

Editorial

English Today is pleased to present a number of interesting articles in this issue, the first of 2020. And many of these articles seem to be published with unusually appropriate timing. Stephanie Redekop examines the use of English in American Holocaust museums and the possible effect that language choice has on the mediation of testimony and remembrance. As this issue goes to press in January, just days before the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January 1945 – a date that is commemorated as the UN’s International Holocaust Remembrance Day – Redekop’s essay reminds us of the importance of language within the act of remembrance.

Mahdi Dahmarde and Sung–Do Kim examine the representation of gender in English language coursebooks in Iran, and Hyeon–Seok Kang examines policies related to English-language education in North Korea. Neither of these nations, both of which are frequently in news broadcasts for the last few years, are places that are known for their teaching of the English language, yet these scholars have turned their attention to the ways in which English is taught in each. The essays remind us that there are few places in the world today where English doesn’t have some role in education.

Two essays on contact between English and Chinese – one focusing on historical relations and the other on contemporary uses of English – highlight the relationship between these two important world languages. Zhen Wu examines early Mandarin loanwords that have been borrowed into English, and Zhongyan Wan and Xuesong Gao examine attitudes and perceptions of English-medium and Chinese-medium pharmacology programmes in China.

Additionally, two essays examine contemporary developments in English and the prescriptive judgements that innovations frequently entail. Marten Van Der Meulen examines the pronunciation of *gif* and whether the inventor’s tongue-in-cheek opinion carries authority to change public practice. Brian Poole examines contemporary practices in

writing compound words as two words, hyphenated or as single words.

Articles from the past year also highlight some of the cutting-edge scholarship submitted to the journal in recent years. Structural descriptions of English grammar, modal systems, slang pronunciation, punctuation and hyphenation have been published in the journal this year, in addition to examination of gender-inclusive *they* and the performance of prescriptivism in popular culture.

English Today has also examined the spread of English into a number of different countries and regions, but none more than Chinese mainland and Hong Kong; 11 essays examining issues related to the use of English in Chinese-language contacts were published in volume 35. Other countries represented this past year include Cameroon, Indonesia, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore and Thailand. The editorial team is pleased to include examinations of English from both the most expected and unexpected regions of our world.

Finally, 2019 saw the publication of several essays that are uniquely suited for the eclectic pages of *English Today*. Lindsey N. Chen’s essay on the names of handmade soaps explored the language of health and wellness, and Daria Dayter and Sofia Rüdiger’s examination of lines used by ‘pick-up artists’ explored the language of attraction. Julia Schultz examined contact between Yiddish and English and the interesting ways that Yiddish loanwords have entered English. Finally, we were especially pleased to include an essay by Walt Wolfram and Kennynoel Waldorf about the making of *Talking Black in America*, and the impact this documentary film has had on understanding the world’s most controversial ethnic variety of English. The film was also reviewed in *English Today* this last year.

The editorial team has worked hard in the past year to bring you 30 articles and eight book reviews written by 46 authors. And the team is committed to continuing to bring readers the very best contemporary scholarship related to the forms and functions of English.

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.