

Institution: Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)
Unit of Assessment: D28A (Modern Languages and Linguistics: Linguistics)
Title of case study: Linguistics research for English Language teachers
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>QMUL research into Multicultural London English (MLE) substantially contributes to the delivery of the GCE A level English Language curriculum and, since 2010, the GCSE English curriculum, which both have a compulsory focus on spoken English. MLE figures in 3 school textbooks and in a new QMUL online <i>English Language Teaching Resources Archive</i> that now receives 18 000 – 20 000 hits per month. The QMUL <i>Resources Archive</i> addresses difficulties in delivering the spoken English curriculum faced by teachers who are mainly trained in literature, not linguistics. Teachers and students benefit from new teaching resources including accurate linguistic commentaries on MLE sound clips and accessible summaries of linguistic research published in recent journals. The impact extends to the delivery of English Language curricula in EFL Colleges and HEI institutions worldwide, and to a wider public understanding of language change in London English.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Since 2004 Cheshire, with Paul Kerswill (then at Lancaster, now York) has led a research team analysing variation and change in London English, in the first ever large-scale sociolinguistic survey of the capital. The first phase (2004-07) revealed that, contrary to thinking at the time, London is not the source of the language changes underway in many UK urban centres. Analysing a transcribed corpus from audio recordings of 1.4 million words from indigenous Londoners aged 70+ and adolescents aged 16-19 from many different ethnic groups, the research team found that young people in multicultural inner city areas used a repertoire of innovative features, in all components of language. The researchers refer to this way of speaking as Multicultural London English (MLE) and argue that MLE has replaced 'Cockney'. Young people from immigrant backgrounds led in the use of MLE features, but white speakers from long-standing 'Cockney' families also used them.</p> <p>The second research phase (2007-10) aimed to establish how MLE arose. A further 2 million words were recorded and transcribed from speakers aged 4, 8, 12, 16-19, 25 and 40, including parents and caregivers of 12 of the younger children. The researchers found that MLE was well established among the youngest children, suggesting that they acquired it from peers and siblings, not their parents (who were mostly non-native speakers of English). They concluded that children in multilingual areas of London acquire combinations of language features from a rich 'feature pool' of linguistic forms influenced by a wide variety of languages, dialects and learner varieties. The pool serves as a resource and a model for non-native speakers acquiring English where there is no consistent target variety. This is a new dynamic of change affecting a metropolis containing a large minority ethnic and/or immigrant population, with strong implications for our understandings of processes of language change. More than 40 outputs to date include detailed quantitative analyses of ongoing language changes at the phonetic, grammatical and discourse levels, accounts of how specific innovations emerge, and new contributions to our understanding of the effect of language contact on language change. They are published in international peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes and include presentations at national and international conferences.</p> <p>Although the research had mainly theoretical objectives, the Pathways to Impact included 3 Knowledge Exchange workshops with teachers and students of GCE A-level English Language, where sound clips from the project recordings were discussed (held at St Francis Xavier 6th Form College, London SW12, Feb 2009 and July 2009; Hackney Community College, London N1, Dec 2007, with approx. 30 participants at each). Teachers asked to use these recordings in their classes since few suitable teaching materials on spoken English existed. They confessed to lacking confidence in using appropriate linguistic frameworks and terminology as they had been trained in literature, not linguistics. Furthermore they found it difficult to meet the examination</p>

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boards' requirement to keep abreast of current Linguistics research, because of time constraints and the difficulties of accessing journals. The work at QMUL leading to the impact described here aimed to address these problems.

QMUL researchers:

- (i) Cheshire, 1996 – present: Professor of Linguistics, QMUL
- (ii) Fox, 2007 – present: Research officer, QMUL (2007–Dec 2011); Visiting Research Fellow, QMUL (Jan 2012–present)

3. References to the research

- (i) **Cheshire, J.** and **Fox, S.** (2009) *Was/were* variation: a perspective from London. *Language Variation and Change* 21: 1-38. [REF2, Cheshire output]
- (ii) **Cheshire, J.**, Kerswill, P., **Fox, S.** and Torgersen, E. (2011) Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: the emergence of Multicultural London English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15: 151-196. (also in 2011 Special Virtual Issue "highlighting key contributions to our understanding of sociolinguistic variation": [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1467-9841/homepage/virtual_issue.htm](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1467-9841/homepage/virtual_issue.htm)) [REF 2, Cheshire output]
- (iii) **Cheshire, J.**, Adger, D., and **Fox, S.** 2013. Relative *who* and the actuation problem. *Lingua* 126: 51-77. [REF 2, Cheshire output]
- (iv) Kerswill, Paul, **Cheshire, J.**, **Fox, S.** and Torgersen, E. (2007). *Linguistic Innovators: The English of Adolescents in London*. ESRC End of Award Report, RES-000-23-0680. Grade: outstanding.
- (v) Kerswill, Paul, **Cheshire, J.**, **Fox, S.** and Torgersen, E. (2011) *Multicultural London English: the emergence, acquisition and diffusion of a new variety*. ESRC End of Award report, RES 062 23 0814). Grade: outstanding.

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- (i) RES-000-23-0680 (2004-2007), amount £278,996; PI Paul Kerswill, **CI: J. Cheshire**, Researchers **S. Fox** and E. Torgersen
- (ii) RES 062 23 0814 (2007-21010), amount £721,495: PI Paul Kerswill, **CI: J. Cheshire**, Researchers **S. Fox**, **A. Khan** and E. Torgersen. (Kerswill and Torgersen then at Lancaster University; Cheshire, Fox and Khan at QMUL).

4. Details of the impact

The feedback from the project KE workshops led Cheshire, in 2010, to successfully seek an ESRC Follow-on-Fund award to develop relevant KE activities (*From Sociolinguistic Research to English Language Teaching*, RES -189-25-0181, Jan-Dec 2011, £120,237: Cheshire: PI (QMUL), Fox: CI (QMUL), Kerswill: CI, (Lancaster, then York). The bulk of the work was done by Cheshire and Fox, with some advice from Kerswill.

The researchers worked with a UK-wide advisory panel of 14 teachers and A-level examiners to produce an online *English Language Teaching Resources Archive* (<http://linguistics.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/english-language-teaching>) based on their London research projects. The Archive responds to GCE and GCSE specifications that ask students to (i) analyse spoken texts using 'appropriate linguistic frameworks and terminology', (ii) study sociolinguistic aspects of spoken English, (iii) carry out an original language investigation and (iv) show that they are familiar with relevant research.

The Archive contains (i) 12 audio clips from the London projects illustrating genuine conversations between Londoners of different ages and ethnicities, each with an accompanying transcript; (ii) discussion points about features of London English and spoken English more generally, as exemplified in the clips; (iii) a separate guide to features of spoken English, described using simple, accurate terminology; (iv) 10 suggested Language Investigations; (v) a linked Linguistics Research Digest blog (<http://linguistics-research-digest.blogspot.co.uk>) containing

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weekly summaries of recent articles from Linguistics research journals (including 4 on MLE). Discussion points and Language Investigations are linked to specific summaries in the Research Digest. The advisory panel piloted these resources and worked with the researchers to ensure maximal relevance to the A-level specifications.

Cheshire and Fox disseminated information about MLE and the Teaching Resources Archive through 3 **workshops** organized by Fox and Pichler (Newcastle) on 'Analysing Spoken English: resources and techniques': April 18, 2012, Salford; July 5, 2012, QMUL; December 8, 2012, Newcastle (attended by approx.120 teachers in total); **presentations** to A-level teachers and pupils (e.g. Cheshire, to 30 pupils and 3 teachers at Kelmscott School, London E17, July 12, 2012); and **publications** for English teachers (e.g. Fox, *EMagazine*, London: English and Media Centre, 2008; Fox, chapter on spoken language in *Language: A Student Handbook on Key Topics and Theories*, ed. D. Clayton, London: English and Media Centre, 2012). There is a **Facebook** page for the Linguistics Research Digest (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Linguistics-Research-Digest/385237578154350>).

The Linguistics Association of Great Britain and the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) each donated £1000 in 2012 and 2013 for the Research Digest; the Archive won a further £1000 in BAAL's 2012 'Applying Linguistics' Competition; (funds were used to subcontract some summaries).

The work has impacted on four beneficiaries:

(i) **Teachers of GCE and GCSE English Language**, who now have authentic curriculum-relevant materials on spoken English. They include **teachers from at least 120 UK schools** (those who attended the 3 workshops above). Between Jan 2013 and 31 July 2013 the Archive received 18,000 - 20,000 visits per month, of which 60% were return visits (total hits from transfer to new QMUL web pages in Nov 2012 to end July, 2013 were 167, 219; previous number unobtainable); in the same period the Digest received 7,000- 8000 hits per month (total hits from launch to July 2013 were 137, 763). Numbers could be confirmed by the QMUL Webmaster. **Teachers' websites** recommend the Resources (e.g. 'There is a fantastic blog produced by Queen Mary University of London's Linguistics Department. They have a real commitment to encouraging A-level students in their study of the English language.... even better, they have come up with some possible A2 level investigations and for some, they even suggest a methodology and research question.... they have even provided access to a whole data bank of spoken contemporary London English this is a fantastic opportunity' (<http://eastnorfolklanguage.blogspot.fr/2013/06/great-leads-for-possible-investigations.html>). 45 replies, mainly from GCE and GCSE teachers, to **an online survey** posted 13 June 2013 on the Resources Archive were highly positive (e.g. 'The audio and transcripts have been invaluable in helping me prepare students for the exams and coursework, and the glossary of terms has always been a handy reference point. I've used the Linguistics Research Digest with teachers at AQA meetings to encourage them to find new material to point students towards and it's always gone down very well' (6/7/2013 12:01pm).

(2) **Students of GCE and GCSE English Language**. MLE now has a place in the English Language curriculum, which increases students' understanding of sociolinguistic diversity. MLE is now represented in 3 widely used UK school textbooks (see section 5).

(3) **Teachers and students of EFL/ESL and university-level English Language in the UK and beyond, evidenced by responses to survey and personal communication** (e.g. 'I teach linguistics, working with prospective teachers--and practicing teachers-- in the USA. This is a terrific site for them to look at ...and to talk about the phenomena here in the context of analogous topics in varieties of American English they know and are likely to encounter', online survey, 1/7/2013 18:50). Website analytics show that approx. 60% of the visitors to the Archive are from the UK, but others originate in more than 30 different countries, from all continents.

(4) **The general public**: extensive media dissemination of the research has contributed to a wider public understanding of London English (a few examples: Fox, interviews on *Capital Radio*

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(April 2006), *BBC Radio London* (April 2006), *Radio New Zealand* (February 2007), *BBC Radio 3 Lingua Franca* (November 2007), *Radio London* (Sunnay and Shay), October 13, 2012; *Daily Mail online* 26.4.13, *Guardian online* 26.7.13. MLE featured in the British Library's exhibition *Evolving English* (12 Nov 2010 -3 April 2011), the *Celebrate Cockney* initiative, King's Place, London (July 2010) and even in *The Guardian Weekend Quiz*, Nov 3, 2012, p.101 ('what is MLE?') Many more examples could be given.

Emails and comments posted on the Linguistics Research Digest blog provide evidence of interest from members of the public.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. MLE in School textbooks

- (i) Saunders, M., Leyburn, A. and Clayton, D. (2008) *AQA English Language A A2 Student Book*, Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, pp. 57-58, and the accompanying online resources (<http://www.kerboodle.com>);
- (ii) Carter, R. et al (2008) *Working with Texts, 3rd edition*, London: Taylor and Francis, pp.96-97, with links to the project websites;
- (iii) Aslin, E., Clayton, D. and Glozier, J. (2013) *GCSE Skills: Spoken Languages Study Student Book*, Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, containing a transcript from the Archive (p.50).

2. Examples of media Dissemination

- <http://goo.gl/1mLOJ> (*Mail online* 26.7.13)
- <http://goo.gl/hes5fS> (*ITV London News* 25.7.13)
- <http://goo.gl/k3fWXs> (*Dockland and East London Advertiser* 25.7.13)
- <http://goo.gl/u6lSp2> (*Guardian online* 26.7.13)

3. Online survey responses showing positive reactions to the Archive

https://www.surveymonkey.com/myaccount_login.aspx

Username: jennycheshire Password: ref2014 (lower case)

3. Examples of teachers' websites that recommend the Archive

- <http://eastnorfolklanguage.blogspot.fr/2013/06/great-leads-for-possible-investigations.html>
- <http://englishlangsfx.blogspot.co.uk/search?q=linguistics+research+digest> (5 posts)
- <http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Linguistics-research-digest-6197266/>

4. Examples of appreciation of the Linguistics Research Digest by the general public.

- <http://goo.gl/G9eMDW>
- <http://goo.gl/BcDfgP>

5. Use of the English Language Teaching Resources Archive by teachers of GCE A level and GCE English Language

- (i) Teacher and examiner and member of the advisory board, Colchester Sixth Form College
- (ii) Teacher, King George V College, Merseyside.
- (iii) Teacher, East Norfolk Sixth Form College
- (iv) KS5 English Coordinator, The King Edward VI School, Morpeth

6. Use of the English Language Teaching Resources Archive at university level

Lecturer in English Language, Università degli Studi di Salerno, Fisciano, Italy