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English Language Studies: A Critical Appraisal

Ann Hewings and Philip Seargeant

Introduction

In this chapter we locate English Language Studies (ELS) in relation to other areas of the subject 'English', but significantly we also argue for the study of the English language as a highly effective socio-cultural and political lens on global and local issues relevant to education in the twenty-first century. From globalisation and superdiversity, through the relationship between language and nationalism, to an understanding of the dynamics of and attitudes towards diverse varieties of English, ELS provides opportunities for students and researchers to critically explore many of the big challenges facing societies today, while simultaneously addressing issues of communication at an individual level as both cultural artefact and skill. It can be conceptualised as a discipline in its own right, but it also draws on and contributes to debates in multiple other disciplines, and thus has an importance across curriculum areas. In illustrating the relevance of ELS as a discipline—as a partner within English Studies and in interdisciplinary combinations, and as a vehicle for communicative skills development—the chapter positions it as contributing a unique humanities-social sciences perspective to research and to educating students as global citizens.

The context for the discussion is the current status of the English language. This, while a product of its history, continues to have global relevance beyond its original home. It has a political dimension on the world stage, but also a personal dimension for millions as both a first and an additional language. It is implicated in identity construction at a variety of levels—from the family to the nation state and beyond—and the relationships that people have with it can have a significant impact

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on their lives and personal and professional opportunities. Learning *about* the language can encourage an understanding of the past as well as an appreciation of its influence on the present, alongside contributing to aesthetic and creative sensitivity. To this end the chapter examines how ELS is constructed in higher education, both in the UK and internationally, and the fundamental contributions it can make to a range of critical, creative and reflexive skills and attitudes. It looks at the way ELS engages with major themes such as globalisation, intercultural communication, and identity politics, and examines the insights that can be gained from a focus on language practices associated with English around the world.

What is English Language Studies?

In higher education, the relationship between English-the-language and English-the-cultural-artefact is a complex one. While 'English' is both the name of the language and the discipline, the language element of the discipline is often, ironically, overlooked; or at least accorded comparatively less prominence than the cultural products written in English. The extent to which this is the case can be seen in the way that the term 'English' is regularly adopted metonymically to refer simply to Literary Studies. The reasons for the uncertain position of ELS are many and varied, ranging from the historical development of the discipline in different parts of the world to its current institutional and epistemic structuring. We will examine these below, but before doing so it will be useful to consider how ELS aligns with the broader area of English Studies.

If Literary Studies has taken as its starting point the cultural *products* of English—poems, plays, novels et cetera written in English—and Creative Writing has at its heart the *processes* of creativity—the practice and reflection of bringing into being such products—then Language Studies focuses on the *resources* drawn upon in these processes and used in the creation of these products. This is, of course, a rather simplistic—reductive even—characterisation of the three subject areas and their respective concerns. As we have seen in the previous two chapters, each subject area embraces a wide and complex set of concerns which resist being categorised by means of a secure set of essential qualities. What this formulation does do, however, is offer a way of drawing initial distinctions between the three elements of a broader English Studies, and of highlighting certain key issues around which they are structured. In this way, it provides a useful entry point into an examination of what

constitutes ELS, and of how we can best conceptualise its disciplinary identity.

To begin in basic terms, English Language Studies examines the ways in which people communicate using the English Language as a resource. It explores the nature of this resource (or, more accurately, the multiple resources which come under the umbrella term 'English'), and how these are used across the spectrum of social and cultural interactions that humans engage in. Both parts of the equation—the nature of English as a resource, and the ways in which it is used—present issues for the identity of the subject.

The first (the nature of English as a resource) does so in the sense that (a) determining what constitutes English is not as self-evidently straight-forward as one might assume; and (b) an alternative conceptualisation of the content of the discipline is possible which does not foreground the English language, but language in general—i.e. it looks at language as a resource in human communication, rather than privileging this one particular language. With respect to (a), as a language with a true global spread, English has multiple forms and multiple identities, is used in combination with other languages and semiotic modes, and is in a constant state of evolution and diversification. It is not, therefore, a clearly and precisely circumscribed entity, and a great deal of scholarship addresses the blurred nature of its conceptual boundaries. With respect to (b), the privileging of one language (resulting in English Language Studies) over a more general examination of linguistic communication (Language Studies, or Applied Linguistics) can be both pragmatic (in an Anglophone country it makes sense to focus on the particular linguistic resources that most of the population work with) and ideological (based, for example, on perceived relationships between a language and national identity). In both cases, the notion of what English is—in terms of form, identity and influence—becomes a core part of the concerns of the subject area.

The second part of the equation then looks at the ways in which English is used across the spectrum of social and cultural interactions. Given the diversity of the domains in which this use occurs, the subject overlaps with—and in some case underpins—a huge variety of other subject areas, and thus an interdisciplinary element is native to its existence. We will return to both these elements—and especially the issue of interdisciplinarity—later in the chapter. Before that however, let us look at how ELS is actually constituted in terms of its institutional framing. To do this we will draw on examples primarily from the UK context, but referencing out also to ELS more widely.

The breadth of ELS in UK higher education is captured by the list of most common modules or courses in English language as reported to the *Survey of the English Curriculum and Teaching in UK Higher Education* commissioned by the English Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy:

History of English language	**World Englishes**	**Dialects/regionalism**
Syntax	Grammar	General Linguistics
Language change	Sociolinguistics	Stylistics
Phonology	Morphology	Language acquisition
Pragmatics	Conversation analysis	Semantics
Linguistic theory	English language in the media	Language description
Psycholinguistics	English language in business	Lexicography
Bilingualism/ Multilingualism	Computational linguistics	Other

(Cronberg and Gawthrope, 2010, p. 22)

This list highlights the way that the study of English language is more than simply describing the structure of the language (its grammar, syntax, morphology). The study of meaning (semantics) is joined by a focus on language choices made in social contexts (pragmatics) and points to what some might describe as a more cultural or social turn in the subject, akin to trends identified in English literature/English Studies more generally (English, 2012; McComiskey, 2006). This same socially-informed focus is also apparent in modules focusing on dialect, World Englishes (i.e. the nature, use and politics of diverse global forms of the language), and sociolinguistics. This has been accompanied by greater use of technology to analyse both spoken and written texts. Large-scale collections of texts (corpora) interrogated with specially designed computational tools have enabled researchers to describe systematically how language is used in registers ranging from sermons to doctor-patient interactions and from business letters to poetry. As can also be seen from the list, a focus on particular domains of communication—such as the media and business—is also a notable part of the subject, along with specialist areas of language study such as lexicography.

Institutions teaching English language within non-Anglophone traditions, as for example in most European universities, focus on teaching communication in English, which often includes aspects of the

linguistic study of language originating within philology. While this is a narrower conception of ELS, without the focus on social and global issues that was a key element in the earlier examples, some programmes do incorporate aspects of American or wider Anglophone study, or place English within the context of Europe and other European languages. Alongside the skill of communication, English in these contexts is also often about Anglophone literatures from around the world, and is a traditional way of learning about both the language and the culture. The position of English as a lingua franca and as indexical of globalisation also figures in some undergraduate and Master's degrees,[1] alongside an emphasis on developing more vocationally oriented proficiencies relevant to an international employment market that values English language (see Hultgren, this volume).

A further way of illustrating the scope of ELS as it is currently configured is to look briefly at a couple of examples. The study of linguistic variation in different speech communities is a typical area of research, and one that is often related to class and gender differences. Recent work by Mesthrie (2012) has linked rapid pronunciation changes within a particular society to a single historical event: the ending of apartheid in South Africa. Mesthrie claims that the racial connotations of a particular vowel sound, the 'oo' sound [/u:/] as found in the word 'goose' have changed since the ending of segregation. The /u:/ vowel was typically 'fronted' (produced further forward in the mouth) by White South Africans in comparison with Black speakers. Since the ending of segregated schooling in the 1990s, quality schools which were formerly Whites only became mixed and the new non-White students, through a process of linguistic accommodation (the gradual adapting of language practices to match those of the community with which one is aligning), adopted features of the prestige White South African pronunciation, as demonstrated in the fronting of the /u:/ vowel. Mesthrie terms this 'deracialisation' of the vowel and comments that it is no longer easy to identify the race (or ethnic group) of young people through their speech alone. There has emerged a young, middle-class, educated South African accent no longer associated with particular racial groups. While indicative of a reduction of barriers within this middle class group, this also signals aspects of a process whereby children, parents and grandparents from the same family can come to no longer have equal proficiency in a shared language, a phenomenon also observed among migrant communities to Anglophone countries. At a political level this linguistic crossing over is seen as part of a 'broader change in lifestyles, values and symbolism' (Mesthrie, 2012, p. 317) that has the potential to threaten indigenous languages and undermine

the solidarity of the Black community, a solidarity which helped to defeat apartheid.

In order to undertake the type of sociolinguistic study exemplified by Mesthrie's research, an analyst needs proficiency in identifying subtle variations in speech, in methods of appropriate interviewing, data collection and analysis—detailed linguistic work which contributes to an understanding of a socio-political phenomenon—as well as a grounding in the sociological and political issues affecting the community being studied. Such observation and analysis then provides insights into the pace of change taking place not just in language but in social bonds, family relationships, and political and cultural affiliations worldwide in the era of global communication and, arguably, the linguistic hegemony of English.

Another example which can illustrate the type of issues that ELS addresses is metaphor studies. Metaphor studies have expanded from a traditional feature of the analysis of English literature to a field with significant practical implications for society and culture. Examination of the metaphorical underpinnings of the language used in newspapers, for example, has highlighted how news reports are framed in the structure of their telling, and how readers are positioned over time to accept a certain viewpoint (Coffin and O'Halloran, 2005). Exposing the methods used in media representation of events provides a powerful tool for readers to question and/or reject the positioning assumed in the texts. Such critical awareness is, needless to say, a valuable asset in a world dominated by media messages.

Metaphor studies also have a more subtle and positive role to play in social interaction as demonstrated by Cameron's work on conflict resolution (e.g. 2007). Through examination of recorded dialogues with those involved in histories of political conflict, Cameron developed a model of 'empathetic mutual positioning' (2013) which first described successful conflict transformation and reconciliation and later applied the findings to current conflict situations. Based on the narratives people constructed and the metaphorical spaces they occupied and allowed others to occupy, Cameron has helped those involved in conflict resolution from Ireland to Kenya to influence the dialogues taking place.

In both the studies by O'Halloran and Coffin and by Cameron the focus has been everyday language rather than literary language, and close attention has been given to how that language is being used, and the impact that is has on the reader or hearer that is attended to. In addition to systematic, forensic attention to language, the work has an applied dimension that grounds the research, and inspires the

researcher and others. And as can be seen from these brief examples and the common courses which comprise ELS, the subject matter—as it is taught both in Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries—enables students and researchers to analyse and investigate English language broadly as communication and artefact, over time and across different geographical areas where it has local and global relevance for individuals, communities and policy makers.

In using the label 'English Language Studies' so far we have sidestepped one of the key issues that influences the understanding of the subject. As was noted above, the topics covered by ELS that we have surveyed can (and do) also appear under different names and with different emphases. For example, Applied Linguistics is often the home for much that is also (or in different institutional contexts) named ELS, and as the 'applied' designation indicates, the study of the English language may be tied to various professional applications such as teaching, translation, interpreting, and speech therapy. Other aspects of the study of English language are related to developing proficiency in writing, with academic literacies research in the UK, rhetoric and composition in the USA (see Russell, this volume), and journalism and media studies in Australia. This distribution of effort under a variety of names or in the margins of other disciplines can be a problem for ELS in terms of 'brand recognition' and has much to do with the history of the subject, which is the topic we move to in the next section.

Diverse traditions in English Language Studies

A brief glimpse into the various contexts from which English Studies developed as a university discipline can help in understanding the reasons behind the fragmentation of the subject throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. The language part of English Studies was, and in some universities still is, primarily concerned with the historical development of the language as traced through its literature. This was a focus linked to the philological study of language which emerged from a German tradition associated with von Humboldt in the early nineteenth century. Philology was an integrated approach to language, literature and culture, and part of the wider conception of the value of humanities within university education in nineteenth century European and US universities (Hardcastle, 1999). Fry (2008) notes that at Yale 'the teaching of vernacular and even recent literatures was first taken up along lines that Anglophones were learning to call "philological" before even there was a department of English'.

In the UK, English as a recognised university discipline took root slowly, with the first academic department being established at the newly formed University College London in 1828. It was not for another six decades, in 1894, that it was recognised at Oxford however, and controversially it had a strong language/philology bias which was perceived as being at the expense of the study of English literature (Baron, 2005). Philological study by this time had moved away from the Humboldtian idea of the integration of language, literature and culture and come to be associated more with studying the historical development of the English language. This approach began to wane in the early twentieth century in the UK and USA. McComiskey (2006) ascribes this to anti-German feeling following World War One and, in the USA specifically, to the rise of linguistics as a sub-discipline of philology. Linguistics, as a (social) science-oriented approach to language, concerned itself with current rather than historical uses of language, and focused initially more on speech than writing. In Britain, the focus on literature as a core discipline of the humanities, and therefore not a (social) science, in higher education dates from around 1900. As the Cambridge University website proudly announces:

> Amazingly, it was only in the twentieth century that the study of English literature became a respected discipline in universities. Among the new courses, Cambridge's in the 1910s was daringly innovative. First and foremost, it innovated in considering literature as an object of study in its own right, rather than merely as evidence for the history of the language (then the prevailing method). (University of Cambridge, 2014).

The situation further afield was different again. English was part of the colonial project in places such as India, where it was viewed as a secular civilising force without the dangerous evangelising overtones of biblical study. Education in English literature was thus part of the training of Indians for the colonial bureaucracy. This legacy of a focus on literature rather than language has, to a large extent, continued, particularly in the more prestigious universities in the country. Gupta (this volume) charts the increased focus on English language that is being encouraged by the Indian government, and is predominantly being undertaken within English Studies departments. For many English departments, this situation appears to be less akin to the philological integration of language, literature and culture, and more a case of English being taught for instrumental purposes, a skill of use in the increasingly globalised

workplace, with little or no reference to the wider context of English Studies.

Within Anglophone dominant countries, linguistics, as a (social) science, did not have the same level of cultural capital as the study of literature. In the days before substantially increased student enrolments, developing a wider and deeper knowledge of the arts, including literature, was a privilege of the few. Linguistic knowledge was generated by those studying other languages, or seeking to understand the broad foundations of language in use. Contributions to this were as likely to come from philosophers, anthropologists and educators as from those within English departments. A similar situation held in Africa and India (Johnson, 2012; see also Gupta, this volume) with literature, whether indigenous or from the Anglophone centre, maintaining its social prestige. In European departments of philology, on the other hand, English language and literature were institutionally closer, but language study was largely the servant of literary and cultural study. In a survey of English Studies in Romania and Bulgaria at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Irimia (2009) focused almost entirely on literature and culture in a discussion entitled 'English Studies in Romanian Higher Education', and in the same volume, Kostova (2009) foregrounds the 'literary' in a discussion of Englishness in Bulgarian academic culture.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century there have been a number of changes to higher education motivated by evolving socio-political values, increased student numbers, and responses to a significantly wider student demographic. ELS is ideally placed to critically interrogate major areas of concern such as globalisation, migration, and individual and group identities, while also dealing with individual and personal skills development related to communication. In the US, the teaching of writing to all newly enrolled students in 'freshman composition' (see Russell, this volume), while having less kudos than more traditional literature-based English programmes, maintains the economic viability of many English departments, while also supporting a rapidly growing research area related to writing pedagogy. Known as the Writing across the curriculum (WAC) movement in US universities, this integrates the study and teaching of written English within its disciplinary context. It brings the linguistic study of language and the psychosocial exploration of understanding language together for pedagogical purposes. The so-called massification of higher education and the increasing numbers of students with non-traditional backgrounds and/or English as an additional language has meant that many universities are drawing on researchers in ELS to help support these students through, for example,

an understanding of the processes of language learning, the intricacies of English as an academic language, and the effect on identities of using an academic register (see Lillis, 2001; Lillis and Curry, 2010).

The situation in countries where there was no historical link to the English language is different again. Betsy Hu Xiaoqiong and Xi Jing (2013), in a discussion of the English curriculum in China, distinguish between English majors who study language, literature and culture and non-English majors whose study is 'skills based'. They illustrate that teaching focuses on British and American language and culture with aims such as 'Should be able to understand lectures *given by people from English-speaking countries*' (p. 390, italics in original), and courses such as British Literature, American Literature, British Culture, and American Culture. This, they argue, ignores the role of English as a lingua franca and its significance in a variety of linguistic and cultural domains. As an international language, the close relationship between English, Anglophone countries and cultural identity is disrupted by globalising forces. They predict that English as an international language 'will develop in ways which reflect local indigenous cultures and languages, diverging from the variety of English spoken in Britain or North America' (p. 393).

The position of English language within English Studies more broadly has waxed and waned over the last two hundred years in response to ideas about the goals and values of higher education, geography, history, and relations with Anglophone dominant countries and political and economic systems. Different facets of ELS have risen to prominence at different times over this period, and ELS as a whole has expanded its reach and the nature of its relationship with other subject areas. Given this breadth and diversity, in the next section we examine the identity of ELS from a disciplinarity perspective, what the implications of looking at it in this way might be, and how it aligns and combines with other disciplines in examining the communicative resources that are drawn upon in various different domains of social and cultural life.

English Language Studies as discipline and interdiscipline

An exploration of the way that knowledge, and the practices that generate and reproduce it, is structured in academia can be a useful perspective for looking at how and why a subject is taught, and how it attains the status that it does. As has been intimated in the above section, contemporary academic research and teaching are the result of a complex interplay of historical, cultural and political forces, all

of which combine to produce what are understood as disciplines. An examination of these forces, along with their implications, can provide useful insights into the state—and to an extent the future directions—of a discipline, and in this section therefore we will review ELS within this context with the aim of examining in further detail how it is currently constituted and its role in the contemporary university/global society.

Definitions of what precisely comprises a discipline include a broad range of different components (Kelley, 1997), including factors such as: the requirements of the education system; the influence of historical precedent; the nature of the phenomenon under investigation; and the existence of a preferred set of methodologies and theoretical frameworks or approaches. By focusing on a selection of these we can examine what these conventions, such as they are, tell us about the practices and concerns of the discipline, and particularly how it is positioned with relation to other complementary subject areas.

ELS has somewhat of a dual nature as far as its relationship to institutional education structures is concerned. On the one hand it is an established field of study, with textbooks, handbooks, journals and courses of study all serving it, and with a relatively standardised content across different universities. It could also be said to have a central canon of theoretical approaches and core ideas, which comprise the tables of contents of the leading handbooks of ELS (e.g. Leung and Street, 2014; Maybin and Swann, 2009), and the curricula of courses of study.

Another key element of disciplinary identity within the context of institutional education however is the emergence of a named subject which is adopted in institutional structures, policies and curricula. As has been noted, this is a somewhat more problematic—or at least fluid—area for ELS. The topics which constitute ELS are often shared out among different centres or degrees, departmental names vary (Applied Linguistics, or Language and Communication, etc.), and departments can find themselves housed within a number of different faculties, from Arts to Education to Media. The dual aspects of this profile can be seen in the statements prepared by UK ELS academics on what constitutes ELS, which on the one hand provide a clear picture of what constitutes ELS, but also notes its interdisciplinary nature, which is manifest in the various institutional homes it can have:

> The subject of English Language draws on concepts from a range of academic areas including Linguistics, Literature, Media and Communication, but its object of study is English. Programmes in English Language cover … the linguistic systems underlying English,

> as well as language in use and the relationship between language and context, the society and the individual… English may be studied in its cultural, contemporary and historical background; it may be related to literary texts, everyday discourse, and the structure of languages other than English. (Higher Education Academy English Subject Centre, 2011, p. 3)

While this broadness of reach can, in some respects, lead to an unstable identity for the subject area within institutional contexts, it is also the source of its usefulness and strength (in terms of its flexibility) in engaging with diverse areas across the curriculum.

Moving to the nature of the phenomenon under investigation as a determining factor in the focus for the discipline, here again there is a certain fluidity around the boundaries. There are several areas where the discipline incorporates issues and topics which are not, perhaps, at first glance related directly to English. The first relates to where the boundaries are drawn around what counts as English. Languages such as pidgins and creoles are often included in ELS, and more recently communicative strategies such as multilingualism and translanguaging (the mixing of languages and bits of languages) also are. As we will discuss in the final section of the chapter, this is in fact becoming a prominent concern which is likely to shape the future of the subject. Another recent trend in language studies generally has been to consider a wide range of semiotic communication—the use of gesture, of sound and images, etc.—and again this is often included as part of ELS (and indeed features in the 2015 Quality Assurance Agency English benchmark statements). Given the way that communication via digital media draws on a great many non-linguistic resources—often mixing the verbal with the visual—this continues to be a growth area in the discipline (see, for example, Seargeant and Tagg, 2014).

Turning finally to preferred methodologies and theoretical frameworks, ELS as a whole covers several approaches, often with notably differing methodologies, ranging from the statistical to the ethnographic, and while there may be a canonical set of theories and key ideas, these are not always compatible and do not represent a single epistemic vantage point from which all research in the area is approached. Certain broad trends across the subject area can be discerned, however. Empirical evidence is of foundational importance for the discipline (purely speculative work is much less common). In addition there is, for the most part, a concern for social issues. ELS is grounded very firmly in the real world: it looks at language as it is used, ideas of language as

they are manifest in discourse, and language as it relates to society and to individual and group identity. The result is that this work often takes a critical approach, the research itself engaging in some respect with social issues. And it is perhaps this grounding within social realities, and the concomitant social engagement, which acts as one of the defining features, both in terms of disciplinary identity and value, within the HE curriculum.

English Language Studies: its value and future directions

We would argue that the benefits of studying ELS operate at both micro and macro levels, being of relevance to people's individual identities (how they're perceived and perceive themselves, based on the social relationships they form that are mediated by language and communication) as well as incorporating issues pertaining to global politics (for example, the relationship between the history of English and colonialism). In addition to these content-based issues, it also spans generic issues such as critical thinking and communication skills.

If we return to the statements published by the HEA in what constitutes ELS, we can see how it is positioned to teach students 'responsiveness to the central role of language in the creation of meaning and a sensitivity to the affective power of language; [and] awareness of the variety of Englishes in the world and intercultural awareness' (Higher Education Academy English Subject Centre, 2011, p. 6). In practical terms this means that students of ELS develop their ability to see and reflect on language as a resource used for thinking, expressing meaning and communicating; as well a critical knowledge of the cultural and political forces that have shaped the language and provide the contexts in which people learn and use it today. Typically a student will learn the metalanguage necessary to describe and analyse language in use. This then underpins the ability to view language as a product, and evaluate aspects of its creation and use. This can apply to a wide range of domains and scenarios. Stockwell (this volume) illustrates how such skills may be applied to the study of poetry. But equally they are appropriate to understanding how everyday language works, and in particular how language constructs representations of individuals, products, and ideologies, and how it positions people as allies, enemies, and consumers, as figures of authority and as the powerless, et cetera. This sensitivity to the 'affective power of language' prepares students to better manage the way in which they or others are positioned through language, and to take a critical stance towards all aspects of social organisation. A study

of the events, dynamics and debates which have shaped the multiplex nature of English today—a language with multiple forms and identities in diverse world contexts—then provides insights into the actuality of social and political relations which are revealed through the resource of language, and the cultural practices that shape communication.

What then of the future directions of the subject? Based on recent and emerging concerns, as well as the way the phenomenon of English itself continues to evolve, we can identify a number of themes or areas which are likely to continue to develop and to attain ever greater prominence within the discipline. In particular key areas of note are: the relationship between English and globalisation; the use of English (as part of a broader semiosis) in the era of social media; and the impact that digital technologies are having on the research and analysis of language practices. Let us very briefly look at each of these in turn.

Globalisation represents a huge shift in the way that social relations are structured, and is having a profound impact on patterns of communication, with English both influencing and being influenced by the phenomenon. English at once acts as a driver in globalisation processes (in terms of its status as the pre-eminent international lingua franca), while at the same time processes of globalisation result in the on-going spread and diversification of the language. There are several important issues in the relationship between globalisation and English, all of which are likely to influence the shape of ELS. Here we wish to highlight one particular issue: superdiversity. The concept of superdiversity was introduced as a way of understanding the increasingly complex waves of migration that were producing urban societies in Britain from the 1990s onward (Vertovec, 2007). Within this changed context, assumptions about migrants belonging to fixed, homogenous communities no longer held. Superdiversity calls for the reconceptualisation of straightforward connections between individuals and broad social categories such as ethnicity, gender or linguistic-background. It thus challenges many of the notions upon which traditional sociolinguistics was built, and calls instead for new research into how English is used, the forms it takes, and the meanings it has in communities marked by these complex patterns of mobility which define modern urban environments.

Another phenomenon which is having profound effects on social organisation and social interaction is the use of digital communications technologies, and especially social media. Social media sites have, since the first decade of this century, transformed the ways in which people interact, along with the linguistic practices in which they engage.

They allow for new channels and strategies for identity performance, and for different dynamics of community creation and maintenance. Here again, then, traditional sociolinguistic models are having to be refashioned, and research is focused on mapping the ways English is used in these evolving online contexts.

The final area to highlight concerns approaches to the analysis of language use. Corpus linguistics—the computer-facilitated analysis of large collected bodies of actual language use—along with related digital-informed methods have emerged as a key way to investigate language and language use in the last few decades. Corpora of different genres, registers and varieties of English and from different times provide insights into how language use is adapted to different modes, social settings and linguistics heritages. As noted above by Betsy Hu Xiaoqiong and Xi Jing (2013) English is a lingua franca that is evolving in different places in different ways (and being put to wide range of purposes), and collections of corpora from around the world illustrate this evolution and inform our understanding of the adaptations taking place, and thus are proving a highly influential element in ELS.

All the above, then, are related to how the language itself continues to develop (as society changes, so the phenomenon also changes), and how different forms of communicative technology and research technology offer new opportunities and challenges for the study of the language. Again, they span the range from the communicative practices of individuals to society-level changes in social relations, and address issues which have direct relevance for everyone who communicates through English. There is one further aspect of the nature and positioning of ELS to add however, and that is its relation to the other parts of a broader English Studies. We have stressed throughout this chapter how ELS is, due to the spectrum of domains in which English is used, a natural candidate for interdisciplinary engagement, and this is nowhere more apparent than with the other parts of English Studies. There is much to be said for mixing the approaches of Literary Studies, Creative Writing and Language Studies, not least because the combination of their *shared* approach to the use and manipulation of language alongside the *different* perspectives they take to this can result in a productive opening up of new avenues of exploration. We have seen in the previous two chapters arguments for the particular contribution that Literary Studies and Creative Writing can bring to this equation; in this chapter we have argued that Language Studies, in its turn, can make a unique contribution in the way that it is grounded in real-life issues from those focused on the individual to those structuring society as a

whole, and in this way it offers an important lens for educating students as critically-aware global citizens.

Note

1. For example, 'English as a foreign language in the context of globalisation' is part of the undergraduate syllabus at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and the University of Copenhagen runs a course on 'Political and socio-economic conditions (historical and/or contemporary) in countries where English is the main language' at Master's level.

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