McMahon, April, Will Barras, Lynn >Clark, Remco Knooihuizen, Amanda Patten, and Jennifer Sullivan. "Language Matters 1: Linguistics." *The Public Value of the Humanities*. Ed. Jonathan Bate. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011. 247–258. The WISH List. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781849662451.ch-019>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 12:42 UTC.

Copyright © Jonathan Bate and contributors 2011. You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

19. Language Matters 1: Linguistics

April McMahon, Will Barras, Lynn Clark, Remco Knooihuizen,
Amanda Patten and Jennifer Sullivan (University of Edinburgh)

It is hard to think of a more fundamental question than what makes us human. Naturally, fundamental questions have many possible answers; a particularly pithy and engaging one is Francis Evans' 'two legs, thing using and talking' (Evans 1998). Evans argues that humans are essentially bipedal, technological, linguistic animals, and in this essay we will focus on the last of these – the idea that humans are humans because we talk. If we accept this definition, it follows that understanding language better will help us understand ourselves, our context and our lives better. As we shall show, language bears strongly on identity; it conveys our attitudes, and in subtle ways, also shapes and determines them; it changes as we change, through the lifecourse and over generations. Research on language variation and change can help people navigate the complexities of modern society, partly because it illuminates our histories. But initial research is vital. People generally feel they are experts on language – after all, we all speak (or sign) at least one – so one of our main tasks in this essay is to convince readers that they need to know more about something they feel they understand already, and that this additional knowledge, achieved through research, will add value in sometimes unexpected ways.

Language and wider society

Given the central role of language in virtually every aspect of our lives, it seems obvious that, put simply, we should try to understand how it works. Indeed, linguistic research has a number of extremely practical applications that are directly relevant to contemporary life in the UK. For example, the children's communication charity I CAN has found that 'One in ten children ... in the UK has communication problems that require specialist help. This represents approximately three children in every classroom' (UK Parliament Website 2008). They add that '46.3 per cent. of children with a statement of SEN [Special Educational Needs] have identified speech, language and/or communication difficulties'. However, despite this, 73 per cent of staff who work with children have not had Special Educational Needs training focusing on language (Hancock 2008). In order to correctly identify, diagnose and treat speech disorders, it is important to understand language structure and the linguistic abilities of 'non-impaired' language users; this means linguistic research must contribute to training for professionals in these areas.

Linguistic research has also been usefully employed in a legal context. One of the pioneers of research on language variation, William Labov, contributed to an early forensic linguistics case in 1987, after Paul Prinzivalli was jailed for making bomb threats to an airline (Labov 1997). Labov demonstrated that Prinzivalli had a Boston accent, while the bomb-threat caller was a New Yorker. He explicitly comments that his theoretical work was what made his forensic contribution possible:

All of the work and all of the theory that I had developed ... flowed into the testimony that I gave in court to establish the fact that Paul Prinzivalli did not and could not have made those telephone calls. It was almost as if my entire career had been shaped to make the most effective testimony on this one case.

Prinzivalli was found not guilty, and afterwards wrote to Labov 'saying that he had spent fifteen months in jail waiting for someone to separate fact from fiction ... nothing could be more satisfactory for any scientific career than to separate fact from fiction in this case'.

Research into language varieties can also contribute to voice recognition on a much wider scale. For instance, voice-recognition software has clearly improved efficiency and contributed to the economic performance of many businesses. While telephone switchboards using voice-recognition may be the bane of office-workers' lives, it is clear that with further research, voice-recognition capability can only improve. Indeed, the development of these technologies brings further, often unseen challenges for linguistics research; for instance, a 'Brain Training' video game has been shown to have difficulties dealing with northern English accents (Gibbon 2008). The differences in sound systems between accents of English need to be fully understood in order to improve accuracy. Moreover, if it was not initially thought important for voice-recognition systems to deal with accent variation, we might ask what this tells us about attitudes to accents: we return to this question below.

In today's multicultural and multilingual society, issues concerning language variation are relevant to an increasing number of bilingual speakers. Antonella Sorace is currently developing 'Bilingualism Matters', 'an advice and information service for bilingual families based on current research' (Sorace 2010). Reference to research results is needed because there are many misapprehensions about bilingualism – as Sorace notes, 'people are ready to believe that handling two languages at the same time is too much of a burden for the infant's brain, or that the languages compete for resources in the brain at the expense of general cognitive development', whereas evidence strongly suggests that bilingualism confers significant cognitive advantages. Opportunities for bilingualism are increasing in our own society – one person in twelve living in the UK in 2001 was born overseas (UK National Statistics

2005). This means increasing numbers of UK citizens are encountering languages other than English in their day-to-day lives, and may be deciding whether to bring up their children bilingually. If linguistic research could shape more positive attitudes towards bilingualism, it would also play a vital role in determining how our increasingly linguistically diverse environments are managed. Languages die out when they are not used, and when children are not encouraged to learn them. Within the UK this is an issue both for languages like Scots, Gaelic and Welsh, which are threatened by the social and political status of English, and may be limited to increasingly restricted contexts; and for languages like Mandarin, Gujarati and Polish, which may thrive elsewhere in the world, but are spoken only within specific communities in the UK.

The loss of minority languages is an issue of great concern worldwide. Linguists can provide historical information on languages that have been lost or survived in the past (the focus of Remco Knooihuizen's research), in contexts before the development of modern nation-states, thus informing language policy today. The relative monolingualism of European nation-states, unusual in global terms, has led to ungrounded assumptions about the potential hazards of raising a child to speak two or more languages natively. It is essential to address these unfounded concerns with real data and analysis, particularly for minority languages, which may require long-term bilingualism to survive. Linguists have a broader perspective through studying patterns of language change and death, whereas individuals may only know what is happening in their own community. Linguistic research can also influence the success of attempts to standardize languages, providing symbols of national or community unity for their speakers; if users see a particular language as socially useful, and can be convinced that it has intrinsic structure and coherence, with rules of its own and a historical pedigree, there is a greater chance of survival. This task is currently being undertaken with Scots, which has recently been recognized as a minority language by the European Union. The Scots Language Centre is actively involved in raising the status of Scots by promoting its use among Scottish communities (Scots Language Centre 2010).

Language and smaller communities

Historically, accents and dialects diverge and become new languages; the dividing line between language and dialect is therefore an unclear and shifting one. Greater mobility and the diversity of the modern media mean individuals are also increasingly likely to hear more accents and dialects. Even showing that minority languages or dialects are worthy of study can be instrumental in changing attitudes: Damien Hall has researched Norman French for his PhD, and reports that:

In the rural area in particular, people were very pleased that I was studying their language ... It seems to me that they might have been pleased about it

because it showed that their communities, traditions, lives were important from a wider point of view and might play into something bigger that I or others could say about French, or about social matters.

Dialect variation clearly causes strong feelings, as shown by an online BBC 'Have Your Say' page, which received many responses to the question 'How do you feel about regional accents?' (BBC News 2005a) People view regional dialects as an important marker of social and cultural identity and as something that should be preserved (BBC News 2004); but dialect variation is also regarded as problematic in the present day economy (BBC News 2005b). As a researcher collecting dialect data from participants, Will Barras has encountered both attitudes, often from the same people. Potential participants are very interested in the idea of studying local accents and dialects, and very keen to share their knowledge and intuitions. The possible loss of local features with older speakers is regretted, and documenting traditional dialect features is regarded positively. However, these same participants often have a low regard for their own dialect, sometimes describing their speech as 'lazy' or 'bad'. Academic work on dialect data can help to elevate the status of dialect forms, through shifting cultural stereotypes, and fostering pride in local identity. Given the current government focus on citizenship, in schools and in the wider community, this is clearly a positive and relevant application of academic research.

These attitudes to accents and dialects are clearly among the most emotive issues in public debates on language, and, again, linguistic research is central, sometimes confirming and providing evidence for intuitions, but sometimes showing that these are not well-founded. People do not just listen dispassionately to the talk of others, but draw geographical and social conclusions based on the nature of that speech. Studies on language attitudes and stereotyping show that we regularly characterize and evaluate people according to the way they speak, regardless of what they actually say. We often (unconsciously) attribute character traits like (un)friendliness or (lack of) intelligence to someone we have only just met, because of associations we have made in the categorization process between a variety of language, and the type of person (we think) speaks that way. This can have serious consequences for our interactions with others; indeed, it may determine whether we are willing to talk to another individual at all. The speaker in the following excerpt, taken from Lynn Clark's ongoing work in west Fife in Scotland, discussed his experiences of going to St Andrews University with a broad Fife accent, and becoming uncomfortably aware that not only did he judge others based on their accents, but they also judged him:

- c: See when a started gaun tae St Andrews an a wiz having tae deal wi sortaefolk fae different sortae places like America an English, **couldnae understand ma accent eh**. So a wiz immediately a

barrier between me an the lassie that a got on really well wi fae doon in Manchester, Jill, she said for the first couple eh months, couldnae come an talk tae me eh.

LYNN CLARK (LC): mm

c: an a says well a thought that's cos ye didnae like me. She just says well no it's just cos **a wiz so intimidated eh, an a couldnae understand yer accent** an yer awfie, ye seemed awfie sortae rough sortae, **ken local Scotsman**.

LC: [laughs] aye

c: couldnae come an talk tae me eh **she wiz quite posh speaking eh**.

LC: aye

c: so I allwiz thought, an a said that tae her as well a said well a allwiz thought ye were a bit eh **a snob sortae posh thing** eh, so **for months there wiz that barrier there** we just never really got on. It wiz just oer time that we got oer it an fund oot, best pals ye ken still in touch efter like six year eh graduating. So a think, eh, an **that wiz just fae the way she talked**.

Recent research has shown that these judgements can be linked to a single sound segment (Labov *et al.* 2006). The researchers ran experiments to determine whether listeners can discriminate variation in the use of the form of [ING] e.g. *walking* or *walkin'*, and whether it was also evaluated socially. They constructed a passage of news script containing ten instances of 'ing' forms, and had people read the passage with 100 per cent of the non-standard form (where the 'g' is 'dropped'); 50 per cent non-standard and 50 per cent standard; and 100 per cent of the standard form (where the 'g' is not 'dropped'). They played these recordings to members of the public and asked them to rate the speakers on a scale of 1–7 for their suitability as a newsreader. The stimulus passages were exactly the same except for the frequency of 'ing' as a standard or non-standard form. The results showed that tapes which contained 100 per cent of the standard form were more likely to be rated as acceptable newsreaders than those with 50 per cent or 0 per cent of the standard form. The substantial agreement in the results obviously reflects a more widely held stereotype about people who tend to use forms like *walkin'* rather than *walking* as being unsuitable to perform jobs like reading the news. Such language prejudice could have very real negative consequences for speakers of non-standard varieties of English.

Similar patterns were found in Giles and Powesland's famous research (Giles and Powesland 1975). A researcher, who was also a university lecturer in psychology, went to a school in Birmingham to talk to seventeen-year-olds about studying psychology at university. He used his Birmingham accent to deliver the talk to one group of pupils and a Received Pronunciation (RP) 'guise' to talk to another group. The content of both

talks was exactly the same; the only difference was the accent he used. The pupils were then asked to comment on his ability as a lecturer and evaluate how intelligent they considered him to be. The pupils rated the lecturer as significantly more intelligent when he used his RP 'guise' than when he used his Birmingham 'guise'; they also wrote more positively about his capability as a lecturer in his RP 'guise'. Although this is an example of the prejudices that pupils can hold towards teachers based on their accent, teachers can hold prejudices of their own; Giles and Powesland also suggested that teachers may base their first impressions of pupils on the way that they speak, even when they are presented with other examples of schoolwork. This could lead to problems in pupil/teacher relations for a child who creates a negative first impression by (typically) bringing a non-standard variety into the classroom. Perhaps this child will have to perform much better in class in order to make a favourable impression on the teacher, or perhaps negative expectations by the teacher will lead to negative performances by the pupil.

Dick Hudson, of University College London, argues that 'one of the most solid achievements of linguistics in the twentieth century has been to eliminate the idea (at least among professional linguists) that some languages or dialects are inherently "better" than others' (Hudson 1996: 203). However, while linguistic research is vital in explaining accent differences and the social judgements which may accompany them, combating accent prejudice also requires these issues to be communicated clearly and effectively.

Linguistic research could counteract misapprehensions about accent and dialect variation in a number of other ways. First, there is great concern about ongoing changes, often resulting in an emotional response that the English language is suffering at the hands of lazy or ignorant users. Both the introduction of the *walkin'* form and 'h'-dropping, which produces pronunciations of *happy* as '*appy*', are seen as signs of lazy articulation. Yet from a linguistic point of view, such ongoing changes are natural, inevitable, and even somewhat predictable; this is the area of Amanda Patten's research. Rather than being haphazard, many changes 'tidy up' the linguistic system. Languages typically have 'pairs' of sounds; so, for example, the sounds 'f' and 'v' are both articulated by placing the lower lip next to the upper teeth; the only difference is that while the vocal folds remain still in the production of 'f', they vibrate when sounding 'v'; 'h' is the only English consonant with no 'partner'. Consequently, the gradual loss of 'h' shows how languages often develop in the direction of regularizing patterns in the linguistic system, which may bring advantages for learning or perception.

Understanding the history of individual features can also alter attitudes to them. We still see regular letters to newspapers complaining about sloppy and ungrammatical speech patterns; but historical knowledge of dialect formation has the potential to widen the community's perspective. Irish

English speakers' use of 'do be', as in 'She does be reading books' (all the time) is a classic example. Widely berated by speakers themselves, it has, in fact, been argued to be a relic of Early Modern English, in which case it might represent an older feature than modern standard equivalents. Others have argued this structure reflects contact with Irish. Either way, the conclusion to be drawn is that 'do be' is not inherently 'wrong' in any sense, but has simply developed in a different way from modern Standard English.

Without input from linguistics research, however, it can be difficult to appreciate, communicate or, if necessary, argue against claims about accents. In April 2008, various news organizations reported a study by psychologists at Bath Spa University into perceptions of intelligence based on accent variation (BBC News 2008). This clearly has news value: people feel strongly about the way they are perceived. However, in the reporting of this story, there was no mention of *how* the different accents vary: labels like 'Yorkshire', 'Received Pronunciation' and 'Birmingham' were given with no explanation of what features make up these accents. Another recent news story reported on a study of the Queen's Christmas broadcasts which tracked changes in her pronunciation over fifty years. In this *Daily Telegraph* article, there *is* an attempt to discuss changing features of the Queen's speech, but it is not entirely clear what accent features the journalist means to indicate by writing 'I yem specking frem ar herm en the grends ev Beckinghem Pals' (O'Hagan 2006). Similarly, the cover story in a recent issue of *New Scientist* is headlined 'English as she will be spoke', and discusses the history of English, present-day variation in World Englishes and predictions for the future development of English (Erard 2008). Even in a publication aimed at a fairly informed readership, there is none of the accessible, shared vocabulary or 'meta-language' that would be necessary to describe language clearly. For instance, the author notes that 'the "l" of "hotel" and "rail" ... is often replaced with a vowel or a longer "l" sound as in "lady"'. In fact, the 'l' of *lady* is not longer at all – what is important is what vocal organs are used to articulate the sounds. The 'dark' 'l' sound of *hotel* and *rail*, pronounced with the back of the tongue raised towards the roof of the mouth, is more amenable to being replaced by a back vowel, to which it is more similar in articulation.

Variation in sounds is interesting for a general readership, but it is very difficult to explain without recourse to some academic apparatus, such as the International Phonetic Alphabet. This presents a challenge to linguists in terms of communicating interesting knowledge in an accessible manner. We all have intuitions about language: linguists have the wherewithal to discuss these precisely. It would be helpful if there were ways of sharing this meta-language with non-linguists, and this might profitably be pursued through Continuing Professional Development courses for teachers, or indeed by further integration of knowledge about language in the school curriculum.

Language and education

Connections with schools provide other practical ways for academic, university-led research to have a positive effect on wider society. Raising literacy rates among school pupils is a vital and highly politicized example. While there is a prescribed scheme (in England) for teaching reading through phonics, this scheme does not take account of phonological variation in regional accents – thus, *saw* and *door* will rhyme in most varieties of English which do not pronounce a final ‘r’ sound, but in Scotland, and some parts of Lancashire and the south-west of England, the presence of ‘r’ in *door* means they sound very different. University academics have created guides for teachers to adapt the prescribed teaching materials for use with pupils with different regional accents. Here, academic research into phonological variation has a very practical application (Education Committee of the LAGB 2008).

In Scotland, the Committee for Language Awareness in Scottish Schools, chaired by Graeme Trousdale, and the Education Sub-Committee of the Scottish Parliament’s Cross Party Group on the Scots Language, with Matthew Fitt as Secretary, aim to help teachers become more confident in presenting aspects of knowledge about language in the classroom (Trousdale 2008; Fitt 2010). At present, ‘English’ in Scottish schools in particular primarily means literature; and while studying literature is important, presenting language only through its connection with literature is like studying maths only through physics – one particular application of a body of knowledge which is highly relevant in its own right. There are, for example, many non-literary examples of the connection of language with power or persuasion, and it is surely of relevance for school students to be taught to recognize and analyse ‘loaded’ language, repetition and confusing jargon, whether in newspaper articles, adverts or political speeches. An increased, analytical awareness of language would also allow schools to encourage their pupils to use and value their own dialects in appropriate contexts, while empowering them to use a standard dialect (which might perfectly well accompany a regional accent) in more formal circumstances. Just as understanding more about the history of our languages contributes to awareness and value of our cultural heritage, so more information about present-day variation helps us to appreciate and maintain our accents and dialects. Every high street might increasingly look the same these days, but they still sound refreshingly different.

Extending our knowledge

If knowledge about language is to be shared more widely, there must also be ongoing academic research to push back the limits of our understanding, and to refine and build on our theories of how languages work. One example from ongoing research by April McMahon and Warren Maguire involves measuring the similarity between sounds. Until recently, claims that

Newcastle English is more like Sheffield English than Edinburgh English would be supported purely by intuition; now, we can measure the differences and confirm this hypothesis, partly due to a new database of the same words being pronounced in a wide range of present-day varieties of English, and partly through a purpose-built computer program (Sound Comparisons 2010). Jennifer Sullivan is extending this cross-accent comparison to prosody, and specifically to intonation, the 'tune' of speech. The capacity to compare accents quantitatively has many potential benefits. It might allow us to compare the speech of children, people with language difficulties or second language learners with a model pronunciation, to calculate divergence or improvement. We might be able to provide some indication of the cut-off point between language and dialect, even if this were necessarily probabilistic rather than absolute.

In linguistics there is not a one-way channel of communication from specialists to non-specialists or 'outsiders': linguists rely heavily on speakers and listeners for production data and perceptual judgements. The interaction has mutual benefits. Naive intuitions do not always correspond to expected linguistic categories and this can lead to development and revision of theories; but intuitions can appear messy and even incoherent, and we often need trained specialists to spot the more abstract patterns in the complexity. Knowing more about these patterns, in turn, can affect our views on what is or is not a possible human language, with enormous implications for the nature-nurture debate, and for questions of the structure and capacities of the human brain and mind.

The benefits of research can also be subtle and unexpected. School students, properly advised and guided, can gain enormously from conducting their own language experiments in their community, coming to understand both the theoretical aspects of linguistics and the social issues with which language is intimately linked. In the heavily exam-oriented school and undergraduate curriculum, there may be a place for introductions to research in the interests of academic development somewhat apart from external benchmarks and from the performance of others. Research has the potential to cultivate a 'Socratic dialogue' between researchers and develops our ability to think. We may draw a very tentative parallel with quantum theory in physics, which has made major inroads into studying matter at a level more minute than the atom. Many people think that subatomic particles like quarks have nothing to do with their everyday lives; yet they are part of every piece of matter we interact with each day. Turning to language, we find that it is an intrinsic part of every human culture. So exploring questions about language means exploring questions about who we are, about matters that are intrinsic to the human condition; and through combining insights with those from other disciplines, in studying the evolution of language, we can understand better how we came to be human.

Conclusion

William Labov, the pioneer of sociolinguistics, suggests that, 'You can defend any piece of research by saying that it is "theoretical" and "basic" research, and you may be able to get the grants you need. I myself have always felt that theory can only be justified if it fits the facts, and that some facts – the ones that affect people's life chances – are more important than others' (Labov 1997). We believe that theoretical subjects must be pursued for their own sake, because you do not know what you might discover until you spend time looking for it. However, in the case of linguistics, there *are* also clear practical benefits for society arising from the research carried out in universities.

All the authors of this essay are researching language variation and change. We have all heard comments that we are being selfish because we have chosen to be researchers rather than 'giving something back' to society; but for all the reasons given above, we do not see researching and contributing to society as being in opposition. Some of us have had other careers (Will Barras taught in secondary schools for six years); others have chosen between research and an alternative career path. None of us would be doing what we are doing if we did not find it intrinsically fascinating: of course, we all enjoy the detective work of research, gathering the data, constructing and testing hypotheses, arguing with others in our field to come up with the best solution. But we also feel what we are finding is of deep significance to everyday life, and that our research on changing languages illuminates the experience of living in changing societies. Ongoing work in linguistics might involve computational methods, statistical analysis, and experimental paradigms, but it also continues in the best and highest traditions of historical scholarly enquiry, seeking to explain both what makes us human, and what makes us modern. Interdisciplinary research on language, in connection with psychologists, biologists, archaeologists and anthropologists, can tell us more about the history of our species, and hence about the sources of our contemporary lives and values. Only the arts and humanities disciplines can provide this historical context, simultaneously revealing and interpreting.

All the areas of linguistics we have highlighted, however, rely absolutely on prior research, which needs to be thorough and independent; and the value of that research for other disciplines, or in practical applications, may not become obvious until long after it has been done and debated within the discipline – after which it also needs to be communicated to a wider public. In the sciences, courses in Science Communication and academic posts in the Public Understanding of Science are becoming commonplace; in the arts and humanities, we face an extra challenge in convincing people that everyday parts of our lives, like language, are also objects of scientific enquiry. We all use language natively and unconsciously; and grammar lacks the glamour and mystery of quarks and chromosomes, which can

only be revealed through special machinery and techniques (though note that *grammar* and *glamour* come ultimately from the same linguistic root word). In subjects like linguistics, investing in a knowledgeable cohort of excellent future communicators is therefore even more important, and we crucially need to train those who will conduct and publicize research in future; with this in mind, it is worth noting that five of the six authors of this essay are currently, or were recently, PhD students funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council. All of us share a common goal: through our research on language, we want to open people's eyes to what happens when they open their mouths.

Bibliography

- BBC News (2004), 'Website aims to preserve accents', 13 February, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/cornwall/3484835.stm> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- BBC News (2005a), 'Have Your Say: Regional accents: Your experiences', 16 August, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/4153102.stm [accessed 17 July 2010].
- BBC News (2005b), 'Regional accents "bad for trade"', 29 December, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/4566028.stm> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- BBC News (2008), 'Perceptions "affected by accent"', 3 April, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7329768.stm> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Education Committee of the LAGB (2007), 'Accents and phoneme-grapheme correspondences', 27 July, <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/ec/accents.htm> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Erard, M. (2008), 'How global success is changing English forever', *New Scientist*, 29 March, <http://technology.newscientist.com/article/mg19726491.300-how-global-success-is-changing-english-forever.html> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Evans, F.T. (1998), 'Two legs, thing using and talking: The origins of the creative engineering mind', *AI and Society*, 12: 185–213.
- Fitt, M. (2010), 'Cross Party Group on the Scots Language Education sub-committee', 10 March, <http://www.scotsinschools.com> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Gibbon, D. (2008), '"Brain Training" slammed by "Watchdog"', 6 February, <http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/gaming/a88706/brain-training-slammed-by-watchdog.html> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Giles, H. and Powesland, P.F. (1975), *Speech Style and Social Evaluation*, London: Academic Press.
- Hancock, M. (2008), 'MP backs calls for teachers to have more training to support children with communication difficulties', 10 January, <http://www.mikehancock.co.uk/news/34/34/MP-backs-calls-for-teachers-to-have-more-training-to-support-children-with-communication-difficulties/> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Hudson, R.A. (1996), *Sociolinguistics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Labov, W. (1997), 'How I got into linguistics, and what I got out of it', <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/Papers/HowIgot.html> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Labov, W., Ash, S., Baranowski, M., Nagy, N., Ravindranath, M. and Weldon, T. (2006), 'Listeners' sensitivity to the frequency of sociolinguistic variables', *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics*, 12: 2: 105–29.
- O'Hagan, A. (2006), 'Who cut off the Queen's Vowels?', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 December, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/12/05/do0502.xml> [accessed 17 July 2010].

- Scots Language Centre (2010), 'Scots Language Centre', <http://www.scotslanguage.com> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Sorace, A. (2010), 'Antonella Sorace: homepage', <http://www.ling.ed.ac.uk/~antonell/generalpublic.html> [accessed 14 July 2010].
- Sound Comparisons (2010), 'Accents of English from Around the World', <http://www.soundcomparisons.com> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- Trousdale, G. (2008), 'Committee for Language Awareness in Scottish Schools', <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/class> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- UK National Statistics (2005), 'People and Migration: Foreign-born', 15 December, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1312> [accessed 17 July 2010].
- UK Parliament Website (2008), 'House of Commons Hansard Debates for 16 January 2008', 16 January, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080116/halltext/80116h0004.htm> [accessed 17 July 2010].