

**Born Talking: Using birth cohort data
about speech, language & communication
to inform policy and practice**
An ESRC seminar series

Jan McAllister
Event 4
London
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Born Talking

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Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



The Communication Trust
Every child understood

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Importance of communication

Communication is key to many of the things we want for ourselves and our children. It underpins everything we do and helps us live life to the full.

It's fundamental to children's development; children need to be able to understand and be understood; it's the foundation of relationships and is essential for learning, play and social interaction.

Children with speech, language communication needs (SLCN) are at high risk of difficulties with reading, writing and spelling. If children can't say words, they will be more likely to have difficulties in 'sounding out' words for reading and spelling, or writing them down. If they can't understand the words they hear, they will struggle to understand what they have read.

Children with communication difficulties are more likely to have behaviour difficulties. Many children with identified behaviour needs have previously unidentified SLCN. Imagine the frustration of not getting your message across.

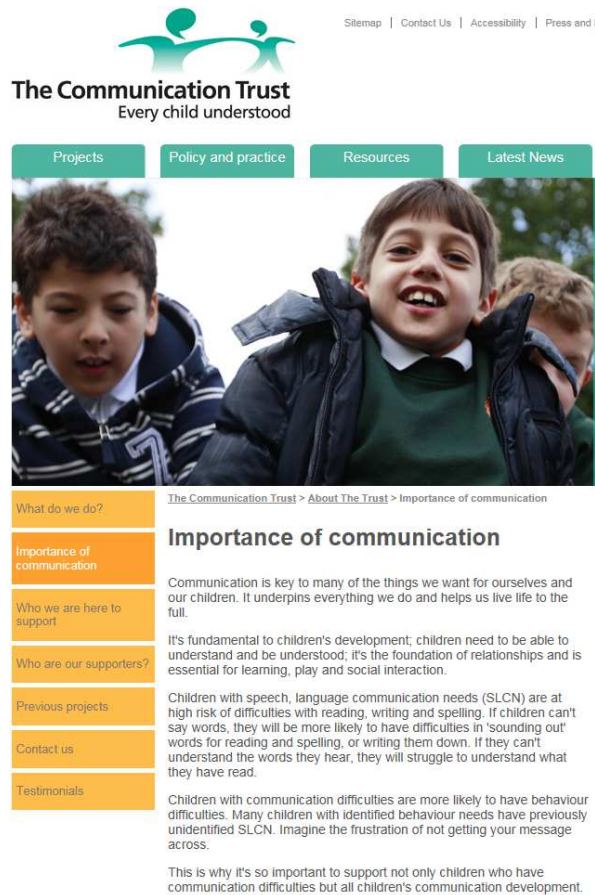
This is why it's so important to support not only children who have communication difficulties but all children's communication development.

SLCNs

- ✦ Affect over 1 million children
- ✦ Often persistent
- ✦ More common in areas of poverty

http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication_difficulties_-_facts_and_stats.pdf

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



The screenshot shows the website for The Communication Trust, with the tagline 'Every child understood'. The navigation menu includes 'Projects', 'Policy and practice', 'Resources', and 'Latest News'. A large image of three children is featured. The main content area is titled 'Importance of communication' and includes the following text:

Communication is key to many of the things we want for ourselves and our children. It underpins everything we do and helps us live life to the full.

It's fundamental to children's development; children need to be able to understand and be understood; it's the foundation of relationships and is essential for learning, play and social interaction.

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This is why it's so important to support not only children who have communication difficulties but all children's communication development.

SLCNs are associated with difficulties affecting

- ✦ Literacy
- ✦ Educational attainment
- ✦ Behaviour
- ✦ Crime & offending
- ✦ Mental health

http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication_difficulties_-_facts_and_stats.pdf

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



Research & services

Bercow, J. (2008). *The Bercow Report: A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0–19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*. Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Speech & language research is often...



- ✦ Based on small samples
- ✦ Based on clinical samples
 - ✦ Unrepresentative?

Representativeness?



- ✦ Australian study
- ✦ Predictors of seeking clinical help
 - ✦ Parental concern
 - ✦ Higher SES
 - ✦ English-speaking
 - ✦ Child characteristics – boys, twins



Who gets help for pre-school communication problems? Data from a prospective community study

J. Skeat,^{*†} M. Wake,^{*†‡} O. C. Ukoumunne,[§] P. Eadie,^{**} L. Bretherton,^{‡¶} and S. Reilly^{*†‡}

What is a birth cohort?

A type of longitudinal study

- ✦ Data collection starts around time of birth
- ✦ Regularly throughout life
- ✦ Typically a large sample
- ✦ Typically a very large number of variables
 - ✦ Health
 - ✦ Education
 - ✦ Socioeconomic factors etc
- ✦ Many are community samples - representative

Some UK birth cohorts

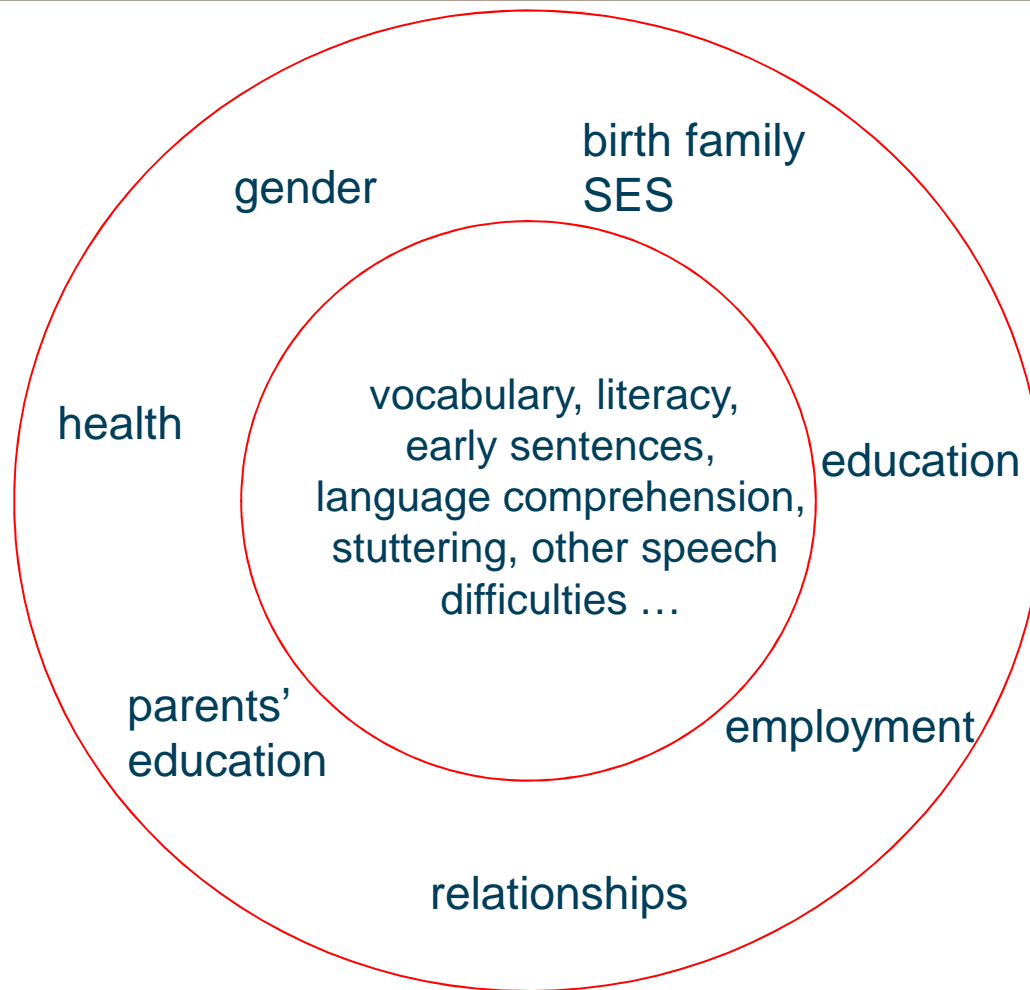
National samples

- ✦ 1958: National Child Development Study (NCDS)
- ✦ 1970: British Cohort Study (BCS70)
- ✦ 2000: Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)

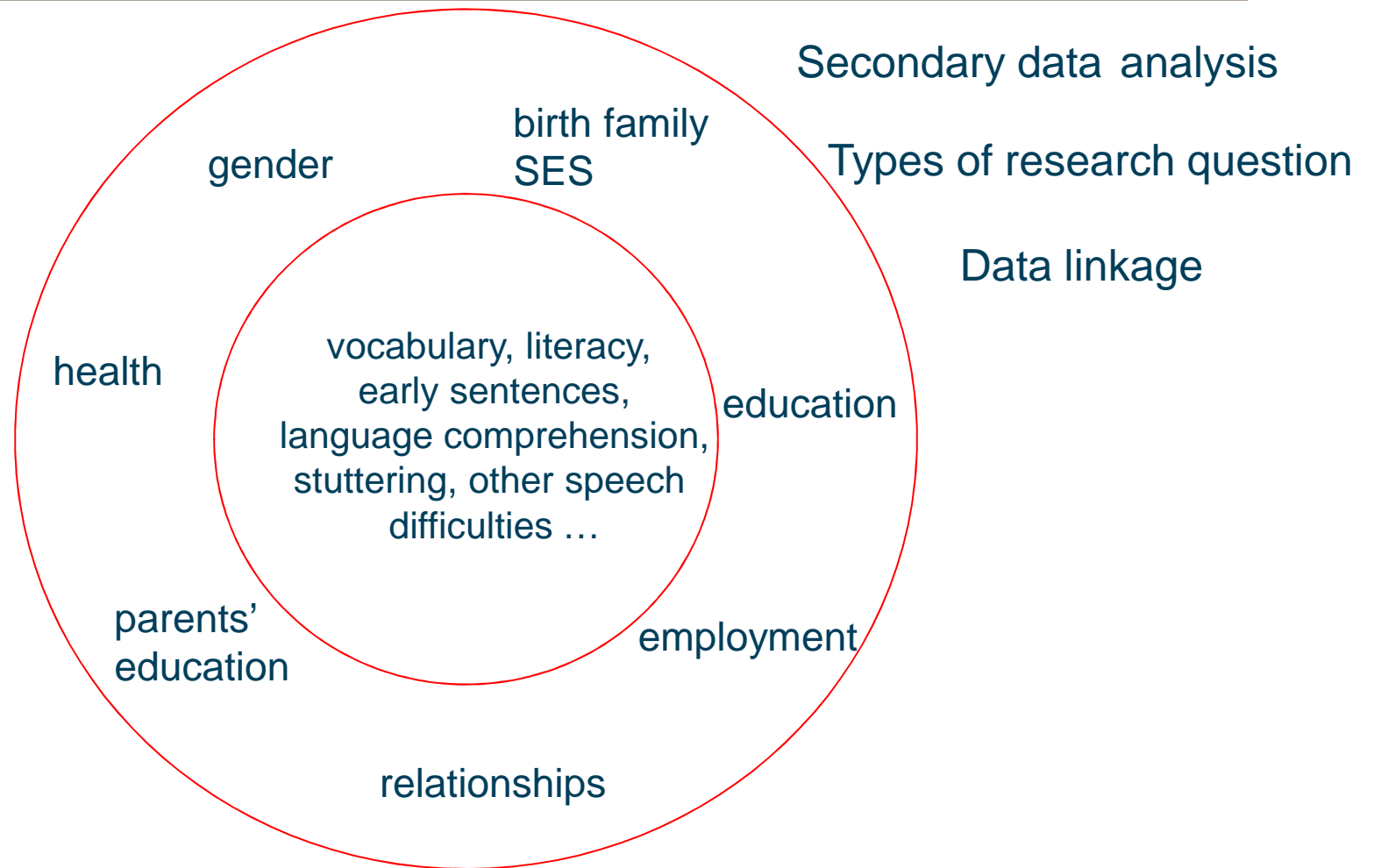
Regional samples

- ✦ 1991: Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children
- ✦ 2002: Growing Up In Scotland

Examples of data in the national UK cohorts



Examples of data in the national UK cohorts



Aims of the seminar series include ...



- ✦ Familiarizing stakeholders with the resources and their potential
- ✦ Consulting with a range of stakeholders to identify research questions
- ✦ Influencing teams collecting birth cohort data



Rest of today's session

- ✦ 2-3pm Theresa Redmond, The Communication Trust
Priorities in speech language and communication
- ✦ 3-3:15pm Break
- ✦ 3:15-4:15pm Alison Park, CLOSER
- ✦ (Cohort & Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resources)
Influencing the content of the birth cohort datasets
- ✦ 4.15-4.30pm What next?