

Editorial

Regular readers of *English Today* will know that for the last three years, beginning with issue 30.1 in March 2014, there has been a series of features from the ‘Bridging the Unbridgeable’ project on the subject of English prescriptivism carried out by the Centre for Linguistics at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. The series began with an introduction to the work written by the project’s Director, Professor Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in which she invited readers’ participation in the data-gathering being carried out by the team. Since then she and colleagues have raised matters being studied at Leiden which they have felt might be of worldwide interest and on which readers might like to comment.

The research has now ended, and a reporting phase has begun. The first element of this was a Symposium that was held at Leiden on the 9th of December 2016, at which members of the research team addressed a wide range of prescriptivism-related issues informed by their work. They were joined by external speakers: Rebecca Gowers, great-granddaughter of Ernest Gowers of *Complete Plain Words* fame and editor of his work; *Times* columnist and writer Oliver Kamm; and author Harry Ritchie, each with their original views on attempts to regulate and regularise English usage. It is intended that at least some of the symposium’s papers will appear in edited form in the December 2017 issue of this journal (issue 33.4), and full-scale publication of the Centre’s project will emerge in due course in various forms.

What is particularly pertinent here, and what might encourage others to follow the Leiden example of involvement with this journal, is that it was very clear at the symposium that the contributions made to the research by *English Today* readers, responding to the various invitations

offered 2014–16, had proved to be extremely valuable: the thanks of the Leiden team are here extended to those readers who answered their call for information. We are very pleased to have been of help here, and hope they will not be the last people we can assist in such a way. Perhaps others involved in high-quality research in the field of English Language can see where this journal might help them to collect their data as well as, of course, to publicise their findings.

This issue of the journal sees educational issues and lexical enquiries looming large across a wide geographical stage. China is represented by Fang debating English there under the ‘World English’ or ‘lingua franca’ labels, Xiaohong Zhang reviewing a work on past and present language education, and Xu and Tian concentrating on recent innovations in vocabulary. Schultz’s article is also lexically-focused, in this case addressing the influence of German on English. Luo writes on teacher perceptions of English as a lingua franca in Taiwan, Zein on English education in Indonesian schools, and Bukhari and Cheng on the willingness of Pakistani students to use English when studying in Canada. Nguyen reflects on the language at work in Vietnam, and Hashim investigates English and Arabic in contact in the Asian region. Aspects of the historical career of English are the subject of an article by Cooper and a review by Honeybone, the former tracing changing features characteristic of the British Yorkshire dialect, the latter evaluating a book concentrating on the development of English pronunciation. The subject of a further book review, by Wenjun Zhang, is strictly present-day, concerning the place of the online world on language study.

The editors

The editorial policy of *English Today* is to provide a focus or forum for all sorts of news and opinion from around the world. The points of view of individual writers are as a consequence their own, and do not reflect the opinion of the editorial board. In addition, wherever feasible, *ET* generally leaves unchanged the orthography (normally British or American) and the usage of individual contributors, although the editorial style of the journal itself is that of Cambridge University Press.