

# Editorial

The (UK) Queen's Birthday honours list of June 2014 saw the appointment of John Simpson to the rank of OBE. This important British honour recognises his service to the *Oxford English Dictionary* from 1976 to 2013, for the last twenty years as its Chief Editor. His time as head of the *OED* saw its digitisation, the implementation of its ongoing third-edition programme, and the addition of more than 60,000 new words and meanings to the work. The OBE award is testimony to Simpson's immense contribution to English studies, and especially to the value of scholarly lexicography, that must be a great satisfaction to *English Today's* readers.

The *OED* is updated four times a year to keep pace with the living, growing language that is English. More than a thousand new words, phrases and senses were added to the Dictionary in the June 2014 update alone, and these are listed in full on the *OED* website. In an accompanying article, Katherine Connor Martin, Head of the US Oxford Dictionaries, highlights such new words as: *anthropocene*, referring to the geological era especially influenced by humans; *flexitarian*, a person who is mainly vegetarian but is flexible about this; and *conlang*, a 'constructed language' such as Esperanto or Klingon. One of Martin's subjects is reproduced in full here, since it touches variously on the newest of new words, on ante-dating, and on the necessity of having strong evidence before making linguistic assertions:

The *OED* famously tends to wait until a word has been attested for several years before entering it into the dictionary, although exceptions are made for words which are extremely widespread or of unquestioned import. Furthermore, many words which lexicographers initially believe to be very new often prove, upon further research, to have much longer histories than anticipated (a prominent recent example being the abbreviation *OMG*, of which a 1917 example was unexpectedly found). As a result,

there are fewer than 100 entries in the *OED* which date from 2000 or later. Until today's update, the youngest word in the *OED* was *crowdsourcing*, but it has now been unseated by *copernicium*, the name of the artificially produced radioactive element with atomic number 112. The element was first produced in 1996, but IUPAC, the international body that approves new element names, did not officially approve the name *copernicium* until 2010. Earlier mentions of *copernicium* were found from 2009, but that still makes *copernicium* younger than even *hashtag* (attested from 2007), which also enters the dictionary in this update. Of course, as with any dating of a word, future research could change the chronology.

Dictionaries feature in this issue of *English Today* in the article by Chan, which focuses specifically on learners' dictionaries. Bogetic discusses quotative innovation in the English of Jamaica, and Yamaguchi explores the ever-problematic English interdental fricative as it is manifested in an emerging Malaysian English. Danielewicz-Betz and Graddol compare and contrast English in the urban landscape of the border between Hong Kong and mainland China through a study of the signage found there. The issue of prescriptivism, so intertwined with that of the appearance of the new in language, features in the contribution of Lukač to the ongoing series of items from the Leiden 'Bridging the Unbridgeable' project; its eighteenth-century manifestation is the subject of the article by Wilton. Language selection is the theme of two articles: code-switching to signal identity in Korea is the theme of Baratta; Croatian students' views of various English varieties concerns Margić and Širola. A review by Bolton of Spolsky's *Cambridge Handbook of Language Policies* concludes the issue.

*The editors*

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