

A transcontinental distribution

When *ET* first came out twenty years ago its global approach to English was not always understood, especially by older readers in the UK and US, many of whom tended to see English as *their* language, and something to be protected. They did not think of it as a global lingua franca, although for other subscribers *that* was the attraction. At that time, such phrases as *world English(es)* and *international English* were beginning to develop a politics of their own, and in *ET*'s early years few guessed how wide and varied the interest would be. Consider for example the distribution of the contributors to the present issue:

- Three Africans. Adenike Akinjobi and Kehinde A. Ayoola, from Nigeria, writing on very different national issues, and Angela P. Cheater, originally from Natal in South Africa, and currently working in Macau, China. She is ethnically European (a group not usually called *African* or even *European African*): part of a worldwide diaspora present in varying degrees everywhere on earth.
- Two Americans, in the narrower 'normal' sense of citizens of the USA: Alan S. Kaye in California and Herbert F. W. Stahlke in Indiana – both of whose ethnic origins are, as their names suggest, European.
- Four Europeans. Three are British, one living in Britain (Julia Snell), one in the 'near abroad', in Spain (Ross Smith), the third (Barry Asker), in Hong Kong, China. The 'mainland' European is Antonio Lillo, in Spain. Two of these four live 'natively' in Europe while two are expatriate.

'Internationality' is now, as it were, built into everyone's life everywhere and also into very large languages like English. No one is now surprised that whole publications are devoted to 'world English': notably, *ET*, *World Englishes*, and *English World-Wide*. The word *globalization* became fashionable (though often negatively) a decade or so after *ET*'s debut, and with it *global English* became a fashionable term (without the negative tinge). And globalization is why the world wants English for its children and its work, China exemplifying this interest perhaps more strongly than anywhere else.

Tom McArthur

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Contacting the Editor: Email Dr Tom McArthur at <Scotsway@aol.com> or write to him at 22-23 Ventress Farm Court, Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 8HD, UK. Tel 01223 245934.

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