

Editorial

This summer's Open Golf Championship at Royal Troon in Scotland reminded one of the editors of his tongue-in-cheek use of the term *Troongate* at a recent quiz in which his team was denied victory because the answer 'Troon' was wrongly denied a point. The suffix <-gate> originates in the Watergate scandal of the 1970s which prompted the resignation of US President Richard Nixon, but was then adopted by the media as a label for political intrigue and/or celebrity misconduct. In July 2016, for instance, *Coiffeurgate* trended on Twitter following revelations of French President François Hollande's allegedly extravagant hair-dressing bill, demonstrating how such forms deploy seemingly light-hearted wordplay to convey genuine public outrage.

Politics, of course, has always had an impact on language and the political and economic uncertainty triggered by the UK vote to leave the European Union – universally reported as *Brexit* – has prompted a similar bout of linguistic creativity. A blend of <British> and <exit>, *Brexit* is cited in dictionaries as successor to the earlier *Brixit*, perhaps preferred due to its greater similarity to *Grexit*, a term credited to economist Ebrahim Rahbari in 2012 to describe the possibility that Greece might withdraw from the Eurozone monetary union. Post-Brexit we have also witnessed *Frexit*, *Nexit* and *Swexit* to refer to similar anti-EU sentiments in France, The Netherlands and Sweden respectively, while the UK media quickly adopted *Regre(t)xit* to describe leave voters who then had an immediate change of heart. The constitutional turmoil following the resignation of Conservative Prime Minister, David Cameron, became *Mexit* (i.e. 'messy exit'), while the fragmentation of the opposition Labour Party was variously described as *Jexit* (a reference to the anticipated removal of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Leader) or *Lexit* (<Labour Party> + <exit>). The latter has the additional appeal of being homophonous with the British slang term *legs it*, meaning 'leaves hurriedly or sheepishly'.

Within a week of the referendum, *Royxit* was used to describe the resignation of England football manager, Roy Hodgson, after England's elimination from the Euro 2016 tournament, and a joke appeared on social media that *Eton Mess* (a popular British dessert of strawberries, meringue and cream) was to be re-named *Brexit Pudding* – a reference to the fact two of the key architects of the apparent confusion, David Cameron and Boris Johnson, were both old boys of Eton College. Interestingly, the earliest analogous form we can find is *Twexit*, contributed to Urban Dictionary in 2010 and defined as 'gone from Twitter', but like <-gate> we suspect <-exit> will remain extremely productive and, perhaps, become a subject of lexicographical debate within these pages.

This issue of *English Today* ranges across lexis, grammar, phonology, and pedagogy. Lexis is covered by Song in a call for careful labelling of English varieties, Roig-Marin exploring the effects of new technologies on word formation, Selvi addressing the impact of English on the Turkish business world, Murphy in an exploration of differing British and American ways of expressing politeness, and Green in a review critiquing Eric Partridge, the works and the scholar. Chamson's phonological exploration sees /w/ combating /v/ in the English of Germans. Articles on grammar are from Weina Li investigating modality in the English of academics, and Hamilton shedding light on 'however' used as a conjunction, while Maguire reviews an atlas of English morphosyntax. Tieken-Boon van Ostede's is last in a three-year run of contributions from a Leiden University project delving into matters of prescriptivism in English. Three articles concern English Teaching: Rao's on the benefits—and problems—of employing English native-speakers to teach the language in China; He and Chiang's on the wider use of English for teaching subjects in Chinese universities; and Lin's dealing with the effects on English-language learners of online interaction with English native speaker.

The editors

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