We thank all those who participated in what we believe to be a very useful exercise. There are numerous dimensions of English as an International Language (EIL) and it was impossible to do justice to any of them in our brief provocative piece. We are delighted to have given colleagues the opportunity to expand on our piece in a collection of papers which brings together those who have other concerns and sometimes different positions. Each of the sub-topics that we have raised would really need a book or more to fully explore the issues involved. The gaps in our reference list implicitly acknowledge that many, including the contributors to this forum, have published widely in this area and there was simply not space to include a wide enough range of materials.

As Pennycook succinctly points out, the main focuses of our position paper (PP from now on) are as follows:

1. A more symmetrical understanding of English as a pluricentric language
2. A focus on intercultural communication (especially the pragmatic, discourse, and conceptual levels)
3. Language policies that promote plurilingualism

Inevitably in such a short PP we were forced to treat some issues with less than the scope that we would have liked, and some of these have been picked up by commentators. Some of the points that need clarification concern the link between points 1 and 2. English, like other pluricentric languages, which according to Kloss (1978, pp. 66–67) are “languages with several interacting centres, each providing a national variety with at least some of its own (codified) norms”, is characterised by asymmetry between the “dominant” and “other” national varieties. This is explained in the PP.

There are two characteristics of English that make it more diverse than other PLs:

1. A large number of countries employ English in official or quasi-official domains (Crystal, 1997, p. 54; Graddol, 1998). This means, for instance, that resources produced for other pluricentric languages, such as dictionaries explicitly contrasting national variants, like those for German (Ammon et al., 2004) or Spanish (Real Academia Española, 2001), have not been attempted on the same scale for English.
But we draw attention to the corpus of English as a lingua franca produced by Seidlhofer and her colleagues in Vienna. Similarly, English lacks the possibility of collective planning.

2. Its extensive use in the expanding circle (Kachru, 1985), whose current variation and volatility make the description possible for the inner and outer circle difficult.

When we speak of “multiplicity of norms” in the PP we are not lamenting the absence of norms, as Seidlhofer suggests, but commenting on the realities of diversity and asymmetry. People from the “inner circle” (see PP) are imposing their norms on those with different norms.

The expansion of communities of users of English has initiated pragmatic, conceptual, and discourse variation that has created new communicative needs. While the general consensus of responses to the PP shows a positive disposition to a more symmetrical pluricentricity, they generally remain silent on our section on discursive, pragmatic and conceptual levels (though note that Kirkpatrick has worked extensively on Chinese academic discourse, e.g., Kirkpatrick, 1995). Peters draws attention to particular lexical and orthographic features being preferred in particular regions or continents because of British or American spheres of influence, underlining the continued dominance of those two inner circle varieties above the others. But it is important to take this issue further in relation to cultural substrates in the outer and expanding circles such as discourse structure, turn taking, and pragmatic formulae (see the PP). In the PP we contend that these are the issues of greatest significance in intercultural communication in English as they are closely linked to cultural values. As discussed in the PP, a lack of understanding of pragmatic and discourse variation can generate stereotypes and prejudices and can compromise educational chances and academic success (e.g., Clyne, 1980). Here, even more than in the “lower level” linguistic phenomena, acceptance of variation is crucial in the EIL paradigm.

In the PP we refer to some culture-based phenomena in written discourse, especially academic texts and how their evaluation according to the norms of the inner circle is discriminating against scholars from other cultural backgrounds in the “expanding circle”. We also mention briefly some turn-taking matters without paying specific attention to incorporating issues of cultural variation. A study of intercultural communication in English as a lingua franca in Melbourne workplaces (Clyne, 1994) found three contrasting communicative styles with considerable variation based on turn length, turn taking, discourse and rhetorical patterns, politeness rules, and generally expectations of communication.
These three styles have been roughly identified with Central European, South Asian and South-East Asian cultures respectively. Cultural history and education systems play a role in nurturing and disseminating the systems as outlined above. These factors are present in different degrees in different cultures. It would be highly desirable if EIL scholars continue to develop the mapping of such dominant features, based on further intercultural communication research involving other cultural groups and in other parts of the world. Australian workplace research (Clyne, 1994; Neil, 1994) also gives attention to convergence leading to collaborative discourse. But the cultural “deviation” from Anglo discourse practice is often misunderstood to be indicative of less “logical” thought or less adequate research.

Resulting from the Melbourne study, an attempt was made to reformulate the maxims of Grice’s Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975), as they are not without cultural bias (Clyne, 1994, pp. 192–195), to make them usable beyond American English in intercultural communication. The attempt requires constant concessions to cultural parameters and expectations, e.g. The Maxim of Quantity: “Make your contribution as informative as is required for the purpose of the discourse within the discursive parameters of the given culture” (with additions in italics). Successful intercultural communication entails making communicative intent very clear and, where possible, being aware of the interlocutor’s cultural expectations. More intercultural communication studies across a greater range of cultures will facilitate a verification of the revised maxims.

Besides the above-mentioned factors, an important aspect of intercultural communication relates to cultural conceptualisations (Sharifian, 2003), which are units of concep-
tual systems, such as schemas, categories, and metaphors that are culturally constructed and heterogeneously distributed across the minds of the members of a cultural group (Sharifian, 2003; 2008a). To give examples from Sharifian’s research on Aboriginal English, words such as “home” and “family” are used by Aboriginal English speakers to instantiate Aboriginal cultural schemas and categories (Sharifian, 2005; Sharifian, 2008c). The word “home” in Aboriginal English is associated most frequently with extended family members and not so much with a building. “Home” evokes a sense of home territory or wherever a member of an extended family, which they simply refer to a “family”, lives. So it can refer to one’s aunt’s or cousin’s place of residence. The word “shame”, as another example, signifies an Aboriginal cultural schema that captures a cultural-specific emotion that does not involve a feeling of guilt or wrong-doing, but rather a kind of awe aroused by respect or novelty. During intercultural communication, speakers may draw on the cultural conceptualisations that are associated with their L1, and in such situations, the similarities and differences in interlocutors’ L1 cultural conceptualisations can either facilitate or debilitate (in the sense of misunderstanding) communication.

Overall, our intention in the PP has been to bring together directions in EIL politics, policy, and practice that would equally benefit all speakers of English, no matter if it is their L1 or L2. This may currently sound more utopian, given the asymmetries that characterise the power balance between different communities of speakers (e.g. “native” speakers from “inner circle” nations versus the rest of the world). However, it seems clear to us that recent trends in structural changes in the use and the status of English around the world call for major shifts at the macro and micro levels of policy and practice. Our PP was an invitation to colleagues to explore possibilities and challenges involved in such major shifts.

There is a general consensus among the colleagues contributing to this forum that the rapid changes in the demography of English in the global context, and the changes in the functions of English policies towards it, and the development of newer varieties of English around the world in recent years, deserve to provoke a revisiting of more traditional approaches, views and paradigms. This applies to various domains, including the geopolitics of the spread of English around the world (Phillipson); the transnational description of Englishes (Pennycook); structures in English as a major Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer); function versus forms of EIL (Peters); the status of English in rising nations (Wang); multilingual performance/proficiency (Kirkpatrick); and language testing (Elder and Harding).
A clarification of basic concepts and terms in EIL has been attempted by Peters in this forum, where she distinguishes between functional and formal approaches to EIL. In particular, she elaborates on the terminological distinctions between International English and EIL. She examines issues such as the extent to which it would be possible to postulate or predict the development of a particular variety that would serve as the medium of international communication. In doing so, among other things, Peters clearly reveals the complexities involved in various forms of contact between different varieties of English, and the inevitability of multiplicity of norms, both in spoken and written forms.

The forum includes a call for a rethinking of language as being characterised by diversity beyond just national and geographical norms, which is strongly represented in Pennycook’s contribution. He invites scholars working in areas such as World Englishes and EIL to explore a more complex understanding of translingual practices, including multilingual communication and language mixing, across various communities that are not necessarily characterised as nations.

In his contribution to this forum, Phillipson focuses on the recent expansion of English, viewing it a product of the imposition of the global neoliberal project by corporate globalisation. He explains how the global “success” of English in the twentieth century is tied to the US power, in all forms, from military to economic. By drawing on information from several countries, Phillipson also examines the complex geopolitics of English versus other languages. Like us, Phillipson believes that a democratisation of English requires English education to be part of multilingual education, not at the cost of competence in other languages.

An examination of the challenges that learners and curricula face for learning English, in particular in the context of East and Southeast Asia, is undertaken by Kirkpatrick in his contribution to the forum. He focuses on issues such as the potential harmful effect of English on students’ L1 if the language is introduced too early in education. One of the central questions in the EIL paradigm is which variety to choose as model(s) for students. Kirkpatrick rightly argues that competent multilingual users of English should be viewed as providing “models” rather than so-called “native” speakers, as they are less relevant to the lives of the learners. The rapid increase in the use of English by multilingual speakers has now made multilingual performance a reality, and this is what needs to be viewed as the ideal in ELT pedagogy, an issue that Kirkpatrick strongly subscribes to.

The growth of English in a country of rising significance, namely China, is addressed by Wang. He maintains that the rapid rise of English in that country is a result of not
only globalisation but also China’s efforts to open up to the rest of the world. He also
discusses the situation of English versus other languages in China, with the rise of English
producing a sharp decline in the wish to learn other foreign languages, such as French
and German.

A discussion and clarification of what ELF researchers try to achieve is presented in
Seidlhofer’s contribution. For example, she maintains that ELF researchers examine how
speakers of English as a lingua franca co-construct discourse and negotiate meaning. She
refers to a wide range of recent studies that fall within the scope of ELF research and
shows how they document, for instance, non-native learners’ independence from “native”
speaker norms in their communicative interactions.

The challenges faced by test developers and takers in responding to the EIL paradigm
are explored by Elder and Harding. They elaborate on the reasons why the majority of
international English tests are still based on “native” speaker models from “inner-circle”
countries. Elder and Harding also report research, both recent and upcoming, that con-
tribute to the assessment of intercultural competence.

The contributions to this forum have covered a wide range of areas and questions
and also paved the way for more dialogue on these issues. The collection as a whole
nicely reflects the diversity of the views that characterise discussion around the interna-
tionalisation of English. In reading the papers in this forum, we find some challenges for
our PP and, as already mentioned, we also feel that there have been some misunderstand-
ings of some of the points that we have made. We take the opportunity of this synthesis
to welcome and respond to the challenges and we also try to clarify and expand on some
of the issues which we do not fully cover in the PP, as identified by the contributors to
this forum.

**CONTROVERSIES AND MISUNDERSTANDING**

One of the most controversial issues in EIL is whether, and the extent to which English,
in its new expanded role, is damaging the status of other languages – whether national
languages, minority languages or other languages of wider communication. Phillipson
views English as a threat to other languages, though somewhat more cautiously than in
some earlier publications (e.g. Phillipson, 1992; Phillipson, 2003). To Phillipson, the
primary beneficiaries of English as a global language are L1 English speakers. Similarly,
Kirkpatrick projects English as threatening one’s mother tongue if it is introduced too
dal at schools. We would argue for the need for additive bilingualism (Swain and
Lapkin, 1985), i.e. conditions have to be created to protect the L1 from the subtractive
effect of languages-in-education policies and practices where one language replaces another (cf. discussion on Canadian immersion versus transitional programs for migrant and indigenous children, in Cummins, 2001). In the context of China, Wang sees neither Chinese nor English as threatening the other, and English being of benefit to the Chinese nation in facilitating modernisation: see also Chew (1999) who argues that the rise of English in Singapore is the conscious choice of the local population, and not due to external imposition.

However, as Peters implies, the intention of the internationalisation of English was for everyone to benefit from it. Kirkpatrick briefly refers to the threat of English to “mother tongues and local languages, especially those which are spoken by a relatively small population and which have no script”, suggesting that it is the number of speakers and corpus planning which determine their vulnerability towards English. The differences between views in such matters seem to be at least partly ideological and partly cultural-contextual. These issues need to be examined further in more contexts to determine the variety of factors that have bearings on domain shift in connection to the role of English.

In relation to the reasons for the worldwide recent spread of English, Phillipson notes that “the expansion of English in recent decades has been a result of English being integral to the global neoliberal project that corporate globalisation has ruthlessly imposed in recent decades”. The paper by Wang has an undertone that runs counter to Phillipson’s line, suggesting that there are several explanations for the rise of English in China. As mentioned earlier, Wang maintains that “in China, English has facilitated the country’s effort to modernise herself by providing an effective means of communication with the rest of the world for understanding and trust”.

Another controversial issue in the applied areas of language teaching and testing is what language variety(ies) should be taught and what variety(ies) widely-used tests such as TOEFL and IELTS should measure in the light of the development of EIL. The paper by Elder and Harding has elaborately responded to our PP on the topic of language testing and has, in general, endorsed the thrust of our paper. But we would like to clarify our position in more detail. We welcome Elder and Harding’s statement that closer ties between EIL research and language testing, both in terms of research and practice, need to be developed. They also provide details about the constraints that currently do not allow for a closer engagement, maintaining that:

The motivations of language testers in resisting a move to EIL testing are seldom as simple as “gatekeeping” for its own sake; rather they are driven by the testers’ ethical responsibility to construct fair and
useful tests, which reflect as faithfully as possible the norms operating in the relevant target language use situations, and which impose necessary constraints on test design.

Elder and Harding maintain that “[i]t is not therefore appropriate to criticise TOEFL for not measuring EIL or intercultural competence (as C & S have done) since that is not the purpose for which this particular test was intended”. Here we would like to refer back to our PP, which agrees with this principle that the test should correspond to its purpose:

The contents of language tests ought to correspond with the functions for which the testees will employ the language (see Zafar Khan, 2009). In many contexts, people who take language tests such as IELTS and TOEFL use English for intercultural communication, often in the absence of “native” speakers. In such cases, we believe the test should try to evaluate intercultural communicative skills instead of obsessively testing the “inner circle” Englishes.

We note with satisfaction that there is agreement between Elder and Harding and ourselves that language tests should evaluate real-life skills. We appreciate that there may be tests whose requirements are such that a particular variety or degree of “nativeness” needs to be measured. However, the “default” situation in academic life in many English speaking contexts is one of cultural diversity, with “non-native” students engaging in intercultural communication with their peers and teachers from various cultural backgrounds. It is no longer possible to talk about academic language interaction in the English speaking world, assuming that it would not at all involve intercultural communication. This situation cannot be resolved by merely including some samples of “non-native accent”, as some tests have done, downgrading intercultural communication to just a matter of accent. The main question we ask is whether with increasing use of English by non-native speakers (more than 80% of the use of the language), it is fair, useful or appropriate to measure their proficiency against a particular, or a few particular, “inner-circle” varieties.

Concerning the need for a careful definition of “the language knowledge and skills that a test is aiming to measure”, our starting point differs from this assumption. A language test for EIL contexts really needs to evaluate speakers’ intercultural communicative performance, for example the effectiveness of the use of communicative strategies for negotiation of meaning, rather than just knowledge of language, in a narrow sense of
competence in a particular variety of English. Elder and Harding refer to users “who prefer to learn and be tested in high prestige varieties”. But the question is why these learners view such varieties as “prestigious” in the first place, and this question applies to the whole field of TESOL. The notion of “prestige” is regularly accompanied by “desirable”. But, in the case of certain varieties of English being prestigious and the rest stigmatised, do they get their prestige from the glorification of the speakers of such varieties in the ELT curriculum (e.g. in textbooks and videos), the result of codification, or is there anything inherent in these varieties that makes them prestigious? This question needs to be addressed when exploring what learners prefer.

Elder and Harding argue that Standard English, as used in “inner-circle” countries, should be the default model for language testing because it “allows for greater certainty about what is being assessed”. But what is the use of such a test if the model being tested cannot match the reality of the communicative interactions of the test takers? It may be that the use of such a model makes the task of test setting and marking easier for the testers, but how fair and ethical is it if it does not match the sociolinguistic reality of the test takers’ communications in English?

There is a reference in Elder and Harding’s paper to recent exciting developments in the area of language testing that makes use of pairwork. While we look forward to more literature on this, we wonder if communication between a pair of non-native speakers will still be measured against the norms of communication between native speakers, or between a native and a non-native speaker – or indeed between two non-native speakers.

One controversial issue which deserves clarification, in the context of ELF research, is the question of who ELF speakers are. Roberts and Canagarajah (2009) criticise ELF research for excluding the so-called “native speakers” of English from their scope. In a new extended category that they call ELF2, Roberts and Canagarajah explore the ways in which English is used as a contact language by all speakers regardless of their background.

Earlier in our response we commented on some misunderstandings. Another is Seidlhofer’s belief that “[t]here seems to be little recognition in this PP [Clyne and Sharifian] that diversity is a necessary consequence of language spread, in the sense that English will naturally vary as it is appropriated and adapted to serve the needs and purposes of communities other than those of Inner Circle native speakers”.

In fact, throughout our PP, we have acknowledged and applauded the fact that the spread of English is accompanied by the progressive and increasingly diversifying localisation of this language. We have stated that the proposed changes that we have presented in the PP “require a mindset appreciative rather than fearful of diversity and multiplicity
in communicative norms”. Furthermore, we have stated that “[a]lready speakers of different World Englishes employ features of English to express their cultural conceptualisations and worldviews (see Sharifian, 2006; Sharifian, 2008b), often through the process of what Brutt-Griffler (2002) refers to as “macroacquisition” of English, or, in other words, the acquisition and changing of English by speech communities”. We have also added that “[w]hen English is used as an international language speakers draw on their cultural conceptualisations to make and negotiate meaning”.

Sharifian, (e.g. Sharifian, 2006; Sharifian, 2007) has carried out extensive research on the indigenisation of English by Aboriginal people in Australia, rather from the position that Seidlhofer endorses: that is, exploring how English is appropriated and adapted to serve the needs and purposes of the community of Aboriginal English speakers. It may be that the term “cultural conceptualisation” has been interpreted in an alternative way here (see earlier in this paper for the explanation of the term).

In the PP and here again in this synthesis, we stress the importance of pragmatic, discourse and conceptual aspects, which are pivotal to intercultural communication, and which have been understudied. As long as users of English, especially the “inner circle”, are insensitive to these types of variation and their underlying cultural values, the promotion of English as an International Language risks being an exercise in cultural homogenisation. We refer to some instances in our PP.

We are very critical of the way in which the notion of “standard” is imposed to disadvantage communities of speakers, such as Aboriginal Australians (e.g. Sharifian, 2008b). We also mentioned that notions such as “standard” are evoked when people [we do not say ELF researchers] take a narrow view of language in their discussions. Since at the pragmatic and conceptual levels, notions such as “standard” would be difficult to define and operationalise, those who use this term generally view language as a set of sounds and grammar. To repeat, we have emphasised that pragmatic and conceptual variations are far more important in international communication, and therefore more studies are required to address these levels, without resorting to notions such as “standard”. Taking this view, we do not see a need to define “standard”, in the way Seidlhofer has suggested. There is a vast literature on this notion, with the majority rightly criticising it as being used as a gate-keeping strategy (e.g. Anchimbe, 2009). Our evoking of the notion of “standard” in the area of the international use of English was triggered by some references to this notion in the literature. This is echoed in Seidlhofer (2004, p. 212):
... many interactions in English are between participants who do not control standard grammar and whose lexis and pronunciation do not conform to any recognised norm. We could describe this as a process of internationalisation and destandardisation. Nonstandard, unedited English is becoming more and more visible.

While we are dealing with the issue of “standard” here, we note that Elder and Harding make reference to “standard grammar” and “standard English” (SE). It is, however, not clear to us which sub-variety is viewed as “standard”? In which country or social class does this sub-variety reside? When Elder and Harding maintain that “[t]he appeal of SE [Standard English] lies in its neutrality, in the sense that it is the variety most likely to be equally familiar to all test taker groups”, the question is what this variety is. And what makes a variety of English (be it British, American, Australian, Singaporean, or any other identified English) neutral? Furthermore, this kind of view maintains the power asymmetry of dominant nations viewing their native variety as “neutral” and others as “deviant”. The paper by Peters shows the difficulties in the emergence of a particular variety even from among the Englishes in the inner circle, and reveals how complicated the picture is even between different inner-circle Englishes.

In relation to the issue of norms, we would like to clarify that we do not think of norms as fixed. In our PP, we mentioned that “we anticipate that new systems of norms will continue to develop as a result of interactions in English between speakers from different cultural backgrounds”. We have also stated that English “should be adapted to accommodate the expressions of multiple systems of norms, whether these norms already exist or are still emerging” (italics added).

To end this section, we comment on Elder and Harding’s statement that in our PP we represent English language testers as “gate keepers”. We have not referred to language testers but “English language teaching and testing industries”. We do not refer to colleagues as “industries”. It is well-known that teaching and testing industries go well beyond just language testers and teachers; they have a strong business side to them (think of the British Council, IELTS and TOEFL, and see more in Phillipson’s paper in this forum), and it is unlikely that decisions about polices and practices will have always been made by language testers and teachers alone, or with only the needs of test takers and language learners in mind.
CRITIQUE

Phillipson maintains that the PP “tends to over-generalise because of inadequate clarification of the contextual and functional dimensions in play in any given situation or country”. We welcome this challenge, and later in this synthesis we will present a more elaborate clarification by means of a case study of the impact of English within a particular country. We would also like to clarify here that by putting “moral advantage” in inverted commas we intended to distance ourselves from the position that considers English-speaking countries to have moral superiority over Russia, Germany and France.

A topical issue in relation to English in the global context has been the distinction between international and local uses/forms of English. For example, Phillipson maintains it would have been better for us to concentrate exclusively on international uses of English. The key point in our article is that it is no longer so easy to make a very clear-cut distinction between local and international in terms of either the form or the use of English. For example, the prevalence of electronic communication means that many individuals constantly engage in communication with people living in other countries from their private rooms in their houses. Societies are also becoming far more multicultural due to processes such as increased migration and asylum seeking, which again results in local communication which is intercultural/international in nature. The outsourcing of industry, such as call centres, has also blurred the distinction between local and international.

In relation to the view that the rise of English as an international language is resulting in the marginalisation of other languages, Graddol’s report posits a trajectory that predicts that, in terms of speaker numbers, the languages on the rise are Mandarin and Spanish, as well as English. Some have even started to speculate that languages like Spanish may overtake English as an international language (Graddol, 2006).

While English is strongly entrenched in the Anglo cultural heritage, from our point of view this is not true of all new Englishes. Having conducted research on Aboriginal English(es), the indigenised varieties of English spoken by Aboriginal people in Australia, Sharifian presents evidence that at least some varieties of English are not centrally based on Anglo cultures. Aboriginal English(es), for example, are largely associated with Aboriginal cultures and worldviews (e.g. Sharifian, 2001; 2002; 2006; 2007). Furthermore, in a recent article, Mahboob (2009) presents data from Pakistani English as an Islamic language, arguing that it is a “vibrant new variety of English which carries the weight of Muslim culture in a South Asian society” (p. 175).

Pennycook asserts that “there are very good reasons to move away from nations as the basis for our descriptions of English”. This resonates with our own observation that
“with the rapid globalisation of the language, world Englishes have not remained comfortably within their traditional circles, but have travelled worldwide and have in many cases found new homes in other circles”. That is, within one nation there may now be a whole host of Englishes used, as is the case in countries such as Australia and the USA (including ethnic and indigenous varieties). While we agree that “nation” is no longer the appropriate basis for thinking about/describing Englishes, we still believe the use of English as an instrument of national, cultural, and social identity remains valid.

A CASE STUDY: RESPONDING TO A CHALLENGE

Phillipson has challenged us to look at a particular situation in more detail than in the PP. We will therefore present as a case study an investigation of the German language policy (Clyne, 2006; 2008) in education, academia, and business. The German languages-in-education policy is somewhat paradoxical in that language assimilation is sought from migrant children, while the education system is increasingly targeted to deliver a high level of German-English bilingualism.

In accordance with EU policy that two languages other than the national language be part of every child’s education, students in elite secondary schools are required to take at least one other foreign language, the main alternatives being French, Spanish and Italian, followed by Russian and Portuguese. But very few children of migrant background, most of whom end up in Hauptschulen (9-year schools), are selected to attend such schools. The need for articulation from primary to secondary is the reason given for Hauptschulen offering only English. Apart from a number of very innovative schools such as the “Europaschulen” with bilingual programs, relatively few schools teach languages perceived to be migrant languages such as Turkish, Polish and Modern Greek, and the numbers of children in such programs who do not share the ethnic background of first language users of these languages are generally quite small. The vast majority of content-based junior secondary school programs where three subjects are taught in L2 are used for English.

Community resources in languages are called upon differentially according to state and school. Increasingly, other than English in early primary schools, programs in foreign languages (meaning migrant languages or languages of neighbouring countries) are being replaced by English programs, and English is now firmly entrenched at the middle primary school in nearly every state. Long-standing concerns about the domination of English have yielded discussions, including suggestions such as:
Introducing English as a second foreign language – since the motivation to master English is strong enough to ensure English proficiency – would facilitate competence in another foreign language rather than detract from English proficiency (Weinrich, 1990).

Using English classes as the basis of a multilingual awareness program (Edmondson, 2004; Gnutzmann, 2004; Quetz, 2004; Rück, 2004).

However, these proposals have had little impact on the German educational scene. Phillipson rightly points out that English in the academic sphere is a threat only if it excludes the use of the national language. Plans were made under the leadership of the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) to teach some courses at German universities in English to attract foreign students and academics, and to prepare local students for study abroad, as has been the case in many other European and Asian countries (including China). The intention was that overseas students completing such a course in Germany should also learn German, taking some courses delivered in German as well (DAAD, 2004; Motz, 2005, Wermke et al., 2002). In fact, most of the “bilingual” programs designed for international students are now entirely in English, including programs with some specifically German cultural content (such as an MA in European Studies). We are dealing with only about 10% of postgraduate and 1% of undergraduate courses here, but it represents an increasing number. At the same time, provision of opportunities for English acquisition at the necessary level for local students is generally inadequate (Clyne, 2006; Erling and Hilgendorf, 2006; Motz, 2005). On the other hand, English-medium lecturers are not given German language support or required to take courses in the national language, as is done in some other European countries. There are few courses using a medium other than German and/or English, the most notable being the quadri-lingual Viadrina University at Frankfurt an der Oder, which teaches in German, Polish, English, and French.

The medium of instruction cannot be separated from a widespread fear of what Phillipson calls “capacity loss” in the national language. A survey conducted by Ammon and McConnell (2002, p. 168) at the Universities of Duisburg-Essen and Aachen indicates that 78% of academics teaching English-medium programs believe that they will adversely affect the status of German as an academic language.

Mocikat (2006) depicts English as the research language and medium of communication, even for small talk between German colleagues, in his Medical Faculty at the University of Munich. A similar situation has been depicted by a medical colleague at another prestigious German university, Heidelberg. Seven theses developed by Ralph
Mocikat and two other leading German natural scientists (Mocikat, Haße, & Dieter, 2005) argue, among other things, that this emphasis on English at the expense of German is stifling German as an academic language, weakening the link between scholarship and the public, and lowering standards in the disciplines. In other words it is actually detracting from Germany as a place of scholarly teaching and research. Some support for this position comes from a survey administered among foreign junior academics on Humboldt Fellowships in 2005 (Clyne, 2008, p. 106). One of the main reasons they gave for not mastering German was the lack of opportunity. Everyone in their department spoke, wrote, and emailed in English! Yet three-quarters of the sample of these 128 respondents employed German in the transactional domain and most regretted that their limited German proficiency curtailed their social and cultural interactions.

In the business sector, both comparative and longitudinal studies (Erling and Walton, 2002; Vollstedt, 2005) indicate increase in the use of English in correspondence and in general use of the language by management. This has come with a concomitant fall in the use of German and other European languages. A study which focused on 12 large companies, and was based on web sites, questionnaires and some observation (Clyne, 2006; 2008), supports this trend and attributes it partly to the challenges of mergers with non-German companies, the number of international investors, and the international workforce. The study shows that there is a great deal of variation in company language use, but the emphasis is on pragmatism. In formal meetings and on web sites the use of German and English is possible. Company-based foreign language instruction is now predominantly in English, with severe cuts for other languages. Moreover, there is a strong assumption that all interactions in which there are non-Germans should automatically be in English. This is problematic in relation to subsidiaries in central European countries where there is a tradition of German use and German teaching, and it is not surprising that Germanists in such countries (such as Földes, 2002) are blaming Germans and German companies for the decline of German studies. Some years ago the overuse of English in CEOs’ communications to employees led to staff protests.

The above suggests that in the case of Germany, pragmatic decisions that appear simple and economical are leading to both the unquestioned use of English in some contexts, and at least the perception that this may be a threat to German in certain domains. This could be counteracted by a stronger policy of bilingualism. However, what is even more desirable is a policy of multilingualism. It should be noted that other languages – migrant languages, other languages of wider communication, and languages of neighbouring countries – are playing a very subordinate role to English in the school system and in academia. This raises the issue of national responsibility for the status of
a language and the need for consistent policy. We would like to reiterate that we are not opposed to English but we are eager to ensure that it does not become a substitute for other languages.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, once again we sincerely thank the contributors to this forum for accepting our invitation to respond to our position paper and for their very valuable contributions, especially from such diverse viewpoints and positions. We believe the forum as a whole significantly contributes to the discussion of the new developments in the studies of English as an International Language. We also hope this forum provides an opportunity for further dialogue on the issues raised. It is clear from all contributions made that there is still much to be done in relation to the examination of the use of English as an international/intercultural communication, current and future policy regarding English against/alongside other languages, the future of English as a global language vis-a-vis other major languages, and EIL paradigm shift in English language and testing, to name a few. We also thank the Australian Review of Applied Linguistics for inviting us to engage in this great opportunity.

REFERENCES


