

A kind of symbiosis

Not only do copies of *ET* go round the world, but our contributors are based in a multitude of places. In recent editions, we have been using map motifs on the front cover to demonstrate the worldwideness (internationality? globality?) of the journal and its topics, and it seems appropriate, at least this once, to pinpoint the kind of places from which contributions come or to which they relate (or both). On this cover we see at a glance that *ET*78 has four source-cum-topic areas in Europe, three in East Asia, two in North America, and two in Australasia/Oceania.

This indicates that *ET* gets contributions from (to use the terminology of the 'Indian American' scholar Braj B. Kachru) the inner circle (ENL or 'native' users) and the outer and expanding circles (ESL and EFL users), an increasing number of the 'second' and 'foreign' users being as much at home in the language (both literally and figuratively) as the natives. It is intriguing to note that in the close to 20 years of *ET*'s existence this global 'at-homeness' has become firmer: English is as much a South Asian, a West African, or a Scandinavian language as it is British or American or Australian. Indeed, as Hu Xiao Qiong, writing from mainland China, puts the matter in the conclusion to her remarkable article in this issue:

'[I]t is to be hoped that in the course of time China English will become an honored member of the Inner Circle.'

This is a radical – even revolutionary – thought if ever there was one. Her article (even bolder than many bold statements on the subject in the PRC today) in effect seeks to register the autonomy of a variety of English that she and others perceive as developing in mainland China today. For proponents in China of this and related standpoints there is no question that English – and certainly not anything that might be called 'Chinglish' – is now 'a language of China', although not in conventional terms 'a Chinese language'. It is intriguing to consider Hu's argument not only alongside the various recent articles from China about China that we have published, but also alongside our report in this issue of a statue recently unveiled in Beijing to the memory of the late L. G. Alexander, an unveiling which took place almost exactly a year after we brought out our own tribute to that master teacher, in *ET*72 (18:4).

Tom McArthur

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.

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