CrossMark

COMMENT

Editorial

'This year is going to be different,' I told myself. 'I don't need to look at those websites to write this editorial.'

Let me explain what I mean.

The editorials for *English Today* are initially composed by one member of the editorial team and circulated among editors for comment and review. Even though each editorial is signed as composed by *The editors*, one member of the team is responsible for drafting the text. And each year my editorial for the first issue of a new volume comes due in December of the preceding year.

And each year I do the same thing to start the process of writing my editorial. I go to look at all those 'word of the year' sites to see what various groups – the American Dialect Society, the Oxford English Dictionary, Dictionary.com, etc. – chose as their 'word of the year'. This year, though, I've decided *not* to review the various choices for 2020, although I did note with amusement that the OED couldn't choose a single word for 2020 and has instead proposed 'words of the year'. I have also heard that the American Dialect Society's runner up for word of the year was *2020*, as in 'That is so 2020 . . . '

Of all the ways that 2020 can be described, 'disappointing' would probably express the best feelings that many of us have for the past year; a host of other adjectives could just as easily be invoked to describe what was for many of us a very painful year. *English Today*'s founding editor, Tom McArthur, passed away in April of 2020. His influence on the journal and English language scholarship have been memorialized in a collection of writings that are freely accessible from the *English Today* website (Cambridge University Press, 2020). I would urge all regular readers who have not yet browsed the collection to do so in the coming months while the pages remain freely accessible.

In September of 2020 *English Today* brought readers a special issue entitled 'Language in the South of England' (Issue 3). The special issue not only highlighted important research in a region of England that has been traditionally overlooked in sociolinguistic research, but it foregrounded a number of innovative techniques developed for the study of English dialectology.

A retrospective examination of the remaining three issues of *English Today* from 2020 (i.e., volume 36) testifies to the journal's versatility and broad coverage of all aspects of the English language. A number of articles in the past year have examined structural features of the English language. English lexicology has been a favourite subject within many volumes of *English Today* and in 2020 the journal published articles about loanwords from Mandarin, attitudes toward loanwords from other East Asian languages and the historical development of LGBT labelling words. The influence of English on other languages was also explored in an article examining English terminology that has entered Serbian related to the European Union. The variable pronunciations of words like GIF, changing rules related to compound word formation, the introduction of *insubordination* in English grammar and the recent development of 'general extenders' as a formal linguistic category are topics that were explored in *English Today* in 2020.

Although *English Today* does not focus primarily on language teaching as an academic discipline, several articles have investigated the ways that the English language is taught internationally. Topics such as English language policy in North Korea or gender representation in Iranian English language teaching (ELT) textbooks suggest some of the diversity that English engages with when it is taught internationally. And, as English is increasingly adopted as a medium of instruction in higher education around the world, *English Today* authors explored these uses in China and Bangladesh. In an exchange between several scholars working in China, *English Today* was able to host a debate about the future relevance of the tertiary English major in China, and we plan to host more debates on other topics in the 2021.

Finally, *English Today* authors have presented readers the unique features of English in various contexts internationally, including English used in movies in Turkey or in outdoor advertisements

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in Morocco. The role of English in 'remembrance' in American Holocaust memorials was also explored in 2020.

In the current issue we are pleased to present readers a number of articles that continue to demonstrate the diversity of English. Sánchez and Reichelt examine the history, features and functions of English in Cuba in a survey that seeks to reverse a literature gap about English in the Caribbean nation. Two articles explore two English–language issues in Hong Kong: Quammie–Wallen investigates vague language as a feature of Hong Kong English and Jenks and Lee explore the English–language terms used to express identity in Hong Kong. Four articles examine specialised functions of English internationally. Zhang discusses the various uses of English found on a Chinese–language microblog and Ahn considers spelling variants of English–language words from Korean popular culture. Alomoush describes the intended features of English printed on shopping bags in Jordan and Dai and Wu contemplate the effects of using English as a medium of instruction in music education in China.

Finally, the editors of *English Today* are pleased to wish all our readers a happy new year with the hope that 2021 will bring health and peace.

The editors

Reference

Cambridge University Press. 2020. 'In memoriam: Tom McArthur.' Online at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/english-today/in-memoriam-tom-mcarthur> (Accessed 10 December, 2020).

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