Language Handbook

(2nd edition)

Key Thinkers on Key Topics

EMC Publications

Language Handbook

Key Thinkers on Key Topics

edited by Dan Clayton,
with a Foreword by Professor Ronald Carter

We would like to dedicate this 2nd edition to the memory of the life and work of Ron Carter 1947-2018.

Acknowledgements
Editor: Dan Clayton

Cover image: Rebecca Scamber, 2018 using 'Faces with letter speech bubbles'
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Published by: The English and Media Centre © 2018
18 Compton Terrace, London, N1 2UN
www.englishandmedia.co.uk

ISBN: 978-1-906101-62-6

Printed and bound by Stephens and George Ltd

Typeset in Adobe Garamond Pro and Humanist BT

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FOREWORD

Over the past forty years or so, the study of language, especially the English language, has changed in striking ways. In the 1970s and 1980s, and especially in secondary schools, language study was still a relatively new discipline and a relatively new area of research and teaching.

As with many new disciplines, the first steps involve defining core terms of reference, producing a stable metalanguage and describing what actually constitutes the field. In any such process of disciplinary definition there is, in the early years, an inevitable element of idealisation of the core data of the subject involved. In the case of language study this entailed a practice of inventing examples or drawing on language data without reference to who was involved in the communication or to where, when and for what purpose the communication was taking place.

So it's not surprising really that language was described and defined in a generally context-free way and that the modes of study of the subject matched this lack of context by inviting students mainly to define and describe the central forms of the language: the sound system, the grammar, semantics and vocabulary structures that make up the core of the language. Very obviously invented examples were not uncommon and students could be asked to describe the grammar of sentences that are very obviously written and unlikely to be commonly spoken. Who can parse 'It was the alienated philosopher who tried to pull the very strong jaw of the hen that couldn't stop clucking?'

There were, of course, grand exceptions that ran in parallel such as the *Language in Use* series (part of a 1970s Schools Council project) produced under the overall direction of Michael Halliday where the emphasis was on language as it is actually used and produced in a variety of different spoken and written contexts[1]; but such an approach was an exception at that time, however influential it subsequently came to be. It's also not surprising either that English language study in its earliest days had a relatively limited appeal and such appeal that it *did* have was mainly confined to those who are interested in the more atomistic components of things and who accept that such approaches inevitably entail more mechanistic and narrowly analytical practices.

Since this time the field of English language study has grown at a remarkable rate in both range and scope and it is now a standardised part of the university and school curriculum with a growing number of students taking A Level or degree courses in English with a main focus on linguistic study. As the field has produced richer and ever more detailed accounts of how language works and of the systems by which the forms of language are organised (still the heart and core of the discipline), so increasing attention has been given to language use and to language in context. This book reflects many of the most exciting and important developments in this direction while also, as in the case of a topic such as world Englishes, pointing to challenging futures[2].

The chapters in the *Language Handbook* chart the changes and current practices in the discipline, underlining the importance of how language works in, and adjusts to, different social contexts, privileging in theory and methodological practice the need for real and evidenced data over concocted examples, evidencing the significance of world English use, showing the many interfaces between language and literature, linking the cognitive and the social and illustrating how technology and the internet are, among other factors, driving forces in the ever more complex and controversial processes of language change and standardisation. At the same time (and this is probably a topic for another volume), corpus linguistics is, as a number of contributors highlight, redrawing the map of how we might describe language. Access to corpora such as the BNC (British National Corpus) (now vastly more accessible than even five years ago) is changing how we do research in and with language, as well as what is investigated and how, and why classroom language study might look the way it does over the next twenty years. And the ubiquitous nature of language in both our everyday social and cognitive life, and as constitutive of other disciplines, points further to interdisciplinary study as a rich future.

The move to examination of 'real' naturally-occurring (as opposed to invented) language data has changed the way English language is studied in classrooms and has led to more empirical data collection and investigation, as well as to more student-centred research tasks and projects. The engagement with data collection (spoken and written) by means of, for example, interviews, media forms, corpus sources, laboratory experiments and the multi-billion word data bank of the internet has involved students actively in English language study and this has been reinforced by curricula which continue to assess not only the capacity for formal analysis but also the additional skills of language research. The simple use of digital recorders to collect examples of spoken language has in itself shown the limitations of too narrow a focus on written language and also challenged students of language at all levels to explore the differences and distinctions between speech and writing, leading in turn to new descriptive accounts of language in use.

I started by reflecting back to some of the origins of English language study in the 1970s and 80s. The English and Media Centre, the editor of the *Language Handbook*, Dan Clayton, and the distinguished cast list of contributors are to be congratulated on having produced a richly nuanced and wonderfully accessible volume, a volume, in fact, that is very much for our time.

Professor Ronald Carter

[1] For example: Doughty, P., J. Pearce & G. Thornton, G., 1971. *Language in Use.* Schools Council Project London: Edward Arnold, London.

[2] For a valuable contribution to current directions in English language study particularly from the point of view of the student see also Goddard, A., 2012. *Doing English Language*. London: Routledge.

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2ND EDITION

When we put together the first edition of the EMC *Language Handbook* in 2012, we had a clear idea in mind. We wanted to provide something for both students and teachers of A Level English Language. For students, we wanted to offer some of the most up to date and well-informed perspectives on key areas of study for their course, contextualised within a wider framework that allowed them to see how the different areas related to each other. For teachers, it was a similar aim. We wanted to offer the chance to refresh their subject knowledge, stimulate their intellectual curiosity and to have ready access to material that they could use with students who wanted to read around the course and stretch themselves.

To achieve this, we approached leading linguists to write chapters that would give an accessible overview of their field, lead into the research and thinking that's gone on in the past, before bringing us up to date with some insights into more recent developments. At the heart of the first edition was a desire to go beyond the usual territory and open up new areas of thinking for both audiences, areas that they could then explore and pursue. And we'd like to think the first edition of the *Language Handbook* went some way towards doing these things.

Now, six years on, with new A Level specifications and new content for students and teachers to think about, we have taken the opportunity to update the Language Handbook with four new chapters: forensic linguistics, critical discourse analysis, American English and urban youth language and an updated chapter on language and technology.

As we said in the introduction to the first edition, this is not an exam board-approved textbook or revision guide, so you won't find constant references to where topics fit in to particular components and specifications, discussions about assessment objectives, or explanations about how to impress the examiner marking your paper. Instead, what you'll find are plenty of ideas, examples and new approaches, all of which have been carefully chosen because they are relevant to most advanced level study, as well as being useful for those beginning university study.

By its nature some of what you find in here will be challenging and new. That's the point. A certain degree of previous study is assumed, so we would expect you to have at least covered the basics of grammar and textual analysis, and to have looked at some of the key topics – child language development, language change, language variation and diversity – with your teachers or lecturers. However, there is an extensive glossary which does offer some basic definitions if you need to go back and refresh your memory.

An overview of the chapters

Each of the fourteen chapters in the handbook has been put together with a common structure. They each begin with a quick introduction and look at why the topic is interesting to study, then offer an overview of some of the key work done in the field so far, before moving on to consider current thinking, debates and directions. Each chapter also offers a summary of key ideas and suggestions for further reading.

Deborah Cameron's chapter on gender and communication looks at competing arguments and models about how women and men communicate, and takes issue with generalisations about gender. Placing the study of spoken language and gender in its historical context, she moves on to look at new approaches that deconstruct simplified notions of gender, foregrounding the local and the individual.

Both **Paul Kerswill's** and **Kevin Watson's** chapters look at language variation. Kerswill's focus is on variation linked to class and ethnicity and Watson's on regional variation, with both drawing on their own research and that of others to bring us right up-to-date with the changing picture in the UK.

Sue Fox, whose chapter draws on data from studies of changing London English, offers an overview of many of the features of spoken English before moving on to some of the most recent work on what are called discourse-pragmatic markers, considering the changing functions of features of spoken language.

Graeme Trousdale's chapter on language change foregrounds social context and overarching patterns of change, but draws too on the link between diachronic and synchronic variation to make the point that change is rarely a regular and consistent process, but one that has links to age, class, region and identity too.

My chapter on attitudes to language change considers the different complaints there have been about how language changes, the development of Standard English and forms that kick against it. The chapter looks too at what lies beyond the basic 'prescriptive versus descriptive' continuum of attitudes to language change, offering alternative models and ideas.

Jane Setter's chapter on English around the world addresses one of the most contentious areas of language study at the moment: the spread of English around the world and its varying uses and forms. Do ***the English ... have as much control over English as the Italians have over pizza and Indians over chicken korma*** – as one anonymous *Daily Telegraph* contributor put it – or is there still an umbilical link between England and English? Moving into arguments about English, Englishes and English as a lingua franca, Setter opens up the topic for further discussion and debate.

Lynne Murphy's new chapter on American English looks at one of the most successful varieties of English around the world and charts its rise to prominence. Considering not just what it is but how it is viewed, Murphy examines some of the differences and similarities between the English of the UK and USA but also the various social and regional variations used within the USA.

1 GENDER & COMMUNICATION

Professor Deborah Cameron

1. Introduction

The study of gender and communication is often thought of as a field of inquiry which investigates differences in the way language is used either by or about the two sexes. But many researchers today would question that definition, which implies that we can make general statements about the verbal behaviour of two groups that each comprise half the world's population. Generalisations of this kind (e.g., 'women talk more than men', or 'men communicate more directly than women') are a staple ingredient of popular writing. But academic research confirms what is also obvious to common sense, if you give it a moment's thought: both 'men' and 'women' are internally diverse groups, and how they communicate is bound to differ considerably depending on who and where they are. It is not obvious that Tamil-speaking farmers in rural south India will exhibit the same gendered speech patterns as English-speaking car mechanics in Swindon; the mechanics' own patterns may be different from those observed in a Catholic monastery a few miles down the road.

With that diversity in mind, most contemporary researchers prefer a more open-ended definition of what they study than just 'differences between men and women'. When people ask me what my research is about, I say it's about the relationship between language and gender – how gender influences language-use and how language-use may influence our perceptions of gender. This definition acknowledges that there is a relationship, but it avoids implying that the nature of that relationship is always and everywhere the same, a simple matter of 'men talk like this and women talk like that'.

2. Why study gender and communication?

There is more than one reason why gender is of interest to linguistic researchers. One area of linguistic inquiry with a longstanding interest in the subject is **sociolinguistics**, the study of language variation and change. All living languages show variability (i.e. they are not used in a completely uniform way by all speakers in all contexts), and the variation linguists have documented is structured rather than random, reflecting (among other things) the social differences that exist among language users. Gender divisions, along with regional, class and ethnic differences, have been found to influence language-

2 LANGUAGE VARIATION 1

Social Factors: Class and Ethnicity

Professor Paul Kerswill

1. Introduction

In this chapter, we explore two of the main social factors which influence the way we speak: social class and ethnicity. The third major social factor is sex, or gender – a topic which is discussed separately in Chapter 1, but which is connected both to class and ethnicity in ways we will touch on. A fourth factor, age, is equally important, though people pass naturally from one age group to another in a way that is not true of any of the other factors. Class and ethnicity (and, of course, gender and age) are large-scale factors serving to both differentiate and unite human beings. To take class first: somebody might have a particular income and have a particular type of job. These are just two of the factors which will feed into a sociologist's analysis of that person's social rank or class. At the same time, a British person might be, for instance, of English, Welsh, Pakistani or Caribbean origin. This category is often loosely referred to as that person's ethnicity. Unlike class, there is no implicit hierarchy or ranking between ethnicities. As we will see, class and ethnicity are more complex and controversial than their portrayal in everyday discourse – that is, the way in which they are talked about in the media and the ways people generally think about them.

We'll be looking at how class and ethnicity shape the way we speak. You will learn about some of the major research from the past 50 years that has looked into these effects, starting with one of the founders of **sociolinguistics** (the study of language and society), William Labov. We will come to realise that what I referred to as 'effects' are, in fact, not just people's passive, automatic responses to their 'objective' social class position and ethnicity, but rather the result of their active engagement with their own social identities. In other words, we may feel a certain pride in our own backgrounds, whatever they are. One of the most important ways in which we signal our social identities is through language.

Although our backgrounds might differ widely in terms of social advantage and disadvantage, we still try to project these identities. It is in our teenage years, particularly, that we do this, not only through things like dress and

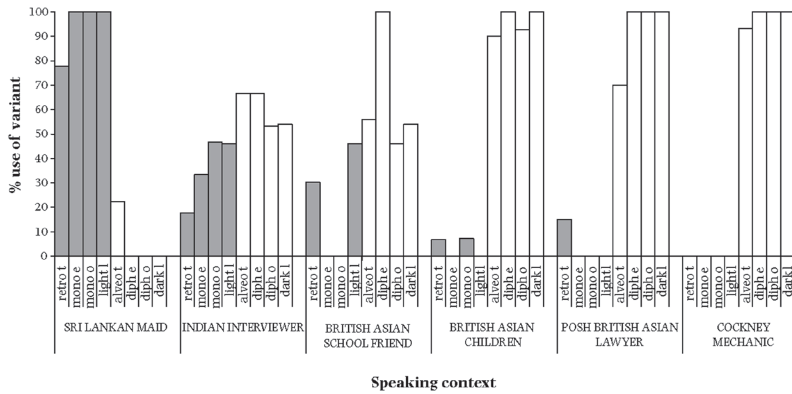


Figure 5. Use by older man (Anwar) of Indian and British and British variants across speaking situations. ■ = Indian variants □ = British variants (from Sharma 2011: 475).

Contrast this with a much younger man, Ravinder, aged 20, part of whose speech repertoire is shown in Figure 6, below.

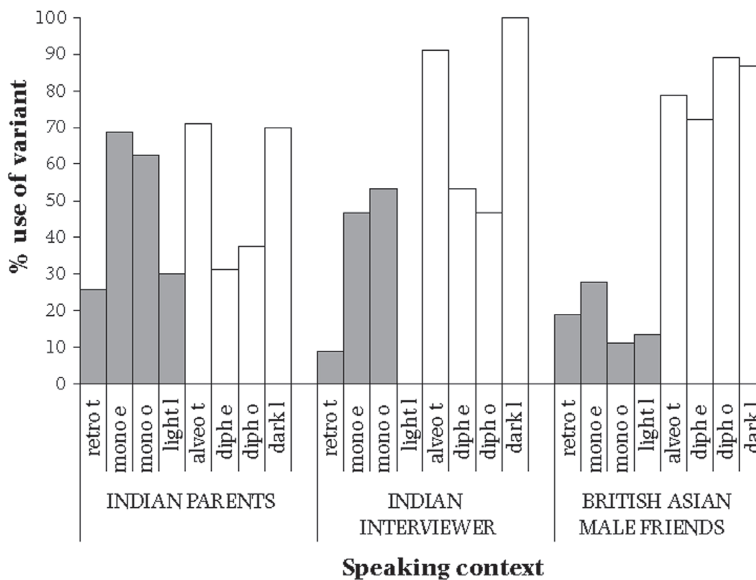


Figure 6. Use by younger man (Ravinder) of Indian and British variants across speaking situations ■ = Indian variants □ = British variants (from Sharma 2011: 478).

With each conversation partner, Ravinder seems to vary his usage only slightly, with a greater preponderance of British forms with his immediate peer group, but (almost) never an exclusive use of one or other form for any of the features. This is in sharp contrast to Anwar, who spans the entire range.

3 LANGUAGE VARIATION 2

Patterns of Accent Variation in British English

Dr Kevin Watson

1. Introduction

It will come as no surprise to you that language varies in a wide range of complex ways. There are differences between languages (e.g., French is different from English), between different varieties of the same language (e.g., the accent of London is different from the accent of Liverpool), and there are differences within the same variety (e.g., you may talk differently to a close friend than to a prospective employer in a job interview). We have known about this sort of variation for a long time. It was noted as early as ~600BC, by the Sanskrit grammarian Panini (see Campbell 2001) and, later, Edward Sapir (1921: 157) wrote 'Everyone knows that language is variable' and added that even 'two individuals of the same generation and locality, speaking precisely the same dialect and moving in the same social circles, are never absolutely at one in their speech habits'.

What might be more of a surprise is that although we have always known that language varies, linguists have not always been interested in understanding *how* linguistic variation works. The reasons for this are rather complex, but an important contributory factor was that linguistic variation was believed to be random and unstructured. Speakers, it was thought, use one pronunciation one minute and another pronunciation the next, in such a haphazard way that we could not hope to find any patterns in their linguistic behaviour. This is clearly not a belief that is widely held by linguists today. We know now that language can vary in systematic ways according to, for example, a speaker's gender (see Cameron this volume, Chapter One) or a speaker's social class or ethnicity (see Kerswill this volume, Chapter Two). In this chapter, I explore how linguists came to start looking for patterns in highly variable language data, and I discuss some of the key patterns that have been found. My focus is on varieties of British English but, as we will see, we must begin in America, because this is where the field itself began. The discussion is focused on **accent variation** rather than **dialect variation** (that is, towards variation in pronunciation rather than grammar or vocabulary), because the field itself is somewhat skewed in this direction, especially in its early days.

what can be pronounced with the sort of [t] we find in other localities, and in RP, but it can also be pronounced as ***wos***, and ***woh***. This latter pronunciation in particular is a very regionally restricted feature, and, given that we know Liverpool's accent is usually stigmatised, we might expect this feature to decline under the pressures of levelling.

To find out whether this was the case, in 2010 we recorded two groups of speakers in Liverpool – one group aged between 60-70 (called the 'Older' group below) and one group aged 16-17 (called the 'Younger' group). We were interested in how they pronounced /t/ sounds at the ends of words when followed by a pause, because this is where the pronunciation of /t/ as [h] is most likely (e.g., 'what' as ***woh***). The results are presented in Figure 2.

There are several things to notice in Figure 2. First, female speakers in each age group use a higher percentage of [t] than men in the same age group – this is what we would expect, given what we know about women usually using the standard variant more often than men. Second, the glottal stop, known to be spreading across most accents of Britain via geographical diffusion, seems to have increased in the younger speakers, but only very marginally – it is only used 4 percent of the time by both the males and females. If it is increasing, it hasn't increased much yet, at least in this pre-pausal position. What *has* increased, however, is the regional pronunciation of /t/ as [h]. It is used 27 percent of the time by younger speakers, and just 3 percent of the time by

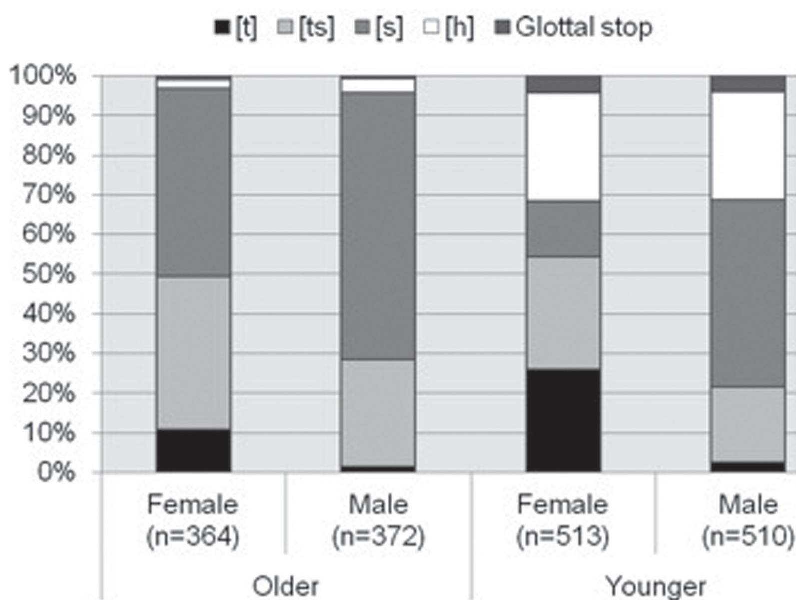


Figure 2: The pronunciation of pre-pausal /t/ in Liverpool, in older and younger speakers.

4 ENGLISH AROUND THE WORLD

Professor Jane Setter

1. Introduction

What a resilient, widely-used language English is. Spoken by an estimated two billion people around the world as a first, second or foreign language (Jenkins 2014[1]), it shows no sign of falling out of favour, even though it has been the language of conquerors, oppressors and of nations who are sometimes seen as too lazy or complacent to learn the languages of others. So what is it that drives people around the world to keep on learning and using this language? What makes it so desirable? What makes it so unique?

This chapter looks at the spread of English since the time of Elizabeth I, how it got to be in various places around the world, and what people were doing with it then and are doing with it now. It considers the features of some varieties of English around the world, how New Varieties of English can be classified, and the research that people are doing into it. We will also look at possible future scenarios for English – will it continue to grow, or will we all be speaking a different language in the future?

2. Why the topic is worth studying

Perhaps the main motivation for the global fascination with English is its chameleon-like capacity to grow and change, offering not just the opportunity for learners of English to work towards standard accents, such as Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GenAm), but also the chance to express oneself in an English which is very much home-grown. English does not 'belong' to native speakers anymore and, in fact, how a native speaker of English is defined is changing. If you are from the UK or the US and a monolingual speaker of English, it is necessary to step out of your shoes and walk a mile in those of an English speaker in Asia, Africa, Europe or the Middle East – to name but a few examples – to really appreciate how English works in a global setting.

And yet there is also a lot of interest in language standards and intelligibility which is also fuelling the debate on English in the world. If your English is too much influenced by other local languages, then how can it continue to be used as a **lingua franca** – i.e. to communicate between speakers who have no

5 AMERICAN ENGLISH

Professor Lynne Murphy

1. Introduction

People in the UK watch American television, listen to American music, play American video games. It's not surprising, then, to hear claims that 'American English is taking over Britain' or 'we all speak American now'.

My experience (as an American linguist in Britain) is that people from both countries tend to overestimate how much they know about the other country's English and to stereotype the language in unhelpful ways. This chapter aims to dispel some of the myths about American English (AmE) – which involves dispelling some myths about British English (BrE) too.

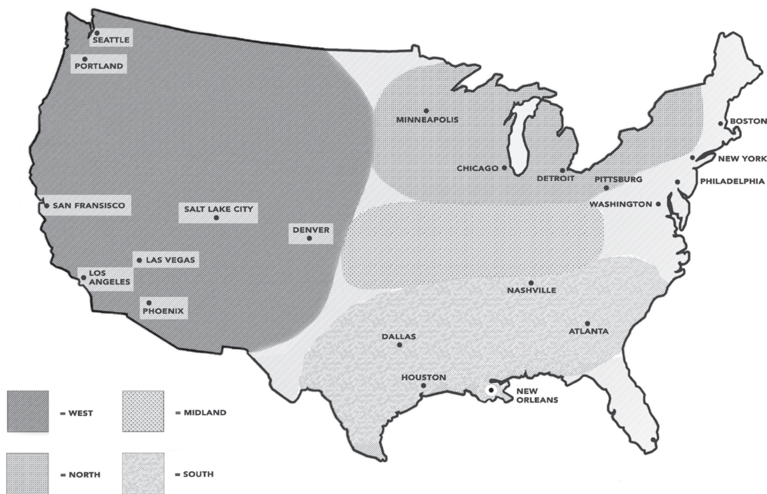
Before going any further, though, we need to be a bit suspicious of this terminology: *British English* and *American English*. There are, of course, many forms of English in the UK, with different accents and some different vocabulary, grammatical structures, and ways of using the language. And the same is true of English in the United States. You can probably think of types of Americans represented in popular culture who use different forms of American English – the mafia boss, the hip-hop artist, and the country singer, for example.

Given all this variation, does it make sense to talk about two national Englishes? It does sometimes, but we must be careful in how we do it. The differences exist at the national level when we talk about spelling and most vocabulary differences. ***Honor*** is American and ***honour*** is British and that's that. If you have a cut, you'd need to ask for a ***plaster*** in Britain, but a ***Band-Aid*** or an ***adhesive bandage*** in the US. This is why different dictionaries are made and sold for the British and American markets. Punctuation also tends to vary on the national level (though this can vary by publication); for example, American publications use many more commas (,) and double quotation marks (" ") than British ones. These kinds of differences are seen in formal, published English. In the spoken form, despite lots of regional variation within each country, some word pronunciations are broadly different in the US and UK. For instance, in AmE the middle syllable of ***tomato*** sounds like *may* and in BrE it sounds more like *ma*. That difference holds across most American and British English speakers, no matter which accents they have.

Accent, some aspects of grammar, and more informal vocabulary are more likely to vary within the nations, and therefore we need to be careful about how we talk about them. It doesn't make sense to talk about the *American*

them language (and especially when their access to the language is limited by their social position), the situation is perfect for a creole language to develop, and some linguists have argued that AAE has creole roots. That is, the enslaved African people might have used a highly simplified version of English that incorporated some elements of their African languages. As this language was passed down the generations, its grammar developed and solidified. Then a process of decreolization happened, in which aspects of the variety moved closer to a standard version of English. When looking for evidence of creole origins of AAE, some linguists point to the absence of the verb ***to be*** as a linking verb in sentences like ***She tall*** or ***They going home***. That is an aspect of historical AAE that seems like other English-based creoles of the Atlantic slave trade, but unlike other varieties of English.

But other linguists note the similarities between AAE and dialects of English that were brought to the American south by British immigrants – many of whom came to the US as indentured servants. The linguist Shana Poplack has shown that some aspects of AAE that contrast with other current Englishes



Map 1. Larger dialect regions of the United States

nevertheless have similar patterns to dialects that were spoken by English migrants to America hundreds of years ago. So, for instance, patterns of where it is appropriate to say ***she sees*** or ***she see*** in traditional AAE look a lot like the patterns of variation used by white English speakers in the early colonies and in the regional dialects they'd brought from Britain.

6 URBAN YOUTH LANGUAGE

Dr Rob Drummond

1. Introduction

1.1 What is youth language?

This might sound like a question with a rather obvious answer: youth language is the language used by, well, youth. But then we need to ask ourselves which youth are we referring to? If we restrict ourselves to 'urban' youth who use some form of English for example, this still covers a very wide range of people, from 13-year-olds in Birmingham, to 16-year-olds in Detroit, to 19-year-olds in Cape Town. Even if we then restrict ourselves to a single city, there is still variation, from 15-year-old grime artists in Peckham, to 17-year-old A Level students in Notting Hill, to 18-year-old trainee chefs in Camden. And if we then add other social factors known to play a role in language variation such as gender, social class, ethnicity, sexuality, first language, and so on, the picture becomes very complex very quickly. Or maybe we should focus on the language rather than the speakers, in which case youth language is the way in which people express their 'youth' identity, regardless of who is actually using it. In this interpretation, arguably, a 35-year-old, or even a 75-year-old's language could be seen as youth language if they were using it to perform or enact 'youth' in some way.

The point is, there is no single 'youth language', even among speakers of the same language, of the same age, and who live in the same area. So what, then, do we mean by the term? In this chapter I'm taking it to mean the language used by young people aged approximately 12-20, with a focus on the contexts in which they are in some ways enacting their youth identities, for whatever reason. The fact that there is so much variation between different groups of young people is not a problem, rather it becomes a source of interest, to explore how different people from different contexts enact 'youth'.

It should be pointed out that this meaning of youth language assumes a particular approach to identity, but it is an approach I would encourage; namely, that language does not only reflect who we are, but in fact helps make us who we are. We do not simply speak in this or that way *because* of our age, our ethnicity, our gender, our sexuality, and so on, rather we *perform* our age, our ethnicity, our gender, our sexuality, and various other characteristics through the way we speak. More than this, we do not have a single fixed

7 SPOKEN ENGLISH

Dr Sue Fox

1. Introduction

Why study spoken English when we have access to so many written resources? Doesn't the written version tell us everything we need to know about the structure and use of English? The answer is 'no' because although they are, of course, both forms of the same language there are also many important differences between the two and these differences are due to the fact that we use speech and writing in very different communicative situations. Speech is 'time-bound, dynamic, transient' (Crystal 2003: 291); it takes place in the here and now as part of an interaction in which both speaker and listener(s) are usually present. It is important for interpersonal relationships, completing daily transactions and for general social integration. It is usually (though not always) unplanned, spontaneous and brings immediate feedback from the addressee. Writing, on the other hand, is 'space-bound, static, permanent' (Crystal 2003: 291); it is usually planned, can be revised and edited to change the sequential order and it can be read and re-read by the recipient many times over (see Crystal 2003 for a more detailed account of the differences between speech and writing).

There is a tendency to think of the written variety as *the* language and as the standard against which spoken language is measured; any speech that doesn't come close to the written standard then comes to be seen as somehow 'incorrect' because written English is the standard form that society tends to value the most. However, it is important to remember that speaking is the primary form of communication and that anyone born with a normal ability to learn will acquire speech and listening skills long before they acquire the ability to read and write (if they ever do and many people around the world do not). As Crystal (2003: 236) notes, 'The origins of the written language lie in the spoken language, not the other way round.' It is clear that the vast majority of English use is speech, thus emphasising the importance of spoken language as the main channel within which human interaction takes place.

So what is interesting about spoken language? There are many linguistic features that are characteristic of speech that we do not find in writing. Unique to speech, there are prosodic features of intonation and rhythm – we can convey meaning by altering the pitch, loudness and speed of our talk or we can use silence in the form of a pause. We can also make use of body language in the form of facial expressions and gestures to help us convey and understand meaning. None of these things can easily be represented in writing. The fact

there was a spider in her bed) because by quoting someone, even if they are not the exact words that were used, the speaker almost acts out what they are reporting. Note that quotative expressions are not just used to introduce direct speech but also reported thought (***I was thinking 'move away!'***), non-lexicalised sound (***I was like 'ugh'***) and gesture (***I went <shrugs shoulders>***).

Traditional grammar usage books tend to state that quoted speech is introduced using the verb *say* (*Sue **said** 'I feel ill'*) but research has shown that speakers use a range of quotative expressions, as shown in the following examples:

Say

(i) *I **said** 'if you wanna find out'*
*I **said** 'you better phone the Salvation Army'*

(ii) *I **says** 'I'm sorry I can't tell you that'*

(iii) *I **was saying** 'god it was only a bag of crisps'*

Think

(i) *I'm just **thinking** 'when did I get this?'*

(ii) *you come from like this age now and you're **thinking** 'oh my mum and dad are gonna say no'*

(iii) *and I just **thought** 'oh my god I'm gonna die'*

Go

(i) *he **goes** 'no man I'll let you off this time'*

(ii) *I **go** 'yeh mum I am still'*

(iii) *she **was going** 'what you looking at?'*

(iv) *yea and I **went** 'oh look who it is'*

Zero form (speech or thought introduced without the use of a quotative expression)

(i) *he said 'I hear you had a bit of trouble last night'*
*(**zero**) 'yeah . police picked me up'*

Tell

(i) *so they just **tell** me 'whagwan why did you do?'*

(ii) *I **told** my olders 'I don't like this boy'*

8 LANGUAGE CHANGE

Dr Graeme Trousdale

1. Why does English change?

This chapter provides an overview of one of the most intriguing aspects of human language – the fact that it changes. In some respects the fact that it changes is trivial. If you invent a new product (like a ***PlayStation*** or an ***iPad***), you often need a new name for it, and so you create a new word, and that is a kind of language change (because there has been an addition to the English lexicon). You don't always have to invent a new word: you can take an existing word and either give it a new form and/or meaning (since the fifteenth century, ***mobile*** has been used as an adjective meaning 'capable of movement'; it is now also used as a noun to refer to a kind of phone), or even build on an old meaning of a word that fell into disuse (an iPad is one of a range of ***tablets*** – historically, a tablet was a slab on which something was written). We might ask 'why those particular forms?', but the motivation for creating a new word, or a new meaning for an existing form, is rather simpler: there is a need for a new means of referring to a new entity when it comes into being.

But this is just a tiny area of language change. Even if we restrict ourselves to discussing new words and new meanings, it is clear that there is not always an objective need for a new term. Speakers of English are not short of ways to describe someone as 'physically attractive' – there are plenty of forms like ***hot***, ***sexy***, ***stunning***, ***gorgeous***, and so on, which do that job – but that did not prevent a new meaning of ***fit*** becoming a conventional way of referring to someone as 'attractive' (as well as 'athletic'). Furthermore, when we think of language change, we typically think of new things coming into being, rather than old things disappearing. But we might well wonder why we no longer refer to people who are spiritually blessed as being ***silly***, or people who are cunning as being ***pretty***, though these were conventional meanings at earlier stages in the history of English.

And what about changes elsewhere in the language? If certain features of English pronunciation had not changed over time, we would ***fneeze*** and not ***sneeze***, and no-one would ever pronounce ***elf*** and ***health*** in the same way, as some currently do. If certain features of English syntax had not changed over time, we'd have a word order more like contemporary German, and have clauses in which the verb is at the end (something like ***I married a woman who***

	Singular	Plural
Subject	ðu	ge
Non-subject	ðe	eow

Table 1. Some forms of the second-person pronoun in Old English

This persists in some non-standard varieties of English as ***thou***, ***thee***, ***ye*** and ***you***, but this is rare. How can it be 'better' to merge all of these helpful grammatical distinctions in one form ***you***? And if it is better, why are some speakers of English using more recent plural forms like ***yous*** (which is very widespread) and ***y'all*** or ***yeeze lot*** (which are more geographically restricted)? A similar misunderstanding holds for the use of multiple negation. Expressions like ***I ain't never done nothing wrong*** in contemporary English are often considered to be illogical on the grounds that two negatives make a positive (so saying ***I did not eat no sweets*** suggests that I did in fact eat some, because the speaker negates the assertion 'I ate no sweets'). But this fails entirely to understand how the system of negation works in dialects which have preserved this historical pattern. In describing the parson in the 'General Prologue' to *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer (a literary figure admired by many speakers of Standard English for the beauty of his language and his poetic craft) wrote ***A bettre preest I trowe that nowhere noon is*** (literally, 'a better priest I believe that nowhere no one is'). He certainly did not mean that there were lots of better priests elsewhere, which is what you would have to claim if you followed the 'logic' of those who condemn multiple negation. In fact, Chaucer – just like those people today who say ***I ain't never done nothing wrong*** – used multiple negative markers for emphasis. ***I ain't never done nothing wrong*** emphatically negates the assertion 'I did something wrong'; ***a bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon is*** emphatically negates the assertion 'someone somewhere is a better priest'. By attempting to enforce a kind of language change (e.g., by attempting to proscribe multiple negation), self-appointed guardians of English often show themselves to be misguided about the nature of English and its history, and about the regular, systematic nature of linguistic variation.

3. An overview of some work on language change

Research on language change has usually been concerned with both the mechanisms of change (how does a change take place?) and the causes of language change (why does a change take place?), though interest in the latter is more recent than the former. We will address both mechanisms and causes in this section; and we will also consider both internal and external factors. By 'internal' factors, I mean factors that are concerned exclusively with the language system, and the properties of the individual and aspects of the

9 Attitudes to Language Change

Dan Clayton

1. Why study attitudes to language change?

While the history, processes and patterns of how the English language has changed are interesting and important to study in their own right, how different people *respond* to language change offers us a glimpse of something more than just the language itself. It gives us an insight into its users and their beliefs, attitudes and personalities. At the risk of sounding pretentious, it gives us a chance to learn more about human nature and what it is to be a living, breathing, speaking, writing, texting, emailing, tweeting human being.

The feelings people have about language change can range from the celebratory to the protective, and from the welcoming to the cautious. Language change is a particularly contentious area, not least because we will all see the language that we used as young people change as we grow older. And while we might see change as an inevitable, even positive, process, seeing and hearing the language that we grew up with change before our very eyes is bound to make us feel *something*. When we extrapolate that individual feeling across thousands of years and billions of people, we can see that it's a big deal.

That we often feel strongly about language shouldn't come as much of a surprise to a student of English Language; after all, from looking in this collection at social and regional variation (Kerswill, Chapter Two and Watson, Chapter Three), technology (Goddard, Chapter Ten), urban youth language (Drummond, Chapter Six), gender (Cameron, Chapter One), you'll have seen that language and identity are tightly bound up with each other.

Another thing that makes attitudes to language change such an important topic to study is that while the pace of language change might be speeding up – with factors such as technology, movement of peoples and social change all having an influence – the concerns remain perennial. For example, there is frequent concern expressed in the UK media about American words that have been adopted by British English speakers, but in the sixteenth century a very similar concern over 'inkhorn' terms – words imported from Latin, Greek and French – was prevalent. Equally, some commentators today are concerned about the rise of social media and their supposedly negative impact on young people's literacy, yet when the printing press first became popular

10 LANGUAGE & TECHNOLOGY

Professor Angela Goddard

1. Introduction

The topic of language and technology is not about technology. That is, it's not about being a 'techie'. You don't have to know how aspects of technology work, such as knowing how computers function or how phones process text messages. Of course, that kind of knowledge is useful, particularly if you are thinking about a career in the communications industry. But the study of language and technology is really about language.

What does help to build a good foundation for this area is an interest in how people communicate, and how new forms of communication shape their language choices. For example, how does it change the way we write when we know we can only use a limited number of words, or when we have to send a message in a real hurry? It helps to have some experience yourself of modern communication systems – but these are now so embedded in our everyday lives that it would be odd if you didn't.

This topic is not just about how we communicate. It's also about our attitudes towards communication, and the public issues that surround its use. Almost every day there is a news item about how new forms of communication are affecting our lives. Sometimes these are hopeful, happy stories – for example, long-lost relatives who rediscover each other via the internet. On other occasions the stories are full of fear and hurt, such as cyberbullying and online fraud. Often, you can find the same technology written up both positively and negatively, depending on the political standpoint of the writer. One example of this is the way mobile phones were implicated both in the public disorder in UK cities in the summer of 2011 (where phones were seen as a bad thing) and in the struggles for change in the Middle East in the 'Arab Spring' in that same year (where phones were seen as a good thing).

You might feel that sending your friend a text message or updating your status on a social media site is a bit different from global politics. But what links them together is language use. When you use language, you are representing yourself in a certain way, creating a story about yourself; and the same process of storytelling is involved when journalists or advertisers or writers of novels present accounts involving new types of communication. Studying this area therefore encompasses personal, social and political perspectives, so you have lots of choice about where to focus.

11 CHILD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Dr Paul Ibbotson

1. Introduction

Flatworms (*Pseudoceros bifurcus*) take part in 'penis fencing' battles to determine who becomes the female of the species. The loser does – the life of the female flatworm is much harder work. Ants (*Protomognathus americanus*) steal eggs from neighbouring species of ants, take them home and raise them as slaves, making them do the foraging, cleaning and babysitting. Female mites (*Histiostoma murchiei*) make their own husbands by laying eggs that don't need fertilising. When they hatch the female has sex with her four-day-old offspring, after which the son/husband promptly dies. The resulting female babies are fathered by their dead brothers. If you were cataloguing remarkable animal behaviour on Earth you would have to add to this list the human capacity for acquiring and using language. The human entry in such an encyclopedia might say '*Homo sapiens* likes to live in groups, uses sound to get thoughts and feelings from one brain to another, learns to do this by three years of age'. When you look at it like this, **child language acquisition** is another extraordinary aspect of the natural world that begs an explanation.

Researchers want to know how language acquisition works not just because many people find language inherently interesting, but because it bears on some fundamental questions of human nature: learning and innateness, the relationship between language and thought, and human uniqueness. At its heart, the process involves children learning the relationship between sound (**phonology**), sentence structure (**syntax**) and meaning (**semantics**). In trying to understand how humans acquire language, with all its subtlety, power and complexity, researchers break the bigger question into smaller sub-questions.

First, how do children find the words in what they hear? Figure 1 (overleaf) shows an image of someone saying ***would you like a jelly baby?*** Notice that sometimes the gaps in the sound line up with the edge of a word but often they don't. When someone speaks, there is an illusion that each word is separately articulated with a_convenient_space_between_each_word. The effect soon disappears when you don't know what the words mean, like when you listen

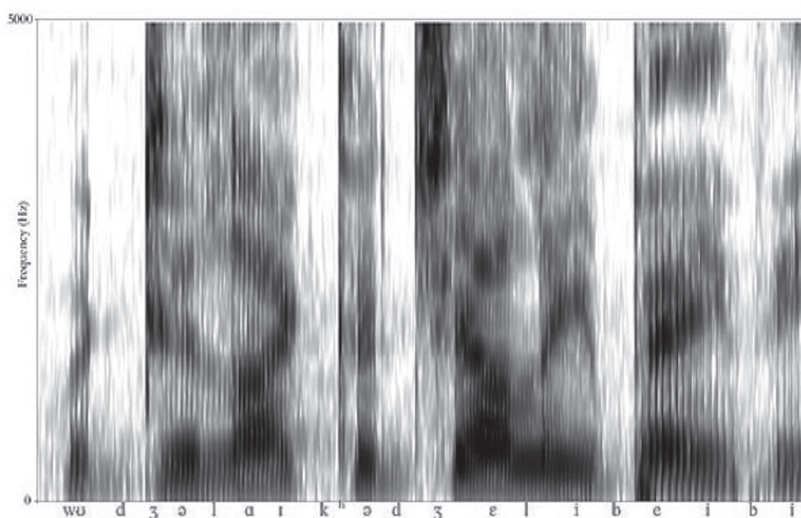


Figure 1

Time is left to right. The dark areas represent sound frequencies. Phonetic transcription of speech (across the horizontal axis) shows how the words map onto the speech.

to someone speaking a foreign language, making it sound like one continuous unintelligible stream of speech. The child faces a similar problem in trying to work out where the words are – except they have to do it without the aid of any foreign phrasebooks or formal instruction. Not only do different speakers have different ways of saying the *same* words, the *same* speaker has different ways of saying the same words – and this depends on lots of different factors including what other words it appears with, what they are trying to emphasise or whether they have a cold or not. Somehow the child has to work out what all the relevant building blocks are and start to put together their vocabulary. And then, when they want to say something they have to somehow translate what they have heard into speech – a phenomenally complex task that involves choreographing the tongue, lips, soft palette and vocal folds. Impressively, at 5 months-old infants can tell the difference between a video of someone speaking their native language and the same person speaking a foreign language ... even when there is no sound!

Second, how do children work out what are the acceptable combinations of words? For example, on a Monday a child hears her mother say sentence (1a) and then (1b). On Tuesday she then hears sentence (1c) and the child decides to say (1d). The child may have reasoned that the structure of (1a) and (1c) are quite close – they overlap in many of the way the words are organised into a sentence. On that basis, she thought, if you can say (1b) after (1a) then I should be able to say (1d) after (1c).

12 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Professor Christopher Hart

1. Introduction: history, theory, agenda

Critical Discourse Analysis (**CDA**) is an approach to language study which (i) theorises the *power of language* and (ii) analyses *power in language*. It focusses on texts that may be broadly characterised as 'political' (as opposed to 'literary' texts, which are the territory of Stylistics – see Stockwell, this volume, Chapter Thirteen). What counts as political, however, is an open question and CDA researchers have analysed texts relating to a wide range of topics where power is at stake (including immigration, race, gender, civil disorder, war, the environment) and belonging to a wide range of genres (including political speeches, parliamentary debates, news reports, advertisements, policy papers and scientific journals).

Contrary to some misunderstandings, CDA is not a method of discourse analysis. Rather, CDA is a particular area of discourse analysis characterised by a *critical* perspective. As a field of study, CDA has developed and applied a number of methods or analytical frameworks based on models of language found in linguistics. In considering the power of language, CDA draws heavily on other forms of discourse analysis, such as found in the work of Michel Foucault who saw language as an essential means of maintaining social hierarchies and governing social groups. What distinguishes CDA from these more sociological traditions, however, is its application of linguistics in detailed analyses of specific linguistic features. In this respect, the focus of CDA is on the way social structures of power and inequality are reflected in, enacted through, and justified by linguistic structures produced as part of texts.

In adopting a critical perspective, researchers in CDA are inspired by other critical theorists, such as those associated with the Frankfurt School of sociology (e.g., Adorno, Horkheimer and later Habermas). To be critical here means to go beyond the standard academic tasks of describing and explaining to consider data in its social context, adopting an explicit socio-political stance and ultimately changing society. Following in this critical tradition, CDA is problem-oriented and change-focused. This means that researchers in CDA start from a perceived social problem, such as the treatment of migrants. This

3. Developments in CDA

CDA has received a number of criticisms over the years. However, these criticisms have spurred a number of innovations in the field. In this last section, I will briefly highlight three key criticisms and the new approaches to CDA that have developed in response.

CDA is too focused on language

CDA developed out of linguistics and thus language has always been of primary concern. However, contemporary texts are rarely monomodal. Instead, texts are multimodal, composed of material belonging to more than one semiotic mode. For example, many texts, such as print and online news articles, are made up of both language and images. And the images in a text are equally significant in supporting specific ideological worldviews.

In response to this issue and in order to study texts that are increasingly visual in nature, CDA has undergone a 'multimodal turn'. Here, CDA has found that many of the textual practices observed in language are also discernible in images. For example, in the visual equivalent of transitivity, social actors can be depicted in different types of process which can be 'transitive' or 'intransitive'. Actors can also be deleted from the representation. By way of example, consider the three images below, taken from the online contents of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* and documenting events on the Gaza border. Images are given together with their captions.

a. *Palestinian protestors look up at falling gas cannisters near the border with Israel in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday* (*Wall Street Journal*, 14 May 2018) © Said Khatib/ Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

13 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS & STYLISTICS

Professor Peter Stockwell

1. From impression to analysis

Everyone who can speak and read can say something interesting and analytical about any piece of language. Every text in the world that you come across is the product of choices made by someone: which words to select, which order to put them in, where and when to say or write them; who is implicitly addressed, what effect or purpose seems to be intended, and so on. For most people, such observations tend to be highly intuitive and impressionistic. People observe things about texts and utterances like ***that sounded rude***; ***that makes me laugh***; ***the language there sounds flowery and fancy***. Sometimes, such impressions can also be a little more technical: ***that instruction was too direct; there was no 'please' or 'thanks'***; ***that joke sends you in one direction, and then fools you with a double-meaning***; ***there are too many flowery and overly-poetic adjectives***. These impressions can begin to be considered as being analytical, though we might say they are examples of sensitive language-awareness, or close-reading. If the person making the comments also possessed a little technical knowledge of how language *really* works, then their observations are likely to be far less impressionistic: ***the politeness markers there are entirely self-oriented***; ***the ambivalence of that word at the beginning of the joke triggers the release***; ***the frequent pre-modification with archaic lexis creates a self-consciously poetic effect***. These sorts of analytical comments are more precise; they draw on a systematic description of language from the discipline of linguistics; they account for an initial intuitive response: they are examples of **stylistics**.

Stylistics is the application of language study to the choices that are made in texts. Stylisticians tend to explore the language of literary and highly creative texts such as interesting advertising, song lyrics, poetry, prose and drama, though there is also a strong tradition of the stylistic analysis of non-literary texts (political speeches and documents, media articles, television and web broadcasting, and so on). This latter form tends to be called **critical discourse analysis** or even simply **text analysis**, with **stylistics** now largely being reserved for what is also sometimes called **literary linguistics**. It ought to be obvious

14 FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

Dr Nicci MacLeod

1. Introduction

Forensic linguistics as it is broadly defined refers to any interface between language and the law. It is useful to think of work within the field as falling into three main categories: (1) studies of the language of legal texts, (2) analyses of the discourse of spoken legal practices, and (3) the use of linguistic analyses of forensically relevant texts for investigative and/or evidential purposes.

Within the first category, studies of legal texts, scholars have concerned themselves variously with:

- The language of police cautions, i.e. the words police officers must utter to suspects when an arrest is made (Rock, 2007; 2012), known in the US as Miranda warnings (e.g., Ainsworth, 2012);
- The instructions given by judges to juries before they are sent to deliberate on a verdict at the end of a criminal trial (e.g., Dumas, 2012; Tiersma, 2010);
- The warning labels that appear on certain products (e.g., Shuy, 1990);
- A whole array of **performative** written documents, i.e. documents whose wording consummates an action or creates another state of being, such as contracts, statutes, and wills (Tiersma, 2001).

One outcome of such research has been the rewriting of legal texts in order to improve their comprehensibility. For example, following the high-profile acquittal of OJ Simpson for murdering his wife and her friend in 1995, the late Professor Peter Tiersma became involved in the redrafting of the instructions provided to juries in California. Noting that the existing instructions were often criticised for not being easy for jurors to understand, a task force was formed of judges, lawyers, members of the public, and Tiersma himself, in order to draft new ones that were more comprehensible. Among the problems that were identified with the old instructions were that the term ‘reasonable doubt’ – a central tenet of adversarial criminal justice – was not defined. Jurors were told what it *was not*, but not what it *was*. The committee rearranged the wording and rephrased the instruction as a positive statement, defining ***proof beyond a reasonable doubt*** as ***proof that leaves you with an abiding***

GLOSSARY

A

Abstract noun: A noun referring to a concept, idea or feeling

Accent: A way of pronouncing sounds differently, usually linked to the region a speaker is from

Accommodation: A term applied to the ways in which different speakers' language styles move closer (converge) towards or move apart (diverge) from each other

Acrolect: The variety of a language that is closest to the standard form (especially when discussing different varieties linked to regional and world Englishes)

Active voice: See **voice**

Adjective: A word class used to modify nouns

Adverb: A word class used for a number of functions, including modifying adjectives and verbs. Adverbs often tell us about time, manner and place. These are called adverbs of manner. They can also modify adjectives and verbs by telling us to what degree (how much or how little) a verb is operating or an adjective is modifying

Affordances: In discussing Computer-mediated Communication (CMC), these are the what the technology or platform offers the user in terms of benefits (e.g., the potential to address multiple recipients, communicate instantly over a large distance, or imbed video links). See also **limitations**

Anaphora: A form of reference that relates to a previously established referent e.g., a pronoun referring back to a person or thing that has previously been introduced in the text. The antecedent is the 'thing' that has been previously established (e.g., In the sentence 'The protesters carried on until they were forced back by police', the antecedent is *the protesters* and the pronoun *they* makes an anaphoric reference back to *the protesters*

Analogy: A mechanism of language change in which a speaker 'regularises' a language feature that appears to break a regular pattern

Aspect: A grammatical term that refers to whether an action or process is ongoing (progressive aspect) or completed (perfective aspect)

Authorship synthesis: Using linguistic techniques to mimic the style of another person and artificially assume their language identity

Auxiliary verb: A verb that operates alongside another verb in a verb phrase, often to specify tense or modality

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Deborah Cameron is Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford University. She has written extensively about language, gender and sexuality: her book-length publications on the subject include *The Myth of Mars and Venus: Do Men and Women Really Speak Different Languages?* (OUP 2007) and *Gender, Power and Political Speech* (with Sylvia Shaw, Palgrave 2016). She is also the author of *The Teacher's Guide to Grammar* (OUP 2007), and a regular speaker, broadcaster and blogger on a range of linguistic topics.

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Dan Clayton is an Education Consultant at the English and Media Centre and an experienced A Level English Language teacher who has worked at St Francis Xavier College, London and The Sixth Form College, Colchester with a period as a Research Fellow at UCL in the middle. He is a senior examiner and moderator for A Level English Language at a major awarding body and has written and edited a number of English Language publications for Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Routledge and the EMC. His A level English Language blog can be found at http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.co.uk/ and he tweets at @EngLangBlog.

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Sue Fox is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Bern, Switzerland. She is a sociolinguist whose primary research interest is in contemporary language variation and change in English. Her research has focused on the social and historical contexts that have led to the variety of English that is spoken today in London, particularly among young people. She works on documenting, analysing and accounting for variation in pronunciation as well as variation in discourse and grammatical features, among speakers of various social and ethnic backgrounds. She is interested in tracking changes in progress and the processes that bring about language change, particularly in a multicultural urban environment such as London.

Professor Angela Goddard

Angela Goddard is a Professor of English Language and a UK Higher Education Academy National Teaching Fellow. She has taught English in schools and universities both in the UK and abroad. Angela is Chair of Examiners for English Language A Level at a major UK exam board; she also chairs an international equivalent. She has written many books and articles on language, particularly with an interdisciplinary focus. Her most recent publication is *Discourse: the Basics*, for Routledge.

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Christopher Hart is Professor of Linguistics at Lancaster University. His research investigates the link between language use, cognition and the legitimation of social and political action. He has been particularly interested in the language of migration in the news and the way the media reports civil disorder in the form of riots, strikes and political protests. Chris is author of *Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Science: New Perspectives on Immigration Discourse* (Palgrave, 2010) and *Discourse, Grammar and Ideology: Functional and Cognitive Perspectives* (Bloomsbury, 2014).

Dr Paul Ibbotson

Paul Ibbotson studied physical geography for three years and then linguistics for a further year. After several more unwise and eccentric decisions he gained his PhD in developmental psychology from the University of Manchester, UK. He currently works at the Open University – continuing to research the learning processes that drive language acquisition and continuing to make unwise and eccentric decisions.

Professor Paul Kerswill

Paul Kerswill is Professor of Sociolinguistics at the University of York. His first research was on dialects in Norway, where he studied changes in the speech of rural dialect speakers who had moved to the city of Bergen. This started his fascination with how dialects change as a result of migration. His first major study, which he conducted with Ann Williams, was of the new accent of Milton Keynes. He is perhaps best known for his ground-breaking study of Multicultural London English (MLE), on which he has worked with colleagues from Queen Mary, University of London. The research covered topics from linguistic changes in MLE, through young Londoners' identities, to the representation of MLE in the media. He is currently researching the origins of MLE, as well as the history of English dialects in the Industrial Revolution. At the same time, he is carrying out joint research on language use in Ghana.

Dr Nicci MacLeod

Nicci MacLeod gained her PhD in Forensic Linguistics from Aston University in 2010, on the topic of police interviews with women reporting rape. Since then she has been employed on various research projects, focussing on 17th-century legal discourse, authorship analysis of tweets, and assuming identities online in the context of undercover online operations against child sex offenders. She is now a Lecturer in English Language and Linguistics at Northumbria University, an Honorary Research Associate at the Centre for Forensic Linguistics at Aston, and a self-employed forensic linguist.

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Kevin Watson is a senior lecturer in sociolinguistics at the University of Canterbury, in Christchurch, New Zealand. Originally from Liverpool, Kevin has carried out research on Liverpool English, and also on other accents in north-west England, such as Skelmersdale and St Helens. He runs the Origins of Liverpool English Corpus (OLIVE), based at the University of Canterbury, which has language data spanning one hundred years and so can be used to track linguistic change. He also works on New Zealand English. His research interests focus primarily on phonological variation, in particular on the factors at work in the convergence and divergence between accents, and also on the co-variation of phonological variables across space and over time.