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Invited keynote address
English: Monolith, multilith or chameleon?

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Some languages of international standing – French is perhaps the best example – present themselves as monoliths, single, stable and regulated. People who write in formal French, whether for domestic or international consumption, follow a set of established and agreed norms. And leading French politicians actually speak it. English is not like that. It is at least a multilith. Not only are there two major focal points for standardisation – the UK and the USA. There are also many 'second tier' Englishes (the plural is deliberate) including Australian, Canadian, Indian, Sri Lankan and New Zealand, with their own local properties. And there are the numerous '-lishes', like Manglish, Honglish, Chinglish, Japlish, Konglish and Singlish, which are increasingly establishing norms of their own, not as 'deviant' aberrations from mainstream first-language Englishes, but as norms with substantial support and expanding outreach. This is English the chameleon, adapting to local needs as it finds them (or as it is found by them). This presents editing and editors with a unique set of challenges. Most of the time we support one of the major Englishes. But the task is not merely one of consistency with published norms of orthoepy, orthography, ortholexy or orthogrammary. Because, while speakers and writers may be using English words, often with high levels of competence, they may not be making English meanings. In pragmatics, in social and cultural values, these texts may be expressing meanings which are not consistent with first-language-English messages, and sometimes very subtly so. This presentation addresses such questions and asks how editors might, or could, or should not, take such issues into consideration in their professional work. These questions are not unique to English. But they are present in English to a uniquely high degree. Editors represent a line in the sand. But can we define a line and what the sand is and means?

I want to talk today about English and other languages as monoliths and multiliths, because the way we view the norms and identity of English have a lot to do with the way editing work proceeds. A monolith language is one which is a single entity and is usually dead: classical Sanskrit, classical Greek and classical Latin. We've closed the book on those. The dictionaries are complete. Their grammars are comprehensive, and we know about their orthography and their lexis and their rhetoric. Spoken classical Latin is still used in the Vatican for some purposes, but fundamentally it is no longer a living language, and so Latin is a single entity. So, also, are computer languages like Python and FORTRAN, which have very tightly defined lexis and syntax and which allow little variation.

Among modern living languages, however, there are a number of relatively monolithic languages, and it's interesting to ask ourselves: what makes them monolithic? They tend to belong to smaller and compact countries, which have only a moderate diaspora. With Russian after 1917, you had a large number of émigré Russians; they actually persisted with pre-revolutionary spelling for years, making a single set of contradictory norms of the language in other places.

You need an educated middle class, because a coherent body of people who respect and nurture the norms of the language, both in modern times and historically, is very important. You need an academy. Every language in Europe, except for English, and all the national

languages in Asia, have a national language academy. Their job is to define and defend the language, especially from the encroachment of English.

But you also need people who have a strong feeling of national identity associated with language. It's rather curious to reflect that the notion of a country as being something that is defined by borders, which are in turn defined by people who have a language and a set of cultures, only dates from about 1800. It was a very late idea, and, before that, places like the Austro-Hungarian Empire spanned all sorts of language groups and paid no particular attention to the languages of the people who spoke them, like Hungarian or Croatian or Serbian.

The country has to be culturally coherent and have continuity back from its earlier cultural monuments, so the people feel that they have something which identifies them, and they can look back and belong within it.

Status planning is when you plan for the status of the language in your country, and in a place like Iceland or Estonia or Latvia, that's now very clear. Under the Soviet Union, in a country like Estonia, for example, there was a substantial Russian minority, and in parts of modern Estonia, there still are areas which are major Russian-speaking areas. But when the European Union came along and Estonia joined, they said to all the Russians, 'You are now going to learn Estonian.' Which – Estonian not being a language related at all to Russian – was actually quite difficult for the Russians.

Corpus planning is when you define the forms of the language. So you have a list of spelling rules, a list of grammar rules, dictionaries and so on. One of the first things that happened when Bosnia became a country is that they set up an academy, and its first job was to define the language.

And, finally, the language needs to be monocentric. And that means that it's got one prestige form, which is recognised and observed by the people who belong to it. Iceland is a particularly apposite example. Iceland is not on the way to anywhere, and, as a result, has not been overrun by people doing invasions as happened in Europe over the centuries. As a result, modern Icelanders can read the old Icelandic sagas written in the ninth and tenth centuries, whereas for us Old English is a foreign language.

Harder to control for these monolith languages are elements of the colloquial language. Here we are all in a state of ongoing ferment, and their ferment is in some ways just as tempestuous as ours. Technology is bringing a lot of new things and, with it, a lot of international English, together with cultural models, propagated by places like California. Social engineering and PC has had a fundamental effect on these languages, particularly, but not only, in Europe. In Spanish, *Primer Ministro* is masculine from the point of view of gender and referred to males. And then along came Margaret Thatcher, and they had to change the grammar of the language. They invented *Primera Ministra*, feminine, which could refer to Margaret. In French, the word *juge* is masculine, but now is able to be *madame la juge*. So, at a result of PC, language has actually changed. As of course it has in English: a student hands in *their* essay late (which was wrong when I was at school), but this is now advocated by all the grammars. We have broken a rule in order to save ourselves from a social problem which was created by PC. I think it is a viable problem, by the way. But Shakespeare used plural they/their more than once, so we have an indisputable precedent.

Equally, if you do have expatriates in the diaspora, if there is a big ideological difference between you and them, then you have essentially a bifurcation of the language. The diaspora will always be conservative and maintain the older 'pre-revolutionary' models. But now that communism has fallen over, the Estonian of Estonia and the Estonians in the midwest of the United States are converging.

Equally, with a monolith language, French – with some exceptions in West Africa and particularly in Quebec – is a monolith language. You're going to have a canon, with respected norms, as applied by the academy. And in France, in modern times, if you are a journalist and you use an Anglicism where there is an established Gallicism, they will take you to court according to the Loi Toubon and fine you for one misused word.

Editors in these countries have a more straightforward task – I simplify somewhat: they need to know the norms as set down by the academy and apply them with judgement.

English is different. It's a very large language. No one knows how big it is, but it's spoken by about 450 million as a first language and by possibly two billion worldwide as a first or second language. No one knows exactly how many and, in fact, a lot depends on how we define competence in English. Twelve words for negotiating in the bazaar in Malaysia may not quite count as English, but it may be quite effective for the needs of the day.

The real problem with English is that it's the first language in more than one country, and a second language worldwide. ASEAN, for example, in which I think only one member, Singapore, has English as a first national language, has declared English to be its language of communication. So it's not going to be in Thai, it's not going to be in Tagalog, the language of the Philippines; they are going to be communicating in English. This transnational factor is a big feature of what I want to talk about today.

English, as you know, has no academy. There were attempts in the eighteenth century and later in the early nineteenth to set up one. By that time the Americans were saying, 'Well, we'll have it!' and the British were saying 'We'll have it!' and no one could agree. Nowadays, the horse is well and truly out of the stable: it would be impossible to have a single academy of English. Corpus planning is consequently difficult, while status planning is not a problem; English is either the favoured language of our countries or the favoured second language of everywhere else; I don't know of any country, by the way, where English is not the favoured first non-indigenous language taught in the schools. In terms of corpus planning, we are in a terrible mess. There is a lot of variation geographically between, shall we say, us, and the Americans and the British; and there are dialects within countries, where dialects still persist. But also in terms of functional styles and uses: the sorts of English that you find in SMS and email, the English that is found in the technical language of the world, not to mention sea-speak and air-speak and the language of tourism and the language of advertising and many others.

English is pluricentric. That means that there are multiple prestige versions of English in different parts of the world. We have a vague idea about a prestigious Australian English, although defining it is hard. There are prestigious models of English in the US, at least three of them. In the UK even the Queen has changed her speech from very upper class to more middle class. The normalising instruments in English are much less top-down. In France, the academy says, 'That's that!' and effectively that is what happens. The same in places like Turkey, where they have an academy, which is lexically very, very prescriptive. Our instruments are more bottom-up and usage based. Dictionaries reflect the places where

they were produced. The dictionary of Sri Lankan English, say, contains a lot of local words which have been imported into the English as used in that geographical and cultural space.

We also have lots of online tools, which are a mixed blessing. If you have a spelling checker (rather than a spell checker, please!), it may or may not listen to the sorts of English that you and I want to write.

The two big players in international space are certainly the Americans and the British. The second tier consists of us and the Canadians and Indians (the biggest English-speaking countries, apart from America, are going to be India and China fairly shortly. There are 300 million people learning English in China). The third tier consists of New Zealand and Jamaica and South Africa. South African English is on the way up since the removal of apartheid, because Afrikaans was very much associated by the people who live there with apartheid. India is important transnationally in the subcontinent, because India has better-specified norms and better-specified instruments for applying them. There is a lot of attention paid to Indian English in places like Sri Lanka.

So we get this mixture of UK being dominant, more or less, in Europe, in Malaysia, in Hong Kong, in Singapore – the old bits of the British Empire – and in some of Africa. But US English is certainly winning elsewhere. I go to Macau every year to judge a speech competition, and out of the last finalists that we heard, 23 out of 24 had North American phonology.

Multilith English is even more complex than that. First of all, there is English as an international language – not clearly specified, but understood within fairly broad parameters. Jennifer Jenkins in England has suggested that the thigh/thy contrast is not terribly important in international English; you might say 't' or 'd' or you might say 'f' or 'v', depending on which other language you start from. There is Globish – produced by a Frenchmen who worked for IBM (this is a nice irony) – a cut-down version of English consisting of 1500 words with which it is possible to do an astonishing amount of communication. Then there is ELF, which is English as a lingua franca, rather more varied in terms of its norms and used in a lot of places by people who have had some education in English and who are applying those rules – sort of – to the needs of their communication. And, finally, you have something which Canagarajah, who recently finished a term as President of TESOL, called Lingua Franca English to distinguish it from ELF; ELF implies a -lith of some kind. Lingua Franca English is something which you negotiate on the fly, in real time, for the purposes of communication, with other people who may have very limited English indeed. So it's a bit like a pidgin. Remember that pidgins are used by people who don't share a language and who need, usually, to do trade. In the following generations, if their children take it up, it becomes a creole.

And these are among the reasons why English is a mess, from the point of view of norms and their application. Nonetheless, someone like Gupta can write:

> [I]n many respects, Standard English really is essentially monolithic. In any given text of Standard English (such as a newspaper article) more than 99.5% of words will be words spelled, inflected and used in the same way by Standard English everywhere. Standard English is so much a given that it is almost invisible.

Would that it were so. Because our job would be much simpler as a result. On the other hand, Seidlhofer, an Austrian scholar who has done a lot of work on corpus English, can write:

> [I]n the early twenty-first century, the significance of a **certain command of English** [emphasis added] is closely comparable to that of reading and writing at the time of the industrialisation of Europe.

You've got to think about that. If you are European, knowing English is the passport to all sorts of things. Not knowing English is definitely a global glass ceiling which is going to stop you. Let's keep these factors in mind as we proceed.

I've been recently editing a volume of chapters from a round table that we did in Macau three years ago on international communication in Asia with particular reference to English. A number of the authors were not native speakers of English. So, as an editor, I had the problem of how much I should correct and polish their English, and along which dimensions. A lot of Asian scholars write academic English well, but there are a number of features in their English which definitely are not standard, but which are part of their academic discourse. The publisher in this case was a well-established international publisher in Europe, and I had some quite tricky decisions in advising the authors what to do. US or UK spelling was no problem; the publisher said, 'Look: whatever your authors want to do within each chapter is fine, so long as they're consistent.' I fixed up a number of cases of grammar agreement. But the issue of rhetoric is rather more difficult. If you have a business letter in English you may well say,

> 'Dear so-and-so, we met last month at the convention in Seattle, and we agreed that we were well set up to do business together. I hereby enclose an agreement. What do you say? Let's sign and get on with it.'

Someone from a place like Malaysia would say,

> 'Dear so-and-so, you will remember our meeting in Seattle last month. Your family seem to be doing really well, and I'm pleased that your son has graduated from university at last. I hope that you are all well. Here, we are in the middle of autumn and the trees are turning.'

And so on, for a page or so. And then you get to the point where you may actually raise a matter of business. In other words, there is a sort of foreplay of language which is regarded as good manners. To the Malaysian business person, doing English business in English the way of the first example is rather brutal and offshore. On the other hand, people in Malaysia understand this. People outside Malaysia, doing business with Malays in English, usually don't. And they behave culturally as if they were at home, whereas the Malays, in writing English, may well be behaving like Malays in English. And this is one of the key points that I want to make today.

We have another problem which I wanted to just run past you because it's interesting – and there are indexers here, so I defer to you – but the problem was this: in all Asian language and in a few others, like Hungarian, the surname comes first. In Mao Tse-Tung his family name was Mao, and Tse-Tung were his given names. Usually, in Chinese, the surname contains one syllable, the given names are usually two, sometimes hyphenated, but sometimes only one. The volume I was editing contained some papers by Asian scholars and some by Western scholars, and the Western scholars put their surnames last. Of the Asian scholars, some wanted to put their surnames first out of courtesy to their home culture. And if you have a title of a chapter with the author's name underneath, and you have it only in ordinary Roman, with capitalisation at the start of each word but nothing further, there is a definite problem for an automatic indexing software program. I've actually seen mistakes made by human indexers who have misunderstood the last word in the name to be the

surname rather than, as in the case of Asian languages, the last syllable of the given name. And so the poor author is left with two distinct sets of entries, both of which are their work, but have no link at all in the bibliographic resource.

There's a new convention emerging in Asia, which is that when you write names in Roman, you put the surname in capitals. And that actually solves the point very nicely, because you capitalise the surname:

> GAO Yihong, Andy CURTIS, Doreen WU

GAO Yihong is a colleague of mine in Beijing. Andy CURTIS is my co-editor and is obviously not Chinese, and Doreen WU is a scholar at the Hong Kong Polytechnic who chooses, for the purposes of academic publication, to put her surname last.

The publisher was rather surprised about this. They hadn't come across it before. I said this is becoming quite common scholarly practice in Asia when you write things in Roman. It's neat, it's respectful of different conventions and it actually leaves things entirely clear from the point of view of authors. So they are going to do this, and they're going to tell their typesetters that is the way things ought to be. If the typesetter has a hernia, I shall have a little fight.

The other problem goes like this. I was born in Australia, I grew up speaking English with Australian values. My L1, first language, is my C1, first culture. L1, C1. But there are people speaking in their first language who've lived overseas and have acquired some of the cultural practices of the places where they have lived. Somehow, they feel to us French or Chinese or Japanese or whatever. I know that after living in France for a year, I came home and my friends were saying, 'There's something different about you.' Well [waving his hands demonstrably and speaking in a French accent], I was being French! I cannot stop it! When I speak French, I talk like zis and my eyebrows become mobile and the entire intonation is different.'

Then we have L2/C1. These are people who speak English as a second language but who have assimilated my first-language cultural practices. So their pronunciation in English may not be native, but their ability to accommodate to English cultural practices is fine. And then there is L2/C2. These are the real bilinguals. When my wife was alive – she was Polish – she could flip from one language to the other, and even her personality and body language changed. A few people can do this, but not many. Our problem is to work out exactly which is facing us in the case of a non-native speaker, because competence in language does not necessarily mean competence in culture or vice versa. And these are not simply 100% or 0%, but they are variables. And they may vary depending on the context, the person you're talking to, and what you're talking about. And each speaker's differential competence in different registers. I learned my kitchen Polish from my wife. My kitchen Russian is not great. I learned Russian as an academic language.

An example of cultural transparency is in the translation of Chekhov's play *The Cherry Orchard*. The family has run out of money. They've sold the orchard and they hear the sound of the train, and they say, 'Quick! There's the train; we must hurry, we must all sit down.' Now this sounds perverse to an English speaker. But in Russia, there is a very lovely tradition that before you go on a journey, you sit down in the company of the people who are about to leave and you enjoy the thought of being together, for a while – sometimes quite short – and then you get up and go. If you have this in a translation in English of *The Cherry Orchard* and it's being put on the stage, what do you do when you get to this point? You can either

leave it out, in which case you're missing something important. Or perhaps the producer comes on stage from the wings and says, 'Well, actually folks, I need to give you a little bit of cultural commentary'. You see the problem. In the translation of this scene – and there are some truly beautiful translations into English of Вишнёвый сад, which is *The Cherry Orchard* in Russian – there's obviously a problem here, and it's almost a no-win situation relating to culture.

Here are a few more. The first has to do with pragmatics, which is how we do things with words, and I want briefly to discuss thanking and addressing. I'll then talk about Inshallah. I'll tell you about 'think', and I'll finish with some rather different examples of English that I recently harvested in Asia.

First of all: thanking. You'd think that thanking would be a universal activity, but in fact it's not. In Chinese you don't say 'xie xie', which is 'thank you' to people of your own family, because it is assumed that if you ask for something, they will do it, with good manners and good faith and a smile, and by saying 'thank you' you imply that they don't really belong to your intimate inner circle, and they therefore require some expression of thanks. And this was confirmed by my Singapore students, who said to me, 'Why do Australian people thank the bus driver?' Well, we do! It's a matter of habit, but also, I think, good manners. But they said, 'In Singapore, you don't thank someone unless they've put themselves out in terms of energy, inconvenience, time or money. If they do that, the action warrants a thank you. Otherwise, you don't.' So, Singaporean people in Australia don't thank the bus driver and sound cross; and Australians in Singapore thank everybody and sound insincere and superficial. Now the words are available in both languages; in Singapore, English is one of the four national languages, and Singaporeans speak English really well. And yet, they are doing things in English which do not match with our cultural practices.

Another issue involves addressing people. In Japanese, I am Sasekaso sensei: Sussex the teacher. In Chinese I am Lao shi, which means venerable old teacher; I rather like that. But in my classes at The University of Queensland, we used to get the students to call us by our first names. This was because – this was a Masters course in Applied Linguistics – they were professionals. They were all at least in their mid to late twenties, and sometimes well established in their professions already. We wanted our classrooms to be a place of vigorous challenge and development of ideas. And having students sitting there and addressing you in a very formal way and waiting to be taught was not what we had in mind. So, for about a semester or so, the students struggled with formality and informality. At the end of the first semester we sent them home for Christmas (because the course began in July), and one of my Japanese female students came to me after the holidays and said, 'My parents are very angry with you'. And I said, 'What have I done?' And she said that they'd said, 'We sent you to Australia as a nice, dutiful, polite, obedient, Japanese daughter, and you've come back contentious'. Now, of course, her Japanese was as perfect as always it had been. But her conversational practices had started to pick up something from what we'd been doing in the classroom, in English, in Australia: transcultural jumping of cultural practices.

But to return to naming. What do you do in Russian? You call someone by their first name and patronymic. Patronymic is the name that you get from your father. My father's name was Ronald, so I am Roland Ronaldovich. That is the way people will address me, even when they don't know me at all well. On the other hand, a lot of my Slavic friends say, 'That sounds terrible in Russian. We'll give you a Russian name: Rostislav!' So I am Rostislav Rostislavovich, and my father, in his absence, has been renamed.

Another thing we do in Australia is call people by their diminutive name forms. This is, I think, accepted as the default. I present myself as 'Roly'; I don't like titles; I don't respond to 'Professor' and I don't really like 'Roland'. It reminds me of my mother using it to say, 'You have been bad! Roland!'

The diminutives of people's names are available in many, many cultures. All European languages have got them. But, in many countries, like say Germany, the business of going from the formal 'you' (*Sie*) to the informal 'you' (*du*), or *vous* to *tu* in French, is a matter of some delicacy. And if you try the transition too early, particularly if you are male and you use *tu* too early to a young lady, it may take you months to recover your position. If at all. In English, 'you' is just 'you'.

My students have now learned to call me Roly, and we do so in English. But when I'm talking their languages, they tend to use forms which are appropriate to their cultural practices.

Inshallah in Arabic means 'If God wills'. In Arabic, verbs comes first; 'Allah', the name of God, comes last. It's a speech act; it's a sort of invocation. It goes like this in English:

- We'll have a similar conference next year, Inshallah.
- I hope he is well, Inshallah.
- Thanks, Inshallah, I'll come to dinner tomorrow.
- Inshallah, we will have a big party to mark the engagement.

And if you look at these, you'll see that they refer to the future, or they refer to the sorts of things that are perhaps less than fact. 'I hope he is well' doesn't mean he is well, as a fact, but you're using something like a subjunctive. The reason for this is that in Arabic, you may not make a commitment about the future without referring to God, because it implies that you have control over the future, and only God is able to authorise such events. So, any time you use a future or a subjunctive type of statement, you must use Inshallah. Therefore, it's a mark of, if you like, respect for God's involvement in and supervision of everyday things. There are difficulties, theological ones for non-Muslims, but I did in fact ask one of my Indonesian students, should I say 'Inshallah', when I'm talking to you in English?' Because he did, when talking in English to his friends. He thought for a moment and then said, 'Look, it's all the same God; go for it.' I asked one of my Saudi students the same thing, and she said, 'If you don't mind, please don't. Our God is different from yours.' Some people, including some Arabic scholars, have claimed that Inshallah leaves you a bit of wiggle room. In other words, if you say, 'I'll see you tomorrow, Inshallah,' that might mean 'Well, I'm not sure if I'll be able to come anyway, so if I don't turn up – don't be surprised.' But this issue is important. There is now a significant literature on English, and in fact a huge number of websites in English written by Muslims in places like England, where they use Inshallah regularly. And not only Inshallah, but also Mashallah, which means 'Thanks be to God', and various other expressions. We need to know what these things are and why they're there and to evaluate what they mean in terms of editing tasks for the author and for the audience.

Here's another one that you might not be aware of, and I certainly didn't know until I saw these data (by the way, for me 'data' is plural). Anna Wierzbicka, who is a Polish linguist in Canberra, did a check on 10,000 words of written English, and she found that the word 'think' in written English turns up 35 times per 10,000, and in conversational English 51. Whereas the corresponding thing in Swedish, 'jag tror', occurs only 2.6 times; spoken Dutch has 'ik denk' (9); spoken German has 'ich glaube' (5), 'ich meine' (3), and 'ich denke' (0.6); the numbers are significantly lower. So we use 'I think' a lot in English: 'I think it's going to

rain.' Does it mean that you're having a reasoned thought process about meteorological outcomes? No. It's a kind of phrasal habit. On the other hand, Swedish speakers using English will not say 'think', so they will tend to come over as rather dictatorial and mandatory: 'It's going to rain.' Whereas we, if we're speaking German, would tend to use 'ich glaube', 'ich meine', 'ich denke' much more than the Germans do. And that makes us sound indecisive and silly. I bet you didn't know this before. And yet, I did a count on some numbers from Vietnamese English, Malay English, Chinese English and Indonesian English and I turned these into percentages, and the two top numbers for English (0.0035 and 0.0051) are substantially larger than the numbers for the Asian languages (Vietnamese English: 0.00014; Malay English: 0.001; Chinese English: 0.0005; Indonesian English: 0.0006). This confirms Wierzbicka's contention that in English we use 'think' a great deal, almost as a kind of cliché, a cultural habit. It is part of the way we communicate. It doesn't have a particular meaning, except when it is absent. It tends to be absent in the written and spoken language of people from other cultures making messages in English.

Finally, and for a bit of fun, here are some examples of English that I got from the last few trips to Asia.

- Love toilet: I was so entranced by this, that I started going in and had to be restrained by the women in my party. It's a place where parents go to change babies. And in China, men do not change babies' nappies. So I was going into a place from which I was actually forbidden.
- Urine district: At least you know where you've got to go to do it.

Perhaps less disrespectfully (issues of number agreement):

- Rubbishes and luggages: All the way through Asia, you will find these pluralised because even where the languages do not mark plurals morphologically, and most Asian languages don't, they think about these in terms of item**s** of rubbish, item**s** of luggage.
- Thermal imaging in progress 20 meter (Kuala Lumpur International Airport): The standard of English in Malaysia in public places is good. The standard of academic English in Malaysia is *really* good. And yet, there was a missing 's' here. I came back through the same airport two months later and someone had got a crudely done 's' and stuck it on 'meter' at the end. They recognised the problem, but it wasn't worth redoing the banner.
- Please mind your steps: Now this is a bit more subtle; 'please mind your step', I think we would say.
- No trolley on the aerotrain.

I went around taking pictures of these things, and the locals thought I was mad.

Politeness:

- Please mind the gap (Hong Kong International Airport): In Hong Kong they are terribly polite. 'Please' with everything. In this country it would be 'Mind the gap'. No please. A small matter, but one which after a while you become conscious of.

Lexis and collocations:

- Please grip the handrail (Macau ferry): Almost as if you're going to be torn away from it.

- Please mind your luggage (Kuala Lumpur International Airport).
- And I love this one in China: The grass is afraid of your feet.

So what do we need to manage all of this English? It is making messages, sometimes grammatically and lexically in perfectly competent English. Maybe not from the point of view of collocations, but the messages are not the sorts of English messages that you or I would recognise or make as L1/C1 speakers.

First of all, I call this 'Anglicacy' – you have, after all, 'literacy' – Anglicacy is competence in various forms of English. It means something like this: first of all, you must know about the relevant forms of English, and that will mean not only the Oxford Dictionary, which is used in Beijing, for example, but also something about local norms of prestigious English as used in, if you like, prestigious Chinglish. And that applies to phonology, where there will be elements of Chinese pronunciation, as well as grammar and lexis. You need to know things about the pragmatics of the two languages: thanking and addressing, and there's a whole stack of other ones as well, and how these can fail to transmit across language barriers into English. And also, how our behaviour talking English the way we do it may actually give offence to other people. They tend to suspend offence rather better than we do because they're used to hearing English being used by people from different cultures. But suspension of offence is actually very important. And this is why we need to know something about the languages and cultures of Asia. It's not until you get inside the skin of the language that you start understanding how and why certain things play out. About two billion people in Asia belong to what are called Confucian heritage cultures. They take their values from Confucius, who was a Chinese philosopher of the sixth century BC who wrote a book called the Analects. The Analects is like a series of provisions for moral life: everybody obeys the Emperor, wives obey their husbands (sorry, folks), children obey their parents. In particular, you must pay attention to the good feeling of those around you and to enhance the good feeling of the group. You don't – as we do in the West – reveal all (because it'll be better! Don't keep it bottled up! You'll be much better if you let it out!). This is bad manners in a Confucian society.

For editing, the English that we meet in this country is often relatively locally monolithic, not necessarily to genre, but certainly with respect to grammar and lexis. And with a few variations like punctuation: is the Oxford comma in or out? what do you do with quotation marks? are you following the Americans or not? Basically, within Australia, it's not too bad. But the editing profession is becoming more international, both inwards and outwards. And that means that we need to have a realisation of the differences in English not only in places like New Zealand and the UK and the US, where it's an established first language, but in places like Asia where English is now becoming increasingly a kind of co-national language in various ways.

It's necessary to sometimes advise and be a content consultant, a pragmatic consultant, for the authors you're working for, so they understand what might be the effect of things that they've written if these expressions are presented in a foreign context. And the same thing with the audience: how widely will the book be distributed? If it comes from, shall we say, a British publisher and is read in Asia, it is likely that your readers will make accommodation because they will know where it comes from and who the writer is. But if it comes from, say, an Asian press, in English, that isn't quite so simple. So the role of relevant norms and normative instruments is quite tricky. Where are the relevant norms? There are dictionaries now of English in Asia; the Macquarie has included a lot of Asian English material in its last

version. And how to apply those in each case, because it differs with genre, and with different editing tasks.

And there is also the danger of digital tools and the filter bubble. The filter bubble is something which has been very evident recently; I'll say two words about it. The notion was developed by an American called Eli Pariser, and it refers to the fact that if you are in America and you are getting your news from, shall we say, Fox, on social media, the website will say, 'People who read this, also liked this; would you like to read this newsfeed as well?' That turns out to be Breitbart. And so you are getting a series of right-wing feeds. On the other hand, if you belong to the other side, you will read *The New York Times*, and that filter bubble will say, 'Look at CNN'.

These things create bubbles of information where you don't know what you're not seeing. There are now blocks of people in America who only receive news from one side of the fence, and it's happening here to some extent. Filtering of language form and usage are also imposed on us by some of our digital tools, because they are applying British or American or other grammatical and spelling or other rules to the work that we do; unless you are critical and suspicious of these tools, you can get yourself into considerable trouble, particularly as we start to depend more and more on what these tools will do.

Writers making non-English messages in English present us with a truly beautiful problem. It's really tricky; it's incredibly complicated, but it is, as you understand it, indicative of the cultures which have taken on English language expression. It's one of the ways they do language.

So English is in fact a chameleon. It adapts in different places to different values and is able to encapsulate and communicate those values. It's up to us to come towards them and try and find it. That means that we need to be – this may seem counterintuitive – bilingual and bicultural in English. Bilingual because there is no longer one English, but many Englishes; and bicultural because, as I've shown you, we do need to be aware of different cultural messages which are represented in the language which we may take to be ours, but which actually belongs to everyone. So critical Anglicacy is the way to go.

Best of luck. I find this one of the most interesting periods in the history of English because it has never been as widely spread as it is at the moment. It's on the way up, and the number of people speaking English will doubtless increase far beyond two billion in the next decades. And beyond that, I won't be alive so I don't need to worry, so I can make whatever predictions I like.

Thank you.

Audience questions

Delgate: That data about 'ik denk'; I speak a little bit of Dutch and I remember having to learn that specifically; I was saying a lot of 'ik denk' in Dutch, I can't remember what it's called in linguistics, but that language space to say 'I'm about to give you my opinion' that thing is 'according to me', so instead of saying 'I think' they say 'according to me', so that might have the same count. Do you know if Anna looked at that? And what is that communicative function called in linguistics?

Roly: I think she's just looking at the frequency of naturally occurring words in languages. The standard translation of the word 'think'. And I think it's hedging. If you hedge, you put in

something like 'possibly', or 'maybe' or 'I think', or whatever. And, again, English is very fond of hedging. We have lots of hedges where other languages, particularly Chinese, will tend to say something straight up. Hedging can make you sound indecisive or even insincere or mendacious. Japanese people will never say 'no' to your face; it's extraordinarily rude. So if you're doing a business negotiation and your Japanese interlocuters say, 'That's most interesting; we'll think about it and get back to you'. That actually means 'no'. Whereas people from Israel are notoriously yes/no. They say things straight up. So if you have an Israeli and a Japanese person speaking English together, you have a problem.

Delegate: I'd just like to share my experience with Arab students and how I've completely alienated myself from some of my students when I've said to them, 'And I'd like your homework in a couple of days,' and a student said, 'Yes, Mr Stephen, we'll do that, Inshallah'. And I said, 'No, not Inshallah; you'll do it'. Wrong. Could not have done anything more wrong, in their eyes.

Roly: I'm afraid so! For them, of course, Inshallah is a word of English. It's become a standard way of communicating appropriately to people in English. And we need to know that.

Delegate: You were talking before about trying to understand the cultural context and the language context – for someone who isn't bilingual (I am, myself and speak or have spoken several other languages, and I grew up kind of Malaysian/Australian, so I understand what you mean about – English is my first language, but Malaysian is probably my first culture) – what does someone else do, who doesn't have anything other than L1/C1?

Roly: Learn another language and culture; we should really be teaching culture almost before we teach the language. Because if you make cultural mistakes, you can find it very difficult to recover your position. If you make language mistakes, people may well laugh at you, but they'll let you have another turn. The other thing we should be doing – we know pathetically little about Muslim cultures and we know terribly little about Confucian cultures and their values. These things should be part of the education system of any student in an Australian educational institution. Without these things, we are likely to mark ourselves as monolingual, monocultural Anglos – yet another one of those. If we are able – in English and even better in another language – to show cultural sensitivity and accommodation, that will take you a huge way towards establishing good relations and communication with the people you meet. It often happens, when I talk various languages in Europe, that people say, 'Where did you say you come from?' And I say Australia, and they say, 'But Australians don't'. I'm afraid that's true.