

The Author Replies

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■ Luke Prodromou's comments on my 2006 article in *TESOL Quarterly* are welcome in that they provide me with a good opportunity to draw attention to the various misconceptions of English as a lingua franca (ELF) that he and others who favour a traditional native-speaker-normative view of English language teaching continue to hold. This I can entirely understand, given that ELF is, for many ELT professionals, such a new and complex concept. On the other hand, I was more than a little surprised by the extent of Prodromou's misreadings of my 2006 article and, indeed, by what appears to be a certain amount of selective quoting of the views of others. In some cases, for example, those who hold a perspective on ELF similar if not identical to my own have been quoted in ways that make the opposite appear to be the case (e.g., Leung 2005; Seidlhofer 2002; Widdowson 2003).

In the short space that I have been allocated to respond to Prodromou's comments, I would not be able to do justice to either ELF or myself in respect of the number and seriousness of his misreadings of my (and other ELF researchers') words. Rather than attempting to deal with all of these in summary form, I therefore provide just one example as an illustration, and refer readers to Jenkins (2007), where they will find such issues discussed at length and will be able to draw their own conclusions.

Prodromou claims that in referring to ELF as both "emergent" and "emerging," I have blurred "an important distinction." But this is not so; rather, the problem is his own failure to grasp the fact that ELF, a phenomenon without precedent, does not fit neatly into pre-existing categories predicated on the tired old dichotomy of native/nonnative Englishes. By its very nature and use, ELF is both emerging as more and more L1 groups learn and use English and emergent as speakers of English from this growing number of L1 groups "shuttle between communities" (Canagarajah, 2005, p. xxvi) and increasingly shape their lingua franca English in ways that accommodate the needs of the particular interlocutor of the moment. This is entirely different from Prodromou's assumption that lingua franca uses of English, whatever their context, are "broken" and "stuttering" where they differ from English as a native language.

Accommodation of this kind is, of course, in many ways similar to what

happens in communication among native speakers of English (or, for that matter, of any language). The difference is one both of scale (there are vastly more lingua franca than first language speakers of English) and of resulting forms (the forms used by ELF speakers exist in their own right, not through deference to the forms of an absent native English speaker). Prodromou is thus also mistaken about the nature of what he considers to be “real” language varieties (from which he excludes ELF), which he apparently sees as “moving toward a fixed or stable point.” The fact that a language can be codified at any point in its development does not mean that it is “fixed” once and for all or that its speakers do not accommodate to each other in various ways.

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