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## Paul Kerswill

### Professor

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## Profile

### Biography

Paul Kerswill works in sociolinguistics, specifically language variation and change. He was appointed Professor in January 2012, after appointments at Reading and Lancaster.

### Career

- University of Cambridge (Gonville and Caius College)  
BA in Modern Languages (1978, MA 1982)  
MPhil in Linguistics (1980)  
PhD in Linguistics (1985)
- University of Durham  
Research Assistant (1983)
- University of Cambridge  
Research Assistant (1985-6)
- University of Reading  
Lecturer/Senior Lecturer (1986-2004)
- University of Lancaster  
Professor (2004-11)

### Departmental roles

- Ethics committee  
Member

# Research

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## Overview

My research is in language variation and change, with an emphasis on phonetic but also grammatical and discourse variation.

My research is largely focused on dialect contact – the long-term linguistic consequences that ensue when speakers of different accents or dialects come together through migration and mobility. My doctoral research looked at the ways in which Norwegian rural dialect speakers changed their vernacular speech after they had migrated to the city of Bergen.

A consequence of dialect contact is dialect levelling – the overall reduction in linguistic diversity across a dialect area. I worked on a speech community in which there has been 'extreme' levelling - the New Town of Milton Keynes. With colleagues at Queen Mary, University of London, I have also worked extensively on Multicultural London English, a new 'contact variety' which has emerged in London's East End and elsewhere in the capital. This has led to my growing interest in new youth language varieties, particularly in Northern Europe, where I maintain contacts with scholars in several countries.

## Research group(s)

[Language variation and change](#)

## Grants

- January 2011–December 2011: ESRC Follow-On Fund scheme. Co-investigator (Principal Investigator Prof. Jenny Cheshire). From sociolinguistic research to English language teaching.
- October 2007–September 2010: ESRC, Principal Investigator. Multicultural London English: the emergence, acquisition and diffusion of a new variety.
- October 2004–September 2007: ESRC, Principal Investigator. Linguistic innovators: the English of adolescents in London.
- September 1995–May 1999: ESRC, Principal Investigator. The role of adolescents in dialect levelling.
- September 1990–February 1994: ESRC, Principal Investigator. A new dialect in a new city: children's

and adults' speech in Milton Keynes.

## Collaborators

- Jenny Cheshire
- Eivind Torgersen
- Sue Fox
- Mark Sebba

## Available PhD research projects

- Any topics in Language Variation and Change (Social Dialectology), but especially:
  - Dialect contact
  - Youth language
  - Language contact (particularly sociolinguistic aspects)
  - Language and migration
- Norwegian sociolinguistics
- Sociology of language in Sub-Saharan Africa

## Supervision

- Kate Whisker (ESRC): Saliency of morphosyntactic and phonological variables in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
- Helen West (AHRC): Phonological convergence and divergence in Southport, Ormskirk and Liverpool
- Lucinda Machell-ffolkes (ESRC): Representation of dialect features in Yorkshire dialect literature
- Shaun Austin (ESRC): Adolescent speaking style, working-class identity and the English SATS and GCSE tests
- Elaheh Almousavi: The effect of internal migration on the Azerbaijani Turkish language in Iran: A study of the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun suffix variation in Tabriz
- Katarzyna Alexander: An instrumental sociophonetic of voicing and gemination in Cypriot Greek
- Paulina Hurwitz: A sociophonetic study of aspiration and voicing in Hebridean English
- Werdan Kassab: Accent and dialect in Milton Keynes 20 years on

## Publications

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### Selected publications

The following papers have proved central to my research and teaching:

- Kerswill, Paul (fc 2012). Identity, ethnicity and place: the construction of youth language in London. In P. Auer (ed.) *Space in Language and Linguistics*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Kerswill, Paul, Cheshire, Jenny, Fox, Susan and Torgersen, Eivind (fc 2012). English as a contact language: the role of children and adolescents. In Hundt, Marianne & Schreier, Daniel (eds.) *English as a contact language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cheshire, Jenny, Kerswill, Paul, Fox, Susan & Torgersen, Eivind (2011). [Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English](#). *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15/2: 151–196.
- Kerswill, Paul (2010). Sociolinguistic approaches to language change: phonology. In Wodak, Ruth, Johnstone, Barbara & Kerswill, Paul (eds.). *Sage handbook of sociolinguistics*. London: Sage. 219–235.
- Kerswill, Paul (2010). Contact and new varieties. In Raymond Hickey (ed.) *Blackwell handbook of language contact*. Oxford: Blackwell. 230–251.
- Kerswill, Paul, Torgersen, Eivind & Fox, Susan (2008). [Reversing 'drift': Innovation and diffusion in the London diphthong system](#). *Language Variation and Change* 20: 451–491.
- Kerswill, Paul (2006). [Socio-economic class](#). In Carmen Llamas & Peter Stockwell (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Kerswill, Paul (2006). [RP, Standard English and the standard/non-standard relationship](#). In David Britain (ed.) *Language in the British Isles* (2nd edn.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kerswill, Paul (2006). [Migration and language](#). In Klaus Mattheier, Ulrich Ammon & Peter Trudgill (eds.) *Sociolinguistics/Soziolinguistik. An international handbook of the science of language and society*, 2nd edn., Vol 3. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Kerswill, Paul and Peter Trudgill (2005). [The birth of new dialects](#). In P. Auer, F. Hinskens & P. Kerswill (eds.). *Dialect change: Convergence and divergence in European languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 196-220.
- Kerswill, Paul & Williams, Ann (2005). [New towns and koineisation: linguistic and social correlates](#).

- Torgersen, Eivind & Kerswill, Paul (2004). [Internal and external motivation in phonetic change: dialect levelling outcomes for an English vowel shift](#). *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8: 24-53.
- Kerswill, Paul (2003). [Dialect levelling and geographical diffusion in British English](#). In D. Britain and J. Cheshire (eds.) *Social dialectology. In honour of Peter Trudgill*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. 223-243.
- Kerswill, Paul (2002). [Koineization and accommodation](#). In J. K. Chambers, P. Trudgill & N. Schilling-Estes (eds.) *The handbook of language variation and change*. Oxford: Blackwell. 669-702.
- Kerswill, Paul (2002). [A dialect with 'great inner strength'? The perception of nativeness in the Bergen speech community](#). In Daniel Long & Dennis Preston (eds.) *A handbook of perceptual dialectology*, Vol. 2. Amsterdam: Benjamins. 155-175.
- Kerswill, Paul & Williams, Ann (2002). [Dialect recognition and speech community focusing in new and old towns in England: the effects of dialect levelling, demography and social networks](#). In Daniel Long & Dennis Preston (eds.) *A handbook of perceptual dialectology*, Vol. 2. Amsterdam: Benjamins. 178-207.
- Kerswill, Paul & Williams, Ann (2002). ['Salience' as an explanatory factor in language change: evidence from dialect levelling in urban England](#). In M. C. Jones & E. Esch (eds.) *Language change. The interplay of internal, external and extra-linguistic factors*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 81-110. [All except four non-critical pages of this article can be viewed on Google Books.]
- Kerswill, Paul (2001). [Mobility, meritocracy and dialect levelling: the fading \(and phasing\) out of Received Pronunciation](#). In P. Rajamäe & K. Vogelberg (eds.) *British studies in the new millennium: the challenge of the grassroots*. Tartu: University of Tartu. 45-58. Also at <http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/lang/rp.htm> (website originally set up by the late Andrew Moore for 'A' level English Language students).
- Kerswill, Paul & Williams, Ann (2000). [Mobility and social class in dialect levelling: evidence from new and old towns in England](#). In Klaus Mattheier (ed.) *Dialect and migration in a changing Europe*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang. 1-13.
- Kerswill, Paul & Williams, Ann (2000). [Creating a new](#)

[town koine: children and language change in Milton Keynes](#). *Language in Society* 29: 65-115.

- Kerswill, Paul (1996). [Children, adolescents and language change](#). *Language Variation and Change* 8: 177-202.
- Kerswill, Paul (1993). [Rural dialect speakers in an urban speech community: the role of dialect contact in defining a sociolinguistic concept](#). *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3: 33-56.
- Kerswill, Paul (1987). [Levels of linguistic variation in Durham](#). *Journal of Linguistics* 23: 25-49.

## Full publications list

Download the full publication list: [Kerswill Publications \(PDF !\[\]\(eafc244b53721dd1ec133f0772f70fc7\_img.jpg\), 91kb\)](#)



## Contact details

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Language and Linguistic  
Science

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[paul.kerswill@york.ac.uk](mailto:paul.kerswill@york.ac.uk)

## Teaching

### Undergraduate

- [Introduction to sociolinguistics \(L10C\)](#)
- [World English: \(E/L311\)](#)

- [Advanced topic language variation & change \(LO2\)](#)

## Postgraduate

- Language variation and change

## External activities

### Editorial duties

- Book series: Studies in Language Variation and Change (Benjamins, with Peter Auer and Frans Hinskens)
- Book series: Edinburgh Sociolinguistics (Edinburgh University Press, with Joan Swarbrick)

### Invited talks and conferences

- June 2012: Invited lecture at interdisciplinary laboratory, Lidi Laboratory, Université Stendhal, Grenoble
- April 2012: Lectures at National Institute of Japanese Language and Linguistics, Tokyo
- March 2012: Invited plenary English Phonology conference, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, theme 'Multicultural spoken English'

- ▶ November 2011: Invited plenary symposium on Indexing authenticity: Perspectives from linguistics and anthropology. Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies
- ▶ July 2011: Invited plenary at the interdisciplinary conference Spectres of Contact, University of Chester
- ▶ January 2011: Guest lecture, Centre for Bilingualism Research, University of Stockholm: Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English
- ▶ November 2010: Invited plenary at the Philological Society meeting, University of the West of England
- ▶ October 2010: Invited plenary at the conference Nordic Language Variation: Grammatical, Sociolinguistic and Infrastructural Perspectives, University of Iceland



- ▶ August 2010: Guest lecture, Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge: Contact, feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English
- ▶ August 2010: Guest lecture, Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana: Investigating new youth language varieties in Africa and in Europe: points of similarity and contrast
- ▶ June 2010: Zurich University: paper entitled 'Innovation and contact: The role of children and adolescents' at conference 'English as a Contact Language (Ecol) (with Jenny Cheshire)
- ▶ September 2009: Alf Sommerfelt Memorial Lecture University of Tromsø
- ▶ July 2009: Invi plenary speaker International Conference on Language Variation in Europe 5, University of Copenhagen
- ▶ July 2008:

University of  
Ghana, Dept. of  
Linguistics: 'The  
African diaspora  
and London  
English'

- ▶ June 2008: CNRS  
Paris, Fédération  
typologique: 'Dialect  
contact and  
innovation'
- ▶ October 2007:  
Hamburg  
University,  
Research Centre  
Multilingualism  
Colloquium on  
convergence and  
divergence in  
language contact  
situations: 'Dialect  
levelling and  
dialect divergence  
in south-east  
England: the role of  
minority ethnic  
Englishes in  
phonetic innovation  
in London'
- ▶ July 2007:  
Chulalongkorn  
University,  
Bangkok: 4  
lectures on 'New  
Directions in British  
Social Dialectology  
and 3 days'  
consultancy on  
social dialectology
- ▶ August 2005:  
Invited discussion  
at meeting to  
prepare case for  
Centre of  
Excellence in  
Society and  
Language,  
University of  
Bergen, Norway

- ▶ March 2005:  
Invited speaker  
launch of  
Norwegian soci  
dialectology  
project 'Utviklir  
osessar i urban  
språkmiljø', Ag  
College,  
Kristiansand,  
Norway
- ▶ September 200  
Invited plenary  
speaker at New  
Zealand Language  
and Society  
Conference, Massey  
University,  
Palmerston North  
New Zealand.
- ▶ August 2002:  
Invited plenary  
speaker at 7th  
Nordic Conference  
on Dialectology  
Voss, Norway

## Doctoral summer schools

- ▶ September 2011  
University of  
Bergen: lecture  
sociolinguistic  
typology and  
dialect formation
- ▶ July 2011. African  
Linguistics Summer  
school  
Porto-Novo,  
Republic of Benin  
Organised by NYU  
York and  
Amsterdam  
Universities.  
Lectures on  
sociolinguistics
- ▶ August 2009.  
Linguistic Society  
of America, 65th

Institute, Berke  
Lectures on dia  
contact and dia  
formation

- ▶ June 2009.  
Edinburgh  
University:  
Edinburgh  
Sociolinguistics  
Summer Schoo  
Workshop  
on 'Studying  
phonetic/phonc