

Lifting the Lid on the Queen's Upper-Crust Received Pronunciation: A Real-Time Study in Linguistic Change

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ABSTRACT

This acoustic analysis of Queen Elizabeth's speech in her Christmas broadcasts from 1995 to 1999 investigates whether her dialect becomes less Upper-Crust Received Pronunciation, and more Standard Southern British (SSB), after the Princess of Wales died in 1997; whether there is a correlation with this change in speech style; and the need to increase the popularity of the British Monarchy which declined in the aftermath. A formant analysis of the Queen's TRAP [æ], STRUT [ʌ] and the *happy*-tensing [ɪ:] vowels was conducted in Praat. The results are discussed on their own but also contrasted with those reported in Harrington et al. (2000), and Harrington (2006). This study concludes that although the Queen's speech underwent variation around the time of the Princess of Wales's death, the variation had started in the months prior to the accident.

Keywords: British Monarchy; the Queen, formants, Received Pronunciation (RP); Standard Southern British (SSB); regional dialect; vowel; vowel space; sound change within lifespan

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Introduction

There are many ways in which linguistic changes manifest themselves in speech, and there are many reasons for why these changes happen. One reason is that interlocutors accommodate to their listeners to be more accepted, or indeed popular (Trousdale 2010, 52-53). Linguistic accommodation is one of many tools we use to assist us in becoming accepted by others outside of our social community; we change our dialect according to the audience we are addressing. Popularity shifts are due to events that occur either by a person's own instigation or by a series, or culmination, of events.

The popularity of the British Monarchy has shifted due to many factors and events. At the same time, there have been recent studies (for example, Harrington et al. 2000 and Harrington 2006) that show that the Queen's speech is changing, and she no longer has quite the Upper-Crust Received Pronunciation (U-RP) dialect she once had. Since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, it has repeatedly been reported that the popularity of the British Monarchy declined markedly in the days after the event. The negativity occurred when the Queen remained out of sight at Balmoral, and the crowds who had gathered in London to lay flowers, and other symbols of their grief, held banners which relayed their frustration and dismay that the royal pennant was not flown at half mast over Buckingham Palace (Wober 2000, 129).

The purpose of this study is to find out if there was a change in the Queen's speech after the death of the Princess of Wales, in 1997, and if so, whether this was in the direction of mainstream RP: I address the Queen's speech changes via a real-time study. I propose that these changes may be motivated by the waning popularity of the British Monarchy in the aftermath of the Princess's death, and predict a correlation between the changes in her language, or speech, with her need to regain popularity. I argue that the changes in the Queen's speech are due to her accommodating to her audience to gain a higher level of acceptance from them in a bid to improve her popularity.

Background

This section provides some background details of some regional dialects of England and how attitudes towards these have ameliorated in recent decades. It also describes some changes in U-RP and how attitudes towards this dialect have pejorated. Thus, here is the basis for the analysis of the Queen's speech which was carried out for the purposes of this essay.

The Rise of Regional Dialects and Attitudinal Changes

This essay explores some changes in the Queen's speech, and the possible reasons for these changes. Therefore, this section will focus on attitudes towards English regional dialects in England; where these attitudes have come from; and attitude changes towards regional dialects in the present day. The greatest variation between these is between Northern British English (NBE) and Southern British

English (SBE) with the well-known linguistic variations: the TRAP/bath split and the foot/STRUT split. In NBE, the TRAP [æ] vowel in the word *grass* is used, so it is pronounced as [gɹæəs] (Millward and Hayes 2012, 375). In SBE, the bath [ɑ] vowel is used, and is pronounced as [gɹɑəs] (368). The vowels in words such as *foot* and *strut* sound the same in NBE due to the [ʊ] vowel used in both words, but in SBE *foot* is pronounced as [fot] and *strut* is pronounced as [stɹʌt] (376). Both NBE and SBE can be divided further into regional dialect areas each with their own linguistic variation and changing attitudes towards these.

Trousdale refers to Preston (2002), who categorises attitudes to linguistic variation into two groups, 'good and bad' (Trousdale 2010, 8). This is not to mean that there is a good variation of language versus a bad variation; rather, it is about listener perception and evaluation. Listeners evaluate what they deem to be good or bad language production, and will show preference for some dialects over others. For example, NBE speakers might evaluate U-RP as bad because they think it sounds exaggerated, and U-RP and mainstream-RP, or Standard Southern British (SSB) speakers might evaluate the Cockney and Estuary dialects as bad because they think that the speakers of these dialects have poor pronunciation (Trousdale 2010, 8). The evaluation of a good or bad dialect is linked to our preconceived ideas of correctness, which is traditionally linked to how closely dialects are to the standard language which in the case of British English is U-RP (9). As a result, regional dialects were long considered inferior by U-RP speakers who represented royalty, the aristocracy, and the upper classes of Britain, hence the name Upper-Crust Received Pronunciation (Wales 2000, 10). Furthermore, the belief that regional dialects were inferior was compounded by the BBC employing only U-RP speakers up until the 1970's when SSB speakers introduced a new norm in the dialect of BBC presenters (Harrington et al. 2000, 64).

However, regional dialects in England have been undergoing amelioration in terms of how they are evaluated by listeners. For example, the traditional stereotypes of the NBE dialect being synonymous with the working classes were born out of the heavily industrialised north of England in the twentieth century, and are now regarded as instances of discrimination (Wales 2000, 6). Today, the official BBC website discusses their promotion of diversity in all areas and the positive effects of a diverse workforce (BBC 2018). Furthermore, in 2008, the director-general of the BBC was quoted in the Telegraph newspaper as saying that he '...agree[s] that we could hear a broader variety of English accents across our output' (Martin 2008). The fact that the BBC now has a wider range of dialects across their television and radio presenters gives credence to their claims of welcoming diversity (BBC 2018). In the same vein, BBC presenters such as Michelle Ackerley, a children's television presenter with a Manchester dialect; Melanie Sykes, a radio presenter; and Brian Cox, a television and radio presenter, who both have Lancashire dialects, exemplify that regional dialects are indeed becoming less stigmatised.

Conversely, the increase in presenters with regional dialects does not mean that all regional dialect speakers feel represented by the BBC. Jane Merrick (a journalist for the Independent newspaper) writes that ‘...when [she] need[s] to find Radio 4, [she] do[es]n’t peer at the tiny red line and even tinier numbers, [she] simply carr[ies] on turning the dial until [she] can hear someone speaking in a non-regional accent’ (Merrick 2016). Her point is that positive representations of regional speakers on television and radio are too few. There is evidence that her opinion is justified because, although there are more regional dialects represented in the media, bad evaluations of regional dialects have not been entirely relinquished. With the advent of social media came a plethora of online forums for subjugated social groups. The Accentism Project (Drummond and Carrie), set up by Manchester Metropolitan University, has a website which provides the opportunity for speakers of all English dialects to upload written testimonies about their experiences of dialect prejudice. There are many testimonials of those who have suffered poor treatment due to their specific dialect which we will not explore here. But, overall, the fact that there is such a forum, which portrays that regional dialect speakers continue to experience discrimination, indicates that there is still an imbalance between good listener evaluation of regional dialects compared with U-RP and SSB.

Interestingly, the website reflects that it is not only regional dialect speakers that have experienced prejudice, but also U-RP and SSB speakers. This indicates that U-RP and SSB are experiencing pejoration. Further evidence is shown by Bishop and Coupland (2007) through the investigation of listener evaluation of social and prestige credibility of English dialects in England. Although their study also covers evaluation from a broader perspective, foreign-accented English, regional dialects, U-RP and SSB, it is the last three that are interesting in relation to this study. In their study, Bishop and Coupland found that the younger generation favour the standard dialects less than regional dialects compared to the older generation who favour conservative dialects, and that regional dialects are valued across a diverse socio-demographic variation (Bishop and Coupland 2007, 83). This means that with the younger generation’s acceptance of the changes that have happened in the English language, variations that were once considered lapses in diction, such as h-dropping or glottalising, are now considered mainstream, and indicate an ideological shift (83). In relation to this study of how the Queen’s speech altered around the death of the Princess of Wales, the results of Bishop and Coupland (2007) compound the theory that U-RP and SSB are outdated as representative of most British English speakers, and that although regional dialect speakers are still not proportionately represented in the media, attitudes are turning in their favour.

Received Pronunciation – Changes in Production and Reception

Wales (2000) notes that, to many NBE speakers, SSB speakers (who represent a wide variety of social backgrounds) are not particularly distinguishable from U-RP; partly due to similar pronunciations such the bath [ɑ] and STRUT [ʌ] vowels in both dialects (Wales 2000, 10). Pre-1960, there were

distinct differences between the two dialects as Harrington et al. (2000) identify; [ɔ] in U-RP versus [ɒ] in SSB in words such as *often*; [ɛ] in U-RP versus [æ] in SSB in words such as *apple*; and [ɪ] in U-RP versus [ɪ] in SSB in words such as *bird* (Harrington et al. 2000, 65-66). However, U-RP is starting to lose certain characteristics and becoming more mainstream; in other words, more like SSB. Harrington et al. (2000) investigate the Queen's English in her Christmas broadcasts in the 1950's, 1960's and 1980's and show that her monophthongal vowels were moving towards the SSB speakers at the BBC in the 1980's during that period (72). As displayed in chart 1 below, the Queen's TRAP [æ] and STRUT [ʌ] vowels were becoming more open, and the [ɪ] and [ʊ] vowels were becoming more tense.

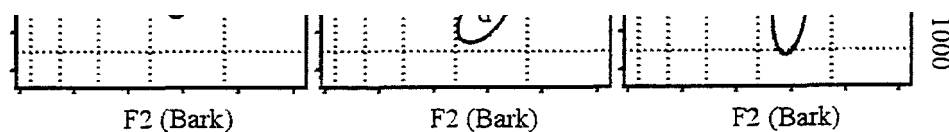


Figure 1. Ellipses in the formant plane for lax (*top row*) and tense (*bottom row*) vowels in the 50's data (*left*), 60's data (*middle*), and 80's data (*right*). The ellipses include data points within two standard deviations of the mean.

There is also evidence in the tense vowel set for a decrease in F1 in the mid-high and high vowels [i ɔ ju u] and an increase in F1 in the open vowel [ɑ] from the 50's to the 60's/80's data. The same figure shows a raising of F2 in [ju] and [u] in later years and a slight lowering of F2 in [i], as a result of which the [i] and [ju]/[u] vowel spaces are closer in the 60's/80's than in the 50's data. F1 and F2 of [ɛ] showed a progressive

Chart 1. Taken from Harrington et al. (2000, 72).

Harrington et al. (2000) do not offer an explanation as to why the Queen's speech was undergoing change, but do show some changes that were happening in U-RP at that time. Obviously, changes in the characteristics of one dialect cannot be determined by one person's linguistic changes, but Hinton (2015) provides evidence of four high-profile U-RP speakers (including the Queen) that shows the same types of changes, concluding that an individual's speech is likely to change 'when the standard is in a state of flux' (Hinton 2015, 33). This state of flux can be explained as the result of U-RP being evaluated today as bad, or at least less superior than it was, and that the minority who are U-RP speakers may be trying to change their language to become more socially accepted, or, in other words, accommodating to their listeners who are non U-RP speakers.

Methodology

I have conducted a real-time acoustic analysis using the same methodology as Harrington et al. (2000), who used analyses of SSB speakers of the 1980's by Roach et al. (1994) and the analyses by Deterding (1997), and Harrington (2006), of the Queen's Christmas broadcasts in the 1950's, 1960's and 1980's. As I am looking for the same information as these studies, and I am studying the same

person, it is sensible to conduct the same type of analysis and apply it to the years I have chosen to focus on: 1995-1999. The aforementioned studies already identified the dependent variables such as diphthongs and unstressed vowels which could create ambiguous formant measurements in the acoustic analysis. They therefore measured only monophthongal vowels in stressed syllables. I followed the same practice, and selected three monophthongal vowels for my acoustic analysis: the TRAP vowel [æ] and the STRUT vowel [ʌ] which were chosen on the basis that Harrington et al. (2000) showed a significant lowering of these vowels towards SSB speakers in the 1980's. With the aid of the transcriptions, the stressed monophthongal vowels were identified in polysyllabic lexical words such as *family* (where [æ] is in the stressed first syllable) and *another* (where [ʌ] is in the stressed second syllable). The third vowel that was analysed, [ɪ:] in 'happy-tensing' (Harrington 2006, 439), was identified as the final position vowel in words such as *happy*, *energy* and *especially*. This vowel was selected due to research which shows evidence of a shift towards it becoming a longer and more tense vowel than in previous decades (441). Table 1. below provides information about the number of occurrences of each vowel analysed in each of the years selected for my study. Conducting an acoustic analysis of the Queen's Christmas broadcasts fulfils the criteria for a real-time study because the focus is on one person, in the same situation, at the same time of year, and the subject matter is similar in each year.

Year	[æ]	[ʌ]	[ɪ:]
1995	17	18	27
1996	22	14	33
1997	34	20	33
1998	18	26	36
1999	32	26	53

Table 1. Number of occurrences of the three vowels analysed in the Queen's Christmas broadcasts 1995 – 1999.

The motivation for my study was to find evidence of whether the Queen altered her speech to sound less U-RP and more SSB in the aftermath of the death of the Princess of Wales in 1997, and whether this correlates with an increase in the popularity of the British Monarchy. Therefore, I chose to conduct an acoustic analysis of the Queen's Christmas broadcasts from 1995 to 1999, thereby analysing the Queen's speech in the run-up to, and in the aftermath of, the Princess's death.

The average duration of the broadcasts is nine minutes and 46 seconds; the shortest duration is eight minutes and 52 seconds in 1995, and the longest in 1999 being eleven minutes and 58 seconds.

To obtain accurate transcriptions of the broadcasts, I audio typed the speeches from the broadcasts on YouTube videos. The acoustic analysis of the three selected monophthongal vowels was conducted using the Praat program (Boersma & Weenink 1992-2018), measuring the first and second formants (in Hertz) in the analysed vowels, and creating tabdelimited files in preparation for producing scatter charts (using Microsoft Excel) to depict the changes in the Queen's vowel space from 1995 to 1999.

Results

The results of the formant analyses of the broadcasts between 1995 and 1999 are presented in charts 2, 3 and 4, which display some distinct shifts in the Queen's vowel space.

Firstly, charts 2 and 3 show that in each year of the analysed broadcasts, the F2 measurements of the Queen's TRAP [æ] and STRUT [ʌ] vowels do not show great variation. Although there is variation in the measurements, they are not significant enough to alter the position of the vowel in terms of front to back position in the vowel space. The TRAP [æ] vowel is in the central to front position in the vowel space, and the STRUT [ʌ] vowel is in the centralised front position.

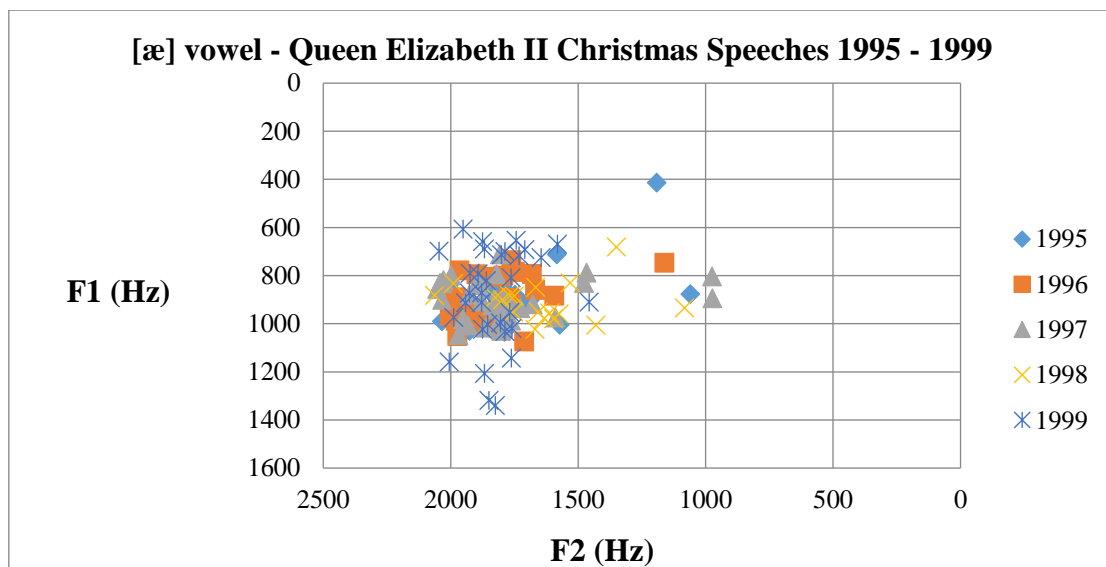


Chart 2. Plot of F1 and F2 measurements (in Hertz) of the Queen's TRAP [æ] vowel.

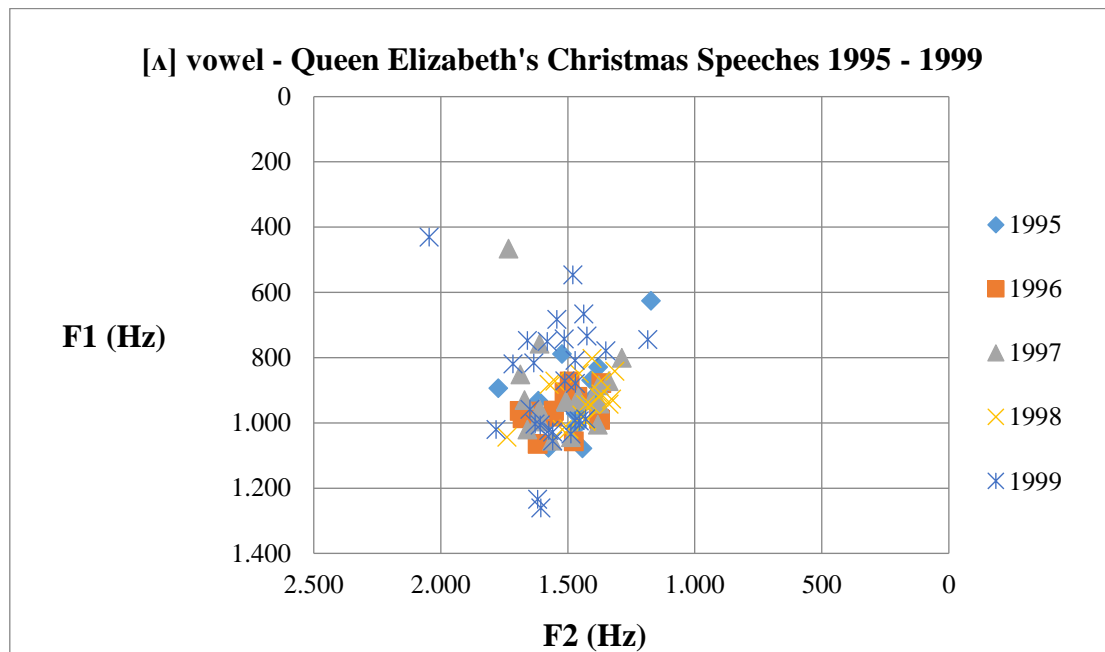


Chart 3. Plot of F1 and F2 measurements (in Hertz) of the STRUT [Λ] vowel.

There is an exception in 1997 whereby the F2 measurements of the TRAP [æ] vowel are lower. Therefore, in 1997 the vowel has shifted to a position between front and centralised back in the vowel space.

Interestingly, F1 in both the TRAP [æ] and STRUT [Λ] vowels shows more variation than F2. This variation causes the position of both these vowels to gradually change throughout the years between 1995 and 1999 in terms of height in the vowel space. In 1995, the Queen's TRAP [æ] vowel is above half-close to below half-open. In 1996, it has moved to half-open to just below half-open. Then in 1997, the vowel is just above half-open to just below half-open, and remains there in 1998. In 1999, the vowel opens up further and ranges between half-open and open. Overall, the Queen's TRAP [æ] vowel becomes more open and lower in the vowel space over the course of five years. The F1 measurements in the Queen's STRUT [Λ] vowel also show variation that leads to progressive changes towards a more varied vowel in the vowel space in terms of height. In 1995, the Queen's STRUT [Λ] vowel is in the above half-open to below half-open in the vowel space. In 1996, a cluster of readings around 1000 Hertz means that the vowel is in the below half-open position, and this position does not alter significantly in 1997. However, in 1998, the vowel shows variation between the half-open to open position. Finally, in 1999, the vowel shows variation between half-open and open. Overall, the Queen's STRUT [Λ] vowel appears to be in a state of change as the readings for F1 in this vowel show several outliers at half-close and half-open positions, and therefore the vowel ranges between high and low positions in the vowel space in 1999.

Secondly, chart 4 shows some variation in the *happy-tensing* [ɪ:] vowel. F1 and F2 in 1996 are higher than in 1995 giving a more open and front vowel space, whereas in 1997 and 1998, F1 is lower.

F2 alters slightly in that it becomes higher (or tenser), but does not alter in terms of front or back position in the vowel space. In 1999, F1 in the Queen's [ɪ:] vowel is lower, giving a more tense vowel. F2 shows more variation indicating that the Queen's pronunciation of this vowel in 1999 varies from open to mid-back in the vowel space.

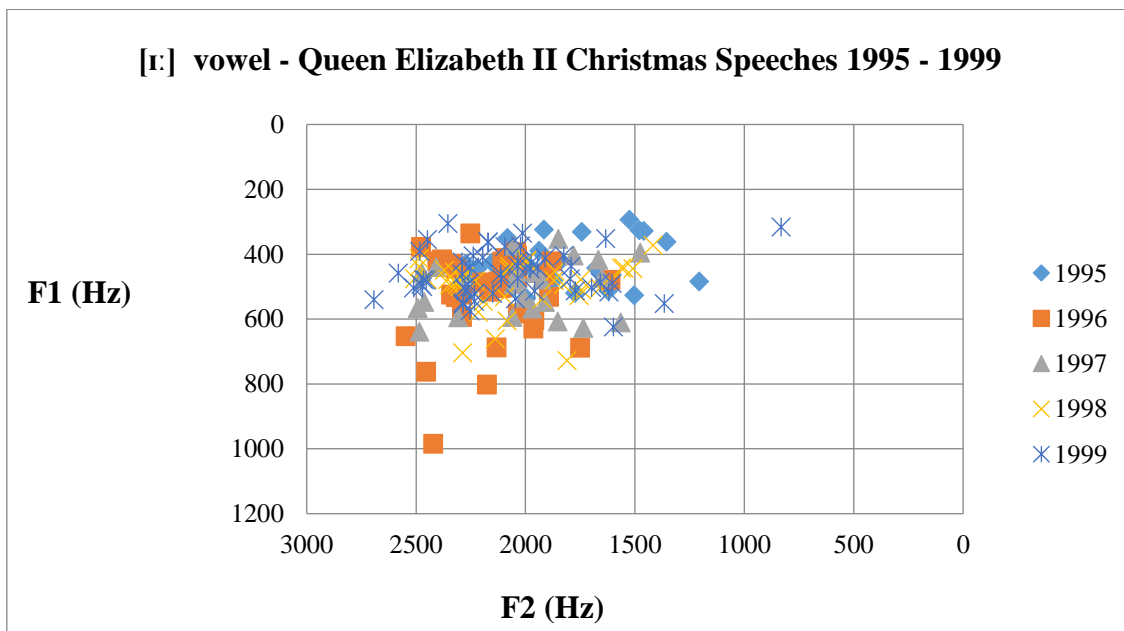


Chart 4. Plot of F1 and F2 measurements (in Hertz) of the *happy-tensing* [ɪ:] vowel.

Finally, table 2. below shows the average Hertz readings of F1 and F2 in the broadcasts from 1995 to 1999 and gives a clear comparison of shifts that happened throughout the five years. It is clear that the average formants in the Queen's TRAP [æ] and STRUT [ʌ] vowels measure more closely in 1995 and 1999 compared to the other three years. The average F2 measurement in the *happy-tensing* [ɪ:] vowel confirms the shift of the vowel to the front of the vowel space in 1996. In 1998 and 1999, the [ɪ:] vowel has made a slight shift back towards the mid-open and the central position

Year	[æ]]	F1 (Hz)	F2 (Hz)	[ʌ]	F1 (Hz)	F2 (Hz)	[ɪ:]	F1 (Hz)	F2 (Hz)
1995		866.52	1,722.67		922.73	1,468.48		431.54	1,871.24
1996		890.02	1,806.78		963.87	1,527.27		528.99	2,156.37
1997		900.63	1,788.21		910.67	1,517.64		505.15	2,074.74
1998		910.10	1,653.16		925.25	1,429.63		496.23	2,065.87
1999		887.27	1,825.5		878.75	1,552.49		460.82	2,082.18

Table 2. Average measurements (in Hertz) of F1 and F2 in each of the Queen's Christmas broadcasts 1995 – 1999.

The next section will compare these shifts to Harrington et al. (2000) and Harrington (2006), and will also discuss some possible reasons as to why they have happened.

Discussion

Comparison of Results to Harrington et al. (2000) and Harrington (2006)

When Harrington et al. completed their study of the Queen's monophthongal vowels in 2000, the results showed that her TRAP [æ] vowel was in a centralised position just above half-open in the 1950's (Harrington et al. 2000, 70). In the 1980's, this position had changed; F1 has increased which made the vowel lower, and F2 slightly decreased so the vowel had moved further back.

In comparison to the results in chart 5 below, taken from Harrington et al. (2000), the Queen's TRAP [æ] vowel is lower and further back in the vowel space in the analysis of the Christmas broadcasts between 1995 and 1999.

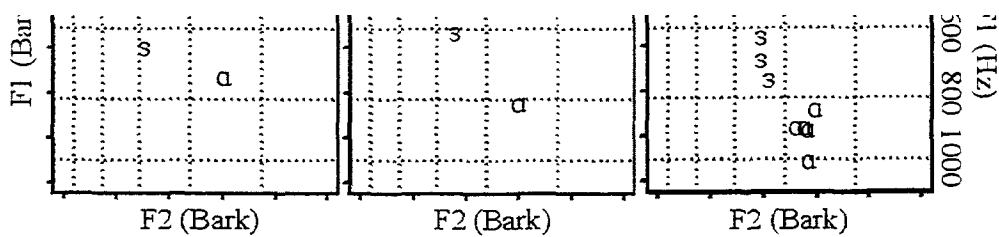


Figure 2. Average positions in the formant plane of lax (*top row*) and tense (*bottom row*) vowels in the 50's data (*left*), 80's data (*middle*) and from the five SSB speakers in Deterding (1997) (*right*).

Figure 2 shows that there is evidence for such a trend in many of the vowels. Consider for example the mid-high and high vowels [ɪ ʊ i u ɔ]. For all these vowels, F1 has decreased from the 50's to the 80's and all five SSB speakers have even lower first

Chart 5. Taken from Harrington et al. (2000, 70).

The Queen pronounced the first syllable in *family* with the TRAP [æ] vowel in the 1980's and 1990's instead of [ɛ] as she did in the 1950's. The Queen's STRUT [ʌ] vowel has followed a similar pattern. Harrington et al. (2000) did not show any significant changes in F2 of this vowel, but the F1 measurement increased so that the vowel lowered from a central position to a half-open one (70). Again, in comparison to Harrington et al. (2000), the vowel is lower and further back in the vowel space removing it from the [ɛ] and [ɪ] vowel space where they overlapped and therefore produced similar sounding vowels. Therefore, the Queen was more likely to pronounce *butter* in the 1980's and 1990's quite clearly as [bʌtə].

Finally, as can be seen in chart 6 below, Harrington (2006) shows that the Queen's *happy-tensing* [i:] vowel F1 measurement decreased so that the vowel raised its position, becoming higher in the vowel space (Harrington 2006, 449). At the same time, the F2 measurement decreased so that the vowel also moved further back in the vowel space (449).

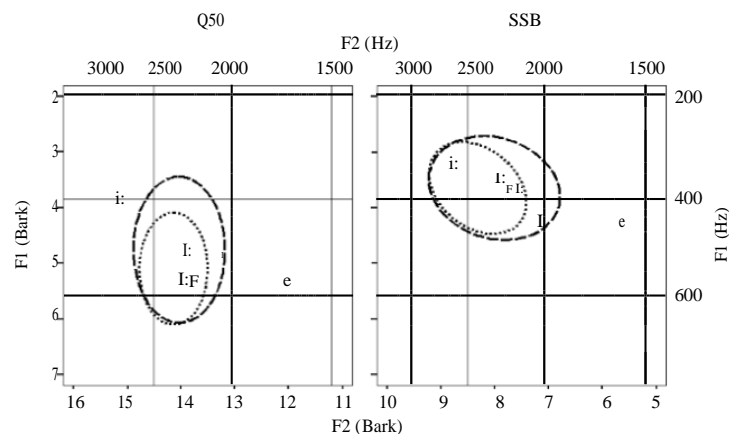


Chart 6. Taken from Harrington (2006, 449).

As can be seen in chart 4, in 1999, the F1 and F2 measurements decrease and the vowel moves to a higher and further back position in the vowel space, becoming more tense, which compares with Harrington (2006). Therefore the Queen's pronunciation of *family* has moved away from the 1950's U-RP version of [fæmɪlɪ:] to [fæmɪlɪ]. Overall, in comparison to Harrington et al. (2000) and Harrington (2006), the results show that the Queen's speech has moved away from the very Upper-Crust RP she had in the 1950's, and her vowel space has less overlapping of the vowels in the 1990's.

Comparison of Results to the SSB Speakers' Results in Harrington et al. (2000), and Harrington (2006)

The results of Harrington et al. (2000) show that between the 1950's and the 1980's, the Queen's TRAP [æ] and STRUT [ʌ] vowels moved closer to the vowels of the SSB speakers, having become lower and being in a central to mid-front position in the vowel space (Harrington et al. 2000, 72). Furthermore, Harrington (2006) recorded that, at the same time, the Queen's *happy*-tensing [ɪ:] vowel was also shown to have moved towards the SSB speakers' same vowel (Harrington 2006, 452). The *happy*-tensing [ɪ:] vowel in this case was in a higher position, or more tense, and more mid-front in the vowel space compared to the Queen's in the 1990's (447).

The comparisons highlighted by Harrington et al. (2000), and Harrington (2006) related to the Queen's speech between the 1950's and 1980's, show an overall trend in her speech becoming closer to that of the SSB speakers. Furthermore, the results of the acoustic analysis conducted for this essay also show that the Queen's speech moved closer to the SSB speakers between 1996 and 1998. Therefore, we can conclude that not only has the Queen's speech become less U-RP, it has in fact moved towards SSB, and we can now look at reasons why this might have occurred.

The Changes in the Popularity of the British Monarchy Following the Death of the Princess of Wales 1997

In the immediate aftermath of the death of the Princess of Wales, press coverage of her life reached phenomenal levels. Having had a prominent and glamorous image in the press, and promoting an accessible image through her charity work, the Princess had gained support and popularity as a member of the British Monarchy for almost two decades. For days after her death, newspapers produced not only coverage of the events leading up to, and of, the fatal car crash, but also supplements with stories spanning her life (Wober 2000, 129). Wober writes about a 'feeling frenzy' (133) phenomena among the general public to describe the hype surrounding the death of the Princess of Wales. His article concludes that this came about due to the volume and negativity (towards the Queen) of the media coverage in the week between the Princess's death and her funeral (133). Therefore, the public grief and outrage about the Queen keeping her distance became the driving force for even more media coverage, which in turn became the machinery that fed the public frenzy by publicising the public's general ill feeling towards the Queen.

The effect of the death of the Princess of Wales and the legacy of public grief left its mark on the popularity of the British Monarchy as the statistics in chart 4 below reveal¹. Support for the British Monarchy had been at 89% in 1996, the year before the death of the Princess of Wales (Worcester et al. 1996, 7). The fall in support in the two years after the death of the Princess of Wales shows a marked difference, and symbolises the loss of the public's link (namely the Princess of Wales) to the British Monarchy. The statistics in chart 7 below show a significant fall in the popularity of the British Monarchy in 1997 to 73% in support of the British Monarchy, and again in 1998 to 66% in support (Ipsos MORI 2016, 1). By 1999, the British Monarchy's popularity was increasing again, albeit only marginally, to 70% in support (Ipsos MORI 2016, 1).

¹ Statistics regarding the British Monarchy's popularity are only published as a part of research into other areas of general public opinion, or when researchers are collating information for studies relating to the British Monarchy. Therefore, the information in appendix 6. is collated from MORI reports in 1994, 1996 to 1999, and 2016.

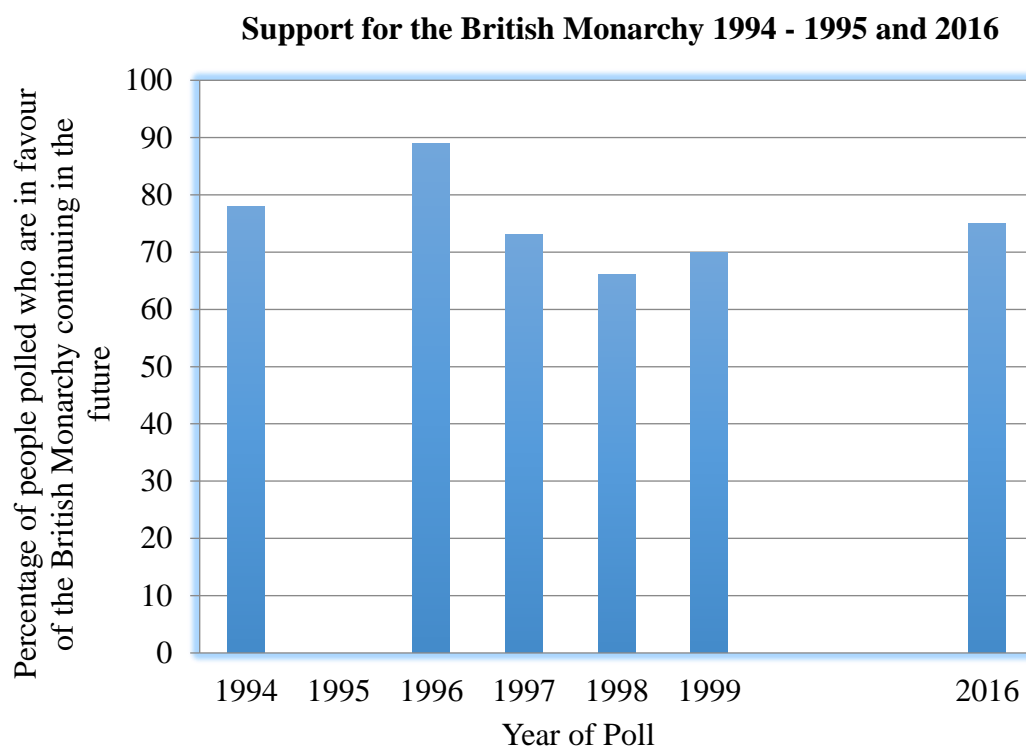


Chart 7. Information taken from Ipsos MORI (2016, 1), Mortimore (2016, 5), and Worcester et al. (1996, 7).

Comparison of the Queen's Linguistic Changes and the Popularity of the British Monarchy.

It is only possible to speculate whether or not the Queen consciously sought to increase the popularity of the British Monarchy using linguistic changes, but the fact that popularity began to increase within two years of the death of the Princess of Wales indicates that some factors were at play, although we cannot know what these were. A comparison of the results of the acoustic analysis, Harrington et al. (2000), and Harrington (2006) along with the statistics taken from the MORI polls shows some correlation between the Queen's linguistic shift and the fluctuations in the popularity of the British Monarchy. As discussed in section 5.2, the popularity of the British Monarchy had decreased in 1997 and 1998. Interestingly, charts 2 and 3 also show a correlation at this time with changes in the Queen's vowel space in relation to the TRAP [æ] and STRUT [ʌ] vowels, which became more like the SSB speakers' in Harrington et al. (2000). Furthermore, in 1999, when support for the British Monarchy had begun to increase, the formant measurements (especially F1) of these same vowels show more variation than in the preceding four years. The *happy*-tensing [ɪ:] vowel follows much the same pattern with similar formant measurements in 1995 and 1999. The fact that, in 1999, the Queen's speech shows considerable variation could be construed as an increase in confidence as her popularity returns.

However, it is intriguing that the Queen's speech already shows variation in 1996: the year before the death of the Princess of Wales. Of course, the Princess's own popularity might have been the cause of higher ratings in 1996, and the Queen was possibly already aware that her own popularity was not as high as that of the Princess, and we cannot possibly know this for certain. Furthermore, if the Queen accommodated to her audience by altering her speech towards SSB to become more socially accepted by the public, she was already doing this before the death of the Princess of Wales. From a scientific perspective, this occurrence serves as a reminder to reserve judgement when comparing statistics. If the analysis and comparison was taken from 1997 onwards, it would be easy to jump to conclusions about the motivation for the changes in the Queen's speech being directly linked to the Princess of Wales's death, and the decline in the popularity of the British Monarchy.

Conclusion

Similarly to Harrington et al. (2000) and Harrington (2006), this study concludes that the Queen's speech has become less U-RP, and has moved in the direction of SSB. However, although there is a correlation between a change in the Queen's speech in the aftermath of the death of the Princess of Wales, when popularity for the British Monarchy decreased, it cannot be confirmed that the correlation is directly linked to the event, or that any linguistic changes were intentional on the Queen's part. The fact that her speech style varies more in 1999 compared to the preceding four years is interesting as the popularity of the British Monarchy increased at this time, and could be linked to an increase in the Queen's confidence. A further investigation of the Queen's speech between 1999 to the present day could possibly discover further changes in the Queen's speech. A study that explores whether the Queen's speech shows more variation and becomes more similar to SSB when the popularity of the British Monarchy is higher, and less varied and more U-RP when popularity is lower, would be very intriguing.

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