

# Invited into every school and home

In *Post & Mail*, Sir Randolph Quirk replies to Braj Kachru's 'Liberation linguistics and the Quirk Concern' (*ET* 25, Jan 91), itself a response to Sir Randolph's 'Language varieties and standard language' (*ET* 21, Jan 90). In the same post-bag, Philip Tregidgo makes some pointed comments on the styles both linguists use to address their topics and readers. These letters make a valuable accompaniment to this issue's opening article, a meditation by John Algeo on the varieties of English that highlights the fictive nature of such concepts as 'language', 'variety', 'English', 'British English', and 'American English'. Further comments are welcome on articles and letters alike.

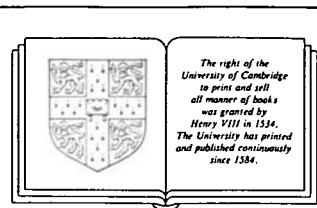
Comment is also sought on the second feature, 'Bilingual Denmark', in which Paul Christophersen considers the implications of a national educational policy that seeks to make every citizen bilingual in Danish and English. The situation he describes is probably not confined to the Danes, and the impact of policies of this kind is highly relevant to the Quirk/Kachru debate: sooner or later we must ask and answer such questions as *Is there now a distinctive Danish English, just as there has for many years been a distinctive Irish or South African English?*

For some years it has seemed to me that north-western Europe, the home of the Germanic languages, is particularly vulnerable to the inroads of English as a 'partner language' to the various ancient national tongues. All have a full panoply of educational, publishing and other institutions to define and sustain their standard forms, yet they may find that such long-standing strengths are not enough when bilingualism really jells. English, in effect, could end up calling the tune from Lapland to the Rhine.

I therefore invite readers in Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria (at least) to comment on Christophersen especially as regards the language situation in their own countries – and also invite Danish readers to indicate how they respond to what he has said. Readers elsewhere may of course see parallels to what is happening or could happen in their parts of the world – as and when English is invited into every school and home in the land.

Tom McArthur

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