualified, bilingual dictionaries are important resources for autonomous learning, and there is massive exposure to English outside the classroom. Native speakers of English play virtually no role as teachers in many European countries, except as targets in multi-media technological form. For employment in teacher training and university departments of English, what is important is possession of relevant qualifications irrespective of nationality or mother tongue.

Investigating native speaker experience

The three editors and a fourth scholar undertook a study of NEST schemes that is reported separately (Copland, Davis, Garton and Mann 2016). Their fieldwork - interviews with LETS and NESTs and classroom observations - aimed at charting existing practices and evidence of intercultural sensitivity. They assert in an ultra-brief overview of English as a global language that ‘English has become *the* language of engineering, science, trade, finance and diplomacy’ (ibid., 7). The claim that English is *the sole* language worldwide in which such functions are carried out is nonsense, reflecting British ignorance and ethnocentricity.

Kirkpatrick writes that ‘the most preferred teacher of English in today’s world remains the native speaker’. This is definitely not the case in Europe, India, or in much foreign language education worldwide, nor in classrooms in the USA for

immigrants learning English. Kirkpatrick otherwise rightly denounces the misuse of the native speaker birthright in ‘many settings’ (248).

Keaney (145) also over-generalises when claiming that ‘NESTs now work in almost all ELT contexts’ and can ‘add significant value to education systems around the world’. However, how can one expect such a result from the input of young people with a British, North American, or Australian background, when these countries are notoriously unsuccessful in achieving foreign language learning in general education? It is extremely unlikely if NESTs themselves have seldom achieved high proficiency in a foreign language either in primary education or as teenagers.

What is not questioned in the book is the ELT communicative language teaching paradigm, or whether the monolingualism of most Anglo-American applied linguistics and ELT is fit for purpose (Kabel 2009). The only reference to the learners’ mother tongue(L1) is when it is used by either LETs or NESTs for a very limited ‘range of functions, from managing the classroom to being humorous and explaining grammar’, which is ‘generally the prerogative of LETs’ (Copland et al, 28). Mother tongues are banned except for very limited purposes.

The British research team makes six recommendations, five of which are for practical improvements. The sixth is ‘Teachers should be encouraged to maintain a healthy regard for the value of L1 and L2 in the classroom. The value of both languages may need to be explained to head teachers ‘ (ibid., 29). Elsewhere Copland, Garton and Mann state that ‘language teachers should aspire to be *multilingual and multicultural*’ (256, italics added). This sounds laudable, but how can awareness materialise if a NEST lives monolingually in private and professional life? Awareness presupposes factual knowledge, and insight into the language and culture of children whose mother tongue is Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.

The limitations of the book’s advocacy can be seen clearly in how the Brunei experience is presented. The *Centre for British Teachers*(CfBT) has 50 years of experience of exporting NESTs. The manager of the *Brunei* scheme, Greg Keaney, claims (130) that ELT was ‘well established as a recognised professional discipline ‘ by the end of the 1960s. When I look back on a lifetime of experience in ELT, entirely in foreign language contexts (the first nine in British Council employment, after that in higher education in Denmark), I feel it is fair to state, as I do in my own vignette in the book, that ELT in the 1960s was ‘dogmatic, behaviourist, monolingual and misguided’ (249)⁵.

The Brunei chapter contains important reflections on native speaker roles, and ideas for taking things forward. Keaney explains that the CfBT works in close collaboration with the local authorities, recruits carefully, and prepares its teachers thoroughly. He cites with approval five desiderata for improving ELT in Brunei identified by a British consultant. Among them are a *bilingual policy* for English and Malay, and a '*bilingual education partnership*' between the Ministry of Education and CfBT (136). However, the ideal NEST recruit for CfBT has teaching experience and qualifications as 'English teachers (for secondary) or primary (for younger learners) in their countries of origin' (144). This means that the cultural, educational, and linguistic universe of an English-speaking country is seen as the foundation for ELT, onto which some *monolingual* ELT training is grafted. NESTs in Brunei are apparently only responsible for English as a subject. They are expected to function monolingually. There is no indication that they should learn Malay, or be interested in the local culture, or have the essential qualifications that good foreign language teaching builds on. Native speakers in British Council, Peace Corps, and similar schemes are extremely unlikely to have learned a foreign language to a high level of competence. Their starting-point can therefore be seen as professionally blindfolded, blinkered.

The extensive research on *bilingual education* in many countries is categorical in defining bilingual education as involving the teaching of content matter (i.e. not merely foreign languages as subjects) through the medium of two languages. The Brunei schooling therefore does not live up to the criteria for bilingual education. Nor does *aspiring* 'to be multilingual and multicultural', as advocated by Knagg (3) and Copland et al(246), result in well-qualified NESTs.

The chapter on *Hong Kong* (Wong, Lee, and Gao, three extremely well qualified researchers) condemns a monolingual approach to the trilingual education that is needed locally (Cantonese, Mandarin, and English). For them the monolingual native speaker paradigm limits all teachers 'linguistically, pedagogically, and professionally' (229).

Mahboob argues on similar lines and demands an overhaul of 'key assumptions made in the applied linguistics and TESOL literature' (256). Most of the vignettes, however tantalisingly brief, argue for change. Kramersch points out that there are commercial reasons behind the promotion of several international languages, and pleads for reflective multilingual mediators. The texts by Edge, Leung, Jenkins, and Pennycook suggest small steps in this direction, but all within a monolingual paradigm of teacher training and teaching. This is not enough.

It is therefore vital to ask whether ELT and applied linguistics experts in the UK or in other ‘English-speaking’ countries are equipped for the change of paradigm that is needed. This ties in with whether the many LETs who go to ‘native speaker’ countries for training and academic qualifications really get value for money. These are existential questions that ought to be addressed in the UK and elsewhere, but are not explored in the book.

Linguistic imperialism?

There is no space here for detailed presentation of the vast literature on language in education policy, bi- and multilingual education⁶, linguistic hegemony, linguicism and linguoracism⁷, the increased use of English in higher education worldwide⁸, English in neoliberal globalisation⁹, and the global textbook industry¹⁰, much of which LETs and NESTs should ideally be familiar with.

Whether *linguistic imperialism* is involved in NEST schemes, and how this might be explored theoretically or empirically, is not investigated in the book. In my view, this is a missed opportunity, and an untenable narrowing of focus. Applied linguists seem to be reluctant to engage with an approach that is seen as ‘political’ or to consider whether their professionalism is implicated in maintaining linguistic inequality and injustice, and may in effect be unprofessional. These are sensitive issues that require more than merely noting that there is some research on the topic.

In *Linguistic Imperialism* (Phillipson 1992), I devote one long chapter to exploring five tenets that are foundational for Anglo-American ELT: the monolingual fallacy, native speaker fallacy, early start fallacy, maximum exposure fallacy, and the subtractive fallacy (ibid, 173-222). I explore the origins of this doctrine, and the relevant research evidence of successful language learning in bilingual education and foreign language education. A monolingual approach appears to be a common-sense concentration on the target language only, but is invalid cognitively, linguistically, and pedagogically.

Adherence to this fallacious pedagogical canon has major structural and economic consequences in educational investment and priorities, training, and testing, as well as for ‘international’ publishers and the testing business. In education worldwide it serves to establish inequalities between native speakers of English and speakers of other languages, and teachers from different backgrounds, irrespective of their qualifications. It is clear evidence of linguicism structurally and ideologically. This term was coined by analogy with racism, sexism, and classism to account for how certain languages are privileged at the expense of others¹¹.

A monolingual ELT paradigm creates an Anglo-American monopoly of expertise, which is still, 60 years after its establishment, fully alive and kicking, as demonstrated by Kumaravadivelu (2016) in ‘The decolonial option in English teaching: can the subaltern act?’. This article reveals how the paradigm disempowers LETs. If LETs are construed as needing ‘help’ from NESTs, the system stigmatises LETs and presupposes that NETs are ‘needed’. This form of ‘partnership’ entrenches inequality and is generally racist (Kabel 2016, Kubota and Okuda 2016). It is not a recipe for good intercultural interaction, even with the best of intentions and ‘awareness’.

It is the *monolingual communicative language teaching* gospel that has been misguidedly exported to the Asian cultures in the schemes described by Garton et al (2016). Restricting the research focus to a concern with native speakerism ‘forgets’ the other four fallacies, and therefore concentrates on only a limited subset of what is at stake. It excludes the variables that have led to the existence and underlying beliefs of such schemes. If ELT training in applied linguistics departments in the UK is still committed to monolingualism, it is no surprise that ‘little has changed’. If the Japanese government insists on a monolingual ELT approach (muzzling a bilingual, as Janase’s traumatic experience in her chapter evinces), then it is unprofessional for organizations in any ‘English-speaking’ country to recruit for an uninformed scheme.

It is particularly the *monolingual* and *native speaker* fallacies that are of decisive relevance in the foreign language contexts under analysis. English as a *subtractive* language, i.e. the replacement of mother tongues by a dominant language, either for all purposes or for those associated with high status functions in the modern economy, is of less immediate relevance in foreign language learning contexts.

By contrast, in Singapore, language subtraction and displacement has been in force since the country’s creation, because English has been the sole medium of instruction throughout education, with heritage languages only taught as subjects. Less extreme variants of the subtractive fallacy are widespread in other postcolonial contexts. The mushrooming of ‘international’ English-medium schools for the children of elites worldwide is having comparable subtractive effects, with the consequence, as in Singapore, of English becoming the main language of the home as well as professional life. Subtractive language policies are in place if a monolingual pedagogy ignores the language that learners start out with, and functions as though the children’s minds are *tabula rasa*.

The *early start* fallacy could well be in force in countries where English is being learned in primary schools, if the age issue has been given priority without policy for English and other languages throughout general education being holistically planned,

and undertaken by well-qualified teachers using culturally and linguistically appropriate teaching materials. The same concern applies in relation to the *maximum exposure* fallacy, since quantity is less important than the quality of what is taught and learned. The research on bilingual education has clarified many of the key variables for successful bilingual language learning.

Far from linguistic imperialism being merely a ‘deliberate post-colonial plot’ or exclusively an economic issue (Copland, Davis, Garton, and Mann, 8), it is a vastly more complex mix of processes and structures, push and pull pressures, supply and demand, in which the expansion of English in education systems continues to play a major role. What is not in doubt is that the British and Americans have set the agenda for the global expansion of English and for the creation of an ELT profession run by the British and Americans since the 1930s (Phillipson 2009, especially pages 103-146; Phillipson 1992, especially chapter 6). Winston Churchill pleaded for this in a speech at Harvard in 1943 in which he connected security issues after the defeat of fascism to a policy of joint Anglo-American global dominance, including ‘the invaluable birthright’ of a common language for promotion worldwide (Phillipson 2016b)¹². British governments since that time have invariably consolidated this mission. The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC¹³ has as its goal the promotion of US/UK dominance worldwide.

The role of all activities in ELT in this dimension of globalization should not be ignored. NEST schemes are part of the fabric of this structure with its ideological underpinning, professional identity and pedagogical practices, one component in a global business venture to secure British interests and influence. This understanding is not a conspiracy or plot but a present-day reality for which identifiable agents are responsible.

The British Council: from cultural diplomacy to corporate plans

This is not the place for a general critique of British Council efforts to strengthen the learning of English worldwide, indeed no-one is currently in a position to do so because of the wide range of activities involved (often documented in the *EL Gazette*). A major multi-disciplinary study, integrating policy and practice, and drawing on insider and outsider specialists would be needed. However there is no doubt that there are fundamental contradictions between a para-statal institution that benefits from charity status but which is a vast business enterprise that generates most of its income from teaching and testing English, and consultancies.

There are serious contradictions between issues of principle and actual practice. Advisory reports by experts who are well informed about the scholarly literature on

language policy and multilingual education have been produced for the British Council, for instance Hywel Coleman's studies of Pakistan (2010) and francophonie West Africa (2013), in collaboration with local experts. By contrast there is British Council support for English-medium education in primary schools, for instance in the Punjab in Pakistan and in parts of Africa, that is in conflict with what is known about what ought to be done in general education, as recognised by UNESCO (2003).

It is BC policy to claim that 'development' is dependent on proficiency in English (Howson 2013) whereas much of the scholarly literature on language and development contradicts the belief that the promotion of English leads to economic development (see many of the articles in anthologies edited by Alderson, 2009, Coleman, 2011, and Erling and Seargeant, 2013, and my reviews of two of these, Phillipson 2010, 2013).

The marketization of English is led by a 'Director of English and Exams' who is presented on the BC website as follows: 'Mark Robson is a member of the British Council's Executive Board. Much of his business career has been in international consumer product marketing and sales, including at the market research agency MORI, Colgate-Palmolive, and the US conglomerate Georgia-Pacific.'

English is marketed as a language that everyone needs and that all should learn. This is one of many myths of global English (Phillipson 2016b). British Council policy texts, which are used in advising governments worldwide, describe English as 'the world's common language', which demographically and sociolinguistically is patent nonsense. It is blithely proclaimed as the *lingua franca* for humanity. It projects 'world' English or 'global' English as a universal need (Graddol 2006: 96-97, 106-9): 'English is now seen as a "basic skill" which all children require if they are fully to participate in 21st century civil society. (...) It can now be used to communicate to people from almost any country in the world (...) We are fast moving into a world in which not to have English is to be marginalised and excluded' (Graddol 2010, 10).

The argument that you can communicate in English with 'people from almost any country in the world' is flawed. You don't get far in Latin America, southern Europe, most of Africa, the Middle East or Asia - even in India - with English outside elite circles and tourist sites. In Scandinavia, proficiency in communication in English above a limited spoken level is not universal, even if schooling provides a sound foundation for English to be used in academia, business, and many leisure activities. While English is of major importance for the global economy, assuming that it is so 'basic' that it is a requirement for economic success is contradicted by the fact that the

economies of China, Japan and Korea succeed through using local languages in basic education, as do continental European countries.

I see the ubiquitous promotion of English under Anglo-American guidance, in discourse that merges the academic and the political as a logical development from the myth of Europeans having the right to occupy land on other continents as though the inhabitants had no right to it, the myth of *terra nullius* in the Americas and Australasia. In the 20th century global Americanization has been projected as a *cultura nullius* (Kayman 2004). Graddol, in reports that are commissioned to strengthen British ELT interests worldwide, is in effect projecting English as a *lingua nullius* as though it intrinsically serves the interests of the whole world's population, and with the vested interest of the British in promoting the language concealed (Phillipson 2016a, Phillipson 2016b).

Monolingualism is part of this gospel, buttressed by the beguiling assumption that the British can solve the language learning problems of people worldwide. NESTs are one small contribution to this international thrust. Inappropriate foreign involvement in educational language policy worldwide is analysed in several articles in *Why English? Confronting the Hydra* (Bunce et al, eds.. 2016). The book includes case studies of language pedagogy in Argentina (Jordao), and language education policy in China (Gao and Vaughan), India (Phillipson, Rao), Japan (Kubota and Okuda), Mauritius (Collen et al) and Pakistan (Mustafa), each within the framework of assessing the use and misuse of English worldwide. The context and key parameters are articulated by the editors in their Introduction (Bunce et al) and in the Afterword by Ahmed Kabel. The book is a follow-up on an earlier volume (Rapatahana and Bunce, eds., 2012) but with more focus on successful efforts to challenge and confront the misuse of English.

What is at stake here is the nature of ELT activity promoted by the Core 'English-speaking' countries in Periphery countries in contemporary capitalist globalisation and militarisation. Consultancy and language education projects dovetail with the activities of global professional service firms in setting 'global standards in particular professional areas', in spreading 'best practices', and facilitating a global economic system driven by notions of the 'knowledge society', 'universal' economic laws, and global governance (for detail of the key areas of activity in the world system, assessed by a scholar in business studies, see Boussebaa 2016). Boussebaa shows that for consultancy firms like McKinsey, Accenture, and the big accountancy firms, there is no flow of knowledge from the Periphery to the Core. The discourse of being transnational or global 'is itself a form of manipulation by professionals, operating as it does to universalise the norms and interests of the Core' (Boussebaa 2016). He

refers to the ‘professional services sector (law, advertising, etc.)’ as occupying ‘neo-imperial spaces’ that function through the medium of English.

The English language business fits clearly into this pattern of unequal relationships that serve the interests of the Core countries and their collaborators worldwide. When John Knagg, the key British Council ELT administrator, refers to ‘professional exchange between the UK and other countries’ (cited earlier), the innocuous word ‘exchange’ seems to imply reciprocity but conceals the reality of a one-way transfer of expertise. His goal is explicitly to consolidate a ‘global ELT profession’ under British supervision, to serve British economic and geopolitical interests. In parallel there is intensive activity, choreographed by the British Council at conferences, to consolidate higher education as a global business dominated by the Core countries, USA, UK, Australia, and countries in western Europe that function increasingly in English. Increasing the learning of English in education systems globally and expanding English-medium schools worldwide are clearly part and parcel of global power. Native speakers of English in classrooms worldwide serve to ‘universalise the norms and interests of the Core’, a reality that the ELT profession should be fully aware of. There is a need for a fundamental reappraisal of the profession’s quality and international role.

Coda

Perhaps I should end on a more personal note, with some bio data that people may or may not feel is relevant, and can either read or ignore. The reason for writing it is my feeling that the concept linguistic imperialism often tends to be referred to in a rather ritualistic fashion, and not subjected to any serious exploration or empirical investigation, as in the book analysed in this article. The issue cannot be ignored in most countries worldwide. Since I do not live in an ‘English-speaking country’ but in continental Europe, it is natural for people here to use two or more languages professionally and in personal life (I use five regularly), and to see English in relation to other languages. For my teaching it was essential to be familiar with the language and culture of the Danish learners that I have mainly taught. My interest in what became the study of linguistic imperialism was triggered by discovering how Scandinavian and British ‘aid’ to Namibian refugees from apartheid in southern Africa was totally inappropriate. This led to an interest in analysing the factors that had influenced language policy in former colonies, and why the use of English has continued to expand. I have been invited to lecture in scores of countries, and had lengthy research time in several. My extensive involvement in EU language policy issues (Phillipson 2003), language rights in theory and practice (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1994, 2016, Kontra et al 1999), and multilingual education (Phillipson 2000, Skutnabb-Kangas et al 2009) represents an effort to situate the many roles

played by English and English teaching in wider perspectives and to work for greater social and linguistic justice. The complexity of ELT and language policy in general requires us to attempt to combine macro and micro issues, and to use insights from many social science and humanities disciplines, so that the worlds of the classroom and the wider world are merged productively.

It is arguable that the most logical place for this article to have been published is the *ELT Journal*, established 60 years ago by the British Council, and which proclaims on its website (<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org>) that it is the key journal in this field. Careful scrutiny of the journal's management reveals that unlike normal scholarly journals, it 'is supported by an Advisory Board which assists the Editor in guiding the development of the Journal'. The Board consists of a senior British Council officer (John Knagg), two employees of Oxford University Press, one academic, one representative of IATEFL (a British 'International' professional Association for teachers of English as a Foreign Language), and one 'ELT adviser'. He works as a 'Director of Strategic Partnerships for Cambridge English', the commercial body responsible for examinations and language testing worldwide, alongside textbooks, reference works, etc. It is questionable whether a journal that openly proclaims its strong link with the corporate publishing world, in partnership with a body that promotes British national interests worldwide is compatible with academic freedom, autonomous scholarship, and independent scientific gate-keeping. That is why this article is being published elsewhere.

Notes

¹ The OBE is the Order of the British Empire, typically awarded for public service. All references to the key book analysed here are cited with only author and page.

² Widin's doctoral study of Australian ELT 'aid' projects to two Asian education systems documents that they serve Australian rather than local interests, as highlighted in the name of her 2010 book, *Illegitimate practices. Global English language education*.

³ www.britishcouncil.org.

⁴ This activity is symbiotic with the expansion of NATO and related military activities worldwide: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/track-record/peacekeeping-english-project>.

⁵ At that time the British Council provided funding for foreign language learning for its staff when posted abroad, with the financial incentive of a bonus for passing the Foreign and Commonwealth Office proficiency exams, covering spoken and written production, and translation (French and Serbocroat in my case). This does not appear to be the case any longer, either in British Council service or CfBT.

⁶ García, Skutnabb-Kangas and Torres-Guzmán (eds.) 2006, Skutnabb-Kangas et al 2009.

⁷ Oda 2000, Kabel 2016, Bunce et al 2016, Kubota and Okuda 2016, Macedo, Dendrinos and Gounari 2003.

⁸ Dimona, Hultgren and Jensen (eds.) 2015.

⁹ Block, Gray and Holborrow 2012, Kubota 2014.

¹⁰ Gray 2010.

¹¹ The term was coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, 2000, 2015). Linguistic imperialism is a form of linguisticism.

¹² Churchill was promoting work on Basic English, a simplified form of the language that scholarship at Cambridge and Harvard was involved in. The British Council was mandated to advocate it, but discreetly avoided doing so, and Basic English had a very short life.

¹³ www.thatchercenter.org.

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Author Details

Robert Phillipson is an emeritus professor at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. His books on linguistic imperialism and the globalization of English, European Union language policy, language rights, and multilingualism in education have been published in a dozen countries. He was awarded the UNESCO Linguapax prize in 2010. www.cbs.dk/en/staff/rpibc.