

Linguistics at the Library – Episode 3

PhD placement students, Andrew Booth & Rowan Campbell, write:

Is the UK in danger of losing its wide variety of local accents? In the third episode of Linguistics at the Library, Andrew and Rowan investigate why we might tone down our accent when talking to people from different areas, and whether the media is making all British accents sound the same.

This week's 'What's the feature?' used a clip from:

Millennium Memory Bank Recording in Quorn, Leicestershire. BBC, UK, rec. 1999 [digital audio file]. British Library, C900/09097. Available: <https://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects/Millennium-memory-bank/021M-C0900X09097X-2100V1>

Studies mentioned:

Eckert, Penelope. 2003. Elephants in the room. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7(3): pp. 392-397.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9481.00231/full>

Evans, Bronwen G. and Iverson, Paul. 2007. Plasticity in vowel perception and production: a study of accent change in young adults. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 121(6): pp. 3814-26.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17552729>

Milroy, Lesley. 2007. Off the shelf or under the counter? On the social dynamics of sound changes. In Christopher M. Cain and Geoffrey Russom (editors): *Managing Chaos: Strategies for Identifying Change in English*, pp. 149-172

Gill, W. W. (1934). *Manx dialect: words and phrases* (No. 4). Arrowsmith
<http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/fulltext/md1933/index.htm>

[Linguistics at the Library Episode 3](#)

News story: Fairer pay for criminal defence advocates in legal aid cases

The reformed Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS) will ensure that pay better reflects the actual work being done by criminal defence advocates and that advocates are being fairly remunerated for work in more complex cases.

The changes will bring the scheme in line with modern practices, taking into account the fact that more and more evidence is submitted electronically.

The process of determining fees will be simplified so that advocates can better understand how they will be paid for their work before they take on a case.

The new scheme is part of ongoing reforms to deliver a modern and effective justice system, whilst ensuring that legal aid is available in cases where it is most needed.

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said:

These changes will create a simpler and more modern pay system for defence advocates in legal aid-funded criminal cases.

We have listened to the views of legal professionals to ensure that advocates will be paid in a way that better reflects the reality of the work they do.

The government previously consulted on the fee proposals and has taken on feedback from professionals to help shape the scheme.

Significant changes have been made to the original proposals to ensure that the vital contribution of junior barristers and solicitor advocates is better recognised in the new scheme.

The changes will come into effect on 1 April 2018 and will keep spend on fees at the current level, so that the reforms come at no additional cost to the tax payer.

Notes

The [AGFS consultation response](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

[Speech: Education ministers from across the Commonwealth meet in Fiji](#)

Thank you Dr Mohamed. And thank you also to those fellow Education Ministers I have had the opportunity to meet over the last few days. I think this has been a very successful conference. I would like to congratulate the Secretary General and the Fijian Government for hosting a very successful conference. It has been wonderful for me to have had so many productive, interesting and warm conversations with fellow ministers, in meetings and at the very successful receptions that have been held throughout the course of the

conference. I have really valued the opportunity to learn about other education systems and to discuss so many shared challenges that we all face across the Commonwealth. I am sure that many of us will stay in touch in future and continue to support each other where we can.

The UK government is looking forward to welcoming your Heads of Government to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April. We will discuss shared challenges, and move forward – I hope – renewed, and revitalised after that conference.

These international gatherings are helpful in shaping shared policy objectives and working collectively to overcome challenges. For example, the Millennium Development Goals focused minds on universalising access to education. And now, the Sustainable Development Goals are going further.

In recent years, great strides have been made across the world. It should not be forgotten that in 1990 there were 1.8 billion people living in absolute poverty. This has been reduced over those years since by a billion. But, there is still much more to do. As our Foreign Secretary wrote recently:

Look at those countries where population is growing the fastest, where unemployment is highest, and where the tensions are greatest, and without exception you will find a common factor: female illiteracy.

Boris Johnson was correct when he went on to state that this is both a moral outrage and 'contrary to the interests of world peace, prosperity, health and happiness.

Globally, 130 million girls are not in school. So I would urge member states to commit to work together and individually to ensure 12 years of quality education for all by 2030.

But we must be more ambitious than seeking universal access. We must turn our attention to ensuring pupils receive the high-quality education they deserve.

Of those pupils in school in low income countries, 90% are not on track to master the basics of maths, reading and writing by the end of primary school.

Raising school standards for pupils from all backgrounds has been the driving force behind the government reforms in my country since 2010. The government's mission is to provide pupils with the knowledge-rich education that will prepare them for the rigours and opportunities of the 21st century.

Core academic subjects have returned to the heart of the secondary curriculum and we have pursued evidence-based approaches to teaching, raising standards for all. At the same time, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers has narrowed both at primary and secondary schools in England since 2010.

In education, there is nothing more important to spreading opportunity than

ensuring all pupils are taught to read effectively. Figures from the UK show that pupils who are reading well by age 5 are 6 times more likely than their peers to be on track by age 11 in reading, and 11 times more likely to be on track in mathematics.

But, in the years just before we came into government in 2010, we knew something was wrong with the way our primary schools taught reading. England was stagnating in the international league tables and the international data also showed a wider gap between top and bottom performers than in most other countries, leading to England being known for its 'long tail of underachievement'.

And data from 2012 showed that we were the only OECD country where the maths and reading abilities of our 16-24 year olds was worse than that of our 55 to 65 year olds. A misguided move away from evidence-based approaches to teaching children to read was stifling opportunity for too many children.

For decades, the overwhelming weight of international evidence – including the influential longitudinal study from Clackmannanshire in Scotland – pointed to systematic phonics as the most effective way to teach children to read.

Phonics teaches children to associate letters with sounds, providing pupils with the code to unlock written English. And despite the evidence in favour of this approach – a traditional approach – the government's phonics reforms were controversial and met with widespread opposition from teaching unions and other vested interests.

All primary schools in England are now required by law to use phonics as they teach pupils to read. But more controversially, the government introduced the Phonics Screening Check in 2012. This is a short test comprising a list of 40 words that 6-year-old children read to their teacher at the end of year 1.

The proportion of pupils passing the Phonics Check has increased every year since it was introduced by us in 2012. In 2012, the first year of the Phonics Check, just 58% of 6 year olds reached the pass mark of 32 out of the 40 correctly read words. So over (he doesn't say over, he just says 40% but given that over is statistically correct are we fine to just leave this in the text version?) 40% were failing. This year, 81% of 6-year-olds reached that standard, with 92% of children reaching that standard by the end of year 2.

This year, 154,000 more 6 year olds were on track to be fluent readers than in 2012. Last year, 147,000 more 6 year olds were on track compared to 2012.

And the success of this policy has been confirmed by the international PIRLS results (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study). The international study of 9-year-olds' reading ability in 50 countries showed that England has risen from joint 10th place in 2011 to joint 8th place in 2016, thanks to a statistically significant rise in our average score.

But more importantly, these tests show that we are dealing with the 'long

tail of underachievement' that has stifled opportunity. The PIRLS results show that reading has improved for pupils from all backgrounds, but it is the low-performing pupils who are gaining most rapidly.

The report found that performance in the Phonics Check was strongly predictive of PIRLS performance, vindicating the government's drive to universalise this evidence-based approach to teaching. The PIRLS national report for England states that: And I quote,

Pupils who scored full marks in the phonics check were also the highest scoring group in PIRLS 2016, with an average overall PIRLS score of 617. In contrast, pupils who did not reach the 'expected standard' in the Year 1 phonics check perform below England's overall average, with lower phonics check scores being associated with decreasing average PIRLS scores.

So that is why our government is determined to go even further and see more pupils reach the expected standard at age 6. And if I could just quote the New Zealand Minister's earlier quote: "We have gone so far, we're going to go further still."

The government has also faced-down much opposition to the drive to increase the proportion of pupils studying core academic GCSEs at age 16. The English Baccalaureate, that we introduced as a performance measure, requires pupils to study GCSEs in English, maths, at least two sciences, either history or geography, and a foreign language.

Schools are measured now on the proportion of their pupils entering GCSEs in all 5 categories, and on the attainment of their pupils in these subjects.

Since 2010 – following a long-term decline in pupils taking these core academic subjects – there have been sharp increases in most of these subjects. For example, the proportion of pupils taking the science component of the EBacc has risen from 63% to 91%, and the proportion studying history or geography has risen from 48% to 77%.

Nationally, nearly two-fifths of pupils are entered for the EBacc. This is up from just over one-fifth in 2010. But again there is still much more to do, to reach the government's ambitious target of 90% of pupils studying towards the full suite of EBacc GCSEs by 2025.

Since 2010, the proportion of pupils studying a language to GCSE has risen from 40% to 47% and we're (remove as got "are" after) are determined to raise participation in languages much further in the years to come, particularly as Britain raises its eyes to the opportunities that await post-Brexit.

Evidence supports the government's desire to drive up participation in these core academic subjects. Evidence from the Sutton Trust found that pupils in a set of 300 schools that increased their EBacc entry, from 8% to 48%, were more likely to achieve good English and maths GCSEs, more likely to take an A level, or an equivalent level 3 qualification, and more likely to stay in

post-16 education.

And these findings were corroborated by work carried out by the Institute of Education in London examining the effect that GCSE choice has on education post-16: And I quote,

Students pursuing an EBacc-eligible curriculum at 14-16 had a greater probability of progression to all post 16 educational outcomes, while taking an applied GCSE subject had the opposite effect. There were no social class differences in the advantages of pursuing an EBacc-eligible curriculum which suggests that an academically demanding curriculum is equally advantageous for working class as for middle class pupils.

And this year more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds entered the EBacc than at any point since the measure was created.

Again, there is still much more to do. Disadvantaged pupils remain almost half as likely to be entered for these subjects than their more affluent peers. But it is essential that all pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are given access to the core academic subjects that widen opportunities at post-16.

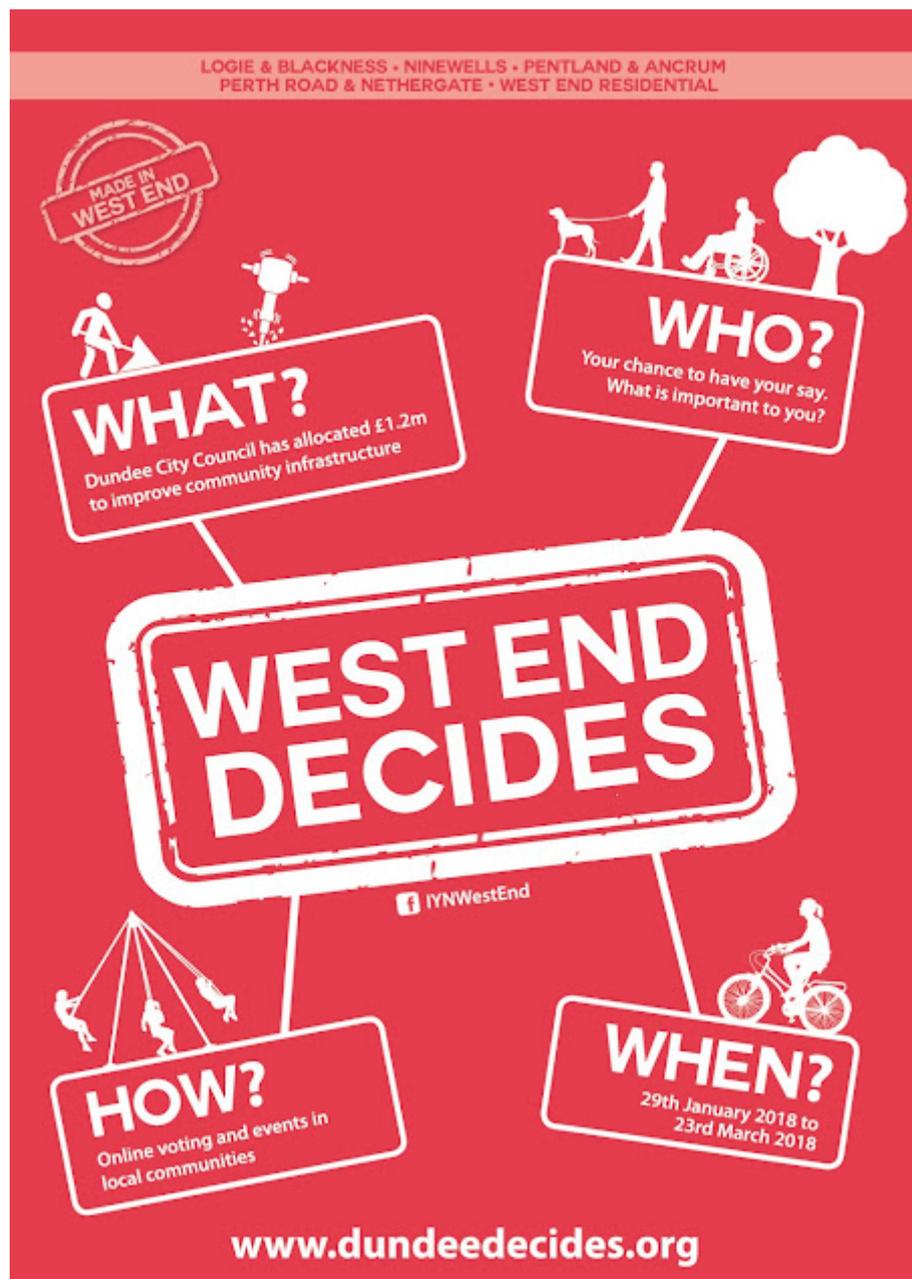
But the government is making progress in widening opportunities, whilst raising standards for all. Recent figures from national assessments that are published on a school by school basis taken at 11 and 16 reveal that the attainment gap has closed since 2011 at both primary and secondary schools, by 10.5% for primary and 10% for secondary.

Despite the controversy and claims from many in my country that the government's standards-raising policies would hurt the performance of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, in fact universalising access to evidence-based teaching methods and widening opportunities to study core academic subjects has been to the benefit of all, particularly those most in need.

There is more to do of course. There are still too many pupils not reading at the expected standard by age 6; and there are too many pupils – particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds – not being entered for the full suite of core academic GCSEs. But much progress has been made since 2010 and the government – in step with teachers – is ambitious and determined to go further in the years to come.

Thank you very much chair for listening. I am very happy to answer any questions you may have on what has been a very controversial seven years of education reform in England.

[#WestEndDecides – event on Monday!](#)



As I have already publicised, Dundee's Participatory Budgeting process "Dundee Decides" is now live – you can read more at [vote here](#).

If you live in Dundee, please go onto the site, select the ward in which you live (eg West End) and select which of the six identified projects you would like to see funded and delivered by the City Council.

You have until 23rd March to vote.

There's a West End drop-in event on Monday – 26th February – 2pm to 6pm at Blackness Library – where you can find out more – all welcome!

YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY
Improvements to Community Infrastructure



www.dundeedecides.org



Voting Live:
29th January - 23rd March 2018

MORE INFO

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[Why we will be better off out of the EU](#)

Prosperity, not austerity.

That must be our aim.

Prosperity will be easier won once we are out of the European Union.

Restoring the freedoms of a once sovereign people.

That is the overriding task we face.

On June 24 2016 17.4 million voters gave a great mandate to Parliament
To take back control.

During the referendum campaign I was asked one of the questions designed by
Remain to damage the cause of freedom.

Would you, the media avidly asked, accept being poorer in order to regain
lost freedoms?

I replied that fortune meant there was no so such choice before us.

The very right to govern ourselves that we wished to reclaim
will allow us to follow policies that made us richer, not poorer

As an optimist I anticipate we will do better out than in.

No-one can be sure what loss there might be in store if we remain in the EU
Or how many gains we will seize out of the EU.

What we do know is our fortune will rest more on our own decisions once we
are free

So let me begin my account of life after Brexit by explaining how we can be
better off.

I appreciate this will be at variance with several modelled forecasts put out
by an establishment afraid of freedom and scared of change.

It is an establishment that has a proven track record of error. They told us
the ERM would bring us a golden scenario of more growth and low inflation.
Instead it brought a deep recession.

They told us if the UK stayed out of the Euro it would be deeply damaging to
our business. Instead our business flourished with the pound and the Euro
area had several years of crises and low or no growth.

They said the big build up in debts prior to 2007 were fine because banks had
found new ways of managing risks. That forecast didn't work out too well
either.

My forecast will be criticised, for it is not backed up with a model nor
expressed in precise figures. It does however come from someone who did
forecast the ERM crisis, the problems in the Eurozone and the banking crisis.

I must warn that no-one can deliver a precise and accurate 15 year economic
forecast. I have no intention of trying to deliver one.

Too many things will change.

I can, however, point to the opportunities and the favourable changes that we
can expect in the few years that follow Brexit that will boost whatever our

growth rate then is. I do not expect a sudden fall in growth or income thanks to Brexit. The Treasury's short term forecasts of such an outcome for the year after the vote have already proved wide of the mark.

In future as in the past the main forces shaping our growth rate will be the pace of innovation, the monetary and fiscal policies being pursued, and the state of the world economy.

The most obvious gain that the anti-Brexit forecasters rarely put in to their models is the chance to spend our tax money on our priorities.

The £12bn we send every year to the EU and do not get back is lost money to the UK.

Worse still it is a large drag on our balance of payments every year.

To pay that bill we either have to borrow more money from abroad to pay it or we have to sell more of our assets to overseas buyers, cutting the investment income we earn on those assets.

Stopping that drag will boost our economy.

Spending the £12bn at home each year will mean more jobs and more items bought from UK suppliers.

That will boost our economy with extra growth of 0.6% of our total income. That's a one third increase in the current growth rate in the year we start it, with the same extra output in every year that follows

In the referendum campaign I set out a draft budget to illustrate how we might spend the money

I recommend it to the government.

I also recommend that we advise the EU that if they do not offer a wide ranging and sensible free trade agreement anytime soon we should discontinue payments to them on March 30 2019 and start the benefits for us.

There is no need for a Transition or Implementation period if there is no good deal to transit to.

We know we can trade well under WTO rules and with WTO tariffs, as that is what we do today with most countries outside the EU.

Out of the EU we will be free to fix and levy our own taxes.

We were told by past governments that tax was a red line issue

That we would always be able to decide our own taxes

That proved to be untrue

Out of the EU we can take VAT off feminine hygiene products

We can remove VAT from green items ranging from boiler controls to draught excluders.

Promoting fuel efficiency without the drag of extra VAT will help us keep warm and be better off. We could do more to combat fuel poverty by cancelling the VAT on domestic heating.

We can also levy the amount of tax we wish from larger companies.

EU tax judgements on UK corporation tax have made us repay tax we thought had been fairly and legally levied.

Lowering taxes, spending our own money and boosting industries like fishing and agriculture which have been damaged by EU membership should add more than 1% to our output, which is more than belonging the single market has ever done.