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Australian English in English-Chinese Dictionaries

The following article is adapted from a presentation given by Professor Gao Yongwei of Fudan University to a workshop on World English and the Dictionary, Macquarie University, 19 July, 2012.

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A brief history of English-Chinese dictionaries

19th century

The first bilingual dictionaries to be produced in China were written by missionaries – who did not necessarily conform to standard lexicographical practices. The first English-Chinese dictionary was compiled by Robert Morrison, as Part Three of *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language* (1822). It was shorn of labels of all kinds (e.g. part-of-speech, usage labels, etc.), and was intended for the study of the Chinese language. Later missionaries, such as Walter Henry Medhurst, Wilhelm Lobscheid, Samuel Wells Williams, Justus Doolittle, etc., followed Morrison's footsteps and published their own English-Chinese dictionaries along similar lines.

The first English-Chinese dictionary compiled by a Chinese scholar was not published until 1868, and was entitled *An English and Chinese Lexicon*. The dictionary was compiled by Kwong Ki Chiu, and it was largely modeled on Morrison's and Medhurst's dictionaries. Kwong's dictionary had a total of about 8,000 entries, but by the time it was revised for the second time, in 1887, the number of entries had increased to 20,000.

Despite being one of the most popular English-Chinese dictionaries at that time, Kwong's dictionary did not have a good coverage of Australianisms, even failing to include one of the most well-known – *kangaroo*, which was first recorded in use in the English language as early as 1770. However, *kangaroo*, did find its way into the third part of Lobscheid's dictionary--*English and Chinese Dictionary with the Punti and Mandarin Pronunciation* (1866-1869). However, the Chinese equivalent Lobscheid provided for the word was长尾驴（literally a long-tailed donkey rather than the vivid translation **袋鼠** (literally a mouse in a bag) which has become the standard Chinese equivalent since the early 1900s. Lobscheid's dictionary also included another Australia-related word, *emu*, which was defined as "a large bird of New Holland, allied to the cassowary and ostrich".

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20th century

A much larger dictionary, the *Commercial Press English and Chinese Pronouncing Dictionary*, comprising 100,000 words and phrases, was published in 1902. The dictionary, based on Lobscheid's dictionary, not only improved on Lobscheid's translations, but also added many thousands of new words. *Platypus* and *lyrebird* were among such additions.

Six years later, The Commercial Press published *An English & Chinese Standard Dictionary* which has been regarded as one of the pioneering lexicographical works in the history of English-Chinese lexicography. Although the only regional label it provided was *Amer.* (for American), the dictionary included several words originating from Australian Aboriginal languages, such as *boomerang*, *dingo*, *kangaroo*, *wombat*, *wonga-wonga*, etc. Other Australia-related words, such as *eucalyptus*, were also included in the dictionary.

The first major English-Chinese dictionary that adopted the label of "<澳>" (" Australian") was also offered by The Commercial Press. Entitled *A Comprehensive English-Chinese Dictionary*, the dictionary was published in 1928 and it became one of the most widely used English-Chinese dictionaries in the twenty years after its publication. The dictionary included dozens of words originating from Australian Aboriginal languages, such as *bandicoot*, *billabong*, *koolah*, *quandong*, *wallaby*, *wallaroo*, etc.

The next development in English-Chinese dictionaries was the two dictionaries that were both given the title *A New English-Chinese Dictionary* (NECD), the first published in 1950 and the second in 1976. There was a considerable difference in their treatment of Australian material, with the latter dictionary in particular extending its coverage beyond words from Aboriginal languages to include some typical Australianisms such as *bonzer* , *bushranger* , *cobber*, *digger*, *station*, *swag*, and *tucker*.

Current developments – the ECD

The English-Chinese Dictionary (ECD), one of the most comprehensive English-Chinese dictionaries in China, was first published in 1991 and revised in 2007. It followed the approach of the NECD in trying to cover words originating from Australian Aboriginal languages and English words or expressions typically used in Australia. ECD included, for example, *boong* , *mulga* , *quokka, taipan*, *Woop Woop* , as well as *arvo* , *bathers*, *boil-over*, *chunder*, *ocker* , *shivoo* , *troppo*, etc. In ECD2, the label "old-fashioned" was added where appropriate. ECD compilers also recorded some idiomatic expressions used in Australian English, such as *come a gutser*, *come the raw prawn*, *have tickets on* , *not the full quid*, s*he'll be right*, etc.

If we search the dictionary text of ECD2, it comes up with 389 words labeled *Australian* and 198 words labeled *Australian and New Zealand*. This, however, does not mean that ECD2 has only recorded 587 typical Australian words and expressions, because a considerable proportion of words originating from Australian Aboriginal languages are not labeled at all in ECD2, and such words are sometimes furnished with notes indicating their Australian origin (as in

boomerang), or they may denote Australia's flora and fauna (such as *callop*, *currawong*, *kelpie*, etc.). There are also a number of words that are not labeled *Australian* because they are also frequently used in other English varieties and British English in particular, such as *bog-standard*, *cranky*, *journo*, *lippy*, and so on.

Five types of Australianisms in ECD2

1. words ending with *-ie*	*barbie* , *blowie*, *brekkie* , *coldie*, *cozzie*, *mozz*, *newie* , *possie* , *sammie* , *scratchie*
2. other types of shortenings	*derro*, *nads*, *servo*
3. English words with senses particular to Australia	*cadet* (novice), *quoit* (buttocks), *rage* (party), *slab* (a pack of beer), *spring* (come upon), *spunk* (a sexy person),
4. terms particular to Australian culture	*alfoil*, *amber fluid*, *Banana bender*, *cark*, *waxhead*
5. phrases and idiomatic expressions	*big-note oneself*, *do one's nana*, *full as a goog* , *give it a bit of a nudge*, *in the nick*, *pull one's head in*

Looking at these categories, anyone who is steeped in Australian culture will find that the additions in ECD2 are far from complete or representative. Take words ending with *-ie* for example. There are still dozens of such words that have not been documented by ECD, such as *bikkie*, *chokkie*, *cockie* (cockatoo or cockroach), *frostie* (a cold can of beer), *towie* (a towtruck), *wettie* (wetsuit).

Updates to the ECD

A third edition of the ECD is planned for publication in 2017. Because this, like the current edition, will be sold more electronically than in its paper form, the revisers are planning to add at least 20,000 new entries which will cover not only neologisms of all kinds and important proper names, but also those words that ECD2 failed to include. A good proportion of the new entries will be Australianisms, old or new.

Colloquialisms

Words ending in *-ie* and *-o* (hypocoristics) will be paid especial attention, including *ambo*, *biffo*, *gastro*, *tradie* , *youngie* (a child), etc. Other colloquialisms will also be documented, such as *bagging* (severe criticism), *boofy*, *fruit loop* (a crazy person), *gurgler* (as in *go down the gurgler*), *hoon*, *mystery bag* (a sausage or meat pie), will also be added to the dictionary.

As ECD based much of its dictionary-making practice on its precedessor—NECD2 which is widely known for its extensive coverage of idiomatic expressions ranging from the archaic and the old-fashioned to the current, the ECD revisers will follow this tradition and add as many Australian idioms as possible, and the next edition of ECD will probably include idioms such as *boring as batshit*, *hit one's straps, like a bastard*, *stir the possum*, *throw (*or *chuck) one's toys out of the pram,* etc.

Australian Aboriginal words

ECD2's inclusion of words that have come from Australian Aboriginal languages is far from complete. Therefore, the revisers will try to record as many such usages as possible this time around, such as *coolamon*, *mulgara, pondi, rakali, tammar, turrum*, *walpurti*, *yolla*.

Words with new meanings

The recording of new meanings has always been a more difficult job than that of new words as the latter are easier to detect in a given text. The ECD revisers, however, will make greater efforts in recording the new uses of existing words through consulting all the major Strine-related dictionaries.

An example of an entry that needs updating is for the word *bogan*. OED Online included *bogan* during its monthly update in June, and defined it as "an unfashionable, uncouth, or unsophisticated person, esp. regarded as being of low social status". In fact, *bogan* made its first appearance in English in 1985, and several other dictionaries, such as *Oxford Dictionary of English, Collins English Dictionary*, and even *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, have included it long before OED Online did. ECD2 has also recorded its use, but it only provided one sense for the entry, "a fool". During the revision, the existing Chinese equivalent will be revised, and the second sense – "粗人；无文化之人" (an uncouth or uncultured person)—and its derivative *boganism* will be added.

Other senses on the front burner for ECD revisers are the noun use of the word *tragic* (a boring or socially inept person), *cactus* (useless or beyond rescue), *shanghai* (steal).

Concluding remarks

The addition of new entries to a dictionary is a never-ending job for lexicographers, and a bilingual dictionary can never hope to cover the full range of vocabulary across all English regions. The steady growth of an Australian English presence in English-Chinese dictionaries is a reflection of the growing awareness of the importance of this variety alongside the major varieties of British and American English. The Chinese lexicographers working on the next edition of the ECD hope to present a much more balanced picture of Australian English through their growing access to Australian material and expertise.

A "Lingua-regional" bilingual Dictionary (Australian English - Kazakh)

The following article is based on a presentation by Gulnara Omarbekova of the Kazakh State Women's Teacher Training University, for Australex 2011.

Introduction

This article introduces a bilingual (Australian English-Kazakh) dictionary that is being developed on the basis of the importance of understanding the central cultural features of a country to learning its language – an approach that is known as lingua-regional.
A recent global interest has arisen in Kazakhstan and the Kazakh language, and with it a necessity to bridge gaps in cultural understandings between Kazakhstan and the rest of the world. This aim has been recognized by Kazakhstan's cultural Trinity of Languages Project, launched in February, 2007, with the intention of ensuring that all Kazakh citizens have full command of Kazakh, Russian and English. The dictionary has been designed to help Kazakh readers converse in English, to thoroughly understand Australian expressions, and to understand borrowed words from the Australian Aboriginal languages.

Focus

The main objects of this investigation are those lexical units of Australian English that showcase national-cultural features. These lexical units are labelled "realities" by Vlahov and Florin (1980), who define them as "…words and word combinations nominating the objects or phenomena, which are typical for one culture and distinctive from others. Being the representatives of national correspondences, they, as a rule, do not have exact equivalents in other languages'' (p. 47)
Development of Australian English

From the earliest British settlement in New South Wales in 1788, both convicts and the free settlers adapted English to their new home, by changing meanings of old, existing words and borrowing new ones to suit their requirements. These special words which describe the way of life in a new country distinguished Australian English from others. It quickly developed into a colourful variety of English which encoded the values and traditions of its people.

Words such as: *bush, creek, paddock*, and *station* are good examples of instances of adaptation from their British origin, and they require special explanation when translating into other languages. In British English, bush primarily refers to an individual plant, or "shrub", whereas in Australia it is a native forest or wooded area in general. The word creek in the British origin is "a narrow inlet on the coastline" or "an inlet or short arm of a river", but in Australia the creek can be as big as a river, or it can be a dry and dusty bed which only fills with water after heavy rain. As agriculture developed in Australia, the great differences between methods of farming in Australia and England gave rise to differences in the meanings of words. Thus the word *paddock*, which in England refers to a small field or a small enclosed meadow, but in Australia can be a huge fenced area or field extending for many hectares. The Australian sense of the word station is likewise interesting in this connection. It refers to a farmer's homestead, the outbuilding and all the land that the farmer owns and is thus a synonym of the words farm and ranch.

The analysis of the realities of Australian English has allowed us to formulate the following groups of realities, which reflect the conceptual background of Australian culture:

Political	Geographical	Ethnographic
For example: *First Fleet, Northern Territory, Labor Party, digger etc.*	For example: *Eucalypt, koala, the Never-never, Opera House, Gold Coast* etc.	For example: *Anzac biscuits, Archibald prize, bring a plate, smoking ceremony, Yolngu*, etc.

Methods of translation

As realities do not have exact equivalents in other languages, they cannot be translated "on general rules" (Vlahov, Florin, 1980) and require a special approach. Translation of Australian English realities was carried out in the following ways:

Transliteration – words were converted from one system of writing into another, in our case, transliterating a Latin text into the Cyrillic script, e.g. *Canberra*-Канберра, *koala*-коала. Each letter in the English alphabet has its own corresponding letter in Cyrillic text.

Phonetic transference – speech sounds were visually represented, e.g. *Boomerang*-бумеранг, *Geelong*-Джилонг. The words are transcribed in the way they are heard. This is also called a practical transcription. Usually the proper names are not translated; they are transformed into the Kazakh language by using this method.

Analogy – in our work we sometimes used the method of approximate translation by means of analogy, e.g. *jumbuck*-қой ("sheep"), *digger*-жауынгер ("soldier"). However, this approach clearly cannot capture the cultural connotations of the word.

Combined translation – when the English analogy does not fully convey the meaning of a lexical unit in Kazakh, it is transferred via literal translation (calques), and then a descriptive translation is used: *tuckerbag*-асқалта, *creek*-өзен, *swagman*-қаңғыбас.

Description or explanation – where no equivalent word is available, an explanation is sometimes used, e.g. *pavlova* – орыс балеринасы Анна Павлованың құрметіне аталған безе- дессерт. Сырты қытырлақ, ал іші нәзік, жеңіл болып келетін безе (a meringue-based dessert named after the Russian ballet dancer Anna Pavlova. It is a meringue with a crisp crust and soft, light inner).

Aims and outcomes

The outcome of this project will be twofold. Firstly, the publication of an Australian English-Kazakh Dictionary with 3000 entries, built on the principles of lingua-regional study (LRS). Secondly, the products of the research will be used in teaching Lingua-regional studies, Lexicography, and Typology at the Kazakh State Women's Teacher Training University of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Focussing, as it does on culturally marked units of language, a lingua-regional bilingual dictionary can be used as a very valuable resource for learning about culture within the language learning process.

Reference

Vlahov, S., Florin, S. (1980). Untranslatable in translation. Moscow: High school.

Book Notes

Alison Moore of the Macquarie Dictionary *reviews Word Up by Mark McCrindle with Emily Wolfinger (Halstead Press, 2011. RRP A$30. ISBN: 9781920831851)*

The subtitle of *Word Up* by Mark McCrindle (with Emily Wolfinger) is 'A Lexicon and Guide to Communication in the 21st Century', so, as I settled down to read it, I put my lexicographer's hat (sturdy, a little frayed around the edges, miner's light attached to the front) firmly on my head. However, this book is much more than its subtitle describes, necessitating considerable juggling of millinery.

The book starts with a listing of the different identifiable 'generations' of Australians since Federation, with their spans of birth years, the number of each at present in Australia, and the percentage of the total population each represents. We start with the Federation Generation (born 1901–1924, making up 1.5% of today's population) and finish with Generation Alpha (born from 2010, and also making up 1.5% of the population). Between them are the Builders, the Baby Boomers, and Generations X, Y and Z.

What follows is a sociolinguistic analysis of Australia and Australians, comparing the older generations with the new. McCrindle looks at the different influences on language at different times, youth slang, clichés, iconic one-liners (*Tell him he's dreamin'*; *Not happy, Jan!*) and jingles (from *Happy Little Vegemites* to *Oh what a feeling!*), political jargon, and offensive and incorrect language (the comparison of the lyrics of hit songs of the 1950s and 60s with those of recent years is fairly hair-curling). There is a chapter on manners which is very enlightening, as well as a section on literacy. A glossary of communication technology and drug terms is provided, which is both useful and alarming.

Throughout the book are many examples of the language of recent generations, the digital natives for whom 'technology is like the air they breathe, it permeates everything'. For this 'digital immigrant' parent of two Gen Y-ers (on goes the mother's hat – unkempt, miner's light attached to the front, but without batteries because they have been seconded for use in a mouse or remote control), there were many illuminating moments – it began to feel a bit like reading about Masonic secrets.

There is a tendency among some older people to regard the young's affinity with technology as a terrible social ill, but this book helps to dispel this by showing just how expert they are at multitasking, engaging in online chat with friends while working or studying. The evidence is showing that the standard and efficiency of their work is not suffering.

Mark McCrindle heads up a social research consultancy, and this book benefits from its wide-ranging quantitative and qualitative research. It is extremely well-referenced, which is unusual in a book of this nature, but welcome if you find yourself wanting to look more deeply into a particular area of research. A possible improvement would be more information on the sample size for the various surveys that are quoted.

The design of the book is welcoming – tables and lists are easy to read, quotations and interesting facts appear in breakout panels and speech bubbles.

The third item of headgear that leapt to my head was my editor's hat (prickly, uncomfortable, very bright miner's light that, sadly, never goes out) when a small number of typographical errors and infelicities of language briefly stole my attention. However, this is a minor quibble.

And finally to the lexicon of youth language – about 500 words and phrases clearly and entertainingly defined, some with etymological information and very useful pronunciation guides. Some errors appear that could irritate a lexicographer (*off your face* is categorised as a verb, *off the hook* is given no part of speech, *coolth* is labelled an adjective), but these would probably not bother the happily unencumbered general reader. The illustrative sentences supplied in many of the entries will make parents LOL with a sudden blast of recognition: *That was so random*; *Sup dude?*

With this book, Mark McCrindle and Emily Wolfinger have majorly pwned it. Really, it's sweet as.

SCOSE NOTES

Language researcher Irene Poinkin summarises recent discussions at SCOSE, the ABC Standing Committee on Spoken English.

Foundering on the sounds of words

Journalists and broadcasters should be more aware than most of the pitfalls of words that sound similar, but mean different things. The following examples show that this is not always the case:

Hundreds of people would gather to witness the victim's family meter out punishment against the perpetrator.

A ***meter*** is a measuring device (e.g. for water or electricity), and the word can also be used as a verb (to meter). But what's needed here is ***mete out***, to allot or apportion.

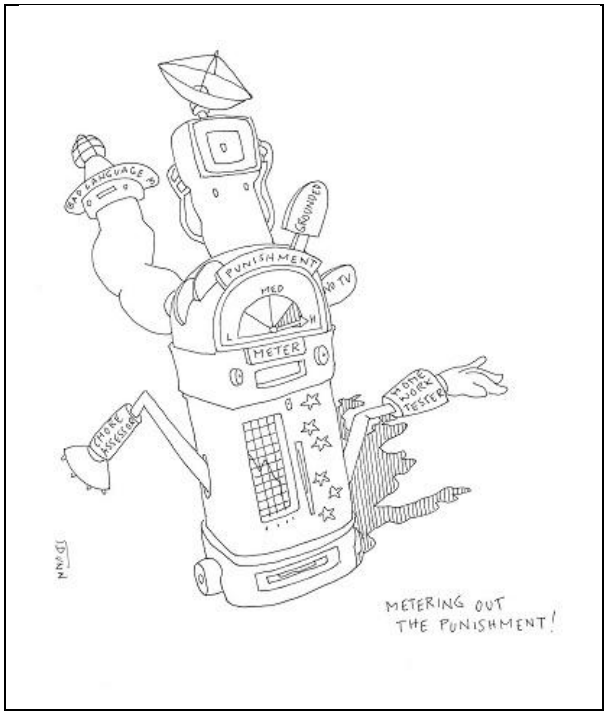
A gunman is still hold up inside a house in Melbourne's north, nearly 24 hours after the siege began.

The phrase is ***hole(d) up***, not 'hold up', which has an entirely different meaning (and in this context doesn't make sense). ***Hole up*** meaning to hide (as from the police) should be familiar to journalists, as they often have to report on such events.

Here's an example where the writer used a word without thinking about what it means:

His [human rights lawyer, George Newhouse's] firm represented the survivors and the families of the deceased on SIEV 221, which founded on Christmas Island in 2010.

'Founded' doesn't make sense in this context. What's needed is the seafaring term ***founder(ed)***, 'to fill up with water and sink'.



Nouns and their attributes

A newspaper recently contained an article about a doctor who had allegedly infected 56 'woman patients'. When I mentioned this in a SCOSE Report, pointing out that the plural of ***woman patient*** is ***women patients***, a staffer's response was:

'Surely "woman patient" is bad usage? What ever happened to "female patient"? We don't say "man patient". Suddenly "woman" has become an adjective.'

No, ***woman patient*** is not bad usage (and ***woman*** hasn't suddenly become an adjective). It's an alternative usage that has been around long enough to have made it into the dictionary. This adjectival sense of ***woman*** is defined in the *Macquarie Dictionary* (see definition #8) and it's even illustrated by the phrase 'a woman doctor'.

English is productive enough to allow us to use nouns as adjectives (provided a sensible meaning results). The fact that we don't say 'man patient' is a usage issue. (It wouldn't be grammatically wrong to use it but we just don't – probably for historical/sociological reasons.) Actually, 'man' has been used as a modifier before; after all, we have words and expressions like 'manhole', 'man-hunt', 'man boobs' and 'man flu'. What's more, 'man child' has been in use for at least a century (see Kipling) and 'girl child' for at least as long.

Vocabulary choices

A listener objected to 'killing spree' as applied to the Brevik killings in Norway, saying that the word should be 'rampage'. 'Spree', the listener said, suggests a lively frolic or a bout of uninhibited activity, and the word ought not to be associated with killing. But the expression is well established – it was used in connection with the 1996 Port Arthur massacre, for example. A Wikipedia site even has a definition of 'spree killer'.

When fugitive Malcolm Naden was arrested after nearly seven years on the run, a newsreader on a commercial station said that police had 'caught up with their prey'. The right word was ***quarry*** (they caught up with their ***quarry***). ***Prey*** suggests that the police eat the people they arrest. It pays to choose your words carefully.

Getting stressed about placenames

On the pronunciation front, some listeners have been expressing annoyance when broadcasters have used a full vowel or a diphthong in an unstressed syllable where an indeterminate vowel is the norm. The second syllable in **Gladstone**, for example, is usually pronounced /-stuhn/, but one listener lamented that he'd been 'hearing an awful lot of "stone" lately'. Typically, placenames consisting of two main segments or morphemes, such as **Hawkesbury** (Hawkes + bury) and **Lidcombe** (Lid + combe), are prone to being given a spelling pronunciation, with **-bury** pronounced like 'berry' rather than /-buh-ree/, and **Lidcombe** pronounced /LID-kohm/. When broadcasters do this, it's usually a dead giveaway that they are not familiar with the name (or are a foreigner, as in the classic case of **Melbourne** pronounced as /MEL-bawn/), and perhaps this is what prompts some listeners to react as they do.

Good repetition

Journalists need to watch out for potential ambiguities and not be afraid to repeat a word or phrase if it would make their message clearer. In the next sentence we see a pronoun that could refer to one of two things:

The company that operates a weir near St George says it's confident it won't collapse despite record floodwaters in Queensland's southern inland.

To avoid the suggestion that the *company* might collapse, it's necessary to replace 'it' with 'weir' (*The company that operates a weir near St George says it's confident the weir won't collapse*).

Mr Assange's British lawyer, Mark Stephens, says he'll fight against extradition.

It's not clear who'll fight – Mr Assange or the lawyer. Fortunately, the story is so well known that most readers would realise the writer is talking about Assange's extradition, not the lawyer's. But it helps to be more explicit (... lawyer ... says Mr Assange will fight ...), especially when you're writing about something that's *not* well known.

From the Editor

The current heated political debate on the definition of misogyny is a colourful illustration of how much words can mean to us. Australian Style is back to give its perspective on English as it is used in Australia, and how this relates to usage worldwide. Both of the articles in this issue of Australian Style look at how Australian English makes its mark on bilingual dictionaries. Professor Gao Yongwei looks at the history of Australian words in English-Chinese dictionaries and how, from negligible beginnings, their presence is now being recorded - acknowledging the growing importance of the variety. Gulnara Omarbekova describes an innovative project to design a bilingual dictionary focussing on the central cultural features of Australia as a means of giving students in Kazakhstan a better understanding of the language.

A very welcome addition to this issue is our first guest Word focus columnist, Colleen Woolley, who looks at the language of philately. We welcome contributions from our readers, both as potential columnists and as letter writers. While both of the published "letters" arrived in the form of emails, they demonstrate the wit and discursive qualities characteristic of this supposedly dying art. The book review, on Word Up: A Lexicon and Guide to Communication in the 21st Century, is by Alison Moore, senior editor at the Macquarie Dictionary. We also have our regular features - SCOSE notes by Irene Poinkin, David Astle's Rubicon, and Judy Dunn's illustrations. Feedback 36 is on some spelling issues, and a report on the previous Feedback, on capitalisation, is available here.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Adam,
I do not share the distress of Irene Poinkin's correspondent concerning a perceived misuse of the term "Black Hole". Hawking, Penrose *et al*. didn't invent the phrase; it had been current slang for a military prison 200 years earlier . Readers as old as I am may recall hearing stories in their Primary School History lessons of the infamous "Black Hole of Calcutta", an event that took place in 1756. What Hawking and Penrose did was to adapt an existing phrase to a new use, a process Irene justly describes as normal in the development of a language. Their metaphor was a vivid one and it caught on.

Much more irritating to me than "black hole" is "quantum leap". Max Planck introduced the quantum idea around 1900 to talk about the unimaginably small. To use the name to describe the startlingly large is nonsense, though some have defended the usage on the grounds that it too describes a change from state 1 to state 2 with no intermediate steps.

There are many absurdities in the language, but one of the silliest must surely be the practice, rife amongst Sports Commentators, of describing consecutive events as occurring "back-to-back". Events have a beginning and an end, so may perhaps be legitimately described as having a front and a back, but if two events follow one another in time, their sequence has to be Front 1 << Back 1 << Front 2 << Back 2 (see illustration below), though I think it unlikely that anyone will want to describe consecutive events as occurring "back-to-front".

One should not, perhaps, expect too much attention to literary niceties from the Sports Commentators, but the disease seems to have infected even the Language Professionals (see

Australian Style Vol.18, no.2, "Style Council 2011"). *Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes* ?

Yours faithfully,
Dennis Gibbings

Consecutive caterpillars
http://www.metro.co.uk/news/839861-caterpillars-line-up-for-africa-s-shortest-migration

Dear Adam
As a someone with a lifelong interest in language, languages and especially etymology (with a dash of lexicography on the side), I should firstly thank you and Macquarie University for sustaining Australia Style. In its earlier print format, and now electronically, Australian Style has informed and engaged my wife and me on numerous overseas assignments during the past 40 or more years. It has also been of interest to and sometimes a source of contention with colleagues to whom we have passed on our copies.

Our continuing interesting in our own English language and its changing character has been heightened by living in other cultures and learning other languages, some of them relatively new and formative such as Tok Pisin and Bahasa Indonesia. To an extent this interest is imbued into our three children (two born in PNG and one in Thailand), all of whom speak fluently at least one language other than English. Macquarie has a part in this anecdote, because as a student of Arthur Delbridge and Robert Eagleson at Sydney in the early 1960s, I was one among a number of card collectors of language oddities for what was called something like "The Australian Language Centre". (At the time concern was expressed by other universities, I recall, whether *Australian* received the principal stress or it was given equally to *Australian Language*.) It has been my understanding that the Macquarie Dictionary grew out of Professor Delbridge's migration to the then chicken farm at North Ryde which, under Professor Alex Mitchell's guidance, became the now esteemed Macquarie University.

All this by way of background to a distinctive use of language I sighted on p.16 of the *City Magazine* (of 20/2/12) - and felt constrained to share, but with whom. This publication is a news-advertorial glossy that has free distribution in Canberra. Multiculturalism may suffer oscillations in the political arena. However, the following caption to a photo in the *City Magazine* suggests linguistic multiculturalism is vibrantly alive: "The uber chic fashionista Sarah and her husband Dominic". The adjectives describing Sarah, each common enough in English when used alone, seem, in order, to be from German, French and Italian. Uber is the newest and seems to be in the ascendancy in recent years; and chic would have been incorporated into English for longer than the other two words.

So if anyone is recording neologisms these days, feel free to include the compound adjective "uber chic fashionista". But let's try not to popularise its use!

Dr D W Sloper
Kingston ACT

Word Focus

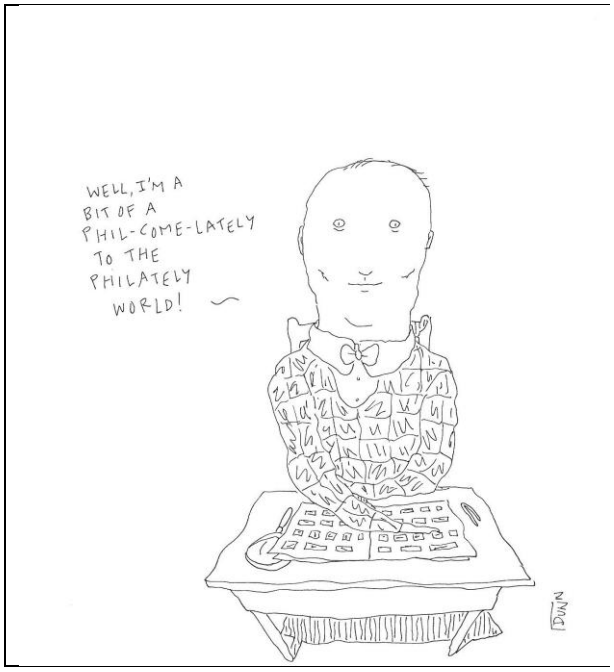
Our first guest columnist is Australian Style reader, Colleen Woolley, from Victoria – a dedicated marcophilist.

What's in a name?

That which we call philately by any another name would be called … stamp collecting (apologies to Shakespeare). Such a hobby spawns a multitude of monikers necessary to cover the many branches of it. Consider *commatology*, now known as *marcophily* and those who collect postmarks are very particular indeed. As are those who indulge in *philography*, they will go to any lengths to have a first day cover signed by someone having a connection to the new issue of stamps on an envelope.

Deltiologists (from the Ancient Greek, *deltios*, "writing tablet") are delighted when they find an old picture postcard, while *maximaphalists* are interested exclusively in maximum cards which are a more modern version of a picture postcard, except that they focus on a feature of a stamp in a new stamp issue. *Aerophilately* is an easy one to pick as it's the study of postal items carried by air.

Philatelists interested in *Cinderellas* aren't reverting to childhood as these are simply a stamp-like label that is not a postage stamp, and they take on a life all their own!
Words with one meaning to people not philatelists take on a whole 'nuther meaning to those who are. Vive la difference!
Note: anyone interested in further investigating philatelic terms can go to:
http://www.linns.com/reference/terms/terms.aspx



Feedback 35 Report

Many thanks to all the respondents who gave their feedback on capitalisation, and special thanks to Irene Warfe, coordinator the Diploma of Professional Writing & Editing at the University of Ballarat, who mailed us 33 responses.

Feedback 35 looked at how attitudes towards capitalisation of certain words might have changed since our last survey on the subject, in December 1997 (*Australian Style* 6:1). As with the previous Feedback (34), on punctuation, the assumption is that the growth of digital media may have reduced the amount of capitalisation we use in general. David Crystal has written that lowercase is increasingly evident in emails, chat groups and virtual worlds, on the "'save a keystroke' principle" (*Language and the Internet*, 2001: 87) – and the same principle is at work in texting.

We received 138 returns on this survey, as opposed to the 400+ for the previous one, but the consistency with some of the results from Feedback 11 suggests that the smaller sample size is still able to give a fair representation of current practice. For example, *alsatian, anglicise* and *federal* all showed very similar proportions of support for being capitalised "never", "always" or "sometimes", with similar explanations given. The monarchy appears to have lost more of its capital status, with *royal* never capitalised by 30% in the current survey, up from 24% previously. *Bible* has similarly lost ground, though interestingly *Koran* is the one word in Feedback 35 that had a majority supporting the always capitalise option (52%). While a large proportion of the lowercase uses of *bible* appear to be for the generic sense of the word, as in "Wisden is the cricket lover's bible", it was clear from many comments that the capitalisation of *Koran* was bolstered by the desire to show respect to a religion from a culture other than their own.

In Feedback 11, it was remarked that there was a stronger support for capitals among the younger age groups, with more rationalisation of the different contexts for use of capitals among older respondents. If we are expecting the use of digital media to have a strong effect, we would be likely to see it most marked among the younger age groups, but in fact they still appear to be the ones who are persisting with capitals, with a 46% support for always capitalising *bible* in Age 1, against less than 20% for all other age groups, and 14% for always capitalising *royal*, an option which had absolutely no support among older respondents. Although the numbers were down overall, the proportions from each age group had not changed very much since the earlier survey – in fact we had a slightly larger proportion of Age 10-24 respondents – so these unexpected findings still carry some weight.

Of the additional terms introduced in Feedback 35, a notable group was that of food expressions containing proper nouns: *brussels sprouts, chardonnay, cheddar cheese, french fries*. There was very little support for ever capitalising these, with *chardonnay* the most likely to be sometimes capitalised (21% overall), but only when referring to the title of a particular wine or the region. The figures for *westernise* supported the other example where a proper noun had been turned into a verb – *anglicise* (85% and 86% respectively said they should never be capitalised). Contrast this with the nominal form in *the west*, where 50% could envisage some situations where *west* would be capitalised in this phrase. It's clear that the majority opinion is that when a proper noun becomes a verb, it loses its right to a capital.

Feedback 35 appears to reinforce the consensus from Feedback 11 that capitals should not be continued in second and abbreviated references – see table below:

	Feedback 11	Feedback 35
gallery	51%	58%
Gallery	49%	42%
bank	62%	62%
Bank	38%	38%
university	45%	53%
University	55%	47%
premiers	52%	66%
Premiers	48%	34%

In all cases the support for the lower case has gone up in the current survey (apart from *bank/Bank*, where it has stayed constant) This is in keeping with the advice in the *Style Manual for authors editors and printers* (ed. 6, p.123) that subsequent references when abbreviated to a generic element should be lowercased. This is also true of the plural forms in the *Style Manual*, but the *Chicago Manual of Style* has changed its advice on this from the 15th to the 16th edition, now advocating the use of a capital: "Illinois and Chicago Rivers". One finer point of capitalisation that pertains to the use of *premier* is that. according to the *Style Manual*, it should be capitalised for current incumbents, but not for former ones. This distinction did not appear to influence our respondents with 89% preferring the capitalised title Premier Joh Bjelke-Peterson to the lower case version.

In conclusion, while there appears to be a reduction of the use of capitals in some cases, the distinction between the use of lower case for generic use and capitals for titles is still preserved. The initial capital has a function in conveying a sense of respect has not reduced in the 15 years since the last survey, and the youngest demographic, for whom capital letters might appear increasingly redundant, are still maintaining their use.

Spelling

The -or/-er question

1a. adapter

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

1b. adaptor

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

2a. adviser

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

2b. advisor

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

3a. carburetter

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

3b. carburettor

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

-

-or versus -our

4a. color

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

4b. colour

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

5a. favor

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

5b. favour

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

6a. honor

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

6b. honour

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

-able or -eable

7a. likable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

7b. likeable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

8a. sizable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

8b. sizeable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

9a. usable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

9b. useable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

-able or -ible

10a. collectable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

10b. collectible

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

11a. deductable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

11b. deductible

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

12a. preventable

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

12b. preventible

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

The doubling of consonants in verb inflexions

13a. focusing

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

13b. focussing

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

14a. targeting

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

14b. targetting

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

15a. trialing

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

15b. trialling

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

Digraphs

16a. encyclopedia

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

16b. encyclopaedia

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

17a. fetus

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

17b. foetus

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

18a. pedophile

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

18b. paedophile

- ☐ used by you
- ☐ acceptable if used by others
- ☐ unacceptable

Age group

- ○ **10-24**
- ○ **25-44**
- ○ **45-64**
- ○ **65+**

Sex

- ○ **Male**
- ○ **Female**

Place of residence

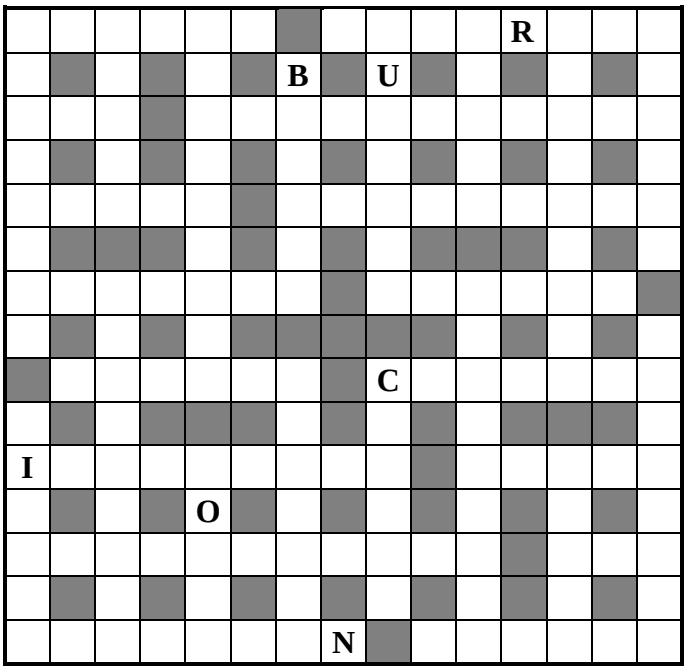
- ○ **ACT**
- ○ **NSW**
- ○ **NT**
- ○ **QLD**
- ○ **SA**
- ○ **TAS**
- ○ **VIC**
- ○ **WA**
- ○ **outside Australia**

Place of education (all or most of it)

- ○ **ACT**
- ○ **NSW**
- ○ **NT**
- ○ **QLD**
- ○ **SA**
- ○ **TAS**
- ○ **VIC**
- ○ **WA**
- ○ **outside Australia**

RUBICON

RUBICON, devised by David Astle, is a hybrid of crossword, jigsaw and acrostic. First, solve as many clues as you can, looking out for the occasional cryptic kind, and then begin to fit the answers inside the grid. (The scattered letters of RUBICON will give you a toehold.) When the grid is completed, arrange the *clues* from the first Across to the last Down – their 32 initial letters will label a category that includes six of your solution words.



Ironwood doctor? (4,7)
It cripples a flawed group of verb forms (11)
Carousel on a restaurant table (4,5)
Let down milk through the teat (9)
Most inexpensive (4-5)
One match beyond the quarters (9)
Start (9)
Trompe l'oeils (9)
Dachshund's physique suggested by factotum? (8)
Hero born Kal-El (8)
Nautical (8)
Ocean in miniature? (8)
Enquired with close questioning (7)
Its capital is Asmara (7)
Nudges some cot – and awakens! (5,2)
Shyness (7)
Entertaining a thought (6)
Febrile 100 clean scratch (6)
Golden Gate, eg (6)
Innsbruck's sporting trails? (6)
Iron-fisted ruler (6)
Oafish (6)
Rain shield, colloquially (6)
Zone including Mildura and Swan Hill (6)
"Toodles, amigo!" (5)
Aristocratic rank of Macbeth (5)
Djibouti's principal religion (5)
Egypt neighbor (5)
Exhibitionist (5)
Wilts in the heat; shoestring chips (5)
Defraud (3)
Toilet (3)

Rubicon Solution 18.2

WORDS MAKING PALINDROMES WHEN BEHEADED:
revive, uneven, grammar, potato, dresser, banana

C	R	U	M	P	E	T	■	P	R	A	I	S	E	S
U	■	T	■	O	■	R	U	E	■	T	■	O	■	H
B	R	I	S	T	L	E	■	O	T	H	E	L	L	O
I	■	L	■	A	■	M	■	N	■	L	■	O	■	W
T	H	I	R	T	E	E	N	■	R	E	V	I	V	E
■	■	S	■	O	■	N	■	N	■	T	■	S	■	R
D	I	E	S	■	I	D	E	A	L	I	S	T	I	C
U	■	■	■	E	■	O	■	I	■	C	■	■	■	A
B	O	D	Y	D	O	U	B	L	E	■	W	E	E	P
D	■	R	■	G	■	S	■	B	■	B	■	L	■	■
U	N	E	V	E	N	■	B	I	G	A	M	I	S	T
B	■	S	■	W	■	H	■	T	■	N	■	T	■	E
D	E	S	T	I	N	Y	■	I	T	A	L	I	A	N
U	■	E	■	S	■	P	U	N	■	N	■	S	■	O
B	U	R	M	E	S	E	■	G	R	A	M	M	A	R

Click here for the clues to this puzzle (18.2, December 2011)