# Leaving Home:[1] De-europeanisation in a post-colonial variety of broadcast news language

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## INTRODUCTION

Recent decades have witnessed considerable shifts in media systems and technologies, and in the configurations of language resources in the media. Such changes have affected Europe, but also those major sectors of the world which were once colonies of Europe. This chapter examines the concept of change in post-colonial language and media in one such ex-colony, New Zealand, interpreted through a lens of 'de-europeanisation'. It does so partly through revisiting empirical and theoretical work of my own from the 1970s and 1980s which made New Zealand broadcast language one of the most described varieties of the time. It then compares the scenario and findings of that period with the contemporary situation in 2011.

In the 1980s I published a series of articles (Bell 1982a, 1982b, 1983a, 1988) which examined the nature of broadcast language in New Zealand, largely on the basis of my doctoral research conducted in the mid 1970s. At 30 years' distance, some of the contents of those publications read like a time capsule. New Zealand cultural systems, including media and language, appeared as still strongly colonialist, largely oriented to standards set in Britain. This was notably the case in language attitudes and broadcasting practices, and especially at the interface of these two. Language attitude studies of the time confirmed that New Zealanders oriented to Received Pronunciation as the model of good English (e.g. Huygens and Vaughan 1983). RP tended to be classified as part of – one pole of – the accent continuum of New Zealand English. And the same situation held for parallel post-colonial varieties elsewhere, and not just of English but of French in Canada (e.g. d'Anglejan and Tucker 1973), and of Spanish in Latin America. New Zealand public broadcasting modelled the language of its prestige National Programme radio network on the BBC Overseas Service. It retransmitted BBC world news live several times daily, and many of its own announcers were British born and bred.

The empirical basis of the 1980s publications adduced evidence from a Labovian study of sociolinguistic variables in the news language of radio stations in Auckland in 1974 (Bell 1977, 1982a). These quantifications showed a gradient of styles across the stations, with the BBC at the prestige end. The higher the social status of a station's audience, the closer its linguistic features approached the BBC's. But there was also evidence of two countervailing trends. First, some localism showed in the language of community-oriented stations, which for some diagnostic features adopted a style distant from the British prestige norm. Secondly, youth-audience music stations showed a divergent orientation for some features whose inventory included an apparently American-oriented variant.

The present chapter revisits New Zealand radio as a case study in social, cultural, political and linguistic change across the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It examines changes specific

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to broadcasting structures and technologies, developments in broadcast genres, and finally shifts in linguistic styles. Many of these macro-level changes are paralleled in other nations (e.g. in Chile: Challies and Murray 2008) although always with local inflections. Empirically, this study proceeds mainly by means of a real-time comparison of one feature of news English in 2011 against 1974.

## RESTANDARDISATION, DESTANDARDISATION

In a 1983 article on 'Broadcast news as a language standard', I discussed the ways in which national broadcast news media functioned as standardising flagships for their language communities. Building on Leitner's close historical work (e.g. 1980) on the place of prescriptivism and standardisation in the early BBC, it seemed fairly obvious why in its early days broadcast news would adopt the standard language as its own mode of speech – because of its use in other prestige domains, its authoritative connotations, its association with 'high' culture, the social standing of the groups from which announcers were recruited, and the assumption that it is the most widely understood variety.

Less obvious was why broadcast news then came to be identified as the standard by which the standard is itself judged. There seemed to be a number of related factors, including:

- the public accessibility of broadcast language
- its place as the most commonly heard use of the standard
- the identifiability, scheduling and frequency of broadcast news
- the sociopolitical importance of the subject matter of 'the news'
- the language professionalism and codification activities of news broadcasters
- public acceptance of the authority of such codifications
- public sensitivity to breaches of broadcast language standards
- the broadcasting of metalinguistic programmes prescribing correct speech.

These dimensions embody the mechanisms of a circulating ideology in which broadcast news serves as the working definition of the standard language – such as 'BBC English'. Agha's study of the enregisterment of RP as a prestige variety (2003) notes the BBC's role in replicating images of exemplary speakers of RP, picking up that torch from broader groups such as former public school boys and army officers. He also points out that although the 'characterological figure' of the BBC announcer remained the same for decades, the linguistic content of their persona changed over time from a conservative RP of the 1920s/30s to a more 'mainstream RP' in the 1970s/80s.

If these are the processes of standardisation, what are its alternatives and opposites, and how can we characterise them? Central here are two concepts which are easily confused but which need to be kept distinct: *re*standardisation and *de*standardisation. Restandardisation involves a redirection of the standard towards another target. Referencing the situation of standard Danish, Kristiansen (2009: 2) equates restandardisation with 'demotisation': 'the belief that there is, and should be, a "best language" is not abandoned, but the idea of what this "best language" is, or sounds like, changes'. The notion of 'standard', then, is retained but its content is reconfigured so that it differs from the hitherto accepted standard. The reshaping of RP referred to above could be interpreted as a mild form of such restandardisation. Mild because RP remains the standard, but restandardised because what constitutes acceptable RP changes – has indeed changed significantly over the past 70 years or so. The linguistic content of 1940 RP is no longer standard today. Presumably such a redirection can tolerate the existence of only one – or at least, very few – alternative standards. An example of restandardisation would be the acceptance in the U.S. of 'Ebonics' (African American Vernacular English) rather than 'standard' English (Rickford 1999) as a medium of instruction. A case where the

restandardisation is towards several alternatives rather than just a single target could be the post-Soviet shift from Russian to a range of national languages such as Estonian, Georgian and Kazakh (Pavlenko 2008). However these new standards are geographically dispersed because they were consequent on territorial breakup, and therefore no longer compete in the same national space.

Much more radical is destandardisation, the loss of the notion that a standard even exists, with all the ideological repercussions that involves. One approach to this is through Bakhtin's concept of the centrifugal and centripetal forces in language (Bell 2007). Bakhtin maintained that language is a site of struggle between the dynamic centrifugal forces which whirl it apart into diversity and difference, and the centripetal forces which strive to normalise and prescribe the way language should be, usually from the top of society. He acknowledges the forces of standardisation, the centripetal, but celebrates the divergence and variegation of the centrifugal:

> Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward. Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance. (Bahktin 1981: 272)

Bakhtin saw this as no neutral struggle but as a crusade for the centrifugal, for the liberation of human discourse from 'the hegemony of a single and unitary language' (1981: 367). Centrifugalisation or destandardisation involves a scattering away from the standard in all directions, and a concomitant unshackling of language from the idea of the standard. While such a movement might be temporarily focused in one unitary trajectory away from the existing standard, its object is the abolition of the standard not the replacement of one standard with another (which would be re- rather than destandardisation).

Taking the concepts of restandardisation and destandardisation as central, a number of other terms arise in the same semantic fields. In a 1982 article entitled 'This isn't the BBC', I both exemplified and challenged the then-colonialistic nature of New Zealand attitudes to language, especially in the media. Over the intervening decades there has been a long process away from these eurocentric standards, which we can characterise broadly as 'de-europeanisation'. In principle this implies a form of destandardisation, that is, the former European standard is deconstructed and not replaced. In practice, it will often be a restandardisation, with the eurocentric standard being replaced by another, whether local or otherwise. In the conclusion I will examine the extent to which 'de-europeanisation' is a viable and insightful way to view the findings I present below.

A further term, foreshadowed above in the introduction, is 'americanisation'. This is one form that English-language restandardisation can take, a shift away from the 'British base' to the 'American connection' (Bell 1988). An example would be a schooling system which restandardised on American rather than British pronunciation as the target of instruction. When an American model is exerting pressure on a former colonial scenario such as New Zealand, americanisation could equate with de-europeanisation – that is, a restandardisation. But clearly de-europeanisation may be more than or quite different from americanisation, involving de- rather than restandardisation.

A final pair of terms are in potential overlap with the above but may not directly equate with them: conversationalisation and vernacularisation. The former has been identified as a trend by which features of colloquial language colonise hitherto more formal forms of public discourse. Fairclough (1992) interprets conversationalisation as a potentially democratising shift. It could be classed as a weak form of restandardisation, since it extends the content of what counts as standard to include forms which are mostly used by the 'right' people but hitherto only in casual contexts.

Vernacularisation, on the other hand, implies a much more wholesale challenge to the standard. It involves the use of forms that are local, group-based, non-standard, even stigmatised. The vernacular may be constructed as unitary – e.g. Greek Demotiki – but it is in reality likely to be variegated both linguistically and socially. It therefore involves, at least potentially, destandardisation. Coupland (2011) examines the extent to which popular music genres may be said to have contributed to the vernacularisation of cultural forms, including through their packaging of 'non-standard' linguistic features. Conversationalisation may be regarded as a (mild) version of vernacularisation.

After presenting empirical findings on news style in contemporary Auckland radio, I will turn to gauging whether such changes can be read as 'de-europeanisation', the extent to which they may be re- or destandardisations, and whether processes of vernacularisation or conversationalisation may also be playing a part in these scenarios.

## AUCKLAND RADIO AND ITS LANGUAGE IN 1974

In 1974 Auckland had five radio stations that broadcast news (plus a classical music station). Three of those were outlets of the public corporation, the then New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC). Two were private stations – a relatively recent phenomenon initiated when legislation permitted a hitherto pirate station to come ashore and broadcast legally from 1969. There were distinct stylistic groupings of stations. First was the NZBC's prestigious National Programme. My original characterisation captures something of the style of the station at the time:

> The tone and self-image … are accurately summed up in the name 'National Programme'. It carries no advertising and invites no audience participation. Its programmes are segmented (i.e. scheduled to distinct, shortish time-spans), publicised in detail, and run strictly to time. Announcers speak in a measured, detached way: there is no attempt (except in specific programmes) to establish any personal rapport between announcer and listener. Programmes include classical concerts, current affairs, radio drama, comedy (usually ex-BBC 1950s), broadcasts to schools… [It] is the prestige station of public corporation radio, the definitive news and weather service. The language style of its announcers is the prestige standard of New Zealand English, and it is quite in keeping that it relays several news bulletins daily from the BBC Overseas Service… The programme content gets the audience it invites – average age nearly 50, the better educated, those in the professions. (Bell 1977: 98–99)

The National Programme carried frequent news bulletins of its own, as well as rebroadcasting live several bulletins per day from the BBC World Service. Auckland also had two middle-of-the-road, community-oriented stations, including station ZB, the NZBC's commercial-network outlet in Auckland, targeting a mid-status audience of the younger middle-aged and their families. Finally, there were two rock music stations, of which the NZBC's ZM is one, with a young and largely male audience. See Table 1 for details.

**Table 1:** Character and continuity of Auckland radio stations 1974 to 2011

| 1974 designation | 2011 designation | Audience | Character |
|---|---|---|---|
| BBC Overseas Service | BBC World Service | Older, higher status | Prestige international news service |
| National Programme | Radio New Zealand National | Older, higher status | Prestige station of publicly owned radio, definitive news service. No advertising |
| ZB | Newstalk ZB | Middle-aged, family, mid-status | Middle-of-the-road, local information and issues |
| ZM | 91ZM | Younger, mainly males | Popular and contemporary music |

In 1974 I recorded a 35-hour random sample of these stations' news, and analyzed a selection of linguistic variables in the context of an ethnography and audience survey of the stations (see Bell 1982a for published detail). In this chapter I will deal only with the stations which were part of the public corporation NZBC in 1974, since they give the best comparability with 2011. The accents of Auckland radio news fell into four groups in 1974:

- There was the BBC itself, definitionally Received Pronunciation at this period (cf Gimson 1970). The BBC also maintained very formal syntax in its news writing, evidenced for example in the absolute non-occurrence of negative contraction, a rule that is indexical of in/formality. By contrast, the National Programme contracted over 25% of negatives, and all other stations over 50%. Because the BBC news was generated by an external broadcaster, although re-transmitted in New Zealand on the National Programme, I class it as a separate station.

- At the RP end of the NZ English continuum was the National Programme. Many of its announcers were British. Some of the New Zealanders' accents were almost pure RP, others had more local flavour but always at the 'cultivated' end of the then New Zealand accent continuum (Bayard 1990). They were led by a trio of men[2] who were also the long-serving national television news anchors of the 1970s–80s, and whose accents ranged from pure RP (Bill Toft) through NZ-English-shifted RP (Philip Sherry) to RP-shifted NZ English (Dougal Stevenson).

- The local- and community-oriented commercial stations, including ZB. These newsreaders used a much more distinctly New Zealand English, although still with a broadcast formality. For some phonological variables (Bell 1983a) it is clear that in 1974 they were orienting away from a standard pronunciation and towards something with more local flavour.

- The youth music stations, again oriented away from the standard. The newsreaders were firmly New Zealand accented but not radically so. On the publicly-owned stations, these were still trained public-service broadcasters.

For comparison between 1974 and 2011, I take one syntactic variable investigated in the earlier study, which indexes orientation to competing international news style norms.


**DETERMINER DELETION, 1974**

Initial mentions of people in the news usually take the form of two appositional noun phrases. The first NP is descriptive of the person, followed by an appositional NP which names the person. A variable syntactic rule which operates on these expressions is characteristic of – perhaps unique to – the language of news reporting. It deletes the determiner in the first of the appositional expressions:

(the) Finance Minister Bill English
(a) City Council spokesperson Richie Moyle
(its) Chief Executive Roger Sutton.

The deletion also restructures the apposition, elevating the name to equal status with the description. It treats the description as a pseudo-title on a par with 'President' or 'Professor'. This implies an exclusivity for the class of persons described by the pseudo-title, parallel to the exclusivity of full titles. It invites the reinsertion of the definite article rather than the in-

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[2] One statistic that is striking now is that, of the 52 newsreaders that I recorded across all stations in 1974, only two were women.

definite, even when context indicates the indefinite would be required. It thus embodies a person's entitlement to be newsworthy. The rule is a variable one, disfavoured by possessives (except *our* as in 'reporter Katie Bradford'), by syntactic complexity in the descriptive phrase, and by following last name only (* 'Chief Executive Sutton'), which would imply full title status on a par with 'President Obama'. For detail on the structure, see Bell (1988). The rule is an exceedingly functional one for news language, since it compresses structure at the same time as highlighting informational content.

Table 2 shows how the four stations registered on this the rule in 1974. All have low deletion. BBC Overseas Service radio serves as an absolute norm with zero deletion, closely imitated by National Radio, and with the community station ZB had 7%. Only the rock music station ZM showed any appreciable deletion at 23%.

**Table 2**: Determiner deletion in news of four Auckland radio stations, 1974

|  | N Det retained | N Det deleted | Total N | 1974 Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BBC | 47 | 0 | 47 | 0% |
| National Programme | 59 | 1 | 60 | 2 |
| ZB | 42 | 3 | 45 | 7 |
| ZM | 33 | 10 | 43 | 23 |

The sociolinguistic interest of this rule was that it indexed orientation towards a British or an American norm. Or at least, this is how I interpreted it, on the basis of two kinds of evidence. Firstly, the rule was the subject of explicit comment, for example in New Zealand news writing guides which warned journalists 'not to follow this American style'. Secondly, a survey in the early 1980s of prestige media in the US and UK (Bell 1988) showed that quantitatively they represented two opposing norms: a semi-categorical low-deleting British norm of below 10% (e.g. BBC-1 Television, *The Times*) and an equally semi-categorical high-deleting American norm at about 90% (e.g. CBS television, *Washington Post*). In terms of the 1974 New Zealand radio stations, it is expectable on the grounds of the character of their content and audiences that the National Programme would adopt a British low-deleting model, and a rock music station would be the highest deleting (albeit not in fact very high at this time). Later in the chapter we turn to a comparison of the 1974 and 2011 data, including questioning the extent to which high deletion can be interpreted as Americanisation.

## CHANGING NEW ZEALAND, 1974 – 2011

We now turn to trace through the macro and micro changes which have taken place in New Zealand society, politics and culture, in its broadcasting systems and technologies, and in broadcast genres and language over the past three decades. There is a strong globalised dimension to these changes, many of which are shared with other nations, particularly smaller countries and those with colonial histories.

### *Sociopolitical reshaping*

The context for New Zealand broadcasting in the late 1970s and early 1980s was one of a highly regulated economy, a two-party electoral system, political consensus on a major economic and social role for the state, a largely subservient foreign policy, and an official monoculturalism and monolingualism dominated by the Pakeha [Anglo] majority. Much of that was swept away in the following decade.

Until the 1970s the colonialist tradition of supplying raw materials (especially agricultural produce) to the mother country dominated the New Zealand economy (Belich 2001). The accession of the United Kingdom to the then European Economic Community in 1973 seriously

reduced New Zealand's access to the UK market (Challies and Murray 2008). The enforced economic re-orientation spurred a loosening of political ties, especially with the increasing influence of the United States in the Pacific region. A Labour Government was elected in 1984, however, with a foreign policy that rejected participation in nuclear defence. The consequent refusal to accept visits from American nuclear warships (Belich 2001) led to the lapsing of the ANZUS alliance and a stand-off with the United States which is only just being resolved three decades later. Socioculturally, this marked a rise in national consciousness and independence that reverberated through many dimensions of society.

From the 1980s there was increasing recognition of the rights of the indigenous Māori people – parallel to the 'ethnic revival' which affected many nations (Fishman *et al*. 1985). Legal structures and procedures were set up for hearing cases, under the founding Treaty of Waitangi, over Māori grievances for past injustices, largely in the taking of land (Holland and Boston 1990). Settlements have involved reparation of considerable parcels of land and/or sums of money, and explicit official apology for the injustices involved. Language played a part in these changes. The *kohanga reo* movement of 'language nests' arose in the 1980s as a grassroots revival mechanism for the threatened Māori language (Spolsky 2005), which became an exemplar for endangered languages in other countries. In 1987 Māori was legislated as an official language. *Kura kaupapa* immersion schooling in Māori followed, and from the 1990s *te reo Māori* had an increasing public presence, although the language continues to be endangered.

Paradoxically, the same 1984 Labour government also initiated wholesale neoliberalisation of the New Zealand economy (Kelsey 1995, cf Fairclough 2000). Within a few years this had changed the face of the economy and decimated much of the public sector (Boston *et al*. 1991, with direct impact on broadcasting. Finally, from 1996 the electoral system was transformed from a traditional Westminster first-past-the-post system to Mixed-Member Proportional Representation. This ensured that future governments were unlikely to hold their own majority, and that minority emphases such as indigenous rights (through the Māori Party) and the environmental movement (through the Green Party) were represented.

There were thus through the 1980s and 1990s a clutch of post-colonial shifts away from the imperial mother country as well as from its putative successor, the post-war American empire. These form the context for a growing national identity, and for changes in both New Zealand broadcasting and New Zealand English.

### *Institutional change in broadcasting*

The market liberalisation of the 1980s–90s revolutionised the structures as well as the context of broadcasting in New Zealand. Until 1989 television was entirely publicly owned, and radio was still dominated by the public corporation Radio New Zealand (formerly part of the NZ Broadcasting Corporation). In line with neoliberal practice elsewhere, the state began to divest itself of assets from the mid 1980s (Kelsey 1993, 1995). At this point language became a direct player in the restructuring of broadcasting. The Government's proposals for public broadcasting were opposed by Māori interests on the grounds that they would reduce the state's ability to meet its Treaty of Waitangi obligations to support the Māori language (Kelsey 1993). Successive cases were argued through all levels of the New Zealand courts for a decade from 1987 (Bell 2010). After the final appeal was lost in 1997, the commercial radio component of Radio New Zealand was sold. The courts nevertheless required the state to honour its Treaty obligations to the Māori language, leading to the establishment of Māori Television as a stand-alone channel in 2004 (Hollings 2005).

With deregulation, radio outlets have proliferated over the past three decades, restructuring the configurations and ownership of the medium. Some of the stations I studied in 1974 have changed beyond recognition, but there is a remarkable continuity in the character of the four stations I have chosen for this longitudinal study. The BBC is no longer broadcast by Radio

New Zealand, but is transmitted locally on its own station. Radio New Zealand National is the direct successor of the National Programme (Table 1), and still remains part of publicly owned broadcasting. ZB is now Newstalk ZB, sold out of public ownership in the late 1990s, but still with a local information orientation and a mid-level audience. And ZM has become 91ZM, owned by the same company as Newstalk ZB, and targeting contemporary music to an audience segment only slightly older than ZM's demographic in 1974.

### New technologies and their impacts

Political changes in broadcasting were parallelled by the technological developments. Between 1990 and 2010 technological change transformed aspects of broadcast media, both from the audience's and the producer's viewpoints. These changes involved shifts in accessibility, immediacy, and interactivity, the proliferation of media outlets, and diversification. Central to much of this is digital technology in its varied manifestations.

### Immediacy

The impetus of news production across the past 150 years has been towards maximum immediacy. Near the start of the 20$^{th}$ century, when Captain Scott reached the South Pole and perished on the return journey, news took a year to get out of Antarctica and into the press (Bell 2003). In mid century, Sir Edmund Hillary overland arrival at the Pole was reported within hours by radio. At the end of the 20$^{th}$ century, his son Peter Hillary was interviewed in real time by satellite on television when he too reached the Pole overland. The ultimate in immediacy is live coverage, which technological developments now enable from situations that were inconceivable twenty years earlier. News anchors can conduct live interviews to any location in the world where they can get a microphone or a camera and a feed back to base. In 1974, this did not occur even on radio news bulletins. Internet availability of news gives print media the immediacy that was once the prerogative of broadcasting. These changes have considerable repercussions for the character of news and news discourse – increased frequency and sophistication of voice reports, scripting for immediacy, and frequent updating.

### Accessibility

The audience experience immediacy at their fingertips, through the facility to go on to media websites and follow coverage of events as they unfold almost in real time, without having to wait for the next scheduled broadcast bulletin or newspaper edition. The kind of immediacy that radio has long offered (and in which it still in fact leads) is now being approached by press and television through their online provision. Internet access has revolutionised availability to the audience. The contrasting affordances of the technologies involved in the two data periods presented in this paper make the point. My 1974 sample of radio news required arduous and logistically demanding live recording or logging of the news as it was broadcast. For my simultaneous sample of Auckland radio stations, I ran a suite of five reel-to-reel tape recorders wired to five radios. When I came to update that sample in 2011, I went online to the stations' websites and clicked to access the audio of their archived bulletins.

### Interactivity

For centuries the nearest media could approach to interactivity were letters to the editor – published at least a day after the issue to which they referred, and very much on the newspaper's terms. 'Talk' radio – initiated in the US in the 1940s – changed that. Phone-in, talkback radio came to Auckland in the 1970s. This immediately resulted in linguistic vernacularisation of the airwaves. Lay people were given a voice in the media, and that voice was not that of the BBC-oriented professional but of everyday New Zealand English, broadcast on more or less equal terms. What talk radio did for the airwaves from the mid 20$^{th}$ century, the internet has done over the past few years for interactivity across a wide range of content, including news.

Individuals can comment immediately on news, redistribute stories to friends, customise what they receive, expand their database on chosen topics through following hyperlinks, and so forth. They can tailor the shape of news to their interests, and can even generate and upload their own news – video footage generated by members of the public is commonplace on news websites. The affordances of the internet mean that the centuries-long dominance of news by professionals is being loosened, and linguistic prescriptivism with it (Bell and Smith in press).

## Proliferation

In the mid 1970s Auckland had six radio stations, dominated by ZB, which commanded 40% of the commercial-radio audience (Bell 1977: 147). In 2011 there are forty stations. ZB Newstalk still has the biggest audience share, but that is only 12%.[3] These changes involve both proliferation and diversification. Initially the new stations involved an expansion of ownership away from state domination as pioneering radio entrepreneurs founded their stations. But quite rapidly such diversity consolidated into relatively few hands, so that today most of the non-public radio stations are owned by just two companies, MediaWorks and the Radio Network.

Satellite and cable technologies have enabled the delivery of multiple television channels, and the suite of channels available through the Sky Network in New Zealand are now the most-watched in the country (29%: source Nielsen). The audiences are dispersing across the newer channels, weakening the dominance of the original terrestrial channels. Weakening but not eliminating: the three long-established terrestrial TV channels still share a majority (58%) of viewers even in 2010. Newer terrestrial channels muster only a few percent of audience share.

The proliferation includes the new availability of traditional media through the internet, especially press and radio, along with the flexibility and changing affordances that this involves. But it is important not to over-estimate the repercussions of technological or other change. The Auckland radio stations may each have greatly diminished audience numbers, but in many cases they have retained similar formats to the 1970s and similar audience demographics.

## Diversification

With proliferation has come diversification, perhaps most obviously in information sources. Twenty years ago the news sources readily available in New Zealand were limited and countable. In 1988 when I undertook a study of public understanding of climate change in New Zealand (Bell 1994), I could claim with justification that local and national press, radio and television provided almost all the information input on this issue to almost all the population. Two decades later the availability of diverse sources, particularly through the internet, would make such a study impossible now. Time and again as events unfold in different sites around the world, it becomes clear that governments now have great difficulty in restricting the information that goes out of, into or around their own country. In political practicalities as well as the imaginary (Appadurai 1996), the nation-state is increasingly challenged.

Diversification in Auckland radio has had two main dimensions. Stylistically, as indicated earlier, in 1970s radio there was a three-part configuration of a national public service station (National Programme), local information/commercial stations (e.g. ZB), and youth/rock music stations both private and public (e.g. ZM). The first two of these sectors remain recognisable. Today's Radio NZ National maintains the continuity of a publicly funded and oriented service, although under pressure. There are a handful of commercial 'talk' stations, focusing on either general news/current affairs or sport, still led in 2011 by Newstalk ZB.

Meanwhile, the third, the music sector of the Auckland radio marketplace, has diversified and segmented beyond recognition. Music was already the main style differentiator in the

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[3] http://www/rradios.co.nz/radio_research/survey_area_results/Auckland/auckland.htm (retrieved 8 March 2011)

1970s, but with few stations, the range was limited. Now there are stations devoted to classic rock, urban contemporary, easy listening, oldies, dance, classical, and so on. And a fourth category has been added – the ethnic-minority stations. New Zealand has received considerable immigration in the past three decades, initially from the south Pacific islands, then from various Asian and African countries. Over a quarter of the population of Auckland speak a first language other than English. In the 1970s it was probably no more than one in ten. This has instigated a shift from monocultural (Pakeha) to bicultural (Māori and Pakeha) to multicultural which has transformed much of the social landscape and created intergroup issues of the kind that are familiar in many European nations (Fleras and Spoonley 1999). Ethnic-minority radio includes a diversity of language alternatives for Māori, Pasifika and Asian groups (cf Cormack and Hourigan 2007). New languages are heard on the Auckland airwaves, older languages have more airtime, and ethnic varieties of English new and old are heard. This represents, especially in radio, a form of vernacularisation. It brings hidden, alternative voices on to the air, which were not heard – or not much heard – in public in 1974. The number and kinds of people who become broadcasters has multiplied and broadened, so that the voices of Auckland radio are no longer those of the elite few, as we will explore further below.

### New genres

New genres are often the outcome of technological development. The media are technological creatures, and contemporary mediated genres are the direct or indirect result of such developments. Talk radio was an innovative combination of the technologies of the telephone and radio. The internet changes the configuration of media, enabling online as well as traditional delivery, but also incorporating a media outlet's website as a part of its functionality which scarcely existed a decade ago. The interplay between what happens in hard-copy and online newspaper, between broadcast and online radio, opens new possibilities. Media cross into different platforms and genres, with the embedding of video or audio clips on internet newspaper sites, and of scripted news on broadcast sites.

New genres have been created apace in recent years. Interactivity and immediacy have led to blogs, chatrooms, newsrooms etc. with their potentials for participation, activism and alternative debate (e.g. Smith 2011). The ability to archive content alters the affordances of existing genres when they become digital. An audio interview retrieved online is a very different experience for a listener than live listening, allowing interactive control over playing, replaying, selecting, etc. But there are important continuities amidst the changes. The traditional news formats remain the core of internet news. The news story stays much the same in discourse structure and syntax (Bell and Smith in press), although its peripherals and reading context are greatly altered. There is a convergence of press and broadcast news styles, often in the direction that Fairclough (1992) has termed 'conversationalisation'.

### New accents

How has language fared amidst the above suite of changes? Contrary to popular expectation of the 1970s, spoken NZ English has in the interim become more itself, more distinctive rather than more British or more American or even more Australian (Bell 1997a). New Zealand prime ministers from David Lange onwards (1984–89) sound like New Zealanders rather than British subjects. Where RP was once classified as part of the NZ English continuum, this is no longer so, at least for younger New Zealanders. NZ English is also diversifying locally as immigrant ethnic groups establish their own recognisable varieties of the language.

These different voices are heard on the nation's media, variegating the range of language in the New Zealand public sphere. Even before the 1970s, radio stations other than the National Programme were always locally oriented, whether to youth or to family. That was reflected in recognisably New Zealand accents – although on public-service radio this included

trained radio voice production (such as hyper-precise consonants). But National Programme radio and national news on Television One, the lead public channel, remained determinedly RP-oriented. From the late 1980s that broke down fast, simultaneously with the rise in national consciousness and independence outlined above. Since the 1990s, the accents of television and radio – with one exception – have been distinctively New Zealand. RNZ National remains the exception, with a mix of presenters who have markedly NZ English alongside others whose accent is equally markedly RP-shifted.[4]

We have thus an interweaving of changes from the macro political and international level, their local outworking in structural, together with technological development and consequent genre creation, and linguistic shift, all interlocking to produce a news media landscape that is unrecognisable compared to the 1970s.

## DETERMINER DELETION, 2011

In 2011 I revisited the four stations and sampled determiner deletion through non-random scanning of the core genre of radio news, the hourly or half-hourly 'bulletins'. A total of 117 bulletins were accessed on the stations' websites, amounting to a little under 6 hours of broadcast news (see Table 3). In these there occurred 301 eligible tokens of referring expressions, which were logged, transcribed, analysed and quantified.

**Table 3**: Determiner deletion sample and frequency in news on four Auckland radio stations, 2011

|  | N of bulletins monitored | Minutes of news monitored | N Det retained | N Det deleted | N Total | 2011 Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BBC | 38 | 190 | 98 | 4 | 102 | 4 |
| RNZ National | 9 | 46 | 67 | 8 | 75 | 11 |
| Newstalk ZB | 10 | 43 | 5 | 48 | 53 | 91 |
| 91ZM | 58 | 70 | 3 | 68 | 71 | 96 |
| TOTAL | 117 | 349 |  |  | 301 |  |

In 1988 I had been bold – or foolish – enough to publish three 'tentative speculations' on the directions determiner deletion might take in the future.[5] Returning to the rule 37 years after the original data and 23 years after that article offers the chance to test these guesses against what has happened in real time. Given the nature of determiner deletion and its semiotic repercussions, it will also allow me to draw wider conclusions concerning the significance of the shifts that these represent in news language and discourse since 1974.

### *Speculation 1*

The prestige media in New Zealand and Britain will be inevitably drawn into deleting more and more of the determiners… In Britain, even the *Times* and BBC Overseas Service will lose their rearguard action and be drawn into increasing determiner deletion. By the

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[4] In the interim, the BBC has also been diversifying. Non-RP voices are now commonplace on BBC World Service news, most obviously Scottish and Welsh, but also including newsreaders with ethnically marked or non-British accents. Most striking in my 2011 monitoring was a voice report from a journalist in the Middle East with a registrably Cockney accent, including vocalization of postvocalic /l/, a fronted-onset /au/ diphthong, assimilated word-final nasals, and a strongly disyllabic pronunciation of 'power'.

[5] A fourth speculation was not testable on this 2011 sample – that determiner deletion would spread to adjacent non-news registers.

end of the century, they may well be where the popular press was in 1950 [i.e. 38%]. (Bell 1988: 342)[6]
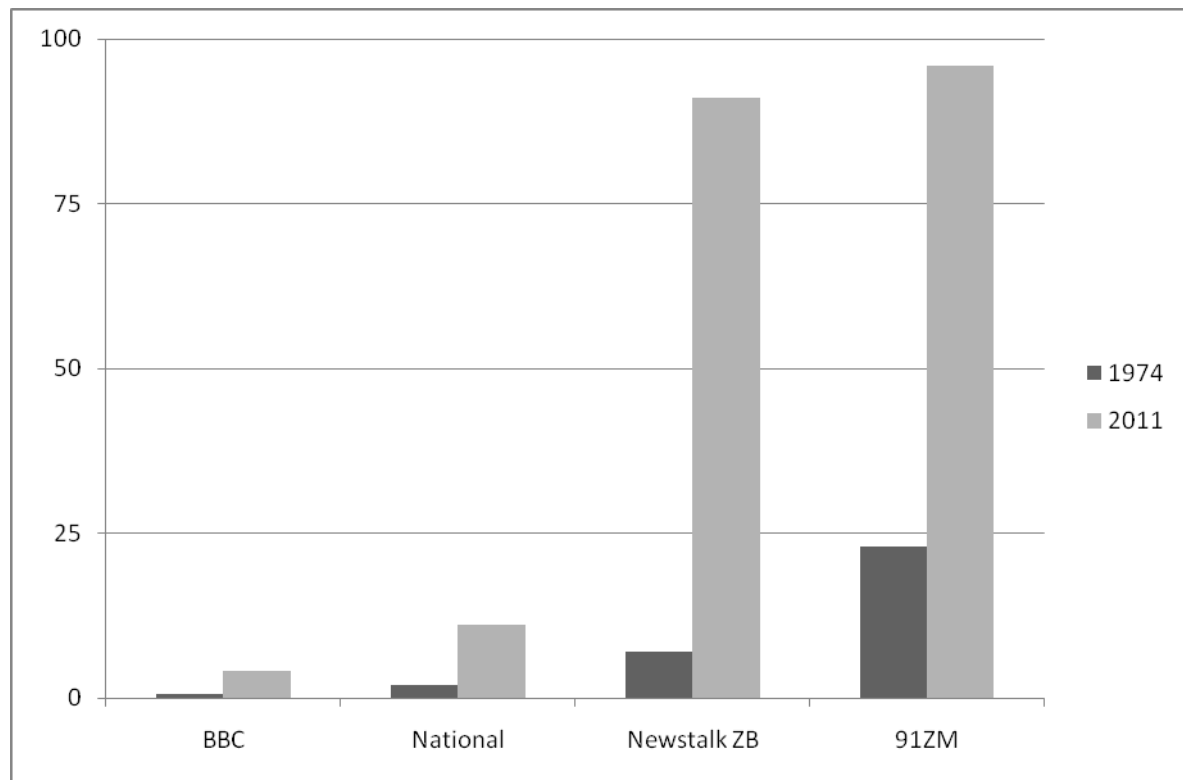


**Figure 1**: Percentage of determiner deletion on Auckland radio, 1974 and 2011

In broad terms, this is what has happened. Table 3 and Figure 1 show that the bastion of BBC World Service radio news is indeed showing some cracks. Now in 2011 the BBC deletes determiners, albeit at the low level of 4% – but the interest is that it is doing it at all. Radio NZ National has 11% compared with its minimal 2% in 1974. Clearly there is a shift underway for both these stations, with the BBC registering on the deletion scale and National showing an appreciable number of deleted determiner tokens. Equally clearly, that shift nowhere near reaches the level I had anticipated on the basis of historical work on the progress of determiner deletion across the 20th century in the UK *Daily Mirror*. This part of the 1988 study tracked determiner deletion in Britain's most stable popular newspaper by the decade from zero deletion in 1910, through 6% in 1930, 10% in 1940, to 38% in 1950, and on to 80% in 1980.[7] Change in the BBC and RNZ National has been much slower than that.

 These figures come from the core of the news genre, the bulletins (as do all the data in Table 3), but we can see the way in which change progresses by looking more widely at other news genres. The BBC carries versions of its broadcast stories on its website, which I monitored for comparison with the broadcast sample. Determiner deletion occurs observably more often in the scripted website news, even when the broadcast items are shorter versions of these scripts. That is, a referring expression which when broadcast on air retains its determiner is quite likely to have the determiner deleted in the parallel BBC website 'print' version of the story:

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[6] In 1980-82 I sampled determiner deletion in two U.K. prestige media. BBC-1 Television News had 8% deletion, and *The Times* 5%. I have not been able to revisit these in 2011.

[7] I have had no reason to suspect that the rule is not comparable across different media: much broadcast news, for example, originates in reports written for the press, and there do not seem to be any quantitative or qualitative indicators of differentiation according to medium for determiner deletion.

> the American State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley (BBC radio news)
> U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley (online print version)

Similarly, voice reports by reporters other than the news anchor function as a subgenre which favours determiner deletion more.

We can also compare the level in Radio NZ National's bulletins with what the news anchors of the daily 'Morning Report' news programme produce after the bulletin is over. The Table 3 figure of 11% is derived from the half-hourly bulletins (which are read by a separate news reader), whereas in the magazine-like format of the remaining 20–25 minutes of each half-hour slot, the two news anchors delete at 23%. The news bulletin, then, appears as the centre of the news genre – the most newslike news – in which a conservative, status-oriented station retains the maximum level of determiners. But we see higher levels of deletion encroaching through related genres such as the less formalised, hosted news programme. Most interesting is the cross-media platform situation at the BBC, where website news appears to be the Trojan horse through which loosening of a rule such as determiner deletion moves into the heartland of prestige news.

### Speculation 2

> Quantitatively, the popular media … seem certain to take the rule to virtual completion, so that determiner deletion becomes as unremarkable in these media as it is in the United States. This shift is likely to be complete within another decade. However, as long as the prestige media within a country hold to determiner retention, the rule will keep its social force. (1988: 342)

This forecast appears to have been fulfilled quite precisely (although the current data do not tell us whether that did happen within ten years, i.e. by the mid 1990s). The 'popular' stations Newstalk ZB and 91ZM now delete determiners at 91% and 96% respectively (Figure 1), that is, a nearly categorical level. With 23% 91ZM had been in the vanguard of what was already an incipient shift in 1974, and 2011 it is this youth music station which approaches the fully categorical. For Newstalk ZB the shift is across almost the full 100% spectrum of possible deletion for ZB, which in 1974 had a level of only 7%.[8]

In 1974, there was a retaining norm, to which stations approximated to a greater or lesser extent depending on their audience status, and which was led by BBC and RNZ National. The youth music stations like ZM were tugging away from that standard. By 2011 they have clearly succeeded in 'leaving home' – the hold of the prestige norm has been broken (probably for some time), and we are dealing with competing and opposing norms. But since the retaining norm continues to subsist within the New Zealand broadcast speech community on RNZ National, the rule keeps its social force, indexing prestige versus popular.[9]

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[8] A second related structure also shows a marked shift between 1974 and 2011. The use of an honorific such as *Ms* or *Mr* in these referring expressions connotes respect, social distance and unfamiliarity. In 1974, 75 percent of people in the news received a respect term on first mention. The exceptions were those who were too junior (children), not deserving of respect (criminals), or – interestingly – celebrities such as a sportsperson or film star, with whom familiarity may be projected. In 2011 the shift from this norm is absolute – there is not a single token of an M-term in first mentions of news subjects in the 2011 sample (N = 309). This holds for all stations, even the BBC. We may speculate on the social meaning of this change.

[9] I did in fact re-sample several stations in 1984, and the numbers at that time caution against too literal an interpretation of the statistics. In 1984 BBC World Service radio news continued with a 0% record of determiner deletion. But National reached 23%, well above the level I have found in the 2011 sample, so clearly there have been some fluctuations. More strikingly, station ZB was at 89% in 1984, almost identical to its 2011 level. I cannot tell if it has held that level over the intervening years or (more likely) has also been subject to fluctuations.

***Speculation 3***

> I think we will see the refinement of this expression continue, increasing its staccato, for-
> mulaic nature. Some pseudo-titles will gradually become so accepted that they pass into
> the realm of fully accepted titles. I would expect that within five years *Prime Minister* will
> be in such a position in New Zealand, no more unusual than *President* without a deter-
> miner. Other ministerial titles may eventually follow suit. (1988: 341–342)

Already in my earlier work, the structural reshaping of these naming expressions was obvious
to the extent that I labelled them 'pseudo-titles' because they were clearly shifting towards the
status of fully accepted titles such as 'Bishop'. The rule is not just a matter of deletion but
involves a honing of the whole descriptive part of the referring expression towards crisp,
pithy, formulaic titles which are part of the semiotic resource of news language. Material is
preposed before the head noun, the shift eliminating the function words and leaving only the
lexical, meaning-bearing nouns and adjectives behind, thus:

> the Chief Executive of the Insurance Council Chris Ryan (RNZ National)
> Insurance Council Chief Executive Chris Ryan (Newstalk ZB)

Three function words are lost here, and the prosodic focus goes strongly on to the preposed
items rather than being diffused by the intervening weak syllables of the function words. The
rule thus achieves two of the primary goals of news writing, abbreviation and emphasis. The
increasingly canonical form of the name apposition over the past decades is:

| (A/N) | (A/N) | N | F | L |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| embattled | property | tycoon | Terry | Serepisos |

In this section, unless otherwise indicated, I draw examples from the 2011 91ZM sample,
whose referring expressions are palpably formulaic in this way. The station's near-categorical
level of determiner deletion is accompanied by an extreme formulaic refinement of the struc-
ture of the expression. Minimally required is a head noun in the first phrase of the apposition,
followed by First and Last Names:

> Aucklander Natasia Downey
> Kiwi Sarah Carter

These 'bare' forms are, however, relatively rare. The canonical form includes an additional
one or two adjectives or nouns preposed before the head noun:

> Christchurch mayor Bob Parker
> U.S. President Barack Obama
> England rugby captain Mike Tyndall
> former ACC manager Malcolm Mason

Longer preposings are possible, but they do not occur on 91ZM, hence the claim of the for-
mulaic shape of the expression on that station. But Newstalk ZB does have long expressions:

> Weather Watch head weather analyst Philip Duncan (Newstalk ZB)
> New Zealand Defence Force Commander Colonel Roger McElwain (Newstalk ZB)
> Business Association Central City manager Paul Lonsdale (Newstalk ZB)

The differences between Newstalk ZB and 91ZM are all the more striking because the two
stations are owned by the same company and share the same news base. 91ZM's news is al-
most certainly rewritten from Newstalk ZB copy, meaning that any differences are the result
of focused stylistic choices by copy editors (Bell 1983b). For 91ZM the rule to prepose all

modifiers and thus eliminate their associated function words is absolute. The one exceptional token is in a compound phrase where preposing would be ungrammatical – 'mother of four Patricia Fraser'.

I speculated that 'Prime Minister' would establish itself as a full title like 'President'. In the Newstalk ZB and 91ZM samples, this has come about: there is no token of the form 'the Prime Minister John Key' (however, N = 4 only). Whether that happened as early as I speculated (by the mid 1990s), these data cannot tell us. On the BBC and RNZ National, he and his kind remain categorically 'the Prime Minister John Key/Naoto Kan/Vladimir Putin'. In line with what we saw above with style in core news bulletins compared to other subgenres, there can be a contrast between referring expressions occurring in the bulletin versus the adjacent magazine programme:

> the National Civil Defence Controller John Hamilton (RNZ National bulletin)
> Civil Defence Controller John Hamilton (RNZ National news magazine)

When a rule is nearly categorical in its application or non-application, the exceptional tokens are of particular interest. As one would expect, the structures in which the BBC's few deletions occur are in the favoured, canonical environments, and with some semantic triggers (e.g. for human interest or celebrity referents). RNZ National's deletions are less explicable, with two tokens in disfavouring syntactic environments. The rare determiner retentions by Newstalk ZB all occur in environments that favour retention – possessive determiner, or complex structure. 91ZM's three retaining tokens are all possessives.

## THE CONVERSATIONALISATION OF NEWS

91ZM's news is different. It is called 'Newsbeat', and runs a constant music beat under the voice of the newsreader, although not enough to mask audibility. Bulletins are frequent in the morning (half hourly), but always short – one to one-and-a-half minutes long. Their structure represents an advanced instance of the 'morselisation' of news in New Zealand broadcasting foreshadowed by Atkinson (1994). Bulletins pack in as many as 10 items in 80 seconds, averaging less than 10 seconds each (the BBC will have five items in five minutes).

### *Lexicon*

Colloquial lexicon is routine in 91ZM news:

1    Police in Napier are *pretty stoked* with the *haul* of *pot* they've *grabbed.* Over forty people arrested after a *sting* targeting cannabis growers seizing around twelve thousand plants worth around forty *mill.*

The italicised words represent a vocabulary that quite simply would not figure in the news of any of the other stations in this 2011 sample, nor in the ZM of 1974. In #1, this involves importation of a popular lexicon into the news, in this case for drug crime, translatable as 'Police in Napier are *very pleased* with the *load* of *cannabis* they have *seized…*'. A similar transfer of everyday vocabulary occurs in many other stories, particularly covering sports:

2    gutted, guy, bits, ditched, Aussie, champ
     feel the pain, not get any better
     St Paddy's Day [St Patrick's]
     across the ditch [i.e. across the Tasman Sea – to Australia]

A second aspect of colloquial lexicon is the use of phrasal verbs instead of more formal alternatives:

3   (A) little better news: Prince William *gets to* Christchurch today. First stop – *checkin' out* the damage in the CBD [Central Business District]… [voice report] … And tomorrow he's back in Christchurch to *check out* Sumner and then *turn up for* the National Memorial at Hagley Park.

*'Visit* Sumner and then *attend* the National Memorial' would be standard news wording. We can note that this occurs not in light news but covering the visit of Prince William to Christchurch, where an earthquake in February 2011 had killed nearly 200 people and destroyed much of the city. Phrasal verbs were commonly used in many stories – 'get spread around, cheer up, be off to, let on, be back on, take off with' and so forth.

### Syntax

Colloquial syntax is also part of this style. Note the use in #3 above of present tense plus time adverbial to denote the future – 'gets to Christchurch today', 'tomorrow he's back'. Colloquial elisions abound, for example of copulas (4) and of subject pronoun-copula-article sentence-initially (5):

4   *Police* [are] *pretty sure* they were the only one on board.

5   [it's a] busy trip for him too.

Auxiliary contraction is common enough in news generally but here it is attached to unusually long noun phrases:

6   *A guy in Palmerston North's* been arrested…
    *Dunedin Mayor Dave Cull's*…

There are non-standard comparatives (7), and use of 'they' for singular indefinite reference, most strikingly in an example where the complement of the following copula is 'one' and would militate strongly against the colloquial plural (8):

7   And America's top nuclear official says the situation there is a lot *worse than what* they're letting on.

8   The name of the person who died in a plane crash north of Auckland yesterday will be released today – police pretty sure *they* were the only one on board.

### Phonology

The speech rate is fast, in harmony with the quick underlying musical beat, and the phonology is that of allegro speech: use of 'gonna'; [ɪn] for 'ing' even in a disfavoured prevocalic environment, 'checkin' out' (#2 above); /t/ elision in 'plenty'; elision of 'asked' to [a:st].

There are also features characteristic of colloquial New Zealand English (as well as other dialects): vocalisation of postvocalic /l/, and glottalisation of intervocalic /t/. Most frequent and local are repeated very close DRESS vowels, a strongly distinctive marker of NZE, and the occasional NEAR/SQUARE merger. Alongside all these allegro, colloquial and local features in English, the pronunciation of Māori words such as place names occurring in the bulletins is carefully native-like.

*Discourse*

As well as the colloquial lexicon, casual syntax and allegro phonology, the discourse conventions of this news are different (cf Bell 1991). We find a high level of reduced anaphora (9), and colloquial extraposition of a conjunction (10):

9   Flying's about to cost more. Air New Zealand's bumping the price of flights by seven to eight percent. Qantas and Singapore Airlines have already *done that to theirs*.

10  Libya's army spokesman announced this morning they will stop their attacks, *though*.

Snatches of voice reports and interviews are dropped in to the text, often abruptly and without linkage to the surrounding text, violating or at least stretching usual cohesion requirements. Frequently these inserts do not source the speaker at all, something which is obligatory in conventional news discourse. Sometimes voice quotes begin an item with no pre-announcement or prior background text:

11  "Now somebody said, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger and as far as we're concerning he's come out of this stronger." – Labour Deputy Annette King. The party's top MPs met with Phil Goff and are backing him over how he handled the Darren Hughes complaint.

The headlines at the beginning of the bulletin are colloquial and self-awarely smart, in the manner of press tabloid journalism, requiring the listener to supply a lot of contextual information in order to interpret them:

12  Fans take it on the chin –
    Get your wallet primed for the Foos – [band concert]
    And games shifting all over.

There are echoes in much of this of Bernstein's 'restricted code' (1971), with its assumptions of shared ingroup knowledge and absence of background information. Mainline news tends to make fewer assumptions and provide more of the context behind a story.

There is also a colloquial-evaluative dimension to some of the clauses of these stories, which recalls the role of evaluation in the classic Labov and Waletzky schema for story telling (Labov 1972). The difference is that such evaluation is eschewed in traditional news as unacceptably opinionated. These include the kind of comments that one might expect to surface in a conversational exchange or narrative about such events, rather than what is normally written within the news. Prince William's visit in particular triggered evaluations:

13  Prince William's touching down in Christchurch about now – busy trip for him too.
    Everyone in Greymouth obviously pretty excited about that.
    Prince William getting to Christchurch today might cheer a few people up

The colloquial features are by no means limited to light-hearted news items, as we saw in example 3 above. They also occur about topics such as paedophile ring victims (14) and murder (15):

14  Three poor kids weren't as lucky.

15  A murder trial that was ditched last year is back on today.

Finally, it is unlikely that these structures are produced ad lib by a reader deviating from a script. They are voice too rapidly to have occurred without scripting or rehearsal, but they are also frequently recycled almost verbatim when an item is repeated in later bulletins. More likely is that they have been *re*-scripted for 91ZM from more conventionally styled versions prepared for Newstalk ZB.

What is salient about many of these features is that they involve the surfacing of an implied addressee within the languaging of the news. The 2$^{nd}$ person is a participant in this news. The audience is hearably co-present in the projected pseudo-interactivity of the syntax and discourse structures, most obviously in the news headlines (note the overt use of 2$^{nd}$ person in #12 above). The case, then, for conversationalisation seems quite clear here, particularly when compared with the traditional news style that Newstalk ZB maintains – let alone RNZ National – in 2011, and in salient contrast to the ZM news of 1974.


## CONCLUSION

We have seen above the range of changes in the New Zealand sociopolitical scene over the past thirty years, changes which have parallels in many countries, albeit with local nuances. These form the context for an increasing – and increasingly conscious – New Zealand identity, and for changes in broadcasting and in NZ English. Indigenous and nationalistic emphases have counter-balanced an often rampant neoliberalist economics. Political and technological shifts have remapped broadcasting, its genres, and the ways in which it interacts with audiences. Diversification has opened the airwaves to new voices, with their potential for destabilising accepted cultural and linguistic norms.

I take determiner deletion to represent an evident case of restandardisation, specifically away from a European standard and towards an American one. Newstalk ZB and 91ZM have (semi-categorical) deletion, contrasting with (semi-categorical) determiner retention on BBC and RNZ National. BBC is expectably the most conservative, shadowed closely by RNZ National. 91ZM is the most innovative, followed by Newstalk ZB. On these two stations, it is now the retained determiner that is remarkable rather than the deleted token. What we see then in 2011 is a total quantitative polarisation on this rule. In Figure 1 Newstalk ZB and 91ZM are the precise mirror images of RNZ National and the BBC.

Are New Zealand journalists aware of determiner deletion as an americanism? They certainly used to be three decades ago when the training manuals made that explicit. But it seems likely that the indexicality of the rule is less salient to 21$^{st}$ century media workers than is its functional payoff. New Zealand journalists may recognise in determiner deletion a linguistic rule that offers them brevity coupled with salience, and that is an incentive to adopt it regardless of its social meaning. Functionality and indexicality are not mutually exclusive, and it may well be that the functional benefit of determiner deletion is a prime driver that also – and perhaps only incidentally – shifts the social indexation.

To what extent determiner deletion still signifies an American orientation in the ears of the New Zealand audience is hard to say, and I regret my lack of attitudinal data that would address that issue. Gibson (2010) and Coupland (2011) suggest that the singing of popular songs in an 'American' accent may now no longer index 'American' so much as just 'singing a popular song'. This clearly depends on the time- and culture-depth behind the co-option of a given accent or feature to a particular genre. But I would not too hastily jettison the possibility that such indexicalities retain a long-term tinge of the American. New Zealand classical choirs have been targeting RP for much longer than pop singers have done American, but that does not prevent a New Zealand choir's pseudo-RP from indexing a saliently eurocentric orientation in local ears.

After some 40 years of increasing determiner deletion, my sense is that for listeners to Newstalk ZB and 91ZM, the rule now probably no longer means American. It is simply the way the referring expression is done in that audience's hearing, and the determiner retention of RNZ National is the quaint, status-oriented way that things used to be, once upon a time. The semiotic loading of a linguistic feature can change over time. In 1974, determiner deletion still meant American to everyone in New Zealand, I surmise, but in 2011 its sociolinguistic significance varies much more according to one's social positioning. For RNZ National listeners, it probably still retains that American indexation – to the extent that one could expect such a connotation to surface as a criticism if RNZ National began to shift to much higher levels (say 30~40%) and thus brought the rule to the conscious attention of its audience. Important here is to remember that the public may experience restandardisation as *de*-standardisation. That is, when listeners register that there is a shift away from the standard they may interpret that as the loss of all linguistic standards. The prescriptivist complaint tradition (documented for NZ English by Gordon and Abell 1990) tends to hear all such change as anarchic.

Determiner deletion vs retention offers a polarisation, an either/or choice. It is a de-europeanisation which is also specifically americanisation, but such salient polarity need not always be the case. A change could just be a shift away without also representing a shift towards, and in that case would represent de- rather than *re*standardisation. We require further external evidence, such as attitudinal studies or metalinguistic commentary, to clarify the status of such changes.

Since New Zealand determiner deletion represents de-europeanisation, it is interpretable as a post- and anti-colonial move. However, the rule also comes with an American tag, so the shift is neo-colonial rather than nationalistic. It is a change that is likely to be being shared with English-language media in many other countries. Determiner deletion may represent 'leaving Home', but if all the prodigal is doing is moving in across the road, this is not exactly independence. In a paper whose title proclaimed 'This isn't the BBC', I reflected:

> It appears, then, that New Zealand is in danger, culturally and linguistically, of falling out of the British frying pan into the American fire. One wonders if a small country such as New Zealand can find and maintain its own identity under the pressure of its (British) colonial past and threat of an (American) neo-colonial future. (Bell 1982b: 254)

That was written before the revolutionary changes in New Zealand life and politics that began in 1984. Most relevant in this context was the declaration of independence from America entailed in the nation's nuclear-free policy, which has had virtually universal popular and political support since its introduction. This is not to say that New Zealand is uninfluenced by U.S. cultural and political power: those are ever-present forces in this country as everywhere else in the world. But, as Gibson (2010) shows, there are vernacular alternatives even in an American-led domain such as popular music.

The news also offers its alternatives, flagged most obviously in this study by the way it is styled on 91ZM. Whereas determiner deletion can be characterised as a clear case of restandardisation on both this station and Newstalk ZB, the broader styling of 91ZM news is more complex. A large majority of the features that I identified in the study of 91ZM above can be classified as generally colloquial. They cover the linguistic spectrum of informal vocabulary, syntax, phonology and discourse. Much of that is shared with many if not most varieties of English around the world. This fits well with an interpretation of 91ZM's style as conversationalisation, and to a quite radical degree: radio news is traditionally scripted and presented in a style that is at the most formal end of the spoken spectrum. But some of 91ZM's lexical and phonological features are conspicuously informal – 'gutted', 'St Paddy's Day', 'forty mill.', and the elisions in 'asked' and 'plenty'. Most significant is the trend to importing the addressee, the 2nd person, into the news and its language. Traditional news is a 3rd-person

genre, it holds the audience at arm's length. 91ZM news uses a variety of linguistic means to incorporate the listener into a news conversation. These shifts are arguably sufficient to constitute a restandardisation towards conversational forms in news English.

But there is also some vernacularisation on 91ZM, distinctively New Zealand usages as well as general colloquialism. NZ English syntax and discourse do not differ much from a general standard English (Bauer 1994), but the lexicon and phonology offer scope for the local vernacular. Above I gave examples of vernacular lexicon such as 'Aussie' and 'across the ditch', which occur in news only on this station (and are interestingly focused on the culturally salient relationship with Australia). Some of the phonology also registers as local. The raising of the DRESS vowel (Bell 1997b) and merger of NEAR and SQUARE (Batterham 2000) are distinctives of vernacular NZ English.

But what is more striking about the accents on 91ZM is not their difference to those on other stations, but their similarity. Except for the continuing presence of some RP-shifted accents on RNZ National, NZ English is now established as standard on all spoken media. As noted earlier, local radio has long been a site for the New Zealand accent, albeit in a modified version before the 1980s. But since the late 1980s there has been a trajectory of de-europeanisation in pronunciation, in effect a restandardisation towards vernacular New Zealand phonology. This shift is universal on national television news and, although so far only partial on RNZ National, it will continue to expand there.

The clearest site of vernacularisation in New Zealand, including its airwaves, is from established and establishing immigrant populations. The immense world-wide flows of migrants over the past half century have affected Auckland significantly. Other languages are now commonplace in the once monolingual city. More, the encounter of those languages with English is producing a range of newer varieties which are colonising the local dialect. Pasifika youth are cultural leaders for mainstream Pakeha, as evidenced in the success of fashion festivals and the animated comedy *bro'Town* (Gibson and Bell 2010). Their Englishes are prime contributors to linguistic innovation and diversification in NZ English. Similarly marginalised immigrant groups are having the same linguistic impact in major European cities. The centrifugal explosion of English varieties seen in multicultural London (Cheshire *et al.* 2011) is a coming reality for Auckland. It involves a much more radical and literal de-europeanisation, since its inputs are from non-European migrations, particularly Pasifika and Asian. This vernacularisation – and the destandardisation that it entails – will be the most significant influence on the future of New Zealand English. And the multilingual and multi-varietal presence which immigrant groups already have on Auckland radio is the precursor of their much wider and richer future cultural impact.

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