# Editorial

While it is the instant and inevitable fate of every newly-delivered US presidential inaugural address to become one of the most pored-over texts in the English language, the address recently delivered by the latest incumbent of the White House, Donald Trump, has been subject to an even greater degree of linguistic scrutiny than usual. To some extent, this simply reflects the fact that Mr. Trump is by any standards an unconventional holder of political high office. But beyond this, the unprecedented interest in the language of Trump's inaugural address – and in his rhetorical style more generally – reflects a widespread sense that Trump's English is somehow different from that of his political peers and predecessors, and that his different way with English has contributed in no small measure to his accession to the position of Most Powerful Person in the World.

The consensus view seems to be that Trump appeals to large sections of the American electorate because his language is closer to the plain, simple and direct speech of 'ordinary' people such as themselves than it is to the notoriously rarefied, convoluted and evasive language typically associated with mainstream political rhetoric. In other words, Trump's appeal is that he speaks as 'one of us' and not as 'one of them'. Part of this, of course, is a matter of what it is that Trump is saying, but it is also a matter of how he says it – the linguistic resources that he draws on while he is on the podium.

Among the more linguistically savvy commentators on Trump's inaugural address, the following features have attracted particular note: a predominance of unusually short and grammatically simple sentences; a preference for simple rather than complex noun phrases; an unprecedentedly frequent use of the pronouns *we*, *you*, *your* and *our*, and the words *America, American* and *Americans*, presumably to invoke a sense of solidarity with the audience; a repeated use of future forms with *will*, presumably to construct a sense of business-like purpose and intent; and extensive use of repetition in general. On this last point, readers may not be surprised to learn that Trump's closing exhortation – *God bless America* – is stated twice:

> *Thank you. God bless you. And God bless America. Thank you. God bless America.*

It is somewhat more surprising, however, to learn that Trump is only the third President ever to use this most well-known of American political exhortations in an inaugural address – the other two being Ronald Reagan (once, in 1985) and George W. Bush (once, in 2001). It will be interesting to see whether and to what extent future Presidents will feel compelled in their inaugural speeches to follow Trump in this or in any of his other linguistic devices.

This issue of *English Today* embraces topics ranging from English as a lingua franca in Taiwan, through Facebook in Mongolia and teachers' views of the place of English in Brazil, to an analysis of the singing style of Rihanna. On the way, readers are invited to help with an author's doctoral research, to consider the status of China English, and to contemplate the growing English lexicon in China and more widely. Three book reviews cover work on the ever-contentious matter of English spelling, English language education past and present in China, and the mysterious world of academic publishing.

*The editors*