Demography, social structure and identity in language change

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Demography, social structure and identity in language change: outline

| A. Studying speech community types: contact, network, orientation |
| B. Studying urban dialect formation and change in Industrial Revolution Britain |
| C. Demography vs. identity in the formation of new urban contact dialects in Britain |
What does Language Variation and Change aim to do?

• LVC is interested in gaining a complete linguistic, social and cognitive understanding of variation and change.

• To do this, it investigates complex relationships between language and:
  - Individual
  - Community
  - Geography
  - Gender
  - Stratification
  - Network
  - Social & cultural values - ideologies
Historical Sociolinguistics

- Corpus based, corpus driven
  - Begins with the corpus, not with the speech community
- Isolates linguistic features (usually morphosyntactic)
- Looks for quantitative patterns of variation
- Investigates change over great time depths and geographical distances

*Problems for the variationist:*
- Can’t investigate many features at once
- Microvariation in phonetics/phonology inaccessible
- Broad synchronic sociolinguistic variation inaccessible
Studying communities in the past

- (Speech) communities are built on face-to-face communication over time
  - between ‘ego’ and family members, neighbours, co-workers, visiting relatives, migrants (short distance, long distance)
- The dialect landscape is a continuum of varieties
  - horizontal and vertical variation
- Communities are in flux
  - individuals with overlapping and changing social networks,
  - boundaries are diffuse
  - the community reflects concentrations of people who are potentially in contact with each other
- An essentially Gumperzian view of ‘speech community’
How can this model be fitted into the Historical Sociolinguistics paradigm?

- Investigating the validity of such a model *in the present* is challenging in itself.

- For the past, we can only have fleeting glimpses of it:
  - Network studies
  - Metalinguistic comments
  - Social and personal comments in, e.g., correspondence
  - Observing geographical and social distributions

➢ Call for a model of social structure that does not rely on scarce linguistic, social and metalinguistic data.
Towards a model of society for sociolinguistic purposes: Henning Andersen (1988)

• **Evolutive** changes: language-internally motivated and triggered during language acquisition

• **Adaptive** changes: adoption of a feature from another community which speakers have come into contact with

• Cf. Labov (2007):
  – **transmission**: intergenerational passing on of language/dialect
  – **diffusion**: adoption, through contact, of forms which have diffused across geographical space

➢ The distinction between contact and non-contact is crucial for the link between community type and type of change
Andersen (1988) cont’d: High vs. low contact communities

• High-contact communities undergo rapid change
  – adoption of norms: ‘The relevant aspects of the innovators’ own traditional norms cease to be passed on in their area’
  – simplification of morphology: ‘leveling of irregularities’

• Low-contact communities: evolutive changes have freer rein
  – ‘high-fidelity transmission of phonetic detail ... the amount of phonetic change may be greater – to the point of being exorbitant’

• High-contact communities: open
• Low-contact communities: closed
Andersen (1988) cont’d: exocentric vs. endocentric communities

• Refers to a community’s subjective orientation to external norms or internal norms: its subjective orientation

• ‘... appeal must be made to the tighter or looser bonds of linguistic solidarity that bind [a community’s] members together, that is, to the attitudes they collectively hold towards their own norms vis-à-vis those of others’

• **Exocentric** communities: positive attitudes towards external linguistic and social norms

• **Endocentric** communities: resistance to external norms
Andersen (1988) cont’d: combined model

- **Endocentric closed** (Type 1): geographically peripheral, and self-contained.

- **Endocentric open** (Type 2): urban, innovative in the context of a ‘great or fair amount of interdialectal communication’ (Andersen). Because of the community’s openness (high external contact), features may diffuse outwards. Resistant to outside features (endocentric).

- **Exocentric closed** (Type 3): linguistic norms are pervious to outside influence, but contact is slight.

- **Exocentric open** (Type 4): often rural, and unlike Type 1 not protective of local norms. Instead, they are strongly affected by incoming features, diffusing from local urban centres.
Taking stock …

• This model is difficult to apply in the real world
  – May be useful for the dimensions it involves
  – It has been operationalised to some extent by Unn Røyneland in her study of Røros and Tynset (2005).
  – Useful as a post hoc, interpretive measure
  – Can we apply it in this manner on historical data?

• Return to this later …
Trudgill’s sociolinguistic typology (2010a, b, 2011)

• Deals with how sociolinguistic structure restricts or promotes particular kinds of linguistic change in a community
• Deals with types of:
  – internal relationships between the members of a community
  – external relationships with people from outside
• The social unit is a group or community, ranging from small to large.
• Depends on the *collective behaviour* of individuals
Factors determining types of change (Trudgill 2010a)

a. small vs. large community size
b. dense vs. loose social networks
c. social stability vs. instability
d. high vs. low degree of shared information
e. degree of contact vs. isolation
Intercorrelations

• Size, network type and shared information are highly correlated
  
  – (I suggest) in a small community, new information becomes capital which can be traded as if on a market
    • People who hold this sort of information gain prestige
    • They are also the most likely conduits for change (Milroy & Milroy 1985)
Stability/instability

• This dimension represents *time*
• In stable societies, change is slow
  – But because of network structures, stability allows complexification to occur
• In unstable societies, change is more rapid
  – Change typically is the consequence of:
    • dialect contact or language contact
    • dissolution of social networks
Trudgill’s example of low-contact complexification (2011)

Marking intransitive infinitives:

– *Can you zew up thease zeam?* ‘Can you sew up this seam?’ (Devon)

vs.

– *There idden many can sheary now.* ‘There aren’t many who can shear now’.
Summary of sociolinguistic typology and dialect change (Trudgill 2010)

• **High-contact situations** involving *child–child* contact are more likely to lead to complexification in inventories and paradigms.

• **High-contact situations** involving *adult–adult* contact are more likely to lead to simplification of inventories and paradigms.

• **Low-contact situations** are likely to lead to *preservation* of existing complexity.

• **Low-contact situations** are more likely to lead to the *spontaneous production* of complexity (internally motivated)
An example: Insular vs. mainland Scandinavian languages
• Scandinavian languages have diverged over past 1000 years
  – **Insular Scandinavian** (Iceland, Faroe Islands) retain most Old Scandinavian inflectional morphology (Iceland more so)
    • So, overall, maintenance of inherited *morphological complexity*
  – **Mainland** varieties have lost person-number agreement on all verbs; no case marking except oblique case on pronouns; fossilised use of subjunctive; two genders (Norwegian maintains three); regularization of irregular
Example: Swedish and Norwegian simplification; Icelandic retention

### OLD SWEDISH
- sg nom indef: *fisker* sg nom def *fiskerin*
- sg gen indef: *fisks* sg gen def *fisksins*
- sg dat indef: *fiski* sg dat def *fiskinum*
- sg acc indef: *fisk* sg acc def *fiskin*
- pl nom indef: *fiskar* pl nom def *fiskanir*
- pl gen indef: *fiska* pl gen def *fiskanna*
- pl dat indef: *fiskom* pl dat def *fiskomin*
- pl acc indef: *fiska* pl acc def *fiskana*

### MODERN SWEDISH
- sg indef: *fisk* sg def *fisken*
- pl indef: *fiskar* pl def *fiskarna*

### Modern Icelandic ‘two’
- m. tveir tvær tvö
- f. tvo tvær tvö
- n. tveimur tveimur tveimur
- nom. tveir tvær tvö
- acc. tvo tvær tvö
dat. tveimur tveimur tveimur
gen. tveggja tveggja tveggja

### Modern Norwegian ‘two’
- to
Reasons?

• Trudgill 2010 suggests it’s due to high language contact in mainland Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, Denmark), particularly with Low German and Dutch
  – Hanseatic League in Middle Ages
    • Led to contact with German speakers
  – Bergen as Hanseatic city had more simplification than all other Norwegian dialects – esp. reduction from 3 to 2 genders
    • Had the highest amount of German contact
Maintenance of complexity and innovation in Iceland and Faroe

• Iceland and Faroes settled by Norwegians from around 900, maintained contact with the ‘mainland’ (remained part of Denmark/Norway till mid 20th C)
  – But no direct German/Dutch contact
  – Iceland maintained strong internal contacts, leading to dialect levelling, but overall very slow language change – maintenance of complexity
  – Faroe was divided into small, self-contained villages, leading to both maintenance of complexity and relatively extreme phonological change, with fairly great dialect differences emerging
A case of isolation: complexification in Faroese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Old Faroese ‘day’</th>
<th>Modern Faroese ‘day’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>singular</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom.</td>
<td>[dagur]</td>
<td>[dagar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc.</td>
<td>[dag]</td>
<td>[dagar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen.</td>
<td>[dags]</td>
<td>[daga]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dat.</td>
<td>[degi]</td>
<td>[døgum]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact $\rightarrow$ simplification
Isolation $\rightarrow$ complexification

• Contact leads to simplification
  – But only if adults are involved in 2\textsuperscript{nd} language learning
  – Children can learn complexity – and increase complexity, as in the Faroes

• So:
  – Community type seems to underlie this
Is it all contact?

• Question of whether dialect change is all due to the interaction of linguistic systems in contact, mediated by real speakers:
  
  – Behavioural co-ordination
  
  – Language ideologies/attitudes
Behavioural coordination

• Trudgill (2008) sees this as a central element in dialect change and maintenance
  – Pelech 2002
  – In linguistics, theorised by Keller as the ‘invisible hand’
  – Pickering & Garrod 2004 – interactive alignment model

• These models provide an explanation for the automatic (non-intentional) side of accommodation

• Priming:
  – Johnston 2002 – priming model
  – Greenwald et al. 1998, Campbell-Kibler 2012 – Implicit Association Test

• The existence of priming effects shows that behaviour is also affected by socially constructed stereotypes
Attitudes and ideology - brief excursus

• Ideology is often claimed to have a role in language change (Irvine 2001)
  – “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure or use” (Silverstein 1979)
  – If it is to affect the direction of change, ideology needs to be seen as operating at a local level
    • Milroy (2016) explains how national ideologies about language variation are effective at the local level
  – I would argue that the model we have been pursuing means that the ideologies are only activated in interaction and at the local level.
For now, we stick to a mainly contact-based model

• Social structures determine who we interact with
  – Personal social network most immediate determinant
  – Our networks in turn determined by larger structures:
    • In urban societies in the last 200 years, the rise of socioeconomic class
Demographic change

- Natural change
- Migration
Britain: the world’s first urbanised and industrialised country

- Britain at the peak of the Industrial Revolution, and the most urbanised country in Europe:
  - 1831 34% lived in cities
  - 1851 50% "
  - 1931 80% "
  - 1991 90% "

B. Industrial Revolution Britain
Did urbanisation lead to koineisation and new dialects?

• Are these changes enough to lead to new dialect formation (koineisation $\rightarrow$ koines)?
• In the absence of contemporary quantitative linguistic data, can we use demographics to find out?
• Mufwene’s Founder Effect, based on the Founder Principle in populations genetics can help us:
  – Idea that the initial population disproportionately influences the outcomes for later generations, even with large-scale migration
  – Mufwene doesn’t tell us about actual numbers, or the role of children in transmission.
The demographic framework: From rural to industrial 1801–1911

Employment in agriculture, 1851 and 1911
Employment in manufacturing, 1851 and 1911

3.3-4 Employment in manufacturing, 1851 and 1911
2.1-4 Population density, 1801-1911
2.5–8 Population growth, 1801–1911
components of population growth, 1851–1911
Northern cities in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century

- Is population growth rapid enough to lead to the formation of new dialects?
- Importantly, how much of it is due to migration?
## Northern cities in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>18\textsuperscript{th} Cent.</th>
<th>1801</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>12K (1725)</td>
<td>77,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>762,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>20K (c1750)</td>
<td>33,322</td>
<td>48,950</td>
<td>80,184</td>
<td>246,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>16K (1771)</td>
<td>94,421</td>
<td>183,015</td>
<td>249,992</td>
<td>552,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull</td>
<td>7.5K (1700)</td>
<td>21,280</td>
<td>40,902</td>
<td>57,484</td>
<td>236,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>43K (1774)</td>
<td>88,577</td>
<td>205,561</td>
<td>339,483</td>
<td>642,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>30K (1766)</td>
<td>82,430</td>
<td>180,222</td>
<td>320,513</td>
<td>711,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>7K (1736)</td>
<td>60,095</td>
<td>112,408</td>
<td>161,475</td>
<td>451,195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk), Wikipedia, local councils
Summary so far

- Big demographic changes
- New concentrations of populations were caused by population increases over a relatively short period.
  - result of in-migration and natural increase.
- Population increases by migration in industrial areas is rapid.

But was it rapid enough to overwhelm the existing dialect?
Testing (or at least exploring) the Founder Effect

Hypothesis:

• Let us assume that, for a dialect to be changed, there needs to be, *at a given point in time*, a minimum proportion of in-migrant people who have not acquired the local dialect. In the absence of detailed information, we can set this number at 50%.

• This means that the population must increase by 100% for a certain length of time. We can set this at 10-12 years.
Blackburn and Middlesbrough: population growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Figures</th>
<th>1801</th>
<th>1811</th>
<th>1821</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1841</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn</td>
<td>11,980</td>
<td>15,083</td>
<td>21,940</td>
<td>27,091</td>
<td>36,629</td>
<td>46,536</td>
<td>63,126</td>
<td>76,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesbrough</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>5,463</td>
<td>7,631</td>
<td>18,892</td>
<td>39,284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- No evidence that a new dialect formed in Blackburn
- Evidence that koineisation took place in Middlesbrough, founded in 1830. High immigration from Ireland
Conclusions

• We have looked only at population increase
• More detailed information needed for migration vs. natural increase
  – Hard to separate in practice
• What of Andersen’s categories?
  – Circumstantial evidence suggests:
  – Blackburn: medium contact (between open and closed), somewhat endocentric (orientation towards the community).
  – Middlesbrough: fairly high contact (open), fairly exocentric (orientation outside the community).
References


• Milroy, Lesley. 2016. “She twanged a piercing r”: Some effects of national ideologies and local attitudes on trajectories of language change. Lecture given at the Department of Linguistics, Queen Mary University of London, 10 June 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvKaqwbUilY


