“Global English, Minimal English”
Towards better intercultural communication

“Global English, Minimal English” aims at in-depth interdisciplinary dialogue on two pressing issues: reducing the dangers of Anglocentrism and achieving better intercultural understanding in these times of Global English. The symposium brings together scholars from across the humanities, including international relations, history, diplomacy, law, education, and anthropology, as well as the home discipline of the Symposium organisers: linguistics.

The key theme of the Symposium is the idea is that “Minimal English” – a radically small, cross-translatable subset of English – can provide a new tool or medium for enhancing intercultural communication and understanding. The rise of global English alone cannot guarantee this. Indeed, it often creates an impression that effective intercultural communication is occurring when in fact it is not. Moreover, global English still carries heavy cultural and historical baggage that can create problems for the free exchange of culturally different ideas and meanings. Minimal English, because it is based on that small part of English that is cross-translatable into all or most other languages, offers a way around this problem.

The idea of Minimal English has emerged from decades of linguistic research into how meanings are constructed, packaged and expressed across many languages. The purpose of the Symposium is to bring this work into the public arena and to explore its potential applications in a wide range of contexts. Contributors will bring perspectives from many different parts of the world – Europe, China, Africa, Russia, the Pacific, indigenous Australia – as well as from different fields and disciplines.

Sometimes, as the saying goes, “less is more”. In this sense, the Symposium is exploring the question: What can Minimal English add to Global English?