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Kingsley Bolton

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# 1

## New Englishes and World Englishes: pluricentric approaches to English worldwide

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English is no longer the possession of the British, or even the British and the Americans, but an international language which increasing numbers of people adopt for at least some of their purposes, without thereby denying . . . the value of their own languages. (Halliday, MacIntosh and Strevens 1964: 293)

A working definition of English linguistic imperialism is that the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. (Phillipson 1992: 47)

[T]he pluricentricity of English is overwhelming, and unprecedented in linguistic history. It raises issues of diversification, codification, identity, creativity, cross-cultural intelligibility and of power and ideology. The universalization of English and the power of the language have come at a price; for some, the implications are agonizing, while for others they are a matter of ecstasy. (Kachru 1996: 135)

In this chapter, I hope to link the study of World Englishes and ‘new’ Englishes to a number of related disciplines – including English studies, English corpus linguistics, the sociology of language, applied linguistics, pidgin and creole studies, lexicography and critical linguistics – with the dual purpose of siting my own research within the tradition of research into World Englishes that has developed over the last twenty years or so, and of investigating how far the World Englishes paradigm may help clarify research on English in Hong Kong and China.

### New Englishes

Over the last twenty years, the term ‘new Englishes’ has been used to refer to the ‘localised’ forms of English found in the Caribbean, West and East Africa, and parts of Asia. One possible assumption here is that the occurrence of hybridised varieties of English dates from only the last two decades, although, in fact, contact language phenomena involving hybridisation between European and Asian languages have a relatively lengthy history, as long as the movements of European trade and colonialism in Asia themselves. ‘New English’ in Asia was predated by

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'new Portuguese' for at least a hundred years, and there is clear textual evidence to suggest that we can speak meaningfully about the origins of 'Asian English(es)' from at least the seventeenth century onwards.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, however, I intend to place such questions on hold and to reserve historical scepticism. I accept, therefore, that in the early 1980s in various branches of linguistics, including English linguistics, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, there was a relatively sudden interest in 'new Englishes' which took hold among language scholars and even gained recognition among the British and American general public through the popularised accounts of international English(es) in print and on television. Within the academic world at least it seems reasonable to accept Kachru's (1992) claim that a major 'paradigm shift' in the study of English in the world began to take place at the beginning of the 1980s.

Before 1980, there was a general assumption within Britain, the United States and many other societies where English was taught, that the primary target model was 'English' in a singular, or perhaps 'plural singular', sense, which included the 'standard English' of Britain and the 'general American' of the United States of America. During the 1980s, however, interest grew in the identification and description of global varieties of English. This shift in focus was based largely on a recognition of 'Englishes' in the plural, and the identification and recognition of geographical 'varieties' of English throughout the world as 'international Englishes', 'World Englishes' or 'new Englishes'. Tom McArthur (1992a) defines 'new Englishes' as: 'a term in linguistics for a recently emerging and increasingly autonomous variety of English, especially in a non-western setting such as India, Nigeria, or Singapore' (1992a: 688–9).<sup>2</sup>

The last two decades have seen the publication of a vast number of journal articles about 'new Englishes', many of which have been published by three journals, *English World-Wide* (1980 onwards, edited by Manfred Görlach); *World Englishes*

<sup>1</sup> Issues of colonialism, imperialism, race and modernity played a major role in the encounters of the European powers (including the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French and English) with the colonial others of the Americas, Africa and Asia. Language was central to these encounters, as the contact between European travellers, traders, armies and colonial officials with the peoples of these 'new' worlds entailed 'languages in contact', almost always with unexpected and to this day only partly understood consequences, both for the history of linguistics and for the history of intellectual thought. The central issue here, however, is the problematic use of the term 'new' in association with 'Englishes'. It may also be argued that English itself is a relatively 'new' language. First, it has a history said to begin a mere 1,500 years ago, in comparison, for example, to Chinese, for which many scholars would claim a history of 4,000 years. Second, it is a new language in the sense that its structure and forms were created through a process 'something like – but *not* – creolization . . . in medieval England' as Anglian encountered Old Norse, French, Latin and Greek, a process that McArthur refers to as 'waves of hybridization' (McArthur 1998: 175–6).

<sup>2</sup> One of the first references to the term 'new English' is in an article by Braj Kachru entitled 'The new Englishes and old models', published in 1977. In addition to the two books by Pride (1982) and Platt *et al.* (1984), the term 'new Englishes' also occurs in another chapter by Kachru (1980), in a chapter of Kachru's book on Indian English (1983), and in the final chapter of McCrum, Cran and MacNeil's popularised account of *The Story of English* (1986). Later in the same decade came *New Englishes: the Case of Singapore* (Foley 1988).

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(1981 onwards, edited by Braj Kachru and Larry Smith); and *English Today* (from 1985, edited by Tom McArthur). *World Englishes* is worth particular note in this context, as its original title of *World Language English* was changed to *World Englishes* when Kachru, together with Larry Smith, took over the editorship in 1985. The use of the term ‘Englishes’ to refer to ‘varieties of English’ is again of recent popularity. The *MLA* (Modern Language Association) *Bibliography*, for example, has only one reference to ‘Englishes’ before 1980, but 292 references for the years 1980–2002; similarly, the *LLBA* (Linguistics and Language Behaviour Abstracts) *Index* has one reference to ‘Englishes’ before 1980 and 985 for the period 1980–2002.

One reason for the rapidly increasing use of the term ‘new English(es)’ has been the increased recognition accorded to ‘international varieties’ of English. In the Asian region, these varieties are said to include such ‘dialects’ of English as Indian English, Malaysian English, Philippine English and Singapore English. A plethora of terminology has come into use in such societies: ‘English as an international (auxiliary) language’, ‘global English(es)’, ‘international English(es)’, ‘localised varieties of English’, ‘new varieties of English’, ‘non-native varieties of English’, ‘second-language varieties of English’, ‘World Englishes’ and ‘new Englishes’. At the time of writing, those terms currently enjoying greatest popularity are ‘World English’, ‘World Englishes’, ‘global English’ and ‘new Englishes’.

One way to exemplify the distinction between ‘World English’ and ‘World Englishes’ is at the level of vocabulary. Susan Butler, writing as a lexicographer, claims that in most contexts where English is establishing itself as a ‘localised’ or ‘new’ English, ‘[t]here are two major forces operating at the moment . . . The first is an outside pressure – the sweep of American English through the English-speaking world’ which Butler regards as synonymous with *World English*, because ‘[t]his force provides the words which are present globally in international English and which are usually conveyed around the world by the media’ (Butler 1997a: 107). The second dynamic which Butler identifies, and which operates through *World Englishes*, is ‘the purely local – the wellspring of local culture and a sense of identity’ (1997a: 109). Thus at the level of lexis, items like *cable TV*, *cyberpunk*, *high five* and *political correctness* might be identified with ‘World English’, whereas items like *bamboo snake*, *outstation*, *adobo* and *sari-sari store* would be items found in ‘World Englishes’, more specifically ‘Asian Englishes’.

When Kachru and Smith took over the editorship of the journal *World Language English* in 1985 it was retitled *World Englishes* (subtitled *A Journal of English as an International and Intranational Language*). Their explanation for this was that *World Englishes* embodies ‘a new idea, a new credo’, for which the plural ‘Englishes’ was significant:

‘Englishes’ symbolizes the functional and formal variation in the language, and its international acculturation, for example, in West Africa, in Southern Africa, in East Africa, in South Asia, in Southeast Asia, in the West Indies, in the Philippines, and in the traditional English-using countries: the USA,

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the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard form or in its localized forms. (Kachru and Smith 1985: 210)

McArthur (1987) also talks about the core of 'World Standard English', against which localised 'English languages' are ordered. A synoptic view of these two terms can be formulated thus: 'World English' generally refers to the idealised norm of an internationally propagated and internationally intelligible variety of the language, increasingly associated with the American print and electronic media, while 'World Englishes' refers to localised varieties of English used intranationally in many 'ESL' societies throughout the world, such as Nigeria, Kenya, India, Singapore and the Philippines. In many instances, however, we may be referring to the spread of English at either or both levels; so in my discussion in this chapter I frequently use the term 'World Englishes' to include varieties in both senses.

The term 'global English' can for the present be regarded as roughly synonymous with 'World English'; and the term 'new Englishes' is broadly similar to 'World Englishes'; although there is a difference of emphasis, as the following discussion of the origin and use of the term suggests. McArthur (1992b) notes that Pride (1982) was the first to use *New Englishes* as a book title. This volume comprised fifteen papers on English in Africa and Asia, in societies such as Cameroon, Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. The topics covered include the sociolinguistic description of English in Africa and Asia, bilingualism and biculturalism, language education and the classification and description of 'new varieties' or 'nativized varieties' of English. The term 'new Englishes' is dealt with only parenthetically, however, in spite of its choice as a title for the book. Pride's introduction to the volume, entitled 'The appeal of the new Englishes', fails to define the term itself, but instead discusses the range of issues contiguous to the volume's contents, including 'linguistic imperialism', the 'neutrality' of English in former anglophone colonies and extant discussions of 'integrative' versus 'instrumental' motivations in such contexts (Pride 1982: 1–7). Also of interest in the same volume is the article by Richards, 'Rhetorical and communicative styles in the new varieties of English', which discusses the emergence and importance of new Englishes:

The new varieties of English, described variously as 'indigenous', 'nativized', and 'local' varieties of English... are now asserting their sociolinguistic legitimacy... [T]he rapidity with which the new varieties of English have emerged and the distinctiveness of the new codes of English thus produced raise interesting questions of typology and linguistic change that call for adequate theoretical models and explanations. (Richards 1982: 227)

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Platt, Weber and Ho's (1984) volume, *The New Englishes*, surveyed a number of issues related to the Englishes of Asia, including India, Singapore and the Philippines, and West Africa, notably Nigeria and Ghana. The authors suggest a number of criteria which identify a new English including:

- its use in educational systems (particularly those where English is a second language);
- its development in an area where a 'native variety' of English is not a majority language;
- its use for a range of functions, in a particular country or society; and
- linguistic evidence, at the levels of 'sounds', 'words' and 'sentence structures' of 'localised' or 'nativised' features. (1984: 2)

In addition they also mention the importance of political and related factors:

Looking at New Englishes in more general terms, one can see that they have many things in common. When we consider their present-day functions, they often have a high status in the nations where they are used as official or second language. Many of them ... are used by groups within the country as a regular language for communication in at least some areas of everyday activity. (1984: 6)

The books by Pride (1982) and Platt *et al.* (1984) are typically regarded as first and founding studies in this field. Although these were both 'centrist' publications as they were printed by US and British publishers, by the early 1980s work on new varieties of English was also underway at universities on the academic 'periphery' of Africa and Asia in those societies where such varieties were actually emerging. Kachru published an early study of Indian English in the mid-1960s (Kachru 1965), and Llamzon published a study of 'Standard Filipino English' in the late 1960s (Llamzon 1969). Noss (1983) includes a number of descriptions of Asian varieties of English including Wong on 'Malaysian English', Gonzalez on 'Philippine English', Tay and Gupta on 'Standard Singapore English', Nababan on 'English in Indonesia' and Sukwiwat on 'the Thai variety of English'.

Noss's (1983) book also included a number of position papers, including one by Llamzon on the 'Essential features of new varieties of English', which today might be read alongside Platt *et al.*'s (1984) set of criteria for defining 'new Englishes'. According to Llamzon, new varieties of English are identifiable through four essential sets of features: ecological features, historical features, sociolinguistic features and cultural features (Llamzon 1983: 100–4). *Ecological features* are a product of a linguistic environment where verbal behaviour involves 'polyglossic' linguistic choice, code-switching and code-mixing, and lexical shift (lexical borrowing from the local language). *Historical features* typical to new varieties of English relate to 'their comparatively brief historical development from the parent variety', and the fact that, in addition, 'the structural descriptions of the new varieties of English [are] ... all fairly recent' (Llamzon 1983: 101). The most

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important *sociolinguistic features* relate to the use of the variety in the more intimate domains of home, friendship and recreation. Does ‘sociolectal-switching’ take place, that is, do speakers vary their ‘rhetorical’ and ‘communicative’ styles according to context, for example to indicate social distance or intimacy? Finally, Llamzon discusses *cultural features* with reference to creative writing and a local literature in English, arguing that:

works by novelists, poets and playwrights have demonstrated that the English language can ... be used as a vehicle for the transmission of the cultural heritage of Third World countries. The appearance of this body of literary works signals that the transplanted tree has finally reached maturity, and is now beginning to blossom and fructify. (1983: 104)

Llamzon’s reference to the importance of creative writing and literatures in this context is significant. In many Asian societies, including India, Singapore and the Philippines, there is a body of creative writing in English that reaches back five decades and more. In Llamzon’s own society there are poets and novelists such as Nick Joaquin, F. Sionil Jose and many others who enjoy both national status and international acclaim.

Since at least the early 1980s, Commonwealth and postcolonial writers from a range of developing societies have increasingly won acclaim from the literary world in the form of the Booker Prize and other awards, and have also gained recognition within the western academy (particularly within the field of postcolonial studies). The emergence of ‘new Englishes’ in the early 1980s thus overlapped with, and was influenced by, these ‘new literatures’ (see, for example, King 1974; Hosillos 1982; Lim 1984). The end of the decade saw the publication of *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989). By 1993, the title of their book had been appropriated for a *Time* magazine cover story and feature article (Iyer 1993) detailing the successes of Booker nominees and prize-winners such as Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth (both of Indian parentage), Kazuo Ishiguro (Japanese), Timothy Mo (Anglo-Chinese), Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lankan), Ben Okri (Nigerian) and Nobel prize-winner Derek Walcott (Trinidadian).

Iyer describes these writers as ‘transcultural’, because ‘they are addressing an audience as mixed up and eclectic and uprooted as themselves [in ...] a new postimperial order in which English is the lingua franca’ (1993: 48). According to Iyer, publishing is becoming de-centred and new presses are being set up in Australia, India and Singapore. He quotes Robert McCrum: ‘There is not one English language anymore, but there are many English languages ... each of these Englishes is creating its own very special literature, which, because it doesn’t feel oppressed by the immensely influential literary tradition in England, is somehow freer’ (1993: 53).

As we can see, then, the last twenty years or so have seen a rapid growth of interest in the study of the ‘new Englishes’ as well as a number of related fields. With thousands of academic articles on these topics, at least three international academic journals devoted primarily to this branch of linguistics and increasing

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numbers of books on the topic, some taxonomy of the literature may be required. From my own reading of the literature, I suggest that a number of discernible, yet overlapping, approaches to research (and publications) in the field of 'World Englishes', 'new Englishes' or 'new varieties of English' may be identified. These approaches include those of:

- English studies;
- sociolinguistics;
- applied linguistics;
- lexicography;
- 'popularisers';
- critical linguistics; and
- futurologists

On a cautionary note, it has to be stated that the classifications I am suggesting here are by no means discrete, as work in certain categories obviously overlaps greatly with work in others. For example, in the first category of 'English studies', I place linguists such as Tom McArthur and Manfred Görlach, but their work, in some instances, is not simply restricted to this category alone. McArthur, for example, also has done much in the fields of applied linguistics and language pedagogy. Similarly, Görlach's work on World Englishes also displays a strong interest in sociolinguistics, as many of the articles published in his journal *English World-Wide* indicate. Trudgill and Crystal are similarly wide-ranging. Trudgill and Hannah's (1982) influential book on *International English* was partly designed for teaching purposes and thus could be categorised as 'applied linguistics' (whereas I have categorised it under 'sociolinguistics'). Crystal's work might be judged by some to belong to the field of English studies, but I prefer to discuss it beneath the heading of the 'populariser approach' to World Englishes. Braj Kachru's work is another case in point, as he has published a great deal on the teaching of World Englishes, and many might see his work as 'applied linguistics'. For various reasons, not least his connection with J. R. Firth and his description of his own work as engaging in 'socially realistic' linguistics, I prefer to categorise his contributions as belonging more to the field of sociolinguistics, more specifically, the 'sociolinguistics of World Englishes'.

### The English studies approach

The 'English studies' approach to varieties of English is the approach favoured by the 'description of English' tradition, which arose partly from English philology and the study of the history of English, and partly from the study of phonetics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. More recently, this approach has been exemplified by the work of contemporary British linguists, such as Robert Burchfield, David Crystal, Sidney Greenbaum, Tom McArthur, Randolph Quirk and John Wells.



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Randolph Quirk was one of the first in the contemporary period to discuss ‘varieties’ of English and the notion of ‘standards’ of World English in his 1962 book, *The Use of English*.<sup>3</sup> Quirk later (1990) assumed the role of a guardian of international ‘standards’ of English and was drawn into a celebrated debate with Braj Kachru on ‘liberation linguistics’. In the mid-1980s, a number of books on World Englishes in the ‘English studies’ tradition were published, including Burchfield’s influential *The English Language* (1985), Greenbaum’s *The English Language Today* (1985) and Quirk and Widdowson’s *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literature* (1985). Each of these in their own way attempted to address issues related to the learning and use of English from a global perspective. Burchfield drew a great deal of attention when he discussed the possible fragmentation of English along the lines earlier seen with Latin:

The most powerful model of all is the dispersal of speakers of popular forms of Latin in various parts of western Europe and the emergence in the early Middle Ages of languages now known as French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and of subdivision (like Catalan) within these languages, none easily comprehensible to the others . . . English, when first recorded in the eighth century, was already a fissiparous language. It will continue to divide and subdivide, and to exhibit a thousand different faces in the centuries ahead . . . The multifarious forms of English spoken within the British Isles and by native speakers abroad will continue to reshape and restyle themselves in the future. And they will become more and more at variance with the emerging Englishes of Europe and of the rest of the world. (1985: 160, 173)

Burchfield’s comparison of the dispersal of Latin in the Middle Ages with the position of English in the 1980s provides the starting point for Quirk’s (1985) discussion of ‘The English language in a global context’, in which Quirk argues the case for normativity, declaiming at one point that ‘the fashion of undermining belief in standard English had wrought educational damage in the ENL [English as a native language] countries’ and that there is no justification for such an attitude to be ‘exported’ to societies where English has the status of a second or foreign language: ‘The relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-native needs to use English (even in ESL countries) is arguably well catered for by a single monochrome standard form that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech’ (Quirk 1985: 6). By the mid-1980s, then, Quirk had lost some of the linguistic radicalism of his youth, if that indeed was what it was, and seemed anxious to join battle on behalf of both ‘Standard English’ and ‘standards’ of English. His 1985 paper also represents something of a rehearsal for his later engagement with Kachru and the forces of ‘liberation linguistics’ in the pages of *English Today*.

<sup>3</sup> See also Randolph Quirk’s 1972 volume, *The English Language and Images of Matter*.



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Another significant figure in the English studies approach in the 1980s was Tom McArthur, the founding and current editor of *English Today* (from 1985), and the editor of *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992a). McArthur's (1987) paper on 'The English languages' sets out part of his theoretical agenda for the study of World Englishes. As the title of the article suggests, the notion of plural Englishes is foregrounded in the discussion: 'If there are by now "English literatures" [by 1987 a well-established phrase] can the "English languages" be far behind?' (1987: 9). The article later continues, 'various... Englishes are developing such institutions as their own dictionaries and grammars', citing the examples of Canadian and Australian English, Tok Pisin and Krio (1987: 10). McArthur presents a model to describe the diversity of World English, essentially in the shape of a rimless cartwheel with 'World Standard English' at the hub:

Within such a model, we can talk about a more or less 'monolithic' core, a text-linked World Standard negotiated among a variety of more or less established national standards [e.g. British and Irish Standard English, American Standard English, South Asian Standard(izing) English, East Asian Standard(izing) English]. Beyond the minority area of the inter-linked standards, however, are the innumerable non-standard forms – the majority now... being unintelligible to one another [e.g. Scottish English, Appalachian English, Indian English, Hong Kong English]. (1987: 10)<sup>4</sup>

Since 1985, *English Today* has had a substantial impact on the discussion and debate about 'English languages' around the world. Issue 41, published in 1995, provides an index of articles in the journal for the years 1985–95. These include articles on 'World English'; 'English in Africa'; 'The Americas' (including the Caribbean and Central America); 'Asia' (East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australasia); and 'Europe' (including Britain, identified as 'offshore' Europe, as well as 'mainland' Europe). McArthur's editorship of *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992a) has had a great influence on recent scholarship on World Englishes. The *Companion* explicitly sets out to acknowledge and to accommodate a global perspective on 'varieties' of English, and 'the English languages' (xvii–xxiv). 'In the closing years of the twentieth century, the English language has become a global resource', McArthur asserts. 'As such, it does not owe its existence or the protection of its essence to any one nation or group. Inasmuch

<sup>4</sup> In a subsequent article, McArthur (1992d) discusses the whole enterprise of model-making in this field, with reference to the 'biological' models of 'language families' produced by such nineteenth-century German Indo-Europeanists such as August Schleicher; and the 'geopolitical' models of Strevens (1980), McArthur (1987), Görlach (1990) and Kachru (1990, etc.). Such models, McArthur suggests, aim at 'the management of diversity', adding that 'their creators have freely used such terms as "Englishes", "new Englishes" and "World Englishes" in discussing this diversity' (McArthur 1992d: 16–17). Later, he goes on to discuss the question of nomenclature, expressing a preference for his own term, 'English languages' because it 'goes further [than "Englishes"]', implying that once what happened to produce the daughters of Germanic has happened again, producing the daughters of a once (more or less) unitarian English' (1992d: 20–1).

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as a particular language belongs to any individual or community, English is the possession of every individual and every community that in any way uses it, regardless of what any other individual or community may think or feel about the matter' (xvii). McArthur summarises his thinking on these and other issues in *The English Languages* (1998) and in the recently published *Oxford Guide to World English* (2002).

Another substantial figure in the academic discourse of World Englishes is Manfred Görlach, who has been described recently as 'practically the founder of the study of varieties of English in a world-wide context as a scholarly field' (Schneider 1997a: 3). Görlach's intellectual interests are wide, but it is chiefly as the editor of *English World-Wide* that he has risen to prominence in the field of World Englishes; indeed his work in this field leads Schneider to claim enthusiastically that 'Manfred Görlach was the first to recognize the challenge and importance of these topics as subjects of scholarly study' (1997a: 3–4). Görlach's contribution to this field has been substantial. *English World-Wide* started publication in 1980 under the imprint of Julius Groos Verlag in Heidelberg. In the editorial to the first issue, Görlach mentions that an original suggestion for the title was *Englishes*, but this was discarded because many scholars found such a plural 'unacceptable and unwieldy' (Görlach 1980: 7). Finally a subtitle was added to accommodate the plurality of the object of study – *A Journal of Varieties of English*.

Overall, however, it is probably fair to comment that part of Görlach's own intellectual endeavour has been devoted to the history of English, rather than World Englishes, where his chief contribution has been as an editor, of books, bibliographies and journals. To the extent that he has written in detail about World Englishes, it is chiefly as a theorist (Görlach 1988, 1989, 1995a) and historiographer of lexicography (1990, 1995 a, b). Nevertheless Görlach's work in this field is of immense importance; and it is also worth noting that Görlach himself identifies his work in this area with that of 'English studies', commenting in 1988 that '[a]s a sub-discipline of English Studies, a consideration of English as a world language would provide an ideal opportunity to expand the social, historical and geographical aspects of English Studies – and ... might well serve to enhance the appeal of a traditional and somewhat ageing discipline' (1988: 37–8). Since Görlach's retirement as general editor of *English World-Wide* in 1998, he has passed the torch to Edgar W. Schneider, who has already carried out extensive work of his own in this field.

Other notable academics in the field of English studies include David Crystal and Sidney Greenbaum. Crystal's early work centred on English studies (e.g. Crystal and Quirk 1964; Crystal 1969, 1975), but throughout the 1970s his interests broadened to include child language acquisition and speech therapy, and by the mid-1980s he was moving away from detailed empirical research and embarking on his present career of academic entrepreneur, encyclopedist, broadcaster and 'populariser' (see p. 32 below). Greenbaum's (1985) volume on *The English Language Today* included contributions on the history of