

Editorial

When Randolph Quirk (now Lord Quirk) set up the Survey of English Usage (SEU) at University College, London at the end of the 1950s, few people imagined that this crazy project to build a corpus of spoken English would be the start of one of the most innovative and influential projects on English grammar, resulting in the *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* in 1985, and many other publications since. A remarkable number of well-known linguists have been involved in the project over the years. Quirk himself has admitted that since the 1950s, he's 'never been without a tape recorder – and never above using a hidden mike' in his quest to describe and understand English as it is really used. In this issue, the current director of the survey, Bas Aarts, and colleagues bring us up to date with their latest innovation: a smartphone 'app' which will help students learn about English grammar.

Isabel Balteiro continues the technology theme by discussing a curious use of 'pwn' in online forums, a variant of 'own' – 'a phenomenon which has scarcely been reported in English ... the alternation of letters 'o' and 'p', due to their proximity on the keyboard'. Isabel tells us how this feature of English gaming slang has influenced Netspeak in Spanish. Emma Dawson Varughese describes a project to anthologise a 'World Englishes literature', arguing 'the multiple features which determine the voice of a World Englishes writer are not defined by the notion of the voice being that of "the subaltern"'. A World Englishes literature approach, Emma suggests, will allow us to move 'beyond the postcolonial'.

Elsewhere in this issue, Isabel González Cruz takes us to the Canaries, where historic trade routes brought the locals into close contact with English

well before their neighbours in continental Spain. Hyun-Sook Kang describes some issues raised by English-only instruction in Korean universities – a trend increasingly found in many parts of the world; and regular contributor Michael Bulley explores some surprising gaps in the possible monosyllables in English.

The last two articles in this issue explore themes related to English as a lingua franca (ELF). Chloe Groom has investigated attitudes amongst European non-native speakers of English to the idea that students should be taught ELF rather than one of the national standards, and concludes that 'an overwhelming majority rejected the idea that European ELF should be the variety taught in schools'. Keith Davidson, meanwhile, takes Nicholas Ostler's book *The Last Lingua Franca* as the starting point for a description of the language usage amongst passengers of mixed nationalities, thrown together on a cruise amongst Greek islands. Where Nicholas Ostler argued that the world's need for a lingua franca will be superseded by technology, Keith Davidson decides that 'people meeting together do like to talk to each other, for which no technology will serve'.

With this issue, Professor Kingsley Bolton steps down as editor due to pressure of other work. The remaining editors express their gratitude for the way he has supported *English Today* with tireless energy since the founding editor, Tom McArthur, retired at the end of 2007. Kingsley's unrivalled knowledge of matters relating to English in Asia, especially in China, has helped ensure *English Today*'s topical coverage of perhaps the fastest growing of the 'expanding circles' of English. We are delighted that we will continue to benefit from his expertise as a member of the *English Today* editorial board.

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.