Demography and class: British urban dialects since 1800

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Deutsch in Österreich, Vienna
9th July 2016
Accounting for dialect formation and dialect change

• Chronological starting point: Great Britain during the rise of the Industrial Revolution

• ‘Using the present to explain the past’ (Labov)
  – Implies a set of social processes which are universally applicable as causes of dialect change
  – In different proportions in different times and places

• What kinds of social structures existed?
  – How did they change?
  – In particular, what were the social class relations in the past?
Dialect contact

Outcomes largely determined by:

• the linguistic features in the ‘feature pool’
  – What relative frequency?
  – What relative difficulty/complexity?

• who is in contact with whom
  – children, adolescents, adults
  – and in what social settings
Mobility and contact in the UK

• Mobility is (at least one) key to understanding dialect formation and dialect change

• Mobility is long and short term:
  – Relocation from rural to urban, and from urban to rural
  – Commuting (a mainly middle-class pursuit)
  – Visiting
  – In the 20th century: two world wars
  – 2nd half of 19th century: railways, suburbanisation of cities
  – 1st half of 19th century: formation of new industrial urban areas through migration

• Mobility is class-stratified
Demographic change
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% “
The demographic framework: From rural to industrial 1801–1911

Atlas of Industrializing Britain 1780-1914

Edited by John Langton & R.J. Morris
Employment in agriculture, 1851 and 1911

Percentage of employed population:
- 50 and over
- 40-49
- 30-39
- 20-29
- 10-19
- Less than 10

3.1-2 Employment in agriculture, 1851 and 1911
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

Natural increase

Change due to migration
Northern cities in the 19th 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 19th century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>18th 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. In some places it was probably rapid enough to cause linguistic swamping of original population.
  – For swamping, around 50% non-native population is needed.
  – More work on demographics!
Demographic change, economic change and interpersonal relations

• What effect does demographic change since 1800 have on societal structures?

➢ Keywords: mobility, urbanisation, contact, socioeconomic class, gender, ideology

• What effect does demographic change have on dialect change?
What were British English dialects like in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century?

• What evidence do we have?

• What trends might we expect?
  – Dialect levelling
  – Dialect divergence (innovation)

• What sort of communities existed in the past and exist in the present?
What is our best evidence for late-19\textsuperscript{th} century conservative dialect?

- Ellis, Alexander. 1889. \textit{The existing phonology of English dialects, compared with that of West Saxon speech}. New York: Greenwood Press.

... interpreted and visualised for us by:

  \url{http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/EllisAtlas/About.html}.
ON
EARLY ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION,
WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO
SHAKSPERE AND CHAUCER,
CONTAINING AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CORRESPONDENCE OF WRITING WITH SPEECH IN ENGLAND, FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD TO THE EXISTING RECEIVED AND DIALECTAL FORMS, WITH A SYSTEMATIC NOTATION OF SPOKEN SOUNDS BY MEANS OF THE ORDINARY PRINTING TYPES.

INCLUDING
A RE-ARRANGEMENT OF PROF. F. J. CHILD'S MEMOIRS ON THE LANGUAGE OF CHAUCER AND GOWER, REPRINTS OF THE RARE TRACTS BY SALESBY ON ENGLISH, 1647, AND WELSH, 1667, AND BY BARCLEY ON FRENCH, 1621, ABSTRACTS OF SCHMELLER'S TREATISE ON BAVARIAN DIALECTS, AND WINKLER'S LOW GERMAN AND FRIESIAN DIALECTICON, AND PRINCE L. L. BONAPARTE'S VOWEL AND CONSONANT LISTS.

BY
ALEXANDER J. ELLIS,
F.R.S., F.S.A., F.C.P.S., F.C.P.,
VICE-PRESIDENT, TWICE PRESIDENT, OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
MEMBER OF THE MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY, FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE, B.A., 1837.

PART V.
[pp. 1*-88*, 1433-2267.]
EXISTING DIALECTAL AS COMPARED WITH WEST SAXON PRONUNCIATION.

With two Maps of the Dialect Districts.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
THE EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY, AND THE CHAUCER SOCIETY, BY
TRÜBNER & CO., 57 AND 59, LUDGATE HILL.
1889.
Forms of ‘I am’ in EPED
Fig. 2: The pronunciation of the vowel in *down* in the EPED
Ellis: limitations, and some insights

Mapping Ellis isn’t the whole story:

“Area. The whole of the s.Yo., comprising the great industrial centres of Huddersfield, Halifax, Keighley, Bradford, Leeds, Dewsbury, Barnsley, Sheffield, and Rotherham on the w. and s. ... The w. parts inhabited by a great manufacturing population, rejoicing in their dialect. ...”

- “The real dialect is heard in the surrounding villages.”
- “Of course it is in the villages and not in the town that peasant speech is heard. In the town a peculiar attempt to speak rs. [Received Standard] is made by the smaller tradesmen.”
- “[T]he refined town speech of petty traders at Leeds, I have reduced elsewhere to a comparison with received speech ...”

Urban vs. rural; upwardly mobile vs. non-upwardly mobile

- Comments suggest linguistic differences along these lines, but Ellis makes no mention of specific features which vary along them
Interim conclusions on mid-19th century dialects

Language

• Some descriptions of rural dialects exist
• No full descriptions of urban dialects
  — Not even commentaries!
• But we can detect strongly regional, if not local, speech
  — We must assume that new dialects had been formed – no actual evidence

Society

• We must assume vast social changes in the 50 years from around 1800
  — Migration, urbanisation
  — New forms of social differentiation – capitalism in its rawest form
Fast-forward 80 years: What is the evidence for dialect change in the later 20\textsuperscript{th} century?

- Variationist studies from 1960s on
- Increasing focus on region and geography (Britain, Llamas, Watt, Kerswill, Cheshire, Maguire)
Dialect change and social change (David Britain 2009, 2012)

• ‘Dialect loss’, ‘dialect attrition’
  – On different levels: phonology, morphosyntax, lexis
  – Dialect contact not necessarily implicated

• Dialect supralocalisation/regional dialect levelling
  – Caused by dialect contact

• Dialect contact caused by the supralocalisation of British society: urbanisation, counter-urbanisation, new towns, new suburbs.
Patterns of dialect change

Dedialectalisation:
• Lexical, phonological, grammatical dedialectalisation
• May happen *without* contact (?)
• Equivalent to Auer 2005’s ‘cone’ model?

Dialect levelling/dialect supralocalisation
• Contact-induced (?)

Diffusion:
• Geographical diffusion (contagion diffusion)
• Migration diffusion

Innovation:
• May be endogenous (to speech community, not only ‘language-internal’) – i.e. *no contact* with other speech communities
• May be induced by dialect or language contact
## Phonological dedialectalisation

(move to Standard English pronunciation of words)

Example from County Durham, northeast England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word set</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Village/Year of birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Byers Green 1880 (Orton 1933)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ushaw Moor 1940 (Kerswill 1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ushaw Moor 1987 (recordings by Kerswill, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>food, choose, move, prove ...</td>
<td>‘choose’ vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>out, mouth, house, town, cow, down ...</td>
<td>Set 2 varies between ‘choose’ and ‘mouth’ vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>owt (‘anything’), nowt (‘nothing’) ...</td>
<td>‘mouth’ vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>four, daughter, thought, bought ...</td>
<td>Set 4 varies between ‘caught’ and ‘mouth’ vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Set 4 has ‘caught’ vowel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mobility, contact and social class

• These (largely) class-free discussions do not take account of social differentiation

• Differences in social class structure:
  – Through time
  – Between communities
Social class in British variationist sociolinguistics

• After Trudgill (1974), class became reduced to just two, well-separated categories (Milroy, Foulkes et al. 1990s, Kerswill et al. 1990s).

• Later, abandoned
  – Focus on mobility and diffusion (D. Britain)

• Now increase in interest in prestige varieties (work by Fabricius on Received Pronunciation, Stuart-Smith on Scottish Standard English)

• Meanwhile, social class has regained enormous renewed interest among both sociologists and non-specialists ...
• Great British Class Survey – Mike Savage and colleagues
• Savage, Mike (2015) Social Class in the 21st Century
Registrar General’s social class scheme (1913)

Non-manual
I  Professional
II  Managerial and technical
IIIN  Non-manual skilled

Manual
IIIM  Manual skilled
IV  Manual semi-skilled
V  Manual unskilled
National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, 2001 (NS-SEC)

• Socio-economic classification based on occupation
• Conceptually based on ‘employment relations’
• Job security/prospects/autonomy
• ‘Service contract’ relationship
• ‘Labour contract’ relationship

Source: B. Johnson 2011: Life expectancy by NS-SEC: Structure, technical and conceptual issues and results
## National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, 2001 (NS-SEC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational categories</th>
<th>Seven-class</th>
<th>Five-class</th>
<th>Three-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>1 Employers in large establishments</td>
<td>1 Higher managerial and professional occupations</td>
<td>1 Professional and managerial occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>2 Higher managerial occupations</td>
<td>2 Lower managerial and professional occupations</td>
<td>2 Lower managerial and professional occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>3-6 Higher professional occupations</td>
<td>3 Intermediate occupations</td>
<td>3 Professional and managerial occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4</td>
<td>7-10 Lower professional and higher technical occupations</td>
<td>4 Small employers and own account workers</td>
<td>4 Lower supervisory and technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>11 Lower managerial occupations</td>
<td>5 Lower supervisory and technical</td>
<td>5 Semi-routine and manual occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6</td>
<td>12 Higher supervisory occupations</td>
<td>6 Semi-routine occupations</td>
<td>6 Semi-routine occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L7</td>
<td>13-16 Intermediate occupations</td>
<td>7 Routine occupations</td>
<td>7 Routine occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8</td>
<td>17-18 Employers in small establishments</td>
<td>4 Small employers and own account workers</td>
<td>3 Routine and manual occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L9</td>
<td>19-20 Own account workers</td>
<td>3 Small employers and own account</td>
<td>3 Routine and manual occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L10</td>
<td>21 Lower supervisory occupations</td>
<td>5 Lower supervisory and technical</td>
<td>5 Routine occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11</td>
<td>22-23 Lower technical occupations</td>
<td>6 Semi-routine occupations</td>
<td>6 Semi-routine occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L12</td>
<td>24-30 Semi-routine occupations</td>
<td>7 Routine occupations</td>
<td>7 Routine occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L13</td>
<td>31-35 Routine occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Great British Class Survey 2013
(Savage, Devine et al.)

• “In January 2011, with the help of BBC Lab UK, we asked the BBC audience to complete a unique questionnaire on different dimensions of class.
• We devised a new way of measuring class, which doesn't define class just by the job that you do, but by the different kinds of economic, cultural and social resources or 'capitals' that people possess.
• We asked people about their income, the value of their home and savings, which together is known as 'economic capital', their cultural interests and activities, known as 'cultural capital' and the number and status of people they know, which is called 'social capital'.
• Amazingly, more than 160,000 of you completed the survey. We now have one of the largest ever studies of class in Great Britain.”

Source: BBC website
GBCS: how was it done?

• Inductively derived classification based on 161,000 respondents to an online questionnaire and a smaller, representative sample of 1,026.

• Ideas are rooted in the work of Bourdieu with its appeal to cultural, social and economic capital as crucial differentiators.

• Questionnaire on:
  – Cultural capital: ‘high’ culture (classical concerts, art galleries) and ‘emergent’ culture (video games, social networking sites).
  – Social capital: ‘the range of people’s social ties’.
  – Economic capital: income, wealth, home ownership

• A cluster analysis derived seven groupings labelled ‘social classes’

• Less hierarchical: only two of the seven classes correspond to ‘middle class’ and ‘working class’ – as we shall see …
## Your tastes and interests - Activities

Please indicate how frequently you have participated in the following activities over the past year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to modern music (rock pop etc) gigs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to the opera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Your social network

For each of the occupations below, only tick 'yes' if you know someone socially who does that kind of work. If you don’t know someone who does that kind of work, or you only know them in a work context (not socially) please tick 'no'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel agent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call centre worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientist/Researcher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBCS class</td>
<td>% (of representative sample)</td>
<td>Average age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Elite:</strong> Most privileged class with high levels of all three capitals. Their high amount of economic capital sets them apart from everyone else.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Established Middle Class:</strong> High levels of all three capitals although not as high as the Elite. They are gregarious and culturally engaged.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Technical Middle Class:</strong> New, small class with high economic capital but less culturally engaged. Few social contacts &amp; are less socially engaged.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. New Affluent Workers:</strong> Medium levels of economic capital and higher levels of cultural and social capital. They are a young and active group.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Traditional Working Class:</strong> Scores low on all forms of capital although they are not the poorest group. The average age of this class is older than the others.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Emergent Service Workers:</strong> New class with low economic capital but high levels of 'emerging' cultural capital and high social capital. Young and urban.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Precariat:</strong> The most deprived class of all with low levels of economic, cultural and social capital. The everyday lives of members of this class are precarious.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GBCS and sociolinguistics

Pros:

• Blurring of the boundary between middle and working classes.
  – This also implies that there is no explicit stratification between the intermediate classes.

• Age pattern shows social change

Cons:

• The scheme can’t easily deal with lifespan mobility

• Does not deal with Bourdieu’s linguistic capital
  – But would be easy to incorporate

• Problem of using GBCS for sampling
  – Relatedness to NS-SEC and traditional sociolinguistic class stratifications potentially makes sampling possible in a two-stage process
Reconciling socio-demographic change and social class?

A critical question without an answer (yet):

• Are certain sorts of class structure associated with particular types of community (and hence speech community)?
  – Contact vs. isolation seems to be a decisive parameter
Contact types and language change: summary (Trudgill 2011)

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

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

- **Low-contact situations** are likely to lead to *preservation* of existing morphological and phonological complexity.
Translating contact-type to community-type (Trudgill)

• Contact vs. isolation
• Dense vs. loose social networks
• Social stability vs. instability
• Relatively small vs. relatively large community size

➢ But no mention of social class
  ▪ Social class constrains/favours contact between people
  ▪ Social class shapes attitudes
How social structure at community level affects language change

Henning Andersen (1988):

- **Open** vs. **closed** communities, also applying to the dialects spoken there. **External contact** is high vs. low.

Now he introduces a new distinction:

- **Exocentric** vs. **endocentric** communities, also applying to dialects. Subjective, **attitudinal factors** favour vs. disfavour selecting incoming, external norms.
Four community types  
(after Andersen)

- **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 their 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.
Four community types
(after Andersen, application to Britain by PK)

- **Endocentric closed** (Type 1): geographically peripheral, and self-contained. Metropolitan inner city. Innovations endogenous. Examples: London’s inner city, 2000s (high internal contact), Belfast inner city, 1970s (low internal contact?).

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

- **Exocentric closed** (Type 3): linguistic norms are pervious to outside influence, but contact is slight. Example: rural town Huntly, late 1990s. But also: at a time of social upheaval, Glasgow inner-city communities adopting external features, e.g. th-fronting (Stuart-Smith).

- **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. Examples: small island Lindisfarne, also suburban areas of cities.
Meshing speech community types and social class

These types of community suggest different types of social class structures:

- **Endocentric closed**: great socioeconomic differences and little contact/mobility across class boundary
- **Endocentric open**: strong internal cohesion, often working-class, but external contacts
- **Exocentric closed**: rural with rural ‘life mode’: small differences in wealth and social practices. Also deprived working-class communities undergoing rapid change
- **Exocentric open**: again rural, but existing social structure being almost completely dissipated
• Conclusion: More questions than answers!


• Milroy, L. 2007. Off the shelf or under the counter? On the social dynamics of sound changes, in Christopher Cain and Geoffrey Russom (eds), *Studies in English Historical Linguistics III*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 149-72


