

**PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION AND CHANGE IN LONDON COCKNEY
ENGLISH: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY**

BY

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For my family.

Mum, Dad, Erlend and Øystein

Inger-Margrethe

and

Allis

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ABSTRACT

Denne oppgaven har hatt som mål å undersøke fonologisk variasjon og endring i varieteten som er brukt i Øst-London, tradisjonelt kalt *Cockney*. Hovedfokuset har vært på den sosiale gruppen som denne delen av London tradisjonelt har blitt assosiert med, nemlig den hvite anglikanske arbeiderklasse. Prosjektet er et sosiolingvistisk studie der talemålet til to forskjellige aldersgrupper har blitt undersøkt. Utvalget bestod av seks voksne (en kvinne og fem menn) og åtte ungdommer (fem jenter og tre gutter). Analysen er en kvantitativ analyse av seks fonologiske variabler i korrelasjon med de sosiale variablene alder og kjønn. Fem av de fonologiske variablene er tradisjonelt betegnet som karakteristiske Cockney-trekk, den sjettede, R-fronting er et språktrekk som i de siste tiårene har vokst hyppig frem blant unge mennesker i store deler av England., også i Øst-London. Avhandlingen undersøker også noen eksterne mekanismer bak språkendring. Hovedfokuset når det gjelder språkendring er på geografisk spredning og taleakkomodasjon med nivellering som resultat. Nivellering er forklart som bortfall eller redusering av geografisk eller sosialt markerte former som erstattes av former som har en bredere geografisk valuta. De underbyggende hypotesene for denne oppgaven har følgende ordlyd: 1. Den empiriske dataen vil avsløre at talemålet i Øst-London har endret seg fra tradisjonell Cockney ved å vise høyere distribusjon av de tradisjonelle Cockney-formene hos de eldre informantene enn de yngre. 2. De unge kvinnene vil lede talemålsendringen ved å lede an i bruken av de 'nye' formene. 3. Talemålet i Øst-London tar del i en nivelleringsprosess ved å vise konvergens med andre varieteter i Sør-Øst England.

Resultatene viser at de språktrekkene som har opplevd spredning som resultat av geografisk diffusjon fra London og Sør-Øst England har høyere distribusjon hos de yngre informantene enn de eldre, dette gjelder T-glottalisering, TH-fronting, L-vokalisering og R-fronting. Resultatene for bortfall av /h/ og monoftongering av MOUTH kan antyde at disse trekkene er på retrett hos de yngre språkbrukerne. Dette gjelder spesielt bortfall av /h/ hvor den kvantitative analysen viste hyppig bruk av /h/ hos de yngre informantene. Resultatene for distribusjonen av de lingvistiske variablene i forhold til kjønn var stort sett tvetydige. Kun med monoftongering av MOUTH viste resultatene tydelig forskjell mellom kjønnene, der ungdomsjentene scorer lavest for monoftongering.

Med alle variablene som ble undersøkt i dette prosjektet, kanskje med unntak av MOUTH, kan det sies at ungdommen i Øst-London tar del i en nivelleringsprosess da disse variablene viser vesentlig utbredelse. Det er imidlertid mange andre språktrekk som fremdeles er særegne for London, og det er mye som tyder på at nyvinningen i London fortsetter.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim and Scope

This thesis aims to do a sociolinguistic study on accent variation and change in London English. The speech situation in London is a very complex one indeed. The London English variety is by no means a homogenous accent as there is considerable variation in terms of geography, social class, age, gender, and also ethnicity. The speech situation in London is an exciting topic to study, not only because of the diversity in London speech, but also because of the fact that London is a significant cultural centre, and thus also a linguistic centre in Britain, as claimed by Wells (1982: 301).

By diversity I mean that there are many different varieties spoken in London, but in an attempt to classify them, one can speak of two main varieties of London English, Popular London (sometimes also often referred to as Estuary English) and the broad working class speech of East London (traditionally referred to as Cockney).

This thesis will explore what is going on with the speech of East London working class speakers (traditionally referred to as Cockney) compared to earlier accounts of the accent spoken in the traditional East End. I will use the term 'traditional' East End as it is used by Fox, referring to the area which is now the modern day borough of Tower Hamlets and the southern parts of Hackney borough (Fox 2007). The study is an apparent time case study where I have recorded different age cohorts, young adolescents (15-16 years old) and adults (35+) and I have considered if there is significant and systematic variation between the younger and the older speakers (see further chapter 4).

Even though working class London English has been described by many (first by Wells, 1982) as "the most influential source of phonological innovation in England and perhaps in the whole English speaking world" (301), there have not been many studies of the East London variety in recent years. There is however a quite substantial project going on now and there was another project that was carried out between 2004 and 2007. These projects are initiated by Paul Kerswill at Lancaster University, and the research group includes Eivind Torgersen (also at Lancaster University), Sue Fox, Jenny Cheshire, and Arfaan Khan (all three at Queen Mary, University of London). In the first project they did different studies of London English which mainly focused on Linguistic innovation. They

sampled 72 adolescents (16-19 years of age) within two boroughs of London (Hackney and Havering). The second project, which is still running, has its main focus on Multicultural London English. The project examines the role of ethnicity as a source of linguistic innovation in London¹. One member of the research group, Sue Fox, has also done a PhD dissertation (unpublished) on London English in the Traditional East End (Fox 2007). Before Kerswill et al, the last substantial empirical phonological study of East End London English was done by Eva Sivertsen in 1960 (*Cockney Phonology*, 1960). There exist however several descriptions of Cockney (for instance Beaken 1971, Matthews 1972, Hudson & Holloway 1977, Wright 1981, Wells 1982, Pointner 1996), and also, Cockney is often being referred to, for instance by Wells when he proposes that the working class speech of London is the most influential source of innovation in Britain today (Wells 1982: 301), but Wells' description of Cockney mainly has Sivertsen as its main point of reference so it is now rather out-dated.

This study will also consider some possible mechanisms for language change, where the most important one is the apparent process of Dialect Levelling. I will, however, also consider some other extra-linguistic factors such as ethnicity, age, and gender as sources of linguistic innovation, and thus also for language change in the East End, and also attitudinal factors and identity. But my main aim is to investigate the status of a selection of traditional Cockney features, with focus on the group that has traditionally been associated with Cockney, namely white Anglo working class people. The traditional Cockney features, or the linguistic variables, considered are MOUTH-monophthonging, L-vocalisation, H-dropping, TH-fronting, T-glottalling, and R-fronting (further descriptions of the variables will be presented in chapter 3).

1.2 Historical background: Cockney – The Traditional East End and its language

1.2.1 What is Cockney?

The term Cockney is used to describe both the people and the dialect spoken in the traditional East End. The traditional definition of a “true” Cockney is one who has lived in London all

¹ More information about the projects can be found at <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/projects/linguistics/innovators/> and <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/groups/LVLT/activities/539/>

his/her life, and who is born within the sound of the Bow Bells, i.e. the bells of St Mary-Le-Bow in Cheapside in east central London (see e.g. Wright 1981: 11). This rather strict definition is however a bit difficult to take literally, as both Wright (1981) and Fox (2007) point out, when considering both the fact that the area around the church is not residential, the nearest residential areas are Whitechapel and the Golden Lane estate by the Barbican, which under normal circumstances would be out of hearing range of the bells of St Mary (Wright 1981: 11) and also Fox's claim that the Cockney accent has experienced a spread to a wider geographical area (Fox 2007), as will be discussed more thoroughly below. Even though the traditional definition of a Cockney is somewhat inaccurate in terms of being too exclusive, this definition is still used by some people in the East End today, as seen for instance by one of my informants' claim that he is, being born in Waterloo, still considered a true Cockney since he could hear the sound of the Bow Bells better than many people in the traditional East End, which is commonly considered the 'true' Cockney area.

According to Wright, the word "Cockney" derives from the Middle English word *cockeney* "cock's egg", which originally suggested a small or misshapen egg, and probably a synonym for anything that was odd (1981: 11). So traditionally the term Cockney was used as a naming for a Londoner which had some amount of humiliation and ridicule attached to it, but the people I met that considered themselves Cockneys were proud to be one. I should however again emphasise that it is rather hasty to regard all people from the 'traditional' Cockney areas as speakers of one homogenous accent/variety. Cockney is by no means an unambiguous term to use, but it is an attempt to classify the working class speech of London, and as we will see, the Cockney accent has changed to some degree in profile.

In table 1.1 below a small overview of some characteristic Cockney features are listed. The table shows the Cockney realisations of the lexical sets that have the most striking differences from RP and Popular London, and some main consonantal features. The features are based on the overview of London English provided by Wells in his book *Accents of English* (1982: 301-332). The variables considered in the present study will be presented further in chapter 3. The realisations given in the table are only meant to be a small overview of some of the broad Cockney characteristics and it is highly simplified, and it should be kept in mind that all of the features are variable realisations, and not features of a homogenous Cockney accent.

Table 1.1 Overview of some characteristic Cockney features

TRAP	ɛ	CHOICE	ɔɪ	GOAT	aʊ
STRUT	ʊ, ~a	GOOSE	əʊ~u:	letter	ɐ
FLEECE	əi~vi	FACE	æɪ~aɪ	NEAR	ɪ:
MOUTH	æ:	PRICE	ɪɪ	SQUARE	ɛ:
Plosive affrication	[tʰəi] <i>tea</i>				
Glottalling of /p,t,k/	Replacement of /p, t, k/ by [ʔ]				
T-voicing	Replacement of intervocalic /t/ by [r]				
TH-fronting	Replacement of /θ, ð/ by [f, v]				
DH-stopping	Replacement of word-initial /ð/ by [d]				
H-dropping	Omission of /h/ in stressed syllable position				
L-vocalisation	Replacement of dark [ɫ] by a back voicoid [o] or [ʊ]				
Yod-dropping	Omission of /j/ in the environment after alveolar stop				

1.2.2 The Traditional East End and Social Changes

In order to get an overview of the language spoken in the East End today, it is important to consider some historical background about the traditional East End, which includes rapid movement of population and social changes. As already stated, the accent/dialect of the traditional East End London (and also its white working class population) is commonly referred to as Cockney. Cockney is mainly associated with the working class of the innermost suburbs of East London (Wells 1982: 302) (which include the modern borough of Tower Hamlets and the southern parts of the borough of Hackney), and Wells for instance regards Cockney as the broadest form of London English along a continuum of RP – Popular London (Estuary English) – Cockney (ibid). Fox however suggests that the Cockneys and the Cockney accent have spread further out from the traditional East End due to massive population shifting of many white working class Anglos, and also that the traditional East End

has undergone huge social changes. Fox claims that the reason for this is threefold (Fox 2007: 2).

The first reason has to do with the 'slum-clearance' programme which was a part of the post-war construction after WWII. Due to lack of housing in the East End after the war, large parts of its original inhabitants were moved out and decentralised to areas further east, or the easternmost suburbs of London like Barking and Havering, to estates that were built for this purpose, or to the new-established towns such as Basildon and Harlow in Essex, and Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire. The result of this was that the population in the East End after the war was decreasing to a point in 1981 where it was down to nearly a fourth of what it had been before the two World Wars. Since 1981 the population has steadily started to grow again, but now with quite substantial social changes (Fox 2007: 2).

The second reason, according to Fox, has to do with the closure of the busy docks in Tower Hamlets in the 70s, which resulted in high unemployment among the dock workers who had to seek work elsewhere. Many of them moved with their families to Tilbury where the only remaining dock was located. In 1981 the government sought to remedy the declining situation of the dock industry in East London, and the Dockland Development Corporation was established. The area began to flourish, and with the development of the Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs, a new financial centre was established. In the process of establishing this new financial centre a lot of new housing was developed in the surrounding area. These prestigious housing developments attracted a community that was more Middle Class than the traditional Working Class with which the area was mainly associated (Fox 2007: 2).

The third reason for the social changes in this area is the fact that London, and particularly the East End, has for a long time been the point of arrival of many immigrants to Britain, starting with the Huguenots in the 17th century. The increasing population in the East End from 1981 is by large due to Bangladeshi immigrants to the East End during this period. The Bangladeshi now make up about one third of the population in the traditional East End, and are a substantial part of the 'new' working class (Fox 2007: 2-3).

In view of the extensive social changes in the traditional East End, it is reasonable to assume that there have been linguistic changes in this area as well. The Cockney accent can, as Fox claims, no longer be restricted to the area with which it is traditionally associated. However, by acknowledging that the Cockney accent is as much a class as a regional accent (Cruttenden 2008: 86), it is still plausible to consider it as the working class speech of London, only not solely restricted to the traditional East End. Nonetheless this thesis will mainly have its focus on the traditional East End, although some of the older speakers in the

sample at hand are not confined to this area (one has spent much of his life in Barking, another now lives in Essex etc.). When considering the possible linguistic changes of London Cockney English I will, as stated above, mainly be concerned with the external language change processes of dialect levelling and geographical diffusion as proposed by Trudgill among others. I will also regard the theory of Supra local vs. local change as fronted by Milroy et. al (1994a-b). I will provide a more thorough account of these aspects in the Theoretical Background chapter (chapter 2).

1.3 Sampling

This thesis will mainly base its analysis on data collected during November 2010. The informant selection was based on ethnographic and geographic criteria. The data was collected in forms of interviews with London speakers of two generations, both males and females. My focus of geographical locality was the borough of Tower Hamlets, and all of the younger informants are white Anglos born and raised within the Tower Hamlets borough (the borough basically includes all the areas listed by Wells as being associated with the Cockney accent; Bethnal Green, Stepney, Bow, Poplar, Whitechapel, Mile End, Shoreditch and the southern parts of Hackney borough (Wells 1982, 302)). The older informants are all white Anglo working class speakers, but not all of them are born or still live within the traditional East End, but still within the extended Cockney area, for instance Barking and Essex (following Fox's claim above that due to the moving of many Cockney families the East End has experienced a geographical spread). The style of the interviews is both the informal interview situation and the more formal reading style.

I have chosen to look at some phonological variables that are regarded as characteristic Cockney features. The phonological variables include *TH-fronting*, *T-glottalling*, *L-vocalisation*, *H-dropping*, and *MOUTH-monophthonging*. I have also included another feature which is not considered a characteristic traditional Cockney feature, but is a feature that commonly occurs with younger speakers in large parts of Britain, namely *R-fronting* (the variables will be presented more thoroughly in chapter 3). I have done a quantitative analysis of these variables and considered how they correlate with the extra linguistic variables of age and to some extent gender. All the speakers in my data can be deemed white working class East Londoners, so variation in correlation with social class and ethnicity will not be a main issue, although I will make some assumptions related to these social factors as well, but then

not in direct relation with my data. Differences related to gender will mainly be considered when regarding the younger speakers, as my sample unfortunately does not include enough adult female speakers to make any adequate generalisations concerning comparisons between the genders in the older age group.

1.3.1 The borough of Tower Hamlets

In this section I will provide a brief overview of the location where the field work was carried out, the inner London borough of Tower Hamlets. All the informants in the present study were located within the borough. All of the younger informants in the sample attended the same comprehensive secondary school situated in Tower Hamlets. All of the younger informants were born and brought up in Bethnal Green, Stepney, Bow or Poplar. Most of the older informants were born and brought up in Bethnal Green or Hackney (more information about the informants in chapter 4). The inner London borough of Tower Hamlets is, together with Hackney, one of the most deprived areas in England. The unemployment rate was over 10% in Tower Hamlets and Hackney in 2005/6 against the national average of 5.5% (numbers from National Statistics Online), and about half the children in inner London lived below the poverty threshold. The inner London boroughs have however seen considerable reduction in poverty since 2000. Tower Hamlets is one of the most diverse boroughs in terms of ethnicity, as this borough has been the main point of arrival for immigrants coming to England. In 2006 56% of the population in Tower Hamlets belonged to another ethnic group than white British, 30% were of Bangladeshi origin (National Statistics Online). Tower Hamlets is also a borough of great contrasts; on the one hand there are very deprived areas with council estates that experience poverty, high unemployment and high crime rates, yet on the other hand some of the areas in the borough, namely the Docklands, experience high prosperity with expensive real estates, such as in the West India Docks and Canary Wharf. All the informants in the sample from Tower Hamlets are from the more deprived areas of the borough, and it seems they do not prosper much from the upswing of the Docklands.

1.4 Research questions and hypotheses

This study will consider the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. Has the speech situation in London's traditional East End changed from traditional 'Cockney' in terms of phonology? If so, what do these changes entail?
2. Which traditional Cockney features still hold ground in the speech of working class adolescents in the traditional East End today?
3. How is the correlation between the linguistic variables and the independent variables of age and gender?
4. Is the accent spoken in present day London East End taking part in the dialect levelling process of the south-east of England?

Hypothesis 1:

The data will reveal that the accent spoken in the East End has changed from traditional Cockney by showing more occurrences of the traditional Cockney features among the older speakers than the younger speakers

Hypothesis 2:

Female adolescents will lead the accent change in terms of using more of the 'new' features.

Hypothesis 3:

The accent of East London is taking part in the Regional Dialect Levelling process of south-east England by showing convergence with other varieties.

1.5 Previous Studies on London English

In this section I will provide an overview of the main studies previously conducted on London English. I will mainly be concerned with the ones that are relevant for this study in terms of attention to the working class speech of London and to the areas with which working class London speech is traditionally associated, but I will also include two studies done on south-east London English. I will present a summary of the projects, and with the studies on East London English also some main findings.

As already mentioned, thorough sociolinguistic studies of the proclaimed influential

source of phonological innovation, Cockney, have to some degree been lacking. Since Eva Sivertsen's *Cockney Phonology* (1960) there have not been many studies on the language spoken in the traditional East End. Sivertsen's study is a thorough descriptive phonological account of Cockney, mainly based on the speech of four working class women in Bethnal Green. Her sample did not consist solely of adult females, she also observed male and younger informants as well, but for the intensive study the elderly housewives were selected (1960: 4-5). Sivertsen's data was collected over several periods between 1949 and 1956 and the observations were mainly made on natural unrecorded speech, but she also made tape recordings for later reference (ibid: 4). Included in her description of the phonological features of Cockney, are all of the linguistic variables considered in the present study (perhaps with the exception of [ʊ] for [ɪ] (for further discussion, see chapter 3.7)). Sivertsen's work is also one of Wells's main sources for his account of Cockney in his *Accents of English*, vol. 2 (1982).

Since Sivertsen, the last main sociolinguistic studies of the accent spoken in the traditional East End are the studies conducted by Kerswill et al., as a part of their project on London English. Their main focus is on ethnicity as a motivator for language change. They have published a number of articles on this. One of them (Torgersen et al. 2006) is on ethnicity as a source of changes in the London vowel system. In this article they have considered the quality of the short vowels in KIT, DRESS, LOT, STRUT, TRAP and FOOT, and the long vowels in START and GOOSE of informants from Ashford, Reading, and two London boroughs, Hackney (inner London) and Havering (outer London) (the informants were both young and older speakers and belonging to different ethnic groups). The vowel qualities have been analysed acoustically. In this article they show that some of the short-vowel qualities in inner London are different for the younger speakers than the older speakers. Their results showed no significant change for KIT, DRESS, LOT and START, but they found significant change for STRUT, TRAP and FOOT. The STRUT and TRAP vowels follow the convergence of south-east England (i.e. they correspond with the results from Ashford). However, the results also show that the changes are more dramatic in Hackney, as there is greater difference there between the younger and older speakers (2006: 261). The results for FOOT are also quite similar to the ones in Reading and Ashford, but the FOOT vowel in Hackney has sometimes a more back quality, mainly among non-Anglos. Kerswill et al argue that this is a tendency towards a process of divergence and innovation when it comes to the realisation of this short vowel. This is claimed to be largely due to the impact of inter-ethnic relations, as they have

found variation between ethnic groups (2006).

In another similar study, Kerswill et al. (2008) considered the diphthong qualities in London speech. They analysed the speech of their Hackney and Havering informants and conducted acoustic analyses of the MOUTH, PRICE, FACE and GOAT vowels. Their analysis shows, among other things, that the diphthongs are shifting in two directions; backing/raising and onset fronting. The backing/raising of the diphthongs are most evident in Inner London, with non-Anglo speakers leading the change, and so far this change has not spread to the mainstream of the south-east. Onset fronting on the other hand is found with many speakers, both middle- and working-class in the south-east (Kerswill et al 2008 with reference to Cheshire et al. 1999). To sum up, the inner London diphthongs do not, for the most part, take part in a levelling process of the south-east, but are, as well as some of the monophthongs, rather taking part in a process of divergence and innovation.

A third article published for this project is also on ethnicity as a motor for language change, and is sort of a sum up of the two other studies (Cheshire et al. 2008). Again, the speech of their Hackney and Havering informants was analysed. In this article they are also concerned with the friendship-networks of the speakers, as well as ethnicity. They present the findings for the vowel realisations in the two other studies (for Hackney), in addition they have considered some consonantal variables as well, namely H-dropping, K-backing, DH-stopping, and TH-fronting. Their results show that H-dropping occurs significantly less frequently with the younger speakers in Hackney than the older speakers (as well as in the south-east of England (cf. Williams & Kerswill 1999)), with non-Anglos having the least occurrences of Ø (2008: 15). The results for TH-fronting show more usage of the fronted variant among the younger speakers than the older, with Anglos having a higher percentage score than non-Anglos, and the Anglos with a non-Anglo networks having the highest percentage score (ibid: 16). They conclude that all young people in Hackney use these 'new' features to some extent, and for the most part it is non-Anglos who are leading the changes (ibid: 18).

Susan Fox's unpublished PhD dissertation (Fox 2007) also has focus on the role of ethnicity for language change in the traditional East End (Tower Hamlets). Fox's sample is also mixed in terms of ethnicity and consists of speakers of white (Anglos), black, mixed race, and Asian origin (mainly Bangladeshi). These are all working class adolescents, and they all attend the same Youth club (Fox 2007). Fox considers the linguistic variables of PRICE and FACE as well as some allomorphic variation in the article system. Her results for PRICE show six different realisations. Three of them considered traditional East London realisations, and

three of them ‘new’ realisations. The results show that the ‘new’ realisations occur most with the non-Anglo speakers (2007: 118-127). The results for FACE show five different realisations, two of which are features previously attested in Cockney. The three “new” features are, as with PRICE, more frequent with non-Anglo speakers.

Tollfree (1999) has done a study on speakers in different locations in South East London, both SELE (South-East London English which refers to working class) speakers, and SELRS (South-East London Regional Standard which refers to more middle-class) speakers. Her data was collected during 1990-4 by means of recorded interviews with 90 randomly selected informants, both older and younger speakers, in six different south-east London communities; Peckham, Sydenham and Penge, which represent working class communities, and Dulwich, Beckenham and Bromley, which represent middle class communities (1999: 163-164). Tollfree provides an overview of the linguistic features in these areas, including the ones considered here.

Altendorf (2003) has also done a small scale study in south-east London as a part of her study on contemporary south-eastern English presented in her book *Estuary English – Levelling at the interface of RP and South-Eastern British English* (2003). Her London sample consists of six school girl informants, two private school pupils (upper middle class), two grammar school pupils (middle class), and two comprehensive school pupils (working class). Her data was collected in the course of 1990s (2003: 42). She is concerned with regional, social and stylistic variation, and investigates all of the variables considered in the present study (and more), except for R-fronting.

I have now presented some previous studies on the language spoken in the traditional East End which this study can be related to. As shown, many of these studies have mainly focused on Ethnicity as a factor for language change, but some of the changes can be seen as part of the dialect levelling of the south-east of England, as shown with some of the short vowels, and clearly with the consonantal features, such as H-dropping and TH-fronting. In the following chapter I will present the theoretical background for this study, with main focus on the process of Dialect levelling.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: LANGUAGE VARIATION AND CHANGE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the theoretical background on which this thesis is based. Firstly this chapter will provide a brief overview of the linguistic field of Sociolinguistics with emphasis on language variation and change. Secondly it will provide an account of dialect levelling and geographical diffusion as mechanisms for external language change, as I will consider if it is possible that these factors can have an effect on the language change in East London today.

2.2 Sociolinguistics

At a very basic level one might say that sociolinguistics is a discipline within linguistics which is concerned with how language is used and who uses different linguistic forms, in short, basically language in use. Another important aspect of sociolinguistic studies is to consider the mechanisms behind language variation and change. Scholars commonly distinguish between internal, or systemic, and external factors. In this thesis I will be concerned with some external factors for language change, as these have been seen to sometimes override systemic changes (cf. Torgersen & Kerswill 2004). As the term sociolinguistics can suggest, it involves a study of the correlations between linguistic and social factors. The social factors are often referred to as extra-linguistic or independent variables. I will here give a short presentation of some independent variables that are often regarded as devices for language variation and change. Some are directly relevant for the purpose of this study, and some are more remotely connected.

2.2.1 Age

My sample consists of both adolescent and adult speakers. When investigating the distribution of the linguistic variables in correlation with the independent variable of age, one can investigate synchronic variation and also language change, as differences across generations are often interpreted as evidence for language change, this is if the *apparent time hypothesis* is accepted. The principle is based on the conception that different age cohorts can be regarded as representatives of different times (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 35). One of the criteria for change in apparent time to reflect change in real time, is that the linguistic system of an individual remains reasonably stable throughout life (after the ‘critical period’ (Meyerhof: 127)), or at least that the changes that may occur are regular and predictable (Eckert 1997: 151-152). Adolescents are regarded as being the main innovators when it comes to linguistic change, as they are in a “life-stage” where they are constructing their identities, and often in opposition to or independently of their elders (Eckert 1997: 163), while older people are regarded as more conservative. It is however difficult to perceive language patterns as changing over the years, or as evidence of increased conservatism with a speaker (or both for that matter), when based only on apparent-time data, so there has to be some form of support from real time data as well (Eckert 1997: 152). The linguistic variables and evidence of change considered in this thesis find support in previous accounts of the working class speech of East London, and is thus a way to contextualise the contemporary data.

2.2.2 Gender

It is a common notion among scholars that men and women from the same speech community use different linguistic forms (perhaps by preference), or rather that they show a different distribution of the same forms (Holmes 2001: 153).

The tendency is that women across all social groups generally prefer more standard forms than men, and consequently, men tend to use more vernacular forms than women (Holmes 2001: 156). This tendency is evident in many sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Trudgill 1982, see also Holmes 2001: 153-166). But rather than pointing to the rather simplistic explanation of females using more standard forms, which suggests that they are oriented towards the standard (RP), Milroy et al. (1994a) point to the necessity of treating it a bit more carefully. They use the terms *local* and *supra-local* forms referring to features that are locally marked and features that can be found over a wider locality, i.e. features that have become

more mainstream or more popular, which are not necessarily considered standard (Milroy et al. 1994b). This notion gets support by the spread of many supra-local features (e.g. all the consonantal features considered in this study), which then are not considered to be standard forms (glottal replacement of /t/ for instance is traditionally considered a highly salient feature), and that female speakers tend to adopt these forms more so than male speakers. So rather than saying that female speakers have a tendency to adapt to more standard forms, they can be seen to rather adopt forms that are considered mainstream or popular, while male speakers are more likely to retain the localised forms. This is indicated by the evident presence of glottal replacement of /t/ in Tyneside. Milroy et al.'s studies (1994a, 1994b) show that the traditionally highly stigmatized feature of T-glottalling is found more with female speakers than male speakers, which at first glance seems to contradict the notion of females tending to adopt non-salient standard features. However, Milroy et al. distinguish between two types of glottalling, glottal replacement and glottal *reinforcement* (1994a, 1994b), the latter considered a localised feature of Tyneside (but generally considered less salient than glottal replacement (cf. e.g. Trudgill 1974)), which is the form generally preferred by male speakers. Their results then illustrate that, relatively speaking, males favour localised forms, while females the supra-local forms, i.e. the mainstream. So this study will keep this in mind when investigating the correlation between the linguistic variables considered in the present study and gender.²

2.2.3 Ethnicity

This study is an investigation of the accent spoken in the traditional East End with focus on the social group with which this area is traditionally associated; namely white Anglo working class speakers. However, when considering the speech situation in East London it is difficult to not look to ethnicity as a possible motor for accent change. Kerswill holds that, to not include ethnicity as a factor leaves out half the story, seeing that people of Bangladeshi origin make up the majority of the population in Tower Hamlets, and also that Anglo adolescents live in these multi-ethnic neighbourhoods as well and their (Kerswill et al) studies show that they are not unaffected by that (personal correspondence). However, when considering ethnicity as a factor for language change in the traditional East End I will mainly draw on the

² As will be explained in chapter 4.6.1.2 I have not considered the two types of glottalling of /t/ as individual features, as the need for distinction seems more evident in the speech situation of Tyneside, where the two variants are a bit different in profile than in for instance London.

studies conducted by Kerswill et al, and I will make no links to the role of ethnicity in direct correlation with the data material for this study. But I might point to the influence of ethnicity when considering the results.

2.2.4 Social Class

Since Labov's study of New York (1966) most sociolinguistic studies have in some way or other been concerned with the correlation of linguistic variables and various social classes, and it is also commonly agreed that social class does indeed play an important role when it comes to linguistic variation. All the informants used for the purpose of this study can be deemed working class, so social class as an independent variable is not very relevant in this study. I have classified my speakers as working class based on geographical locality, occupation and education.

However, there are some elements that are interesting to consider, also for this study. One of which is the apparent spread of localised, indeed salient, London features which have not only spread geographically but also socially. Features such as L-vocalisation and T-glottalling have been identified with speakers belonging to higher social classes (see further chapter 3).

2.2.5 Stylistic variation

That people tend to alter their speech, consciously or unconsciously, depending on the formality of the situation or the topic discussed is well known. The most evident pattern is that people tend to use more standard language in formal situations, and more vernacular in less formal situations (cf. Holmes 2001: 235-236). Another way of putting it is that people tend to be more or less conscious about the way they speak depending on the formality of the situation. In the interviews conducted for this study I included a reading passage, where I asked my informants to read a short text. This was mainly done in order to secure occurrences of relevant tokens, but also to include a more formal speech situation. This study has not been so much concerned with stylistic variation in the quantitative analysis, but I will make some comments on style when discussing the findings. One thing I did note when analysing, was that most of my linguistic variables were not stylistically stratified with the younger speakers,

which might point to a change in profile for these features, or that a reading style passage is not necessarily a sufficient approach to secure stylistic variation.

2.3 Dialect Levelling

As already mentioned, many linguists have interpreted correlation between linguistic variables and age as evidence for change in progress. An important question related to such findings within the field of sociolinguistics is whether these changes are internally motivated (i.e. systemic changes) or externally motivated, that speakers actively adopt features found in other varieties. As briefly discussed above with the local/supra-local distinction, scholars have conventionally thought of accent convergence as a desire to conform to the standard (and this is also often the case (cf. e.g. Trudgill 1999)). More recently, however, studies have shown that accent variation and change is actually more and more influenced by *non-standard* varieties, and most of these changes seem to stem from the non-standard varieties of south-east England (Foulkes & Docherty 1999b: 11), as seen for instance with the already mentioned study of T-glottalling in Tyneside (Milroy et. al 1994a-b). It is claimed that this extensive spread of non-standard features has led to levelling of many regional accents in England. The process of levelling is explained by Trudgill as “the reduction or attrition of *marked* variants” (Kerswill 2003: 223 with reference to Trudgill 1986: 98; emphasis in original), marked variants are explained as “unusual or in a minority” (ibid.), and can be geographically marked forms, or socially marked forms, i.e. that these forms are mainly attributed to members of a certain social class, as one might say is the case with many Cockney features. As a consequence of the reduction of the localised forms, ‘new’ forms have to emerge, and many studies have revealed these ‘new’ forms tend to be found over a wider geographical area, and thus reducing the differences between regional varieties (Williams & Kerswill 1999: 149). A very much cited example of levelling is the accent referred to as *Estuary English*, which is often described as a variety placed in between on a continuum from RP to Cockney (Foulkes & Docherty 1999b: 11).

There are, according to Kerswill (2003), two main mechanisms behind the levelling process. The first one is *geographical diffusion* which is explained by Kerswill with reference to Trudgill (1982) as a mechanism ‘by which features spread out from a populous and economically and culturally dominant centre’ (Kerswill 2003: 223). This mechanism of external language change and of language spread is in line with Wells’ notion of the spread of

London English features. The process of levelling is, as Kerswill points out, closely related to the mechanism of *speech accommodation* which is held by Kerswill as being the other main mechanism behind a levelling process (ibid.). Speech accommodation refers to a process where interlocutors, provided mutual good will is present, tend to converge linguistically (ibid.). When different varieties meet, a process of accommodation takes place, and over a period of time it may lead to long term accommodation, and then changes may happen (Kerswill 2003:223 with reference to Trudgill 1986: 1-8).

One of the criteria for speech accommodation, and thus also dialect levelling, to take place is increased mobility and language contact through face-to-face interaction. Language contact through mobility can happen in two ways: either through active mobility, where speakers move to new dialect areas; or through passive mobility, where people are being exposed to other varieties as a result of in-migration to their community (Stuart-Smith et al 2007: 223). The prerequisite of mobility is also closely linked to the social network theory, that the people who are most mobile (often middle-class speakers) also usually belong to networks with weaker ties, i.e. loose networks, and are thus more liable to adopt new features, while less mobile people (often people of working-class communities), usually belong to more close knit networks, and are thus less liable to adopt new features (ibid.: 224). However, this explanation does not apply to all of the current changes in Britain today, as seen with the vast spread of consonantal features such as TH-fronting, as these features have spread to less mobile, close-knit working class adolescents (cf. e.g. Stuart-Smith et al 2007, Williams & Kerswill 1999).

Another important prerequisite for dialect levelling is that speakers, on one level or another, are willing to adopt these more mainstream features. This last point is perhaps more important than the criterion of being mobile, as seen for instance with Stuart-Smith's study on Glaswegian teenagers (Stuart-Smith et al. 2007) which shows that a significant number of Glaswegian teenagers have picked up a number of features considered traditional Cockney features (for instance TH-fronting). It is hard to explain this tendency of adoption of Cockney features with the teenagers being mobile and having a lot of face-to-face contact with Londoners. Stuart-Smith explains the adoption with reference to the impact television might have on language change. So an important criterion is the willingness to adopt features which are regarded as appealing at some level.

There are many studies that are concerned with the apparent dialect levelling processes in England, and this is also one of the main aspects considered in the book *Urban Voices: Accent Studies in the British Isles* (Foulkes & Docherty 1999a). Williams and Kerswill (1999)

have been concerned with dialect levelling in the south-east of England, where they look at the Southern towns of Milton Keynes and Reading, and a Northern city, Hull. They find that many of the vowel features are becoming levelled in the two Southern towns, as seen for instance with the vowels of MOUTH and PRICE. MOUTH is being realised as the RP-like [aʊ] with many of the younger speakers in both Reading and Milton Keynes, and PRICE is targeted towards the London variant [aɪ] (1999: 151-156, see also final report in Cheshire et al 1999: 6). Hull seems more conservative, and does not for the most part take part in a levelling process of converging vowel realisations. It seems that with vowel changes there is a process of regional dialect levelling, where the convergence is mainly taking place in the south-east (Cheshire et al. 1999: 6-7). There are however studies that have regarded levelling of vowels in the North as well. Watt (2002) for instance claims that the localised Tyneside vowels in FACE [ɪə] and GOAT [ʊə] seems to be declining, and are being replaced by more (Northern) supra-local pronunciations [e:] and [o:]. Watt explains this tendency with reference to identity factors, that young speakers in Tyneside seems to be aware of the fact the traditional realisations are considered old-fashioned, but they do not want to sound like Southerners either, so there seems to be a 'trade-off' between being oriented towards more modern forms and regional loyalty, and thus they adopt these mainstream Northern variants (Watt 2002: 47, 57-58 see also Watt & Milroy 1999).

With consonant features however, the convergence seems to be national, as many consonantal features, such as TH-fronting and T-glottalling, are spreading to many parts of Britain (e.g. Williams & Kerswill 1999: 160, Cheshire et al. 1999: 7-8, Cheshire et al. 2008b: 1), and also to outside Britain (Stuart-Smith et al. 2007)

With regard to Cockney taking part in a dialect levelling process, i.e. that the variety spoken in the traditional East End is itself levelled, this might be seen as in conflict with the notion of geographical diffusion, as one variety is then both a source of innovation, spreading to other varieties of English, and also influenced by other varieties and losing some of its local character. However, my aim of departure will be that these two mechanisms work parallel to each other, or at least that Cockney is also subject to external influence. Then, for dialect levelling to be a plausible explanation for the language change in East End London, it is a prerequisite that speakers of the East End are indeed mobile, either actively or passively, and are exposed to other varieties of English. Another important prerequisite as we have seen is the willingness to adopt these mainstream forms.

3. THE LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

3.1 Introduction

In this section I will provide an overview of the phonological variables considered in this study. These are the variables that I will base the quantitative analysis on. The reason for choosing these features is that they are all (except for R-fronting) considered characteristic Cockney features. I am, as stated throughout this thesis, interested in the accent spoken in the East End today, and I want to examine whether these features that have been claimed characteristic Cockney features still hold ground in present-day London speech of white Anglo working class speakers. R-fronting has been included because this feature is commonly found with young speakers all over Britain, and can be seen as playing a role in the potential process of levelling of London English. Also, I have observed it rather frequently with my younger informants. This feature has also been devoted some extra attention in this chapter, as this feature only quite recently has emerged as an established variant in non-standard varieties in south-east England. I will have RP as the reference accent, i.e. I will provide the standard realisations (RP realisations) of these features and then consider the possible realisations in London English.

3.2 TH - fronting

TH refers to the spelling *th* which in RP is realised as a dental fricative, either as a fortis /θ/, or a lenis /ð/, for instance in words such as *thin* [θɪn] and *brother* [brʌðə].

The RP realisations of TH as /θ/ or /ð/ are also commonly used by London speakers. However, TH is sometimes subject to variable TH-fronting in London English, and then mainly in the broadest form of London speech (Cockney). When TH-fronting occurs, TH is realised as labiodental fricatives [f] or [v], so it involves replacement of /θ/ and /ð/ by [f] and [v] respectively (Wells 1982: 328). As Wells points out, the variable occurrence of TH-fronting does not include a systemic difference between broad London speech (Cockney) and

RP, as most London speakers have the dental fricatives in their phonemic inventory. This means that they are able, if they desire to do so, to distinguish between potential pairs such as *three* and *free* (ibid).

TH-fronting of /θ/ with the voiceless fricative [f] occurs in all positions, while fronting of /ð/ to [v] only occurs in non-initial position, thus one might get realisations such as [fi:f] *thief*, [befnəl gri:n] *Bethnal Green*, [saʊf] *south*, [təgevə] *together*, [wiv] *with*, but usually not [vis] for *this*. There are other possible realisations for word initial *th*, for instance [dɪs] for *this* (Wells 1982: 328), but this only applies for the lenis fricative /ð/.

As already mentioned TH-fronting is listed by Wells as a feature representative of the Cockney accent (Wells 1982: 328). This realisation of TH is also a feature that is spreading to other parts of Britain, as a result of geographical diffusion from London, as claimed by, among others, Trudgill in his study of East Anglia in his book *Dialect in Contact* (1986). In his study he shows that TH-fronting was commonly found with young working class speakers (speakers born after 1967) in almost all the urban centres (such as Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester) in East Anglia (Trudgill 1986: 54). In a more recent study, Kerswill shows that the merger of /θ/ and /f/ and /ð/ and /v/ has spread even further, and is also found with working class speakers in Northern England, more specifically in Hull (Kerswill 2003: 8). There is also reason to believe that this feature has lost some of its working class stigma, and is now also present in the speech of some middle class speakers. This is for instance shown by Williams and Kerswill (1999) where they reported instances of TH-fronting with both male and female middle class speakers in Milton Keynes, and male middle class speakers in Reading (1999: 160, Table 8.8). The spread of TH-fronting has largely been limited to England only, but Stuart-Smith has also reported TH-fronting with working class adolescents in Glasgow (2007).

3.3 T-glottalling

/t/ in RP is mainly realised simply as a fortis alveolar plosive [t]. Sometimes it can be subject to voicing or glottalling in some environments: /t/ may be voiced, and then realised as an

alveolar tap [ɾ], intervocalically as in [brɪɾɪʃ] *British*, and it can be glottalised preconsonantly as in [gæʔwɪk] *Gatwick* (Wells 1982: 299).

/t/ in London English is frequently realised as a glottal stop [ʔ]. T-glottalling is a feature that according to Wells is also considered as ‘one of the most stereotyped characteristics of Cockney’ (1982: 324), and the most salient being glottal replacement of /t/ (but also of /p/ and /k/, but this thesis will focus on the glottal replacement of /t/) in intervocalic position. /t/ in words like *better* and *water* might then be realised as [ʔ], [beʔə] and [wɔ:ʔə].

T-glottalling is also a feature that is not restricted to London only, even if this feature is a characteristic of and traditionally associated with the London accent/s. The various types of glottalling of /t/ are now a quite widespread variable all over Britain (cf. e.g. Milroy et.al. 1994, Foulkes & Docherty 1999a) and are also found outside the British Isles (cf. e.g. Trudgill & Hannah 1994, Holmes 1995). As stated above, it has also been documented that some forms of T-glottalling have been found with RP speakers (but then mainly in non-intervocalic position) (Fabricius 2002). The common explanation for the spread is that this feature has spread out from London as a result of both geographical diffusion and the social-psychological mechanism of accommodation as discussed in chapter 2.3, that the features are adopted because they are perceived as ‘modern’ or appealing at some level (e.g. Wells 1982: 106, Kerswill 2003).

3.4 H-dropping

H-dropping is a non-standard feature and does not occur with RP-speakers. H-dropping refers to the omission of /h/ in stressed syllable position, usually in the beginning of words, but also in word-medial position, yielding pronunciations such as [aʊs] *house*, and [bɪaɪnd] *behind*. H-dropping is a feature that is highly salient, mainly attributed working class speech, and is typically avoided by speakers belonging to higher classes: Wells for instance calls it “the single most powerful pronunciation shibboleth in England” (1982: 254).

H-dropping is yet another characteristic feature of Cockney, and also a feature that has

for the last 150 years been spreading out from London, as a result of geographical diffusion, according to Trudgill, and is now well established in the speech of urban working class speakers in East Anglia (1986: 44), and many other areas (e.g. Altendorf 2003: 62). However, there is a tendency now towards the restoration of stressed syllable /h/ in the varieties of the south-east, as shown by Williams and Kerswill (1999). Their results showed that their older speakers had very few occurrences of initial [h], but that there was a ‘surprisingly high use of the standard form’ (1999: 157) with working class adolescents in Milton Keynes and Reading, especially among the girls. In Hull, however, both generations had few instances of word initial [h]. In London there is also currently a tendency towards the restoration of /h/ as shown in the study by Cheshire et al (2008a), where there were significantly fewer occurrences of H-dropping with the Hackney adolescents than with their older peers.

3.5 L-vocalisation

In RP, /l/ is realised as the allophones clear [l] or dark [ɫ]. The clear allophone occurs in prevocalic position, as in words like *silly*, *lucky*, while the dark allophone occurs in all other positions (before a consonant or word finally) as in *felt* and *animal* (Wells 1982: 258).

In London English /l/ is sometimes subjected to vocalisation. L-vocalisation refers to the converting of [ɫ] to either of the close back vocoids [ʊ] or [o], as in [fio] *fill*, [fou] *fall*, [mɪdʊ] *middle* (Wells 1982: 313, Trudgill 1986: 46).

This feature, together with T-glottalling, TH-fronting, and H-dropping, has traditionally been subject to an overt stigma, in terms of the features being found mainly with lower class speakers, and avoided by higher class speakers as claimed by Wells (1982: 314) with reference to Hudson & Holloway (1977). However, this feature has, together with T-glottalling and TH-fronting, experienced a loss of stigma during the last decades, and is for instance a feature considered symptomatic for Estuary English (e.g. Altendorf 2003: 13). This feature is also rapidly spreading to other parts of Britain through geographical diffusion from London, and has done for the last thirty years or so, as shown e.g. by Trudgill (1986: 46-47), and Docherty and Foulkes in Derby (1999: 52).

3.6 MOUTH-monophthonging

In RP the vowel of the lexical set MOUTH is realised as a back-closing diphthong with an open front (or central) starting point /aʊ/ (Wells 1982).

The London MOUTH is frequently pronounced with a more front and more close starting point [æʊ] than in RP. In broad London speech (Cockney) the vowel sound in MOUTH words is sometimes realised as a long diphthong [æ:]. Wells describes this feature as the ‘touchstone for distinguishing between true Cockney and Popular London’ (Wells 1982: 309). He continues, however, by pointing out that the dividing line between Popular London and Cockney is rarely this sharp, as there are other possible realisations for London working class MOUTH, as a more open [a:], and a centring diphthong [æə] (ibid).

I have not found any recent indications about the current status of this feature, in terms of geographical and social spread, so at this point I will have to rely on Wells’ account that this feature is predominantly a working class London feature. However, Kerswill et al, have found indications that the London MOUTH with younger working class speakers is experiencing a (reversed) shift towards the RP-like quality of a more back and lower starting point, with some speakers still having a monophthongal quality, and others having a diphthong in the area of [aʊ], which is a more back variant than the RP-like [aʊ] (Kerswill et al, 2008: 461). Also Tollfree (1999) observes a tendency towards standardisation of the quality of MOUTH towards [aʊ] in her study on South East London English.

3.7 R-fronting

/r/ is in RP typically realised as the post-alveolar approximant [ɹ]. R-fronting involves a different phonetic realisation, something similar to the labiodental approximant [ʋ], so one might get pronunciations such as [ved] *red*, [pevi] *Perry*. This applies to /r/ in all environments, perhaps with the exception of /r/ after /t/. In this environment /r/ is often fricated.

R-fronting is the only variable I have included that is not considered a typical or a traditional feature of Cockney. This variable has however been observed with many young speakers in large parts of Britain, and I have observed extensive use of the fronted variant with some of my informants as well.

Earlier accounts of the labial or labialised variants for /r/ have mainly considered this feature either as an infantilism chiefly found with young children, a speech defect or as an attribute to affected upper class speech. Wells, for instance, mentions the fronted variant [ʋ] in his section on *upper-crust RP* and identifies it as “an upper-class affection” (1982: 282), he continues however, with a remark that he is not convinced that this feature nowadays is found more frequently with upper-class speakers than speakers of lower classes (*ibid.*). This last remark by Wells seems to correspond with later findings, that [ʋ] now has established itself as a feature found in mature speech of non-standard varieties in the south-east of England (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 30). Recent studies also suggest that [ʋ] is experiencing a change in profile and that the labial variant may be spreading (*ibid.*: 32). The first indication of [ʋ] as a spreading feature is found with Trudgill’s real time Norwich study (conveyed in 1974, 1988, and 1999). In his first study he only reported a few instances of [ʋ], and they were then regarded as idiosyncratic realisations, in his second study (reported in 1988) however, the occurrences of [ʋ] had hit the roof, so to speak, in that one third of his speakers born between 1959 and 1973 now had the variable realisation of /r/ as [ʋ] (Trudgill 1988). More recent studies have also documented that variable use of [ʋ] commonly occurs with children and adolescents, for instance in Torgersen’s study of middle class speakers from various locations in the south-east of England (1997), and Williams and Kerswill’s study of the three towns of Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull (1999). Marsden reported the fronted variant in her study in on labiodental /r/ in Leeds (2006), as did Foulkes and Docherty’s study on [ʋ] in Derby and Newcastle (2000). Foulkes and Docherty note that the spread of [ʋ] is following the same patterns as the spread of TH-fronting and T-glottalling, insofar as the geographical and social distribution is similar, and thus it is fairly reasonable to regard it as taking part in the Dialect Levelling process of south-east England (2000: 34).

Where there is a quite widespread agreement that TH-fronting and T-glottalling are spreading as a result of geographical diffusion from London (cf. Trudgill 1986, 1999,

Williams & Kerswill, 1999, Kerswill 2003, Stuart-Smith et. al 2007), there is more uncertainty attached to exactly where r-fronting is spreading from, i.e. its epicentre of diffusion. Since this feature has previously been dismissed as idiosyncrasies, upper-class affections or speech defects, it is difficult to get an impression of where [v] is spreading from. Foulkes and Docherty (2000) argue that r-fronting might in fact be a feature attributed to London working class speech, referring to a tangential comment made by Sivertsen in her Bethnal Green study (1960) where she states that /r/ may be dropped after labial consonants, such as /b, f, ʃ/ (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 36 with reference to Sivertsen 1960: 139-140). Foulkes and Docherty claim that this can be interpreted as suggesting a pronunciation similar to [v] (ibid). They get support for their view by findings from Beaken (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 36 with reference to Beaken 1971: 344), who registered the use of [v] by children in East London. They also suggest, although very tentatively, that this feature may have emerged in Cockney through influence by a similar variant in the speech of the subcommunity of London Jews (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 38-39). Still it is difficult to determine whether or not R-fronting is a feature that can be attributed to the traditional Cockney accent of East London, and this notion does not get support from the results provided in this study, as will be shown in the chapter 5, where the fronted variant is almost exclusively found with the younger speakers. So, whether this feature can be regarded as a Cockney feature or not is not clear, but there is wide agreement that it is at least a feature that is now a regional accent feature of the south-east alongside for instance TH-fronting, T-glottalling (cf. the studies of Williams & Kerswill 1999, Torgersen 1997, Trudgill 1988).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explain the methodology used for this thesis. This study is an investigation of the language spoken in the traditional East End today. I will explore whether some of the traditional Cockney features are still present in the speech of white working class speakers in the present day London East End. I have considered five linguistic variables that are considered characteristic of Cockney, and one feature that is not (R-fronting). The latter feature is included to see whether this popular feature, which is one of the very few mainstream features that have not spread out from working class London speech, is found with the speakers in the traditional East End. My focus is mainly on the adolescent speakers, following the notion that adolescents are the main innovators when it comes to linguistic change (Eckert 1997: 163). The older informants serve mainly as a comparison and as representatives for the traditional Cockney accent. This last point is, however, treated very carefully, as older speakers may also adapt to the potential new changes, but they are considered more linguistically conservative than adolescents.

4.2 Quantitative Sociolinguistics

The term quantitative sociolinguistics refers to the quantification of the distribution of the linguistic variables in relation to other extra linguistic/independent variables, such as age, gender, class, ethnicity etc. When studying language variation and change it is useful to quantify the empirical data in order to systemise it, and then look for patterns in terms of the frequency of the different variants in relation to independent variables. When conducting a quantitative analysis, it is for instance possible to get an indication of who is leading the potential linguistic change. So it is not a study of linguistic variables in terms of categorical use, but of the greater or less frequency of one variant than another (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 5). This method is largely developed by William Labov (as seen for instance with his famous New York City study from 1966), who is considered a bit of a godfather within the discipline of sociolinguistics. In my study I have quantified the distribution of the linguistic variables

presented in chapter 3. Percentage scores have been worked out, both for the different age and gender groups, and also for each individual.

4.3 Sampling

4.3.1 Choosing informants

My aim is to study the accent spoken in the traditional East End today; I have therefore sought to select speakers that are in some way representative of this area. My sample is in a very high degree a judgement/quota sample, which can of course be problematic (cf. Milroy & Gordon 2003: 30). I will here provide an explanation for my choice. The rather small sample I have is by no means regarded representative for the entire speech community in this area, since it in reality only contains representatives of a very small group indeed. I will draw some conclusions, in terms of generalisations, but with great care. I have chosen to limit my area of research to the speech of the white working class of the traditional East End since this group is the one that has traditionally been associated with the Cockney accent of East End London. As mentioned several times already, this group is no longer solely representative of the East End due to the massive social and ethnic changes in this area, but this study seeks to get some indications about the current speech situation of white working class East London speakers.

My sample consists solely of white working class Anglos (one of the informants is of Jamaican origin, but both he and his parents were born in London), both young adolescents (15-16), and adults (ranging from 36 to 75 years old). An overview of the informants is provided in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1. List of informants.

Informants	Information
James, 75.	Born in Stepney, now live in Hackney. Retired dockworker and local shop owner. No education beyond elementary stage.
William, 56	Born in Bethnal Green, he has lived in the area all his life. Retired. Used to work in the council. He now does a bit of work as a craftsman, no education beyond elementary stage.
Andrew, 54	Born in Waterloo, later moved to the suburbs (borough of Bromley). Works as a London black cab driver. Works mainly in the East End. No education beyond elementary stage.
Franklin, 62	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets, now lives in Essex. Runs a local pie shop in Hackney. No education beyond elementary stage
Millard, 36	Born in Bethnal Green, raised partially in Bethnal Green and partially in Barking where he moved as a child. Now lives and works in Bethnal Green. Works with PE. No education beyond elementary stage.
Holly, 51	Born in Tower Hamlets, lived there all her life. Qualified hairdresser, no education beyond that. Runs a local coffee shop in Hackney (she is also James's daughter)
John, 15	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school
George, 15	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school. His father's side are of Jamaican origin.
Thomas, 15	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school
Kate, 16	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school
Rebecca, 16	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school
Judi, 15	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school. Her mother works in a school administration, and her siblings are university students, so perhaps more middle class than the others, or at least more upwardly mobile (this is also to some degree reflected in her speech).
Keira, 15	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school
Nicole, 15	Born and raised in Tower Hamlets. Pupil at a local comprehensive secondary school

4.3.2 Finding informants

Before I went to London to conduct the field work I contacted a number of local schools, community houses, and the two town halls of Tower Hamlets and Hackney and requested assistance in finding suitable informants. This was done by e-mail, but sadly I did not receive

a single positive response, so I did not have any contact persons or any informants before I came to London. When collecting the data I was based around the area of Bow and Bethnal Green in the borough of Tower Hamlets. Some of my older informants were approached in the streets or their work places (garages, coffee shops, butchers etc.) while others I got in touch with and recruited through others (mainly informants I had already got). The younger generation were all recruited through two local comprehensive secondary schools. The informants I ended up including in my sample were all pupils at the same school. The pupils at the other school (a state-run Church of England secondary school) I ended up not including in my sample because the informants there fell outside my target group, both because they were more middle class and spoke something closer to RP, and when at the end of the interview I talked with them about language they seemed very conscious about how they spoke, and were careful not to use forms that were considered stigmatised. They also told me that they were frequently being corrected by their parents when they were younger. This is of course interesting, but in the quantitative analysis I have chosen not to include them.

The number of speakers in my sample is not as big as I had wished. I originally wanted to have 5 males and 5 females aged between 35 and 55, and 5 males and 5 females aged between 15 and 18, but due to limited time in London I was not able to get enough speakers. I met a lot of people who were interested in talking to me, but they were reluctant to do an interview with me for various reasons (the most common expressed reason: ‘Time is money!’). I ended up with five males and only one female (I interviewed one more, but she also had an accent that was close to the RP end of the scale) in the older group, and three males and five females in the younger group.

4.4 Data collection

The data was collected in forms of interviews with the informants. They were all audio-recorded using a SONY ICD-MX20 Digital Voice Recorder. Most of the interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour, though some were a bit shorter (this applies mainly to the school-children as they were only able to do the interviews during day-time, and had to get back to class).

4.4.1 The interviews and Observer's Paradox

The interviews, as most other interviews for sociolinguistic studies, sought to get the informants to talk like they normally would, i.e. use their everyday speech. This is difficult in an interview situation like this, because the informants might be more conscious about their speech when facing a complete stranger who wants to tape record them. So the problem of trying to get the informants to speak like they would when not being observed is of course that we have to observe them. This is known as *the observer's paradox* (Meyerhoff 2006: 38). There are some measures one can take in order to reduce the change in dynamic (i.e. the formal interview situation), such as attempting to turn the interview to be more a conversation with lively and personal topics. Another measure can be to do group interviews, and thus change the dynamics of the interview away from the potentially intimidating one-to-one format (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 66). Some of the interviews in the current study were done in pairs. Another probably more sufficient measure, is to do a participant observation, where a researcher will spend long periods of time with the informants, and try to gain insider status (Meyerhoff 2006: 38) (this was done for instance by Sivertsen in her 1960 Bethnal Green study), this was not possible for this study due to limited amount of time. The interviews I conducted were rather informal in the sense that all of them were executed in places of the informant's choice, i.e. in their premises where they felt at 'home' (in their work place, their local café/pub, their school, etc.). I primarily wanted to do the interviews in the informant's homes, but this proved very difficult.

I had a list of questions for the informants, or rather of topics to be discussed, but I tried to avoid a typical interview situation where I ask a question and they answer, and then the next question, and so on. I rather attempted to have a conversation, and let them do most of the talking, and I would follow up on what they were talking about. They were also told in the beginning of the interview that they could for the most part really talk about whatever they wanted. This was usually not a problem, but with some of the more reluctant younger informants it was sometimes difficult, and it took some time before they felt at ease enough to participate as a conversation partner. Most of the interviews with the younger informants were done in pairs, so at times they would talk to each other, which was beneficial for the sake of getting the most vernacular speech. Of the topics discussed with the informants I included one section in the end of the interviews devoted to their thoughts on language and identity. I asked them how they would describe their accent and whether or not they would identify themselves as Cockneys. I also asked the younger informants how they would describe their group of

friends in terms of ethnic diversity in order to get an overview of their social network for later reference.

Even though the interviews were quite informal, the interview situation is in its nature rather formal, and especially when conducted by an outsider who is not even a native speaker of English. So I will not claim that the informants produced a 100% vernacular speech, but it was still rather close to everyday speech. Most of the informants seemed quite at ease, especially as the interviews progressed and they realised that they could talk to me about anything they wanted, and that I would not ask questions that were (in principle) difficult or uncomfortable. With some of the informants from the school it seemed important to reassure them that none of the information would be relayed back to the teachers, parents or any of the other pupils. All of the informants were told before the interview that all the information would be treated as confidential and that they would be anonymous, and also that they could at any point withdraw from the project without giving any particular reason.

4.4.2 Interview style

In addition to the normal interview I also included a reading style passage. The informants were asked to read a short text out loud. The text I used was *Comma Gets a Cure* which is a text specially composed to include Wells' standard lexical sets, written by Jill McCullough & Barbara Somerville and edited by Douglas N. Honorof. A reading passage is usually included to analyse different styles. I, however, included it also in order to reassure that I would get relevant tokens, if the informants proved to be reticent. Also, when analysing the data collected I noticed that at least the younger informants did not differ fundamentally in terms of using more standard forms in the reading style than in the normal interview, i.e. there was no quantifiable difference. There were not enough tokens (less than 30) of some features with some of the informants, so where needed and where the two styles were rather homogeneous I have included some of the tokens from the reading style part in the main analysis. Stylistic differences will be commented on in the discussion section, but will not be quantified.

4.5 Independent Variables

I have quantified the distribution of the linguistic variables in relation to the independent variables of age and gender. As my sample (with one possible exception) consists of only

white working class speakers I will not look at the co-variation of the linguistic variables and the variables of social class and ethnicity, only establish that they all belong to the same social class and ethnic group.

4.5.1 Age

As my thesis attempts to investigate the accent used in present day East End London, and also potential changes, I have conducted an apparent time study, so my main interest is the co-variation of the linguistic variables and the independent variable of age (cf. 2.2.1). I have quantified the distribution of the linguistic variables of each of the age groups and compared the two.

4.5.2 Gender

I have also considered the co-variation between the linguistic variables and gender, as this might provide some impression of who is leading the potential changes, which usually are young adolescent girls (in terms of females tending to adapt to super-local forms, cf. chapter 2). I have, as previously mentioned, not considered this co-variation with the older informants as I only have one older female in my sample, but then again this comparison is more interesting with the younger speakers with respect to who is leading the change.

4.6 The analysis

The interviews were analysed auditorily. This of course may lead to some degree of inaccuracy, such as misrepresentation of some forms and overrepresentation of others, but I have sought to keep an open mind when analysing and tried not be biased. Also, I have tried to be as consistent as possible when identifying the realisations. Some of the recordings are at times of a fairly poor quality (due to background noise such as music, other people talking, an ambulance driving past the window, etc.), so there has also been a fair amount of rewinding and re-listening when I was uncertain. I have also let my supervisor listen to excerpts of the recordings and she agreed for the most part with my analysis, enough for it to be considered stable.

4.6.1 The linguistic variables

The linguistic variables analysed were presented in chapter 3. In this section I will account for how the different linguistic variables were analysed, and how the tokens were selected. I have selected 30 tokens of each variable for each of the speakers where possible. To be fairly certain that the variation observed reflects the norm rather than random fluctuation in the data, Milroy and Gordon (2003: 164-165, with reference to Guy 1980) suggests that 30 tokens per variable is a reasonable objective. With some speakers there were not enough tokens, this applies to MOUTH-monophthonging and H-fronting. I have chosen to operate with binary variants for all the variables (even though there are some subtle differences in realisation), with the traditional Cockney realisation vs. ‘new’ realisations.

4.6.1.1 TH-fronting

I have identified items which have potential *TH-fronting* and quantified them; this includes all words where *th* occurs in all positions, but for word initial position, only where the voiceless variant occurs. I have only included those where the realisation was either /θ,ð/ or /f,v/ in the quantitative analysis (i.e. I have excluded those (few) cases where the realisation was [d] or [ʔ]).

4.6.1.2 T-glottalling

I have collected all tokens where syllable-final /t/ occurs in intervocalic position word-medially and also across word boundaries. The tokens were analysed either as the fortis alveolar plosive [t] or as the glottal stop [ʔ]. For a token to be analysed as glottal [ʔ] there had to be a clear replacement of /t/, all tokens where there was for instance glottal reinforcement or pre-glottalling, were analysed as [t]. This is mainly because glottal reinforcement etc. is not deemed as “London-marked” as glottal replacement intervocalically. Other realisations such as the alveolar tap [ɾ] were analysed as [t].

4.6.1.3 H-dropping

I have collected items where /h/ occurs in stressed syllable position word initially or word medially, and I have identified them as the discrete variants [h] or Ø, which indicate presence and absence of [h] respectively.

4.6.1.4 L-vocalisation

I have collected items where non-prevocalic /l/ occurs. I have also included tokens with prevocalic /l/ across word boundaries, but only when there is a pause between the words. However, I have found that some of the younger informants sometimes vocalise their /l/ even prevocalically across word boundaries, even if there is not a pause, especially if there is also a glottal onset thrown into the bargain, as in [tʃɪw[?]aut] *chill out*. Even so, I have tried to avoid them for the sake of consistency (as I suspect that /l/ in this position is mainly not vocalised), and focused on non-prevocalic contexts. I have analysed the items either as [ɫ] or as [ʌ], the latter representing vocalisation.

4.6.1.5 MOUTH-monophthonging

I have identified all MOUTH words and analysed them either as a diphthong [aʊ] or as a long monophthong [æ:]. This variable was perhaps the most difficult to analyse because there are so many subtle differences, and in fast speech it is very difficult to recognise it as either a monophthong or as a diphthong. However, unless there was a clear diphthong with a rounded second element it was analysed as a monophthong, this includes realisations with central off-glides, which might occur because the vowel is coloured by the following sound.

4.6.1.6 R-fronting

I have identified tokens with intervocalic or word-initial /r/, and analysed them either as the labiodental approximant [ʋ], or as the alveolar approximant [ɹ]. I have avoided tokens where /r/ occurs after consonants, because in this environment it is very hard to hear the distinction,

this especially applies for /r/ after /t/, as /r/ in this environment is often fricated. Where /r/ occurred word initially or intervocalically, those were the most unambiguous instances, i.e. where it was least problematic to discern the two variants.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the results of the quantitative analysis of the six linguistic variables considered in this study. The current research project is a sociolinguistic study of the accent spoken in the traditional East End, traditionally referred to as Cockney, with focus on the social group with which this area is traditionally associated, i.e. white working class people. The project is an apparent time study where I have analysed the speech of two different age cohorts to investigate synchronic variation and change. The informants were chosen on the basis of ethnographic and geographic criteria, and the sample include six adult (35+) speakers (five males and one female), and eight adolescent (15-16) speakers (three males and five females). All the speakers can be deemed as working class (perhaps with the exception of Judi which will be discussed below) and all live within the area considered traditional Cockney, or within the extended Cockney area (cf. Fox 2007).

After the presentation of the results for each linguistic variable I will discuss the findings with regard to the underlying research questions and the hypotheses for the present study. The research questions underlying the present investigation are concerned with whether or not the speech of white working class people in East London has undergone phonological change from traditional Cockney (following previous descriptions of Cockney), and if so, what these changes entail. Also, I ask which of the traditional Cockney features considered still hold ground in the speech of white working class East Londoners. The research questions are also concerned with the correlation between the linguistic variables and the independent variables of age and gender, and whether the changes can be linked to the current dialect levelling process in Britain. I hypothesise that the linguistic features that are considered traditional Cockney will occur more with the older speakers than the younger speakers and thus point to a change from traditional Cockney. I also hypothesise that the female adolescents will lead the changes by having more of the ‘new’ features than the male adolescents. Finally I hypothesise that the accent spoken in the East End is taking part in a dialect levelling process which is apparent in many accents and geographical locations in the British Isles (cf. e.g. Foulkes & Docherty 1999a, Williams & Kerswill 1999, Kerswill 2003). I will also compare my results with the findings from Kerswill et al’s studies in their projects

on London English and their Hackney informants, where they look at some of the same linguistic variables considered in this study. Furthermore I will comment on the social status and stylistic stratification of the linguistic variables where relevant.

I will present the results for each linguistic variable individually and they follow the same order as in chapter 3. For each variable I will include a brief recap of the status of the variables and provide the size of the data. The tables show the number of tokens (N) of each variant used by the two age groups and the average percentage scores. Diagrams have been used to illustrate the distribution of each variable in correlation with age and gender. Also, I have included diagrams illustrating the individual percentage scores in order to reveal the variation within the groups. Following the presentation of the results for each variable they will be discussed according to the points given above. Following the results/discussion of the variables that were quantified, I will also present some other findings that were not quantified. In chapter 6 (conclusion), I will also include a general discussion where I regard all the findings as a whole after the results and discussions have been provided for each of the variables individually.

An overview of the linguistic variables can be found in chapter 3, and an overview of the informants can be found in section 4.3.1 (table 4.1).

5.1.1 The case of Judi

As already mentioned, all of my speakers can be deemed working class speakers based on their occupation/income, geographic location and housing, and education. However, to classify people in terms of social class is rather difficult and it is often hasty to assume a person as belonging to a specific social class only based on a couple of factors. This problem was encountered with one of the younger informants in the current sample, namely Judi (see table 4.1 in section 4.3.1). Even though Judi was born and brought up in Bethnal Green, a working class district that is very deprived, it is still not obvious that she could easily be deemed working class. There are also some factors that suggest that she perhaps could be classified as more middle class, or at least as more upwardly mobile than the other adolescents in the sample, for instance the fact that her mother works in a school administration (the mother does not however have education beyond elementary stage), and that her two siblings are university students. Judi also expressed a wish of going to college and do A-levels and then proceed to University when she had finished secondary school, and

it seems that this social aspiration is to some extent reflected in her speech. She shows quite consistently noteworthy lower distribution of the non-standard variants than her peers. I cannot justify excluding her completely from the analysis, but where she shows consistently and noteworthy fewer occurrences of non-standard variants I will provide the numbers and percentage scores for the groups without the numbers and percentage scores for Judi.

5.2 TH-fronting

TH-fronting refers to the replacement of [θ] and [ð] by [f] and [v] respectively. TH-fronting has been described as a typical London feature, mainly found with working class speakers of the East End (cf. Wells 1982, Sivertsen 1960). This feature has however experienced a quite substantial spread, and is now found in many urban varieties all over Britain (Williams & Kerswill 1999, Kerswill 2003, Stuart-Smith et. al 2007). TH-fronting has also experienced a change in profile as it has also been found with certain young middle-class speakers (Williams & Kerswill 1999: 160 table 8.8).

5.2.1 Results for TH-fronting

In this study 30 tokens were elicited from each speaker giving a total number of 420 tokens, 180 tokens for the adult speakers and 240 tokens for the adolescent speakers. Table 5.1 below shows the number and percentage score for the use of [f, v] and [θ, ð].

Table 5.1 TH-fronting: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Adult		Adolescent	
	N	%	N	%
[f, v]	98	54	181	75
[θ, ð]	82	46	59	25
Total	180	100	240	100

As the table shows 98 of 180 tokens were realised as the fronted variants [f] and [v] while the 82 remaining tokens were realised as the standard variants [θ] and [ð] with the adult speakers, giving a percentage score of 54% for [f, v] and 46% for [θ] and [ð].

The adolescent group realised 181 out of 240 tokens as the fronted variants, and 59 as the standard variants, giving a percentage score of 75% for [f] and [v], while only 25% for [θ] and [ð].

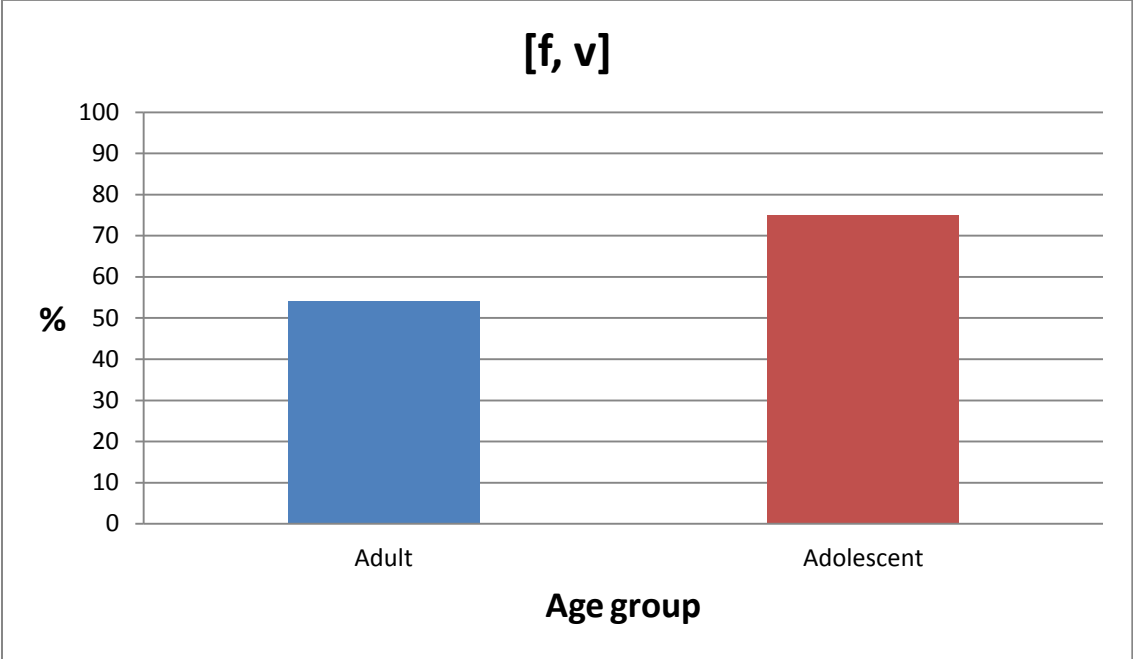


Figure 5.1 TH-fronting: Percentage score of [f, v] for each age group

Figure 5.1 above illustrates that both age groups show fairly high distribution of the fronted variants, both over 50%, but with the younger speakers there is an increase of realisations as [f] and [v] to 75%. These results do not correspond with what was hypothesised, that the older speakers would show higher usage of the traditional Cockney features (including TH-fronting) than the younger generation. However, it is not very surprising when considering the spread of [f] and [v] which will be discussed below. In fact, it is rather fairly surprising that the adult speakers show such high percentage score, of over 50% for the fronted variants. In Cheshire et al (2008) their older Hackney informants only realised 29.7% of (word initial) TH as the fronted variant. Also, their younger informants

showed more TH-fronting than the informants in the present study, a total percentage score of 89.7% against 75% in the results given here (2008: 16).

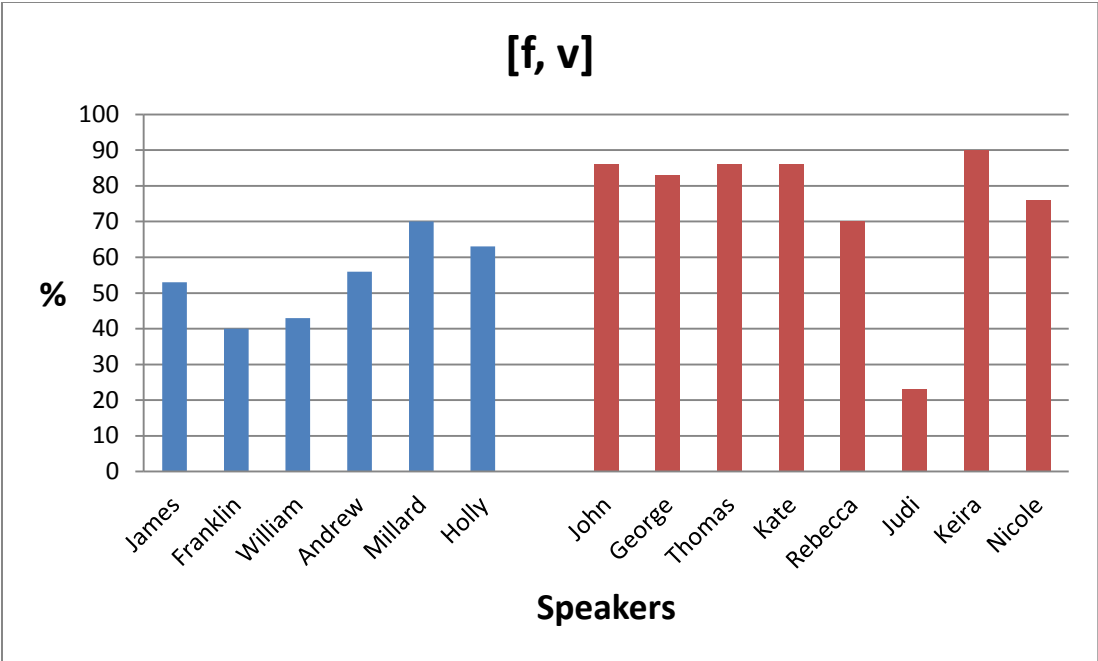


Figure 5.2 TH-fronting: Individual percentage score for [f, v] (blue: Adults, red: adolescents)

However, when taking a closer look at the distribution of [f] and [v] for each individual speaker (fig. 5.2 above), all of the adolescent speakers show TH-fronting of 70% or more of the tokens, except for Judi, who only realised 23% of the tokens as [f] and [v], which is considerably less than the others, even less than Franklin who had the fewest occurrences of [f] and [v] among the adult speakers. So Judi’s score of 23% for the fronted variants lowers the overall percentage score for the young group. If the distribution of [f] and [v] is computed anew without Judi, the numbers and percentage scores for the younger group show a slight increase of the fronted variant from 75% to 82%, as seen in table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 TH-fronting: Numbers and group scores excluding Judi

Variants	Adult		Adolescent	
	N	%	N	%
[f, v]	98	54	174	82
[θ, ð]	82	46	36	18
Total	180	100	210	100

The total number of tokens for the young group has now decreased from 240 to 210, with 174 realised as the traditional Cockney variants, and only 36 realised as the standard variants.

From the individual percentage score we learn that the three adolescent boys all have a score of over 80% for [f] and [v], while the variation is greater with the adolescent girls, ranging from 23% to 90% (70% to 90% if excluding Judi). This suggests the adolescent boys are leading the change of increased realisations of the traditional Cockney variants as seen in figure 5.3 below.

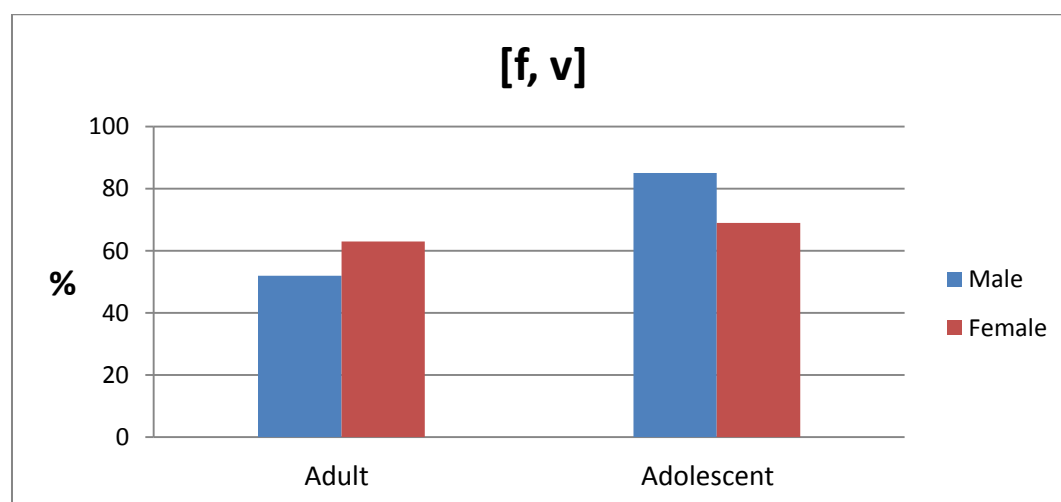


Figure 5.3 TH-fronting: Percentage scores of [f, v] for the different genders

However, when again considering Judi's low frequency of the non-standard variant, her score lowers the overall score for the girls as well, so it is difficult to draw any generalisations concerning who are leading the increased usage of [f] and [v]. Still, when excluding Judi from the calculation of the percentage score for the adolescent girls, giving a score of 80%, the males still have 5% more TH-fronting than the adolescent girls. When looking at the diagram for the older speakers concerning gender-based variation, it shows a rather atypical pattern where the female shows more TH-fronting than the five males. Yet, in this study it is rather pointless to draw any conclusion on this, as the sample only includes one female in the older group.

As a sum up of the results for the realisation of [f] and [v] for [θ] and [ð], it is clear that there is a tendency towards increased usage of the fronted variants.

5.2.2 Discussion of the results for TH-fronting

The following section will provide a discussion of the results provided in 5.2.1 for TH-fronting. The results showed overall an increase of the non-standard variants [f] and [v]. I hypothesised that the older speakers would have more of the traditional Cockney features than the younger speakers, but in the case of TH-fronting, it is not highly surprising that this particular feature has a higher distribution among the adolescents than the adult speakers. This acknowledgment is based on the fact that this traditional Cockney feature (and others as we will see) has experienced a vast spread into other varieties in England, and also, as shown with Stuart-Smith et al.'s study in Glasgow (2007) to urban centres outside England too, suggesting that TH-fronting has become a well-established supra-local feature, found with young speakers, particularly working class, many places in Britain. So at least one conclusion can be drawn with regard to the underlying hypotheses of the present study; that TH-fronting still holds solid ground in the speech of white Anglo working class speakers in the London East End.

The results for TH-fronting may suggest that the young adolescents in the traditional East End indeed are taking part in a dialect levelling process, as far as the distribution of the fronted variant mirrors the distribution found elsewhere, for instance in Reading, Milton Keynes and Hull (Williams & Kerswill 1999: 160, table 8.8). At least at this point, there is no indication in the data material for this study that young adolescents in London are going against the tendency of increasing distribution of TH-fronting, and my data also shows rather

stable distribution of the fronted variants with the adolescents (again, with the exception of Judi), which can suggest that the realisations of [f] and [v] for /θ/ and /ð/ are in a process of stabilising as the ‘norm’ in Cockney (and also in other varieties), rather than /θ/ and /ð/ only being variably subject to TH-fronting, but time will show.

The results given for this study also correspond with the results in the study of Williams and Kerswill (1999) with regards to which gender-group shows the highest distribution of [f] and [v]. In both studies the adolescent boys are leading the change towards increased TH-fronting. This is however contradictory to the hypothesis that the adolescent females would lead the changes in showing more of the ‘new’, i.e. in this case, supra-local variants. However, seeing that TH-fronting has traditionally been a highly localised or marked feature in London speech, and thus usually being used more by working class males, it could perhaps be expected that adolescent males would show higher distribution of the marked variants.

TH-fronting was one of the variables that did not seem to hold any stylistic stratification with the younger speakers. None of the adolescents had noteworthy different distribution in interview style than reading style. This can suggest further that TH-fronting has lost some of its stigma as a highly localised feature, and thus is equally likely to be realised as the standard in more formal speech situations.

5.3 T-glottalling

T-glottalling refers here to the replacement of /t/ by a glottal stop [ʔ] in intervocalic word medial or word final position, giving pronunciations such as [wɔːʔə] *water* and [lɒʔ əv] *lot of*.

T-glottalling and especially glottalling of /t/ intervocalically is also a feature commonly associated with traditional Cockney. This feature has, as TH-fronting, experienced a massive geographical and social spread where it has even diffused into high status accents such as RP (Milroy et al. 1994a: 4), and Milroy et al. claim that “[t]he spread of the glottal stop is so rapid that it is now widely perceived as a stereotype of urban British speech” (ibid: 5). In this study I have identified the tokens either as a glottal stop [ʔ] or as the standard realisation [t].

Unless a distinct glottal sound could be perceived the tokens were analysed as [t]. I should however point out that there are other realisations of intervocalic /t/ in London English than

the two provided here, such as the alveolar tap [ɾ]. This is also a traditional Cockney feature, and some of the older speakers occasionally used this variant, so it should be kept in mind that the tokens analysed as [t] is not necessarily the standard RP variant with the older speakers.

5.3.1 Results for T-glottalling

For T-glottalling 30 tokens of intervocalic /t/ were elicited from each speaker giving a total number of 420 tokens, 180 tokens for the adult speakers and 240 for the adolescent speakers. Table 5.3 below shows the number and percentage score for each age group.

Table 5.3 T-glottalling: Numbers and percentage scores

Variants	Adult		Adolescent	
	N	%	N	%
[ʔ]	134	74	218	90
[t]	46	26	22	10
Total	180	100	240	100

As we learn from the table, 134 tokens were realised as the glottal stop [ʔ], while 46 tokens were realised as [t] for the older speakers, giving a percentage score of 74% for [ʔ].

For the younger group 218 tokens were realised as the glottal stop [ʔ] while 22 tokens were realised as the standard variant [t], giving a total percentage score of 90% for the traditional London feature.

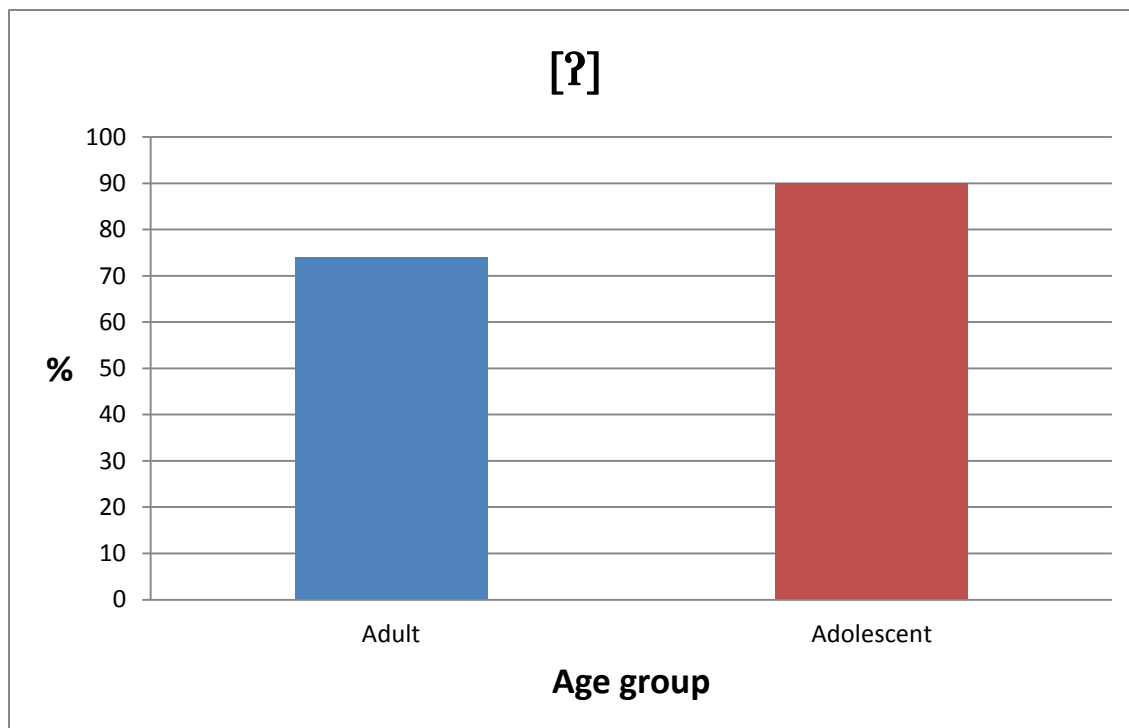


Figure 5.4 T-glottalling: Percentage score of [ʔ] for each age group

Figure 5.4 above illustrates the distribution of the glottalised variant for the different age groups. The diagram shows that, again, the distribution of the non-standard variant is quite high with both the adult and the adolescent speakers, with both groups realising intervocalic /t/ as a glottal stop in over 70% of the cases. However, with the adolescents there is a 20% increase of the glottalised variant to 90%. Thus the distribution of this feature is much the same as with TH-fronting, only with higher scores overall. It seems that with the older group the glottal [ʔ] is competing with [ɾ]. Overall [ɾ] occurred far less, as seen with the rather high distribution of [ʔ], which might suggest that the glottal variant has experienced an increase with the older speakers as well, at the expense of the tapped variant. The alveolar tap did not occur at all with the adolescent speakers, which can suggest that the glottal stop has completely taken over as the preferential non-standard variant with the East London adolescents.

As with the distribution of TH-fronting, this result does not correspond with what was hypothesised, that the older speakers would show higher scores of the traditional Cockney variant. But again, with regard to the feature's current status as a highly popular and mainstream feature it is not surprising that the adolescents have a high percentage score for the glottal stop. None of the recent studies on London English provide quantified data of the

distribution of T-glottalling, though Tollfree (1999) reports “high incidences” of intervocalic T-glottalling with her SELE (South East London English, which refers to speakers from working class areas) speakers (1999: 171). The results given here do however correspond quite well with the results for intervocalic T-glottalling in the three towns of Reading, Milton Keynes and Hull (Williams & Kerswill 1999), where /t/ intervocalically with the young speakers is realised as a glottal stop in over 75% of the cases in Milton Keynes, over 90% in Reading, and over 70% in Hull (1999: 160, table 8.8).

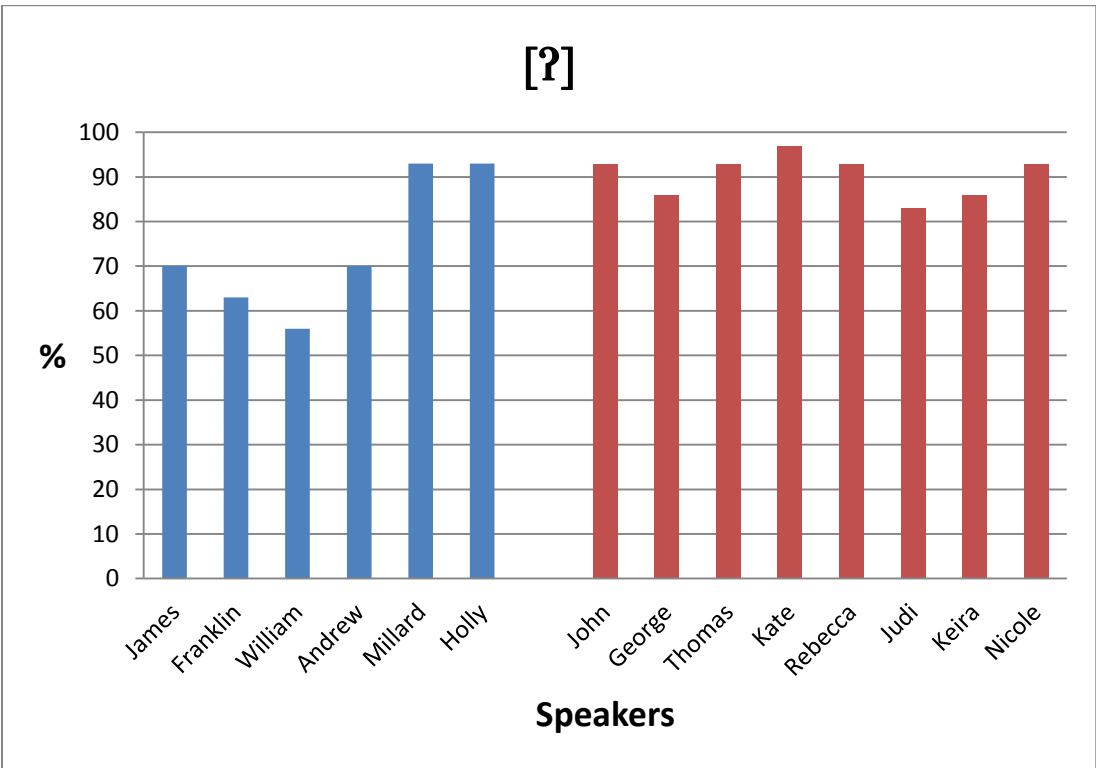


Figure 5.5 T-glottalling: Individual percentage score for [?]
(blue: Adults, red: Adolescents)

In figure 5.5 above the individual percentage scores for [?] are given. The diagram show that all of the adult speakers realised intervocalic /t/ as a glottal stop in over 50% of the cases with Millard and Holly showing as much as 93% score for the non-standard variant. The person with the lowest distribution of [?] is William with a percentage score of 56%, he was also the one that used the alveolar tap [ɾ] most frequently.

Among the adolescent speakers all had a percentage score of over 80%, with Judi showing the lowest score of 83%, and Kate with the highest score of 97%. Overall there is an increase of the glottalised variant with the adolescents, all having a higher score than the adults, except for Holly and Millard, who show surprisingly frequent realisations of [ʔ].

It is difficult to suggest who is leading the change of the increasing distribution of the glottal stop, as both adolescent males and adolescent females show the exact same overall percentage score of 90% as seen in figure 5.6 below.

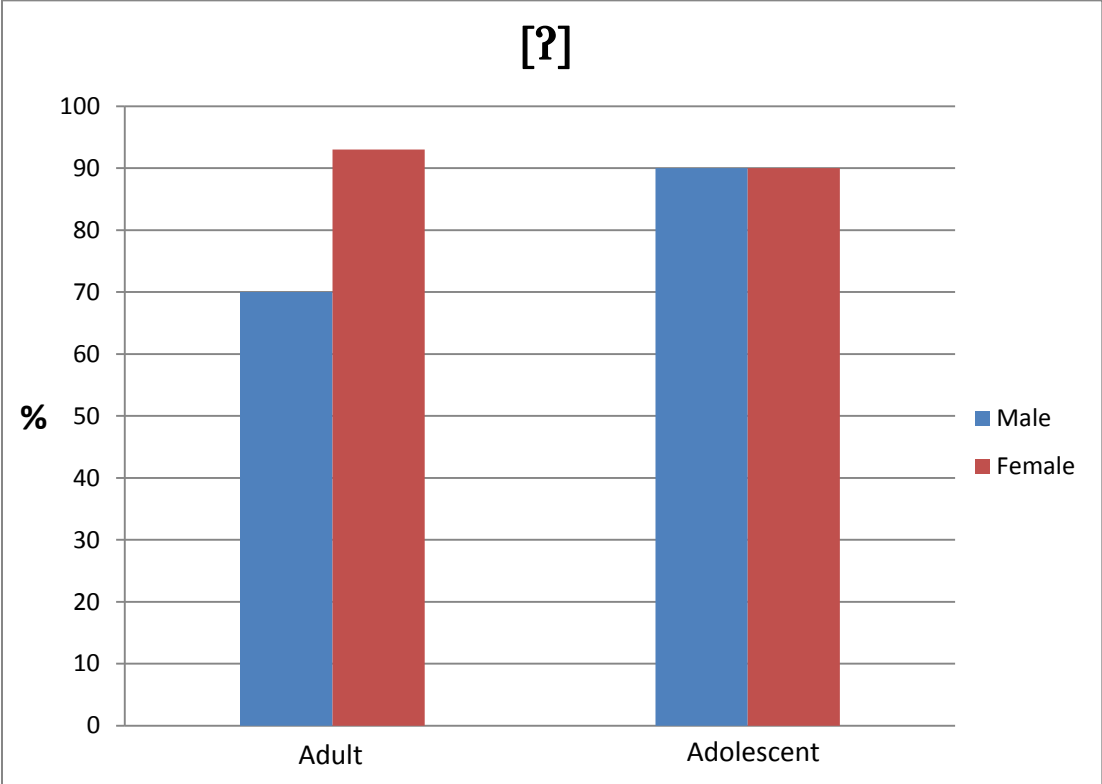


Figure 5.6 T-glottalling: Percentage score of [ʔ] for the different genders

The percentage scores for the different genders in the adult group again show an atypical pattern, with the female having more realisations of the non-standard variant than the males, but again, no generalisations can be made from this, due to the insufficient amount of female informants.

Overall there is also here a clear tendency that realisations of the non-standard variant are on the increase.

5.3.2 Discussion of the results for T-glottalling

As the results suggest, the increasing use of supra-local non-standard features also applies for intervocalic T-glottalling in East London. Again, the results for the glottal replacement of /t/ by [ʔ] go against the first underlying hypothesis, that the traditional cockney features would be found more with the older speakers. However, when considering the status of T-glottalling in Britain, that this feature has experienced a vast and widespread popularity, and is symptomatic for British urban speech (Milroy et al. 1994a: 5), it is fairly unsurprising that this feature too is on the increase in East London working class speech, or at least that adolescents show such high distribution. Again, one fairly certain conclusion can be made, that the replacement of intervocalic /t/ by [ʔ] is very much still present in the variety spoken in the traditional East End today. The other traditional Cockney variant [ɾ] on the other hand seems to be highly receding, as it was not found at all with the younger speakers.

Whether the distribution of /t/-glottalling among East London working class adolescents will experience a further escalation or whether the progression has stabilised is difficult to tell, but Tollfree (1999) at least, suggests that intervocalic T-glottalling with her SELE (South East London English) speakers has stabilised, and if it has not the progression of glottal /t/ sound change is very slow (1999: 171). Also, if considering stylistic stratification of T-glottalling, the younger informants were just as consistent in their use of the non-standard variant during the reading style passage as they were in the normal interview, which can suggest that T-glottalling indeed has lost some of its salient characteristics, which again can suggest that it has stabilised as the norm with young speakers in East London.

The high distribution of T-glottalling can also indicate that the young people are taking part in a national dialect levelling, as also previously seen with TH-fronting. A more thorough discussion of the high distribution of some of the consonantal features will be discussed further in the general discussion section in chapter 6 (Conclusion).

As the data material for the current study shows, there is no difference in the distribution of the non-standard variant between the genders, as both groups show a total percentage score of 90%. This can illustrate further what was discussed above with TH-fronting distribution between the gender groups, that both gender groups could be expected to lead the change. On the one hand males are often seen to be more likely to retain the localised form, which T-glottalling traditionally is deemed, and on the other hand females are regarded more likely to use the supra-local form, which T-glottalling certainly has become, so the

inconclusive results given for the glottalised variant here could suggest that T-glottalling has stabilised as a norm for both working class gender groups. The results here, however, do not correspond with the results given for T-glottalling among working class adolescents in Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull (1999), the results there mirror the results for TH-fronting both in the current study and in the three towns, that the adolescent boys are leading in showing higher distribution of [ʔ] than the girls (1999: 160, table 8.8). This may suggest that this feature has not stabilised in the same way in the three towns as it seemingly has in East London.

5.4 H-dropping

H-dropping involves omission of /h/ in syllable stressed positions in lexical words, either in word initial positions such as in *house* [aus] or in word medial positions in words such as *behind* [biamd]. This feature is considered a traditional Cockney feature, but also this feature has in the past experienced a spread to other varieties in England (e.g. Trudgill 1986: 44), but unlike T-glottalling, and to some extent TH-fronting which have also experienced social spread, this feature is still considered a highly salient feature mainly found with working class speakers. The spread of H-dropping has however been reported to be stagnating (Altendorf 2003: 62).

5.4.1 Results for H-dropping

For H-dropping it was not possible to elicit 30 tokens from all speakers in the sample, thus the total score of tokens is lower than for T-glottalling and TH-fronting. The total number of tokens elicited for the adults was 178 and 205 for the adolescents, giving a total of 383 tokens for the data set for H-dropping.

Table 5.4 H dropping: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Adult		Adolescent	
	N	%	N	%
∅	95	52	21	9
[h]	83	48	184	91
Total	178	100	205	100

Table 5.4 above gives the number and group scores for H-dropping. The table reveals that 95 tokens were realised as ∅, and 83 tokens realised as [h], giving an average percentage score of 52% for ∅ with the adult speakers.

The adolescent speakers realised 21 tokens as ∅ and 184 tokens as [h], giving an average percentage score of 9% for the traditional Cockney feature.

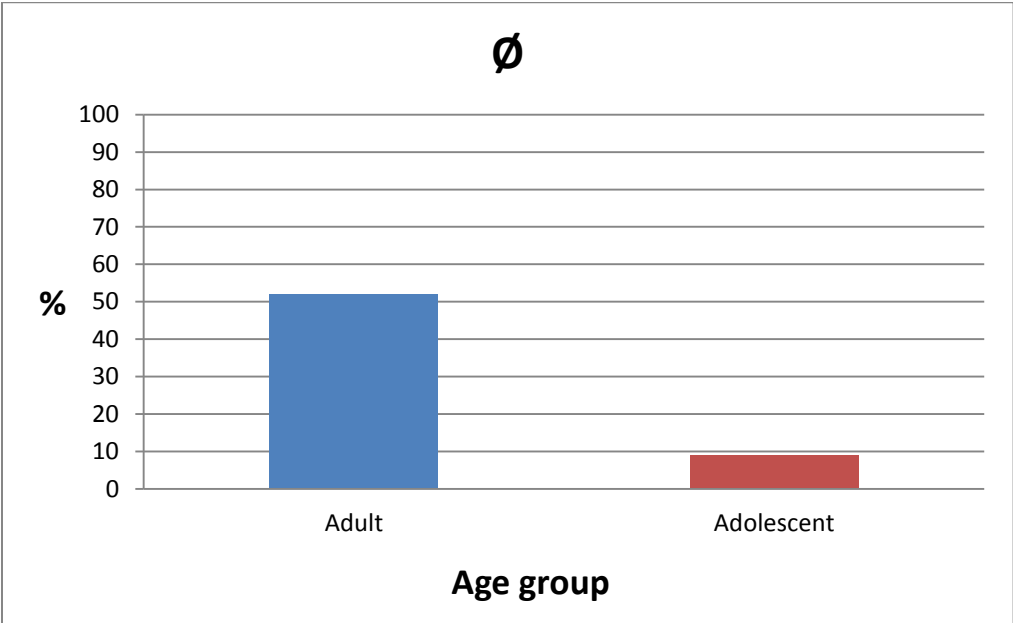


Figure 5.7 H-dropping: Percentage score of ∅ for each age group

Figure 5.7 above illustrates the distribution of \emptyset for the different age groups. As can be read from the diagram there is a massive difference between the two age groups concerning the omission of /h/ in stressed syllable position. The adult speakers have a percentage score of over 50% while the adolescents omit their /h/'s in less than 10% of the cases, which indicates that the adult speakers are far more likely to not pronounce /h/ in stressed syllable position than their younger peers. This result does not reflect the results given for TH-fronting and T-glottalling where the traditional features were subjected to increased distribution with the adolescent speakers. The results are, however, in line with one of the current project's hypotheses, that the older speakers would show a higher distribution of the traditional Cockney features. The reason why the distribution of /h/ with the East End-speakers does not correspond with the distribution of glottal replacement of /t/ and the replacement of /θ/ and /ð/ by [f] and [v] quite possibly has to do with the current status of the features. H-dropping has also spread throughout England, but as already mentioned, it has not experienced the same change in social status, as H-dropping is still considered a highly salient feature, mainly associated with working class speakers. This, and other factors concerning H-dropping, will be discussed further later.

The findings here also correspond with the findings in Williams and Kerswill (1999), where they explain that recent years have seen a reduction in H-dropping in the south-east (1999: 147, 158). Cheshire et al. (2008) have also considered H-dropping in their study in the London borough of Hackney. Their results reveal that their older Hackney informants are far more likely to drop their /h/s than their Hackney adolescent speakers, having an average percentage score of 58.1% against the adolescent's score of 18% (2008: 15). So there is a clear tendency towards h-restoration in the south-east including London.

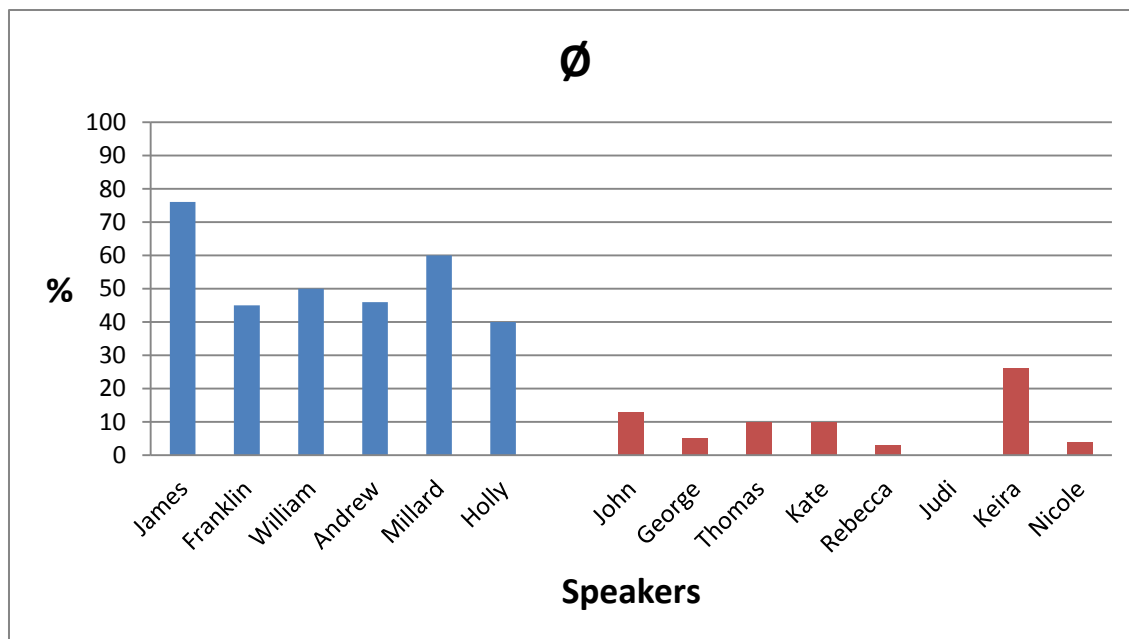


Figure 5.8 H-dropping: Individual percentage score for Ø (blue: Adults, red: Adolescents)

Figure 5.8 above illustrates the variation within the two age groups, and we learn that the distribution of Ø is of 40% or more with the older group, with James, the oldest informant, showing the highest score of 76% for Ø. The person with the lowest score in the adult group is, for once as expected, Holly, with a score of 40%.

For the adolescent speakers, they overall show low scores for Ø, with Judi not omitting any of the /h/s of the 24 tokens elicited from her. The person with the highest distribution of H-dropping among the adolescent speakers is rather surprisingly one of the girls, Keira, having a percentage score of 26% for Ø, while none of the boys score more than 13%. Again, Judi's low score is lowering the overall percentage score for the adolescent group slightly. If her score is excluded from the calculation the overall score is 10% rather than 9%, but this very small difference does not really lead to skewing of the data, and since the distribution of Ø is so low overall among the younger informants, it is still evident that there is a tendency towards h-restoration

The distribution of Ø for the different genders is illustrated in figure 5.9 below. The diagram shows that the adolescent boys have slightly higher score than the adolescent girls, 9% to the girls' 8%, which is expected when considering the overall tendency of females often preferring the less marked forms. However, with such small differences it is difficult to make any adequate generalisations, so here the results are rather inconclusive. That the distribution of Ø is higher among the boys (however very slightly) also corresponds with the

findings both in Reading and Milton Keynes (Williams & Kerswill 1999: 147, 158), where the young boys have a higher distribution of \emptyset than the young girls, especially in Reading, in Milton Keynes there is only a slightly higher distribution of \emptyset among the boys.

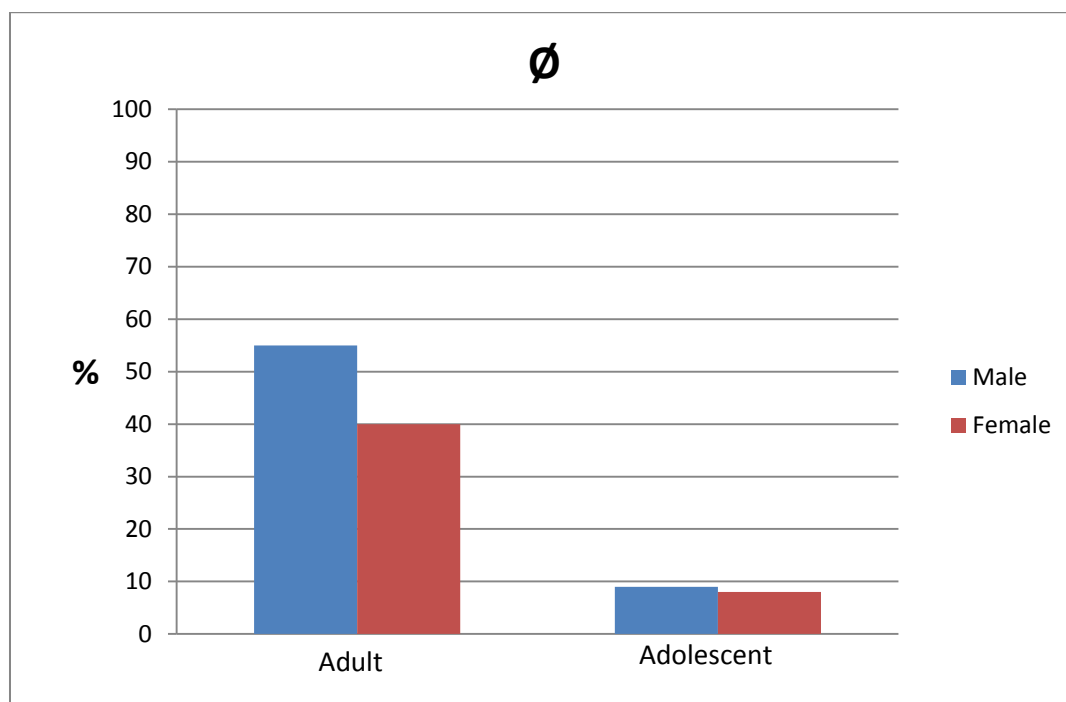


Figure 5.9 H-dropping: Percentage scores of \emptyset for the different genders

The distribution of \emptyset for the different genders in the older age group suggests that the adult males are more probable to omit /h/ than the female, which is an expected result as already mentioned. Unfortunately, with only one female adult, generalisations cannot be made based on these results.

5.4.2 Discussion of the results for H-dropping

As the results demonstrate, there is an enormous difference in the distribution of the highly salient variant \emptyset between the two age groups, strongly indicating a tendency towards the restoration of stressed syllable /h/ in lexical words in East End London. I should however be quick to suggest that this might be because the adolescents were accommodating towards me as the fieldworker, leaving out the exceedingly salient feature. This does not however seem to be the case, as the other non-standard features were used very frequently, both during the

main interview and during the reading style passage.

The tendency of higher distribution of \emptyset with the adult speakers is in line with what was hypothesised, that the older speakers would show more occurrences of the traditional features. However, when considering the results for TH-fronting and T-glottalling they do not reflect the results given here for H-dropping. So why the highly salient variable of H-dropping shows so different distribution in the present data set than that of TH-fronting and T-glottalling is difficult to understand. Also, the distribution of H-dropping differs from TH-fronting and T-glottalling in another respect as well, as seen with Williams and Kerswill's study (1999), where they show that their younger working class informants in Hull, a northern city, have adopted TH-fronting and T-glottalling rather extensively, but they do not pursue the change of h-restoration (1999: 147, 158). Thus there is an enormous divergence concerning this variable between north and south, where the north has retained the traditional form. Kerswill and Williams (2002) have attempted to give an explanation for this divergence, but they are careful to state that none of the explanations are totally reliable. The one explanation that seems most trustworthy has to do with different attitudinal factors in North and South. It seems that some of the spreading features are more desirable for Northerners than others, as Kerswill and Williams state '[e]ven though T-glottalling and TH-fronting are southern in origin and are demonstrably spreading from the South, they apparently do not pose a threat to Northern identity – unlike the use of /h/' (2002: 95). Kerswill and Williams further explain that in order for the Southern features to be adopted by working class Northerners, it seems they have to be low prestige features (*ibid.*), or at least not features considered "posh" (I wish to include this modification because of the fact that both TH-fronting and T-glottalling are perhaps not that stigmatised anymore, as discussed earlier). However, this does not explain why there is a tendency towards h-restoration in East London and the south-east in general, since the reinstatement of /h/ is evident with working class adolescents who remain fairly strongly non-standard in their phonological distribution (*ibid.*: 96). An explanation given by Kerswill and Williams is that to pronounce one's /h/s is no longer evaluated as 'a marker of "poshness" for these speakers' (*ibid.*).

Another explanation could be one related to the apparent influence of ethnicity on the speech of East London working class speakers (cf. Torgersen et al. 2006, Fox 2007, Cheshire et al. 2008a, Kerswill et al. 2008, Cheshire et al. 2011). In the article by Cheshire et al. (2008a), they show that the non-Anglo speakers in Hackney are much less likely to omit their /h/s in stressed syllable position than the Anglo speakers (3.9% score for \emptyset with non-Anglos against 18% score for \emptyset with Anglos) (2008a: 15), and thus they can be seen as leading the

change towards /h/-restoration. That the non-Anglo speakers prefer the more standard variant [h] than the non-standard Ø are in line with the tendency that ethnic speakers tend to use more of the standard variants in general (though multi-ethnic friendship groups might encourage use of innovative forms) (Cheshire et al 2008b: 3). Still, this explanation necessitates that the change towards h-restoration started in London and then later diffused outwards, and whether this is the case, or whether London speakers have in this case allowed features do diffuse into London is difficult to know for certain, though the first case is the most evident with other features as we have seen. This notion also gets support from the findings in the present study since the working class Anglos here had even lower distribution of Ø than in both Reading and Milton Keynes, but there are only very slight differences, so one cannot be certain. Nevertheless, even though influence from non-Anglos might be present, there also has to be an element of willingness to adapt to the restoration of /h/, independently of where the feature is spreading from, so for the time being I have to rely on Kerswill and Williams' explanation of attitudinal factors, that perhaps the pronunciation of /h/ has lost some of its "poshness" for the working class adolescents of the south-east, or that there is a notion among young adolescents that this particular feature is old fashioned, but as Kerswill and Williams point out, one might have to recognise that one is dealing with linguistically arbitrary factors (2002: 96).

Concerning the research question of which Cockney features still hold ground in the speech of white working class speakers of East London, one can quite safely conclude that H-dropping is definitely on the retreat following the very high distribution of the standard form among the adolescents.

Also with the H-dropping variable, it is reasonable to conclude that young adolescents in the traditional East End are taking part in the dialect levelling process. However, this particular feature might be said to rather take part in the regional dialect levelling of the south-east of England, as the change has not been pursued in the North or elsewhere (contrary to the perception that consonant features are more widely spread than vowel features and thus can be seen as taking part in a national levelling process).

The correlation between the distribution of the variable of H-dropping and the independent variable of gender is rather inconclusive as there is only 1% higher score of Ø with the boys than the girls, but even if the difference is slight it is still an indicator for females preferring the less marked forms.

Concerning the stylistic stratification of H-dropping, none of the adolescent speakers omitted /h/ in reading style. That may suggest that in more formal speech situations H-

dropping is not likely to occur with the young speakers. The same also applies for the adult speakers, who overall produced less vernacular speech in reading style than in the more informal interview situation.

5.5 L-vocalisation

L-vocalisation refers to the replacement of a dark [ɫ], i.e. non-prevocalic /l/, with a back vowel, usually one of the voicoids [o] or [ʊ] so that pronunciations such as [mɪdʊ] *middle* and [mɪʊk] *milk* may occur. This feature is considered a traditional feature of Cockney, and also a feature of London English in general. L-vocalisation has also experienced a spread to other varieties. It has not, however, experienced the same substantial spread as for instance T-glottalling and this linguistic variable is mainly found in rural and urban places in the south-east (Altendorf 2003: 67 with reference to map 17 in Trudgill 1999: 64). As with for instance T-glottalling, L-vocalisation has also experienced a change in social status, at least in London. Altendorf (2003), reports that the vocalised variant is almost categorical in both working class and middle class accents (2003: 95). Though, it is less frequent with upper middle class speakers (but still fairly frequent, approaching the 70% mark), which Altendorf claims reflects the vernacular origin of the feature (ibid.). Altendorf's findings also get support from Tollfree (1999: 174-75) where she arrives at the same conclusion concerning her SELE and SELRS (South East London Regional Standard, which refers to "the local form of near-RP" (1999: 164)) speakers.

5.5.1 Results for L-vocalisation

30 tokens were elicited from each speaker, providing the data set for this variable a total of 420 tokens, 180 tokens with the adult speakers and 240 tokens for the adolescents. Table 5.6 below provides the numbers and group scores for the different age groups.

Table 5.5 L-vocalisation: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Adult		Adolescent	
	N	%	N	%
[ʊ]	121	67	175	82
[ɪ]	59	33	65	18
Total	180	100	240	100

As can be read from the table the adult speakers realised 121 tokens as the vocalised London variant [ʊ] and 59 tokens as the standard variant [ɪ], giving an average percentage score of 67% for [ʊ]. The adolescents realised 175 tokens as [ʊ] and 65 tokens as [ɪ], providing an average percentage score of 72% for the non-standard variant.

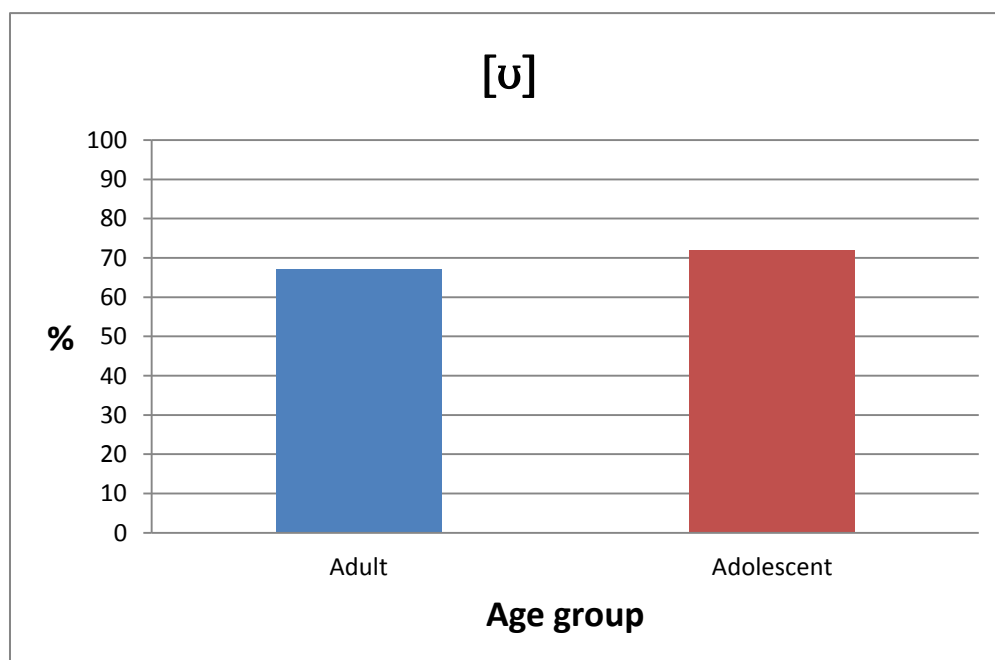


Figure 5.10 L-vocalisation: Percentage score of [ʊ] for each age group

Figure 5.10 above illustrates the distribution of [ʊ] for each age group. As with TH-fronting and T-glottalling the distribution of the non-standard variant is again rather high with both age groups, with both age groups scoring over 60%. The younger group shows a slightly higher usage of the vocalised form than the adults, an increase of 5%. The distribution of [ʊ] is pretty similar to the distribution of TH-fronting and T-glottalling, though the average percentage scores are higher with both age groups for T-glottalling, which again does not correspond with what was hypothesised: that the adult speakers would show more of the traditional Cockney feature. Still, concerning the spread and the current status of this feature as a supra-local variant, at least in the south, it is perhaps not an unexpected result. The other recent studies on the speech in the traditional East End have not considered L-vocalisation. The results provided here do however reflect the findings of Tollfree (1999) in her study on South East London English. She reports that variable L-vocalisation is found with all speakers in her sample, and more with the younger speakers (1999: 174). Tollfree also noted that some of her younger informants had vocalised realisations in intervocalic word-final position which is usually said to not be a possible environment for vocalisation in London English (e.g. Wells 1982: 321). This was also noted in a few cases with the younger informants in the present study (see 4.6.1.4). I suggest that it may occur if there is glottal onset of the second vowel: [fiʊ^ʔʌp] *fill up*.

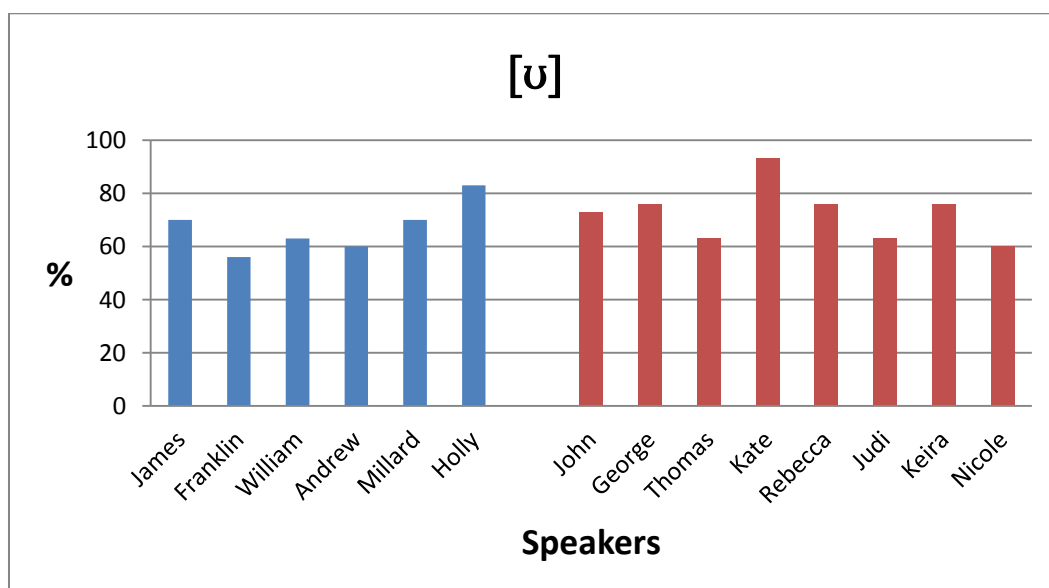


Figure 5.11 L-vocalisation: Individual percentage score for [ʊ]
(blue: Adults, red: Adolescents)

Figure 5.11 above provides the individual percentage scores for [ʊ]. As the diagram shows, all speakers have a vocalised realisation in 60% or more of the instances, except for Franklin who scores 56% for [ʊ]. Of the older speakers Franklin then has the lowest score, while Holly, again rather surprisingly, has the highest score with as much as 83% for [ʊ].

In the younger age group Nicole has the lowest score of 60%, while Kate has by far the highest score of all the speakers with 93% for the non-standard variant. Overall there is a quite stable pattern with the vocalised forms, except for Kate and Holly who both have very high scores compared to the others in their respective age groups. Kate is without doubt increasing the overall score for the adolescents, while Holly is increasing the average percentage score for the adults. Nonetheless, the overall pattern shows an increase of the vocalised form with the adolescents, and thus may be indicative of a change.

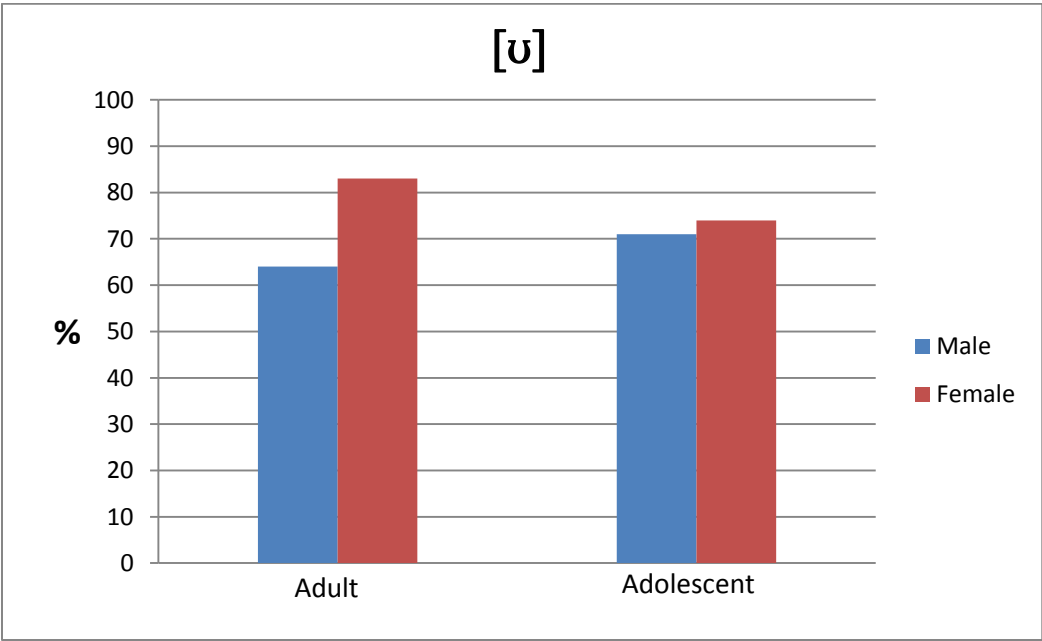


Figure 5.12 L-vocalisation: Percentage scores of [ʊ] for the different genders.

Figure 5.12 above illustrates the distribution of [ʊ] for the different gender groups. The diagram shows that the females seem to be leading the change in both age groups. In the adolescent group the females scored an average percentage score of 74% against the male’s score of 71%. The difference is not a great one, but still a rather surprising result. Neither

Tollfree (1999) nor anyone else has regarded gender-based distribution, in terms of variation between males and females, when it comes to L-vocalisation in London, so there cannot be made any comparisons with other studies regarding distribution in relation with the different genders. Altendorf (2003) does, however, show the distribution of L-vocalisation with her south-east London female school-children, but since her sample does not include any male speakers no comparisons are attainable. Comparisons with the distribution of the vocalised variant with Altendorf's female informants and the female informants in this study can however be made. Overall her two comprehensive school children (working class) show higher distribution than the female adolescents in the present study. Both of them show a score of over 90% for the vocalised variant (2003: 91-94). Docherty and Foulkes (1999) report that L-vocalisation in Derby was mainly found with younger working class males, a perhaps more expected result (1999: 52). However, when regarding the fact that L-vocalisation has lost much of its stigma and that this feature as well as T-glottalling and TH-fronting might now have status more as a supra-local feature, rather than a localised London feature, the results might not be so surprising after all.

5.5.2 Discussion of the results for L-vocalisation

The results for L-vocalisation in the current study show that both age groups are more likely to realise non-prevocalic /l/ as [ʌ] rather than the standard realisation [ɫ]. The adolescents used the London variant slightly more than the adults, and thus this result argues against one of the underlying hypotheses saying that adults would show more of the traditional Cockney features than the adolescents. However, regarding the spread of this feature, it is not surprising that the adolescents prove to have higher distribution.

This traditional Cockney feature is indeed holding ground in the speech of young working class people in the traditional East End, and it can suggest that this feature is also on the increase, as suggested by Tollfree (1999: 174) when regarding the distribution and popularity of this feature. There are at least no apparent indications from the results provided here for this feature to be on the retreat. However, further investigation is required in order to make further generalisations concerning the spread and increase of L-vocalisation. That London can be seen as taking part in a levelling process is also quite evident here, when comparing the results provided with results elsewhere (e.g. Tollfree 1999, Altendorf 2003).

The results are rather inconclusive regarding who is leading the increasing distribution

among the adolescents, but it may be drawn from the results that the females are leading by showing slightly higher distribution than the male speakers. Concerning the social stratification of this feature, L-vocalisation has, as already mentioned, experienced a change from being a rather salient localised feature to becoming a feature with wider social and geographical currency as suggested by for instance Altendorf (2003: 67). Altendorf claims that speakers do not seem consciously aware of the fact that this feature is generally held in low esteem. Altendorf asked teachers in English schools if their pupils “dropped *ts* and *ls*”, and they could only relate to t-dropping, while having no idea that the possibility of dropping of /l/ even existed (2003: 67). So people’s seemingly lack of awareness concerning the social stratification of L-vocalisations might explain why this feature has been adopted by middle class speakers in London as well. This might also help to explain the atypical pattern of the results for L-vocalisation given here, where the girls show higher usage of the non-standard variant than the boys.

The stylistic stratification of L-vocalisation was not evident with the informants in this study. Most of the young informants showed the same distribution in reading style as they did in conversational style, with [ʊ] as the norm.

5.6 MOUTH -monophthonging

MOUTH-monophthonging refers to the realisation of MOUTH with a long monophthong [æ:] rather than as diphthong with an open front (or central) starting point [aʊ], which is the norm in RP and in recent years also seen in regional accents in the south-east, including London (Kerswill & Williams 2005). The monophthongal realisation is considered highly salient, and found only with broad Cockney speakers. This study will primarily investigate the distribution of [æ:] versus [aʊ], and these are the variants that have been quantified. However, the quality of the vowel sounds cannot easily be rendered either [æ:] or [aʊ] as there are many subtle differences in realisation (cf. section 3.6), but for the purpose of this study the most important factor is whether the realisations are monophthongal or diphthongal.

5.6.1 Results for MOUTH-monophthonging

It was not possible to elicit 30 tokens of MOUTH-monophthonging from each speaker, so the total number of the data set for this variable is lower than the data sets for T-glottalling, TH-fronting and L-vocalisation. 180 tokens were elicited from the older group and 218 from the younger group, giving a total of 398 tokens for MOUTH-monophthonging.

Table 5.6 MOUTH-monophthonging: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Adult		Adolescent	
	N	%	N	%
[æ:]	98	54	90	82
[aʊ]	82	46	128	18
Total	180	100	218	100

Table 5.7 above provides the numbers and group scores for MOUTH-monophthonging. From the table we learn that the adult speakers realised 98 tokens as [æ:] and 82 tokens as [aʊ], giving an average percentage score of 54% for the traditional Cockney feature.

The adolescents realised 90 tokens as [æ:] and 128 tokens as [aʊ], giving an average percentage score of 37% for the long monophthong [æ:].

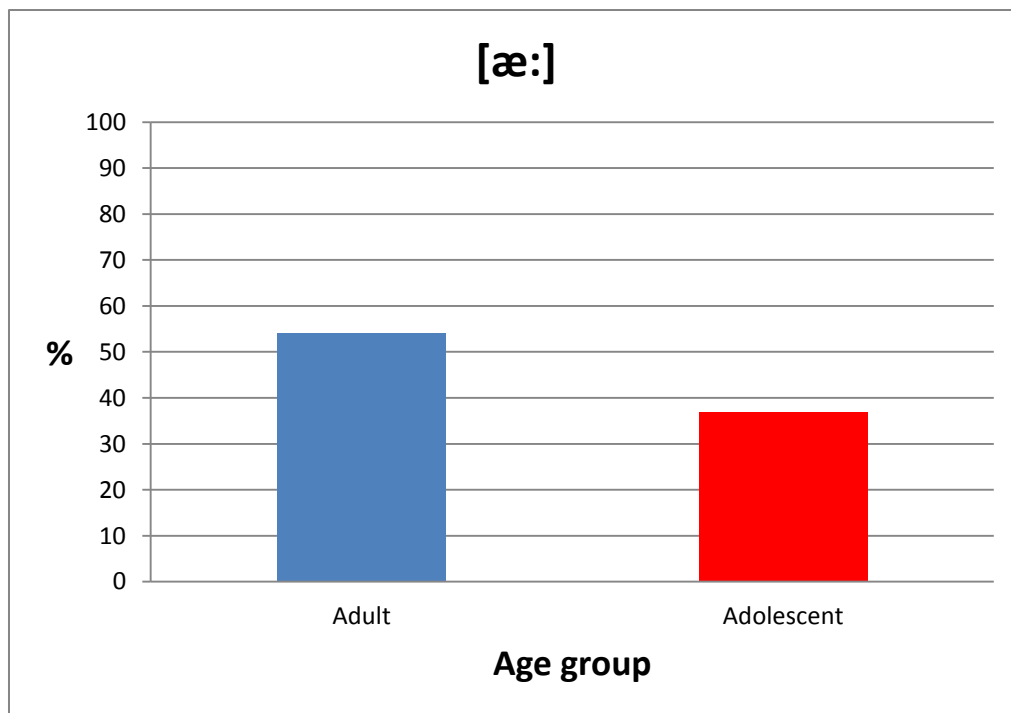


Figure 5.13 MOUTH-monophthonging: Percentage use of [æ:] for the different age groups

Figure 13 above illustrates the distribution of [æ:] for the different age groups. The diagram shows that the adult speakers have an average percentage score of 54% for the long monophthong, while the adolescent speakers score 37%. Thus it illustrates that the adult speakers have a higher distribution of the traditional Cockney feature than the adolescents. The adult speakers who had frequent realisations as [æ:] used the monophthong in both frequently occurring words and less frequently occurring words, while the adolescent speakers mainly had the monophthongal realisations in frequently occurring words such as *out* and *about*.

The results for MOUTH-monophthonging agree with the hypothesis that the older informants would have more of the traditional Cockney features than the adolescents. This feature, unlike the others considered in the present study, has not experienced a spread to other varieties and geographical locations, so the result given here was to be expected. Other studies on London varieties that have been concerned with the vowel of MOUTH, have mainly been concerned with other realisations of the vowel than the once considered in this study. Kerswill et al.'s study (2008) reports that with their younger informants they also found monophthong-like realisations with some and diphthong realisations with some, with non-Anglos leading in the use of the diphthong realisations (2008: 471). The diphthongs were however realised as further back than the RP-like [aʊ], something similar to [ɑʊ] (*ibid.*). The

diphthong quality in MOUTH reported in their study can apply for the MOUTH realisations among the adolescents in the present study as well (at least with some of the adolescent males), but I also registered realisations similar to the RP-like [aʊ] which seems to be the norm in the south-east in general. Furthermore, there were also different monophthongal realisations with the younger speakers in the present study, where some speakers had a retracted vowel in the area of [ɑ:]. Though, in this study I have transcribed all diphthong realisations as [aʊ], and all monophthong realisations as [æ:]. In the present study the investigation of this variable is mainly concerned with diphthong versus monophthong realisations, where the monophthong represents the traditional broad Cockney feature, while the diphthong realisations represent the new realisations, which seem to be the ones favoured by the young adolescents in Tower Hamlets. Altendorf (2003), however, also considered the realisation of the MOUTH vowel. Her results for the two working class school girls show that the monophthong realisations are very much recessive, only one of them had realisations as a monophthong (around 12% score), and then [ɑ:], the more front [æ:] did not occur at all. Altendorf also states that, surprisingly, the most common variant with her working class girls was in fact the levelled RP-like [aʊ] (2003: 104). Tollfree (1999) states that with her SELE speakers she observed various realisations of mouth, ranging from broad realisations such as [æ:^u], [æ:] to less broad [aʊ] and [aɻ] (1999: 169). Tollfree does not however provide any apparent time information on this variable, so the results provided in the current study cannot be tested against hers.

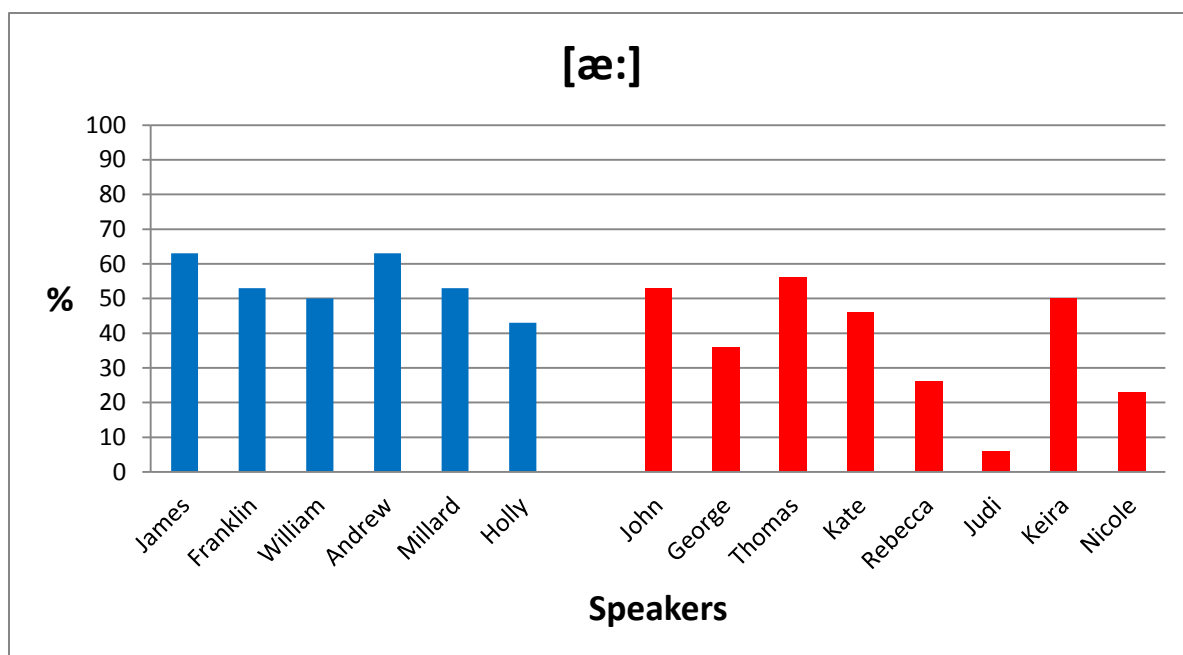


Figure 5.14 MOUTH-monophthonging: Individual percentage score for [æ:] (blue: Adults, red: Adolescents)

In figure 14 above, the individual percentage scores for [æ:] have been provided. As can be read from the diagram all speakers have variable realisations of [æ:]. The older speakers have the traditional Cockney realisations in 40% or more of the cases, with James and Andrew having the highest scores of 63%. Holly has the lowest distribution among the adults with a score of 40%. The other three adults, Millard, William and Franklin score between 50% and 53%.

Among the adolescents the distribution of [æ:] is rather more varied than with the adults, with scores ranging from only 6% (Judi) to 56% (Thomas). Judi is again lowering the average percentage score for the non-standard feature with the adolescents, but even if Judi were excluded from the calculation the adolescents would still have a considerably lower score than the adults (41%). Thomas seems to be the most conservative among the adolescents when it comes to this particular variable, having the highest score among the adolescents. A tendency towards standardisation, or at least a divergence away from monophthonging, can be extracted from these results, at least with some of the speakers.

Another noticeable result is the high distribution of the traditional Cockney feature with Keira and Kate, with Keira realising a monophthong in half of the cases. Still the males are leading in the distribution of [æ:] with both age groups, as seen in figure 5.15 below.

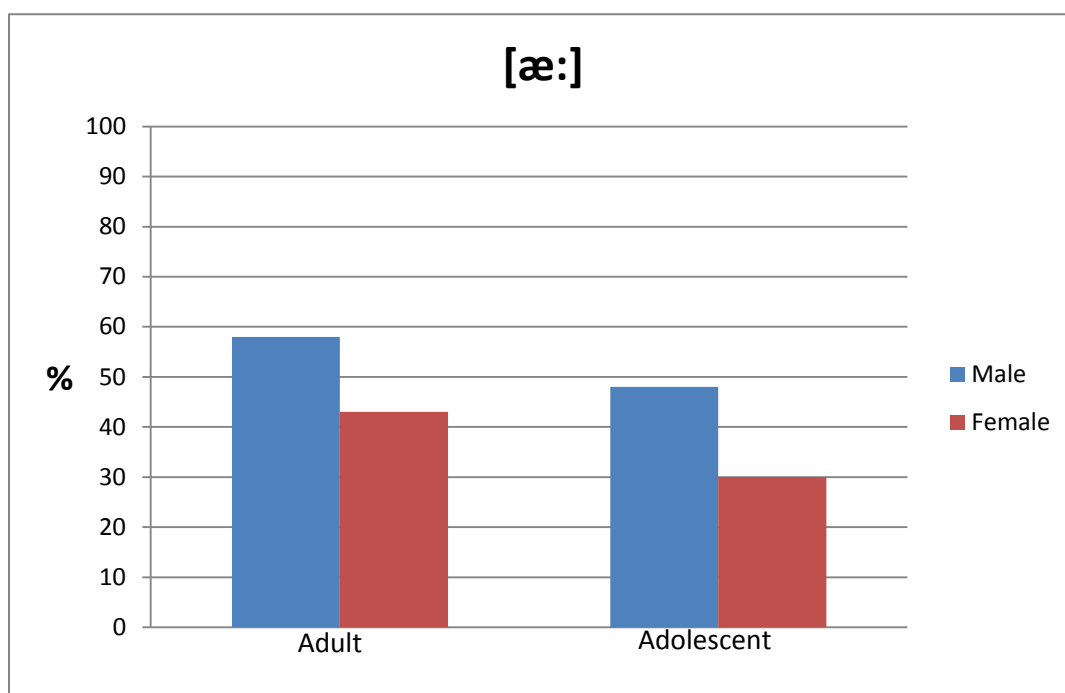


Figure 5.15 MOUTH-monophthonging: Percentage score of [æ:] for the different genders

The diagram shows that the males in both groups are far more likely to have monophthongal realisations than the females. This result is also as expected, that the adolescent girls show more of the ‘new’ features, i.e. not the traditional Cockney feature, following the claim that females are more likely to adopt the more standard and/or supra-local features.

5.6.2 Discussion of the results for MOUTH-monophthonging

The results given here for the distribution of the monophthongal realisation of MOUTH might be interpreted as a movement towards the more standard RP-like [aʊ], as the adolescents overall show lower distribution of the localised Cockney variant. It is however not evident whether this is a movement towards standardisation, or whether it is rather a movement towards the levelled variant in the south-east, or to put it in another way: it is not evident whether the working class adolescents in Tower Hamlets are indirectly accommodating towards the more standard variant by accommodating to what seems to be the norm in the south-east as a whole (Kerswill et al. 2008), or whether they are directly accommodating towards the standard. The first case is however more likely when considering the distribution

of the other variables presented in this study, where there seems to be no indication that the speech of working class speakers in East London are oriented towards the standard. In either case, a tendency of a change away from the broad Cockney realisation can be drawn from the results presented here. The ‘new’ realisations can be considered a combination of moving towards the levelled variant of the south-east and innovation, likely with ethnicity as an influential factor or what Cheshire et al. (2011) refers to as Multicultural London English. Though this study is not able to draw any conclusion concerning the change in realisation of this linguistic variable, other than that it seems to be a tendency of a movement away from the traditional broad Cockney realisation.

Concerning the distribution of [æ:] in relation with gender the results provided in the present study point towards that the young adolescent females are leading the change by using more of the ‘new’ variant. This result corresponds with the second hypothesis underlying this study. A comparison of Altendorf’s study cannot be made concerning distribution between the two genders, but the overall distribution of the monophthongal realisations among the girls here is higher than the distribution of the two working class girls in Altendorf’s study (2003: 102).

5.7 R-fronting

R-fronting refers to a different realisation of /r/ which in RP and also traditional Cockney is realised as [ɹ]. The new realisation is a labial or labialised variant, commonly transcribed as the labiodental approximant [ʋ] (see e.g. Foulkes and Docherty 2000, Marsden 2006). This feature has for a long time been noted as being habitually used by some speakers of English. The fronted variant has often been considered either as an infantilism, an idiosyncratic realisation or as an attribute of affected upper class speech. In recent years it seems that the labialised variant has established itself as an acceptable feature in non-standard varieties in south-east England, and there is also evidence that this feature is spreading to other parts of England as well (Foulkes and Docherty 2000: 30).

5.7.1 Results for R-fronting

A total of 30 tokens were successfully elicited from each speaker, which gives a total of 180 tokens with the adult speakers, and 240 tokens with the adolescent speakers. The total number of tokens for both groups is 420. Table 5.8 below shows the numbers and group scores for each age group.

Table 5.7 R-fronting: Numbers and group scores

Variants	Adult		Adolescent	
	N	%	N	%
[v]	8	4	112	46
[ɹ]	172	96	128	54
Total	180	100	210	100

From table 5.8 we learn that a total of 8 tokens were realised as the fronted variant and 172 tokens as the standard [ɹ] with the adult speakers, which gives an average percentage score of 4% for the labialised variant [v]. The distribution of R-fronting among the adolescents was 112 tokens realised as [v], while 128 tokens were realised as the standard variant. That gives an average percentage score of 46% for [v] with the younger group.

The results show that the labialised variant is indeed present with the adolescent speakers in the traditional East End, and almost non-existing with the adult speakers. Figure 5.16 below illustrates the distribution of [v] with the different age groups.

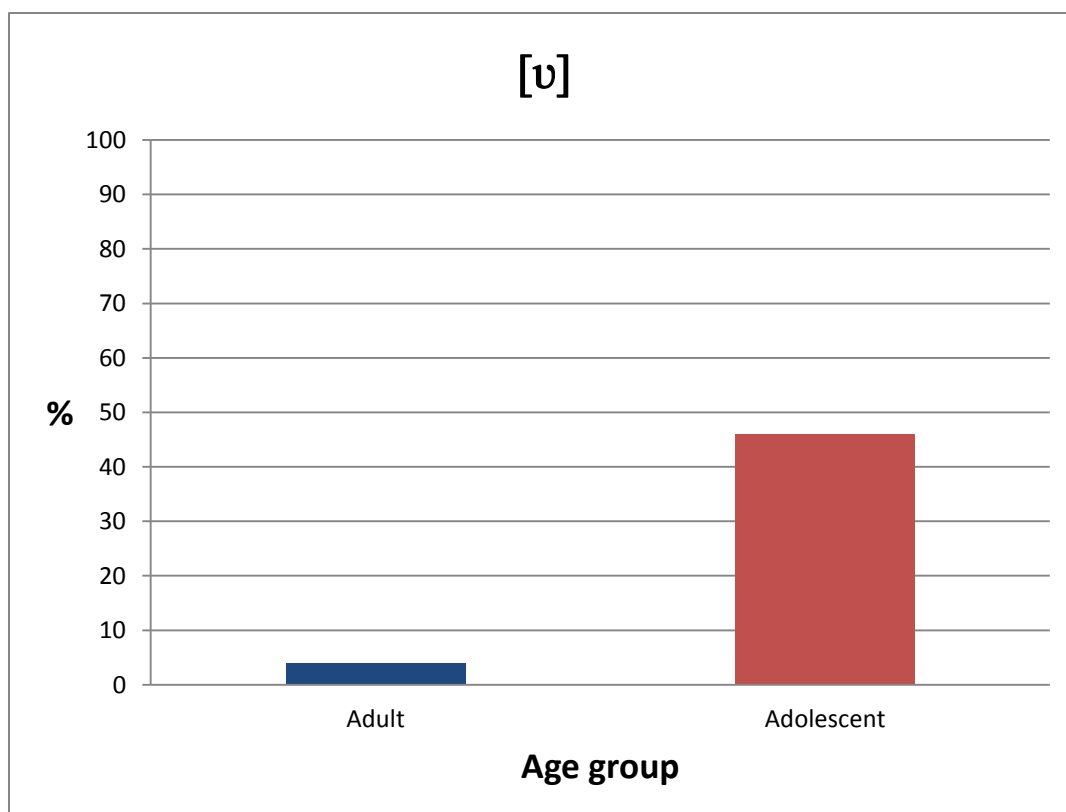


Figure 5.16 R-fronting: Percentage score of [v] for each age group

As can be read from the diagram the adolescents have an average score of almost 50% for the labialised variant, while the adults only 4%. This enormous variation between the age cohorts reveals that the adolescents are far more likely to have the labialised realisation than the adults, and the result can suggest that the fronted variant is indeed a new feature, which was not at all common in the traditional East End when the speakers in the adult group were young. These results mirror the results given in Foulkes and Docherty (2000) for the distribution of type 3 (weak labial) and 4 (strong labial)³ of labial [v] with their younger informants (14-27) in Derby (the labialised variant was wholly absent with the older speakers (45-65)). Their younger Derby speakers realised 41% of the tokens as type 3 and 4 (2000: 42). Their Newcastle adolescents only scored 4% for the labialised variants. Marsden's results from her investigation of labialised realisations of /r/ in Leeds (2006) also correspond quite well with the findings in both Derby and in the present study of London East End. Her younger informants (born between 1960 and 1994) realised /r/ as a labial variant in 31% of the cases, while the older speakers (46+) had no realisations as [v] (2006: 168). So the score

³ See Foulkes and Docherty (2000: 41-42) for further discussion on the number scores for the different variants.

for the labialised variant in Leeds is a bit lower than the score given in the Derby study and here, but it is still evident that this feature is mainly adopted by younger speakers, and not by the older speakers in both Leeds and Derby. Williams and Kerswill (1999) also reported that the labiodental variant is common among children and adolescents in Reading, Milton Keynes and Hull (1999: 147). Tollfree (1999) reports that some individuals showed variable use of [v], with four of the younger informants demonstrating consistent use of the labialised variant.

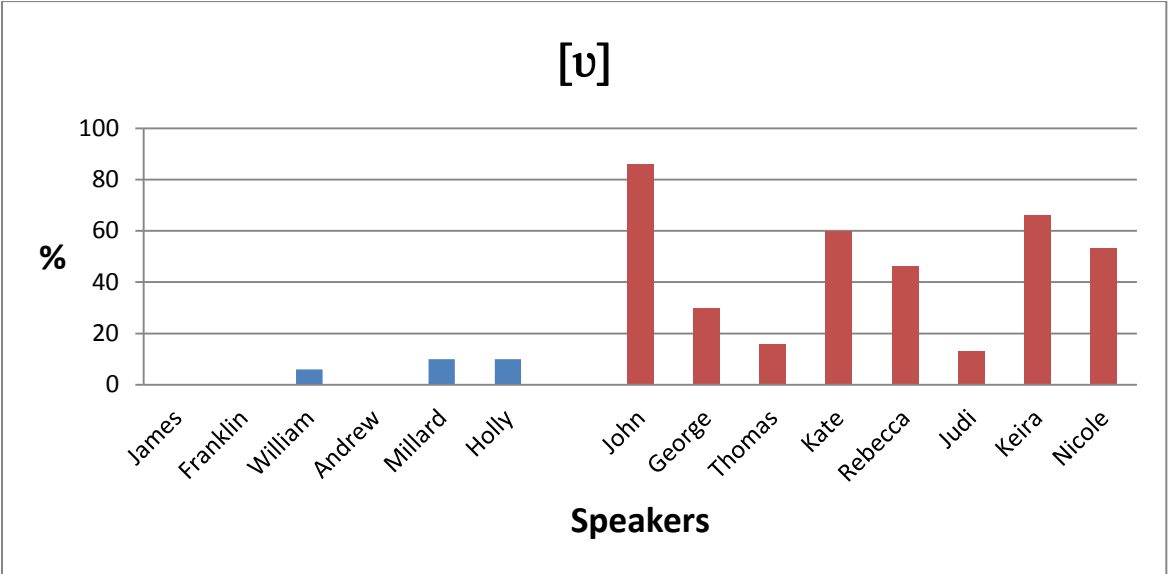


Figure 5.17 R-fronting: Individual percentage score for [v]

Table 5.17 shows the individual percentage score for [v]. Among the adult speakers the labialised variant is almost non-present. William, Millard and Holly are the only ones that seem to have this variant in their inventory, but the fronted variant occurs very rarely. Millard, who is the youngest of the adults, 36 years old, realised three of the tokens as a labialised variant. Speakers of Millard’s age in Foulkes and Docherty’s (2000) and Marsden’s (2006) studies also had the fronted realisation of /r/, which may explain why Millard occasionally has the fronted variant. Holly also had three realisations as [v], but only in the word *great*, which may suggest that this is perhaps rather an idiosyncratic realisation of that particular word. William had the fronted realisation in the words *foreign* and *around*, but he also pronounced the word *around* with a distinct post-alveolar [ɹ] sound elsewhere, so the explanation of the labial sound being an idiosyncrasy may not apply for him. However, that older speakers are influenced by innovations in the language and might adopt certain forms to some extent is not

unheard of, especially since the distribution of the ‘new’ sound in this case is so infrequent. That the labialised variant exists with the older speakers might however also give support to Foulkes and Docherty’s tentative suggestion that this feature might in fact come from Cockney (see chapter 3.7), but then it might be expected that it would be found with the three other adult informants as well, and more frequently.

Among the adolescent speakers, table 5.17 shows that all speakers have the fronted variant in their phonemic inventory and the majority of the younger speakers use it quite consistently, but all of them alternate between the two adjacent variants. John shows the highest distribution of [v] with a score of 86%. Judi and Thomas have the lowest score, 13% and 16% respectively. George also has a quite low score of 30%. The others score between 46% and 66%. The results then show considerable variation within the adolescent group.

Even though John raises the overall score for the male adolescents, the females have a slightly higher average percentage score of the fronted variant, as seen in figure 5.18 below.

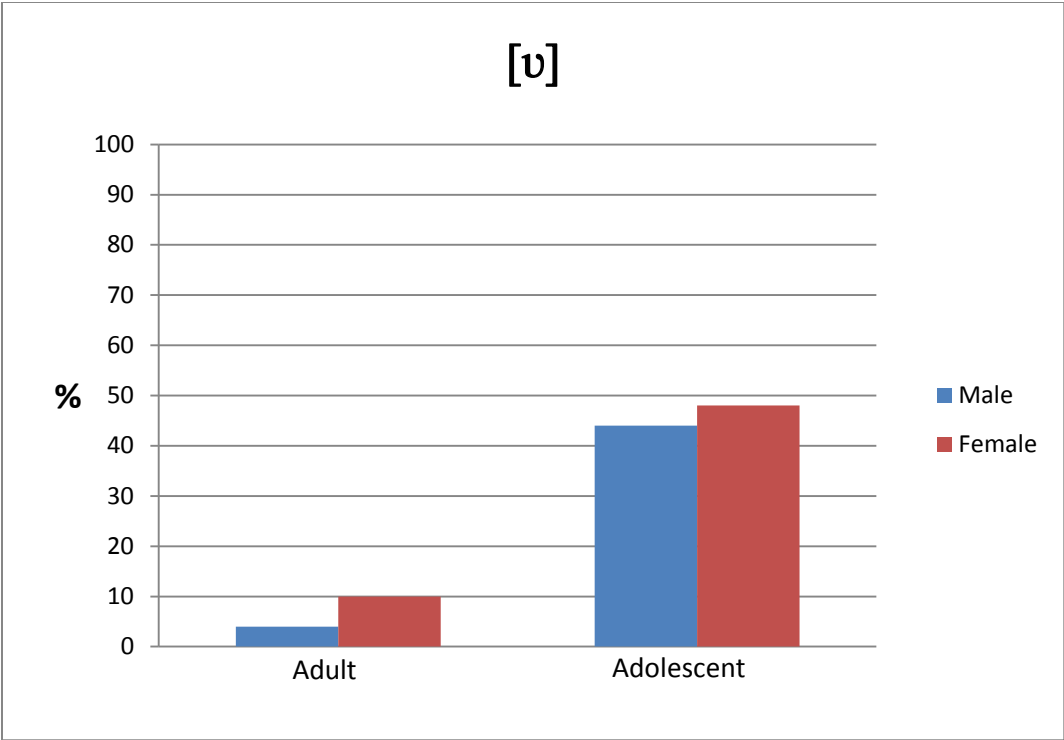


Figure 5.18: Percentage score of [v] for the different genders

The diagram shows that the females have an average percentage score of 48% against the males’ 44%. The difference is however so slight that it is hard to provide any well-founded

conclusions about which group is leading in the change towards the use of [v] for [ɹ]. The results provided in the present study might still suggest that females seem to be the prime facilitators when it comes to the use of [v]. This generalisation gets neither support nor opposition from Foulkes and Docherty (2000) and Marsden (2006) as their results from Derby/Newcastle and Leeds were rather inconclusive when it comes to gender-based distribution (Foulkes and Docherty 2000: 42, Marsden 2006: 162).

5.7.2 Discussion of the results for R-fronting

The results for R-fronting in the present study mirror the distribution of [v] in many other studies (Williams & Kerswill 1999, Tollfree 1999, Foulkes & Docherty 2000, Marsden 2006), by showing that the adolescent speakers are far more likely to use the fronted variant than their older peers. As the results show, the fronted variant was found with some of the older speakers as well, but very rarely. This result might counter Foulkes and Docherty's tentative claim that R-fronting perhaps is an old Cockney feature, and perhaps rather support the notion that the accent of the traditional East End is being subject to external influence in this case. Considering the vast and rapid spread of this feature, which is similar to that found for TH-fronting and T-glottalling, it is reasonable to assume that also in the case of [v], the accent spoken in East London can be said as taking part in an accent levelling process. In the case of R-fronting however, the working class accent of London has perhaps not the status as the epicentre for the dissemination, but rather that the accent spoken in the traditional East End is subject to influence from elsewhere. So with this particular feature (and perhaps also [au] in MOUTH), the spread can perhaps not be explained as geographical diffusion from London, but rather from the south-east of England in general. This claim also gets some support from Kerswill in his article *Children, adolescents, and language change* (1996). Here he suggests that many of the recent consonantal changes, such as TH-fronting and R-fronting, might be explained with the fact that with many children [f, v] for /θ, ð/ and [v] for /r/ are variants that are common as they go through developmental stages. Usually these forms are eradicated, for instance as a result of overt correction or linguistic experience, but in places like Milton Keynes, where the communities are presented with many changes and competing norms with the adults as well, the children are not offered any dominant adult models. This might lead to

less pressure to eradicate some of these features that are stages in a development (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 38 with reference to Kerswill 1996: 189). A scenario like this might have taken place in some of these so-called “new” towns, like Milton Keynes, where there are rather loose-knit networks and where the community is exposed to many different varieties as a result of in-migration from various other places in England, mainly from the south-east including London (cf. Kerswill & Williams 2000). To sum up, due to the natural characteristics of children’s speech and lack of an authoritative adult norm, features such as R-fronting may be preserved and thus also lead to change, and this is perhaps more likely to happen in loose-knit mobile communities in the south-east, such as for instance Milton Keynes, than in more close-knit immobile working class communities such as Tower Hamlets. The feature has however spread to these close-knit working class communities as well, as showed with the results presented in the present study.

The results for the distribution of R-fronting in the current study are rather inconclusive when it comes to which gender group is leading the change. The females show a slightly higher distribution than the males, but it is difficult to make any adequate generalisations based on the slight difference in these results. Other studies that have been concerned with the R-fronting variable also got rather inconclusive results.

In terms of social distribution of the variable it mainly mirrors the distribution of TH-fronting, in that it is mainly found with working class speakers (Foulkes & Docherty 2000: 45), though in Newcastle, Foulkes and Docherty found that [v] occurred the most with their middle class females (though based on small number of tokens) (ibid.: 43-44).

There are no indications towards R-fronting being subject to any stylistic stratification. Most of the informants in this study showed the same distribution of [v] in both reading style and interview style, though one of the informants, Nicole, actually showed far more realisations of the fronted variant in reading style than in the interview (16 tokens of 30 as [v] in interview style and 30 of 33 tokens in reading style). This is fairly odd, as one would expect that the non-standard variant would be used more in less conscious speech, but it is quite clear that this feature does not have any stylistic stratification attached to it. Foulkes and Docherty (2000) did not find any indications towards stylistic stratification of R-fronting either.

5.8 Other observations

In this chapter the results from the quantitative analysis have been presented, and the findings have been discussed in relation to the underlying hypotheses and research questions. In this section I will provide an overview of some other observations that were made in the auditory analysis. It should be kept in mind that the observations presented here have not been quantified and the findings are highly impressionistic, and should thus not be considered as systemised empirical data.

Of the other observations made, the most striking were some vowel features. The PRICE vowel was with some of the younger informants realised as a monophthong, something in the area of a more fronted [a:], but also a retracted [ɑ:] thus pronunciations such as [tɑ:m] *time* occurred. This was especially evident with the adolescent male speakers, particularly John who seemed to have quite consistent usage of the monophthongal realisations. It also seemed that the monophthongal realisations were mainly used in certain frequent occurring words, such as *like* and *time*. In Kerswill et al. (2008) they found that the vowel in PRICE was realised with a more front and lowered onset with their younger Hackney informants, especially among the non-Anglo speakers. They also observed near monophthongal realisations with non-Anglos leading (2008: 467-468, 482). Fox also provides similar results in her study in Tower Hamlets (2007). She lists six different observed realisations, the most common with her informants was [ɑɪ], but she also identified two monophthongal realisations, a fronted [æ] and a back [ɑ:]. These were however not very frequently used with her informants, 5% and 1% respectively (2007: 120). The vowel quality observed with the younger informants in the present study was usually nearer a back [ɑ:] than the fronted and slightly raised [æ]. The observations made in this study of PRICE might support the view that Anglo speakers are influenced by non-Anglo speakers, as they have been found to lead the change of this vowel. However the actual distribution is not known.

Another observation that caught my attention was a very different realisation of CHOICE with all of the younger informants except for Judi and Thomas. The CHOICE vowel occurred very rarely, and with most of the informants it only occurred once, as *choice* in the reading style passage. However, even though it only occurred once with many of the informants they all had a rather striking realisation. The first element sounded much more front and more open than the traditional Cockney [ɔɪ], somewhere around a central [ɜ] or even

more front and raised with some of the informants. The second element was usually [ɪ], but sometimes it sounded more retracted, like a schwa or almost as a schwa off-glide, so ranging from [ɜɪ] to [ɜə]. Kerswill et al. (2008) show the acoustic analysis of CHOICE with their Hackney informants, but the realisation is not described in detail. The figures they provide however show CHOICE as more fronted and sometimes also raised (2008: 466-477).

A third striking observation was the quality of the lexical set LETTER. In London English in general it is usually realised as [ə], though in broad Cockney it may be realised as a very open [ɐ] (see Wells 1982: 305). This broad Cockney variant was observed with two of the older speakers, James and Holly. The adolescents however seemed to have quite consistently a different realisation than both [ə] and [ɐ], usually a long back vowel [ɑ:], but sometimes also more central and raised, but always with a considerably long sound, thus realisations such as [beʔɑ:] *better* and [kʌltʃɑ:] *culture* were observed. The long back [ɑ:] realisation also applies for comma words, [kʌmɑ:] *comma*. I have however not been able to figure out the exact quality of the realisations for LETTER and comma, so the ones provided here should be regarded only as suggestions. The long realisation was evident of all the younger informants, and even though it was not quantified, it was observed so frequently that I would claim that this realisation even occurred more than [ə], with the exception of Judi and Thomas.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 General discussion of the results

In this study I have done a quantitative analysis of six phonological variables, of which at least five are considered traditional Cockney features (see discussion of R-fronting in 3.7). I have chosen to focus on the social group that has traditionally been associated with Cockney, namely white Anglo working class speakers. All of the informants can be deemed working class, though in some cases it is a rather rough classification (as seen with Judi). In chapter 5 the results for the distribution of the linguistic variables in correlation with the independent variables of age and gender have been presented.

The overall tendency that can be extracted from the results, is that the features that have experienced vast and rapid spread, and have become supra-local features, are very much still holding ground in the contemporary accent spoken in the traditional East End, and they have actually overall experienced an increase with the younger informants. This was indeed the tendency concerning all of the features except for H-dropping and mouth-monophthonging. For these two variables the results suggested a movement away from the traditional Cockney realisations. With H-dropping the results were quite irrefutable, showing a tendency towards h-restoration, which is also evident other places in the south-east. Concerning the realisation of MOUTH, the results suggested a tendency towards decreased usage of the traditional Cockney monophthong [æ:], though this variant was still used with most of the younger informants, and an increase of a long back closing diphthong. Thus the results for MOUTH-monophthonging and H-dropping give support to the underlying hypothesis that the adults would show higher distribution of the traditional Cockney features than the adolescents, while the results for TH-fronting, L-vocalisation and T-glottalling do not support this hypothesis. Though considering the status of these features as supra-local features this result is not that unexpected. I will not include R-fronting in relation to this hypothesis since this feature is considered a very new development, and were almost absent with the adult speakers.

The overall results might suggest a tendency towards less broad Cockney. Why this tendency is occurring might be explained by attitudinal factors, or markers of identity. None of the young informants in this study, apart from Thomas (see further below), would characterise their speech as Cockney, when asked how they would describe their accent. Some uttered quite strong objections towards being characterised as Cockney, and it was

evident for most of them that the Cockney accent and the Cockney person was something very old fashioned, and they did not seem to have any clear conceptions of what Cockney actually was. One of the informants came with the following response to the question of whether he would characterise himself as Cockney:

No. It's different innit, cause, no... yeah... Cockney is like, hi look, London yeah, obviously, or England, innit, yeah, back in the day that suggested top hats innit, suits and that, Cockney, they used to talk Cockney, the way they dress, ways they talk, or even pack a beer in their hand, talk Cockney, the rhyming, all the rhyming and that, innit, yeah. I don't even know it all, but obviously, like, "lovely jubbely" and all that, that's Cockney innit. (John, 15)

This quote illustrates that the younger speakers showed quite strong opposition towards being labelled Cockney, and this was the overall pattern. Thomas on the other hand, suggested himself that he spoke 'maybe even Cockney' when asked how he would describe his speech. Thomas also shows overall quite high distribution of the traditional Cockney features, such as for instance [æ:]. Another interesting point concerning how the informants would characterise their speech is that most of them simply considered their speech as slang, with focus on the 'use of different words' and more swearing, with no mentioning of pronunciation. This can suggest that these adolescents are not very conscious on how they speak in terms of phonology. This is also somewhat reflected in the fact that the adolescent speakers showed very little stylistic variation.

The results for the co-variation of the linguistic variables and gender were in most cases rather inconclusive. With L-vocalisation and R-fronting the results showed a slightly higher distribution with the adolescent girls than the boys, but the differences were so slight that it is difficult to make any adequate generalisations. The same also applies for H-dropping, or rather H-restoration, where the girls showed slightly higher distribution of [h]. The results for TH-fronting were a bit more decisive, showing a tendency of males leading in the usage of the fronted variants, which corresponds quite well with the findings in other studies. It should however be kept in mind that the low distribution of [f, v] with Judi lowered the average percentage score for the girls. With MOUTH-monophthonging the results suggested that the girls were leading in the change towards decreasing usage of the traditional Cockney realisation. With T-glottalling the results were fully inconclusive, with both genders showing the same distribution. So concerning the second hypothesis underlying the present investigation, that the females would lead the changes by showing higher distribution of the

'new' features, following the notion that females tend to avoid the most localised forms, does not get overall support from the results, with the exception of the MOUTH variable. The reason why the two genders show so similar distribution with the consonantal features might lie in the change of status with these features, as all, except for H-dropping and maybe R-fronting, are both localised London features, and also supra-local features. Concerning H-dropping, the results are rather surprising in that the girls are not showing a more solid lead towards the restoration of /h/. Cheshire et al.'s (2008a) results were also inconclusive in terms of gender-based distribution of H-dropping with their Anglo Hackney informants; with the boys showing only 1.1% higher score for Ø than the Anglo girls. With the non-Anglo informants, however the difference was greater, with the non-Anglo girls showing 0% for Ø, and the non-Anglo boys 6% (2008a: 15). The inconclusive results in both studies may suggest that perhaps attitudinal factors override the social status of the variable. It seems at least that in East London the local vs. supra-local division is not that strong with this variable, and it might rather be that the adolescent speakers consider H-dropping as old fashioned, and it is therefore avoided by both gender groups. However, this study is not able to draw any clear conclusions concerning the gender-based distribution of the features considered here, so further investigation of these consonantal features is required.

The variants preferred by the adolescent speakers that are considered here can all be said to have a wider "geographical currency" (Kerswill 2003: 223) rather than being localised Cockney features, which might then suggest that the adolescents in the traditional East End are taking part in a dialect levelling process. It is at least very evident that the East End is taking part in a levelling process in terms of being the epicentre for diffusion with many of the features, but with R-fronting, and perhaps also with the movement away from the broad [æ:] realisation of MOUTH, it might be suggested that the traditional East End of London is also being subject to external influence by letting mainstream features diffuse into London, for then to be adopted by the speakers there. A prerequisite for this to happen, though, is that the speakers are frequently exposed to individuals who use these widespread forms, and the majority of the adolescent speakers in the current sample could not be described as very mobile. However, it can be said that the people in the traditional East End are passively mobile, considering the fact that a lot of people outside London travel into the city to work. So this might be the case with at least R-fronting, if we consider this feature not as a London innovation. With MOUTH it is more difficult to make this suggestion, as the realisations considered in this study do not include a sufficient range of realisations to state whether the

diphthong qualities reflect the mainstream realisations of the south-east in general, [aʊ], or whether they reflect the London innovation [ɑʊ] as reported in Kerswill et al. (2008). Both these realisations were however identified with the younger informants in this study, but the different realisations were not quantified. Nevertheless it is still quite evident that with the phonological variables considered in this study the adolescent speakers in the East End can be seen as taking part in a dialect levelling process. There is however quite strong evidence suggesting that new London innovations continue to emerge, as seen with the other observations made here, as well as the findings in other studies on London English (e.g. Kerswill et al. 2008, Cheshire et al. 2008a-b).

To sum up, the speech of the working class adolescents in the traditional East End can be regarded as moving away from traditional Cockney, and the underlying mechanisms for this change might be innovation and influence from non-Anglo speakers and/or attitudinal or identity factors. With the variables considered here, it can also be drawn from the results that young speakers in Tower Hamlets are taking part in a dialect levelling process. There is however no indications towards stagnation of linguistic innovations in London. The results provided in this study are rather inconclusive in terms of gender-based distribution of the phonological variables, so further research is required.

6.2 Concluding remarks

This study has sought to provide gained insight into the accent spoken by white Anglo working class speakers in the traditional East End today. This thesis has provided some interesting results concerning the distribution of the traditional Cockney features with the adolescent speakers. I also hope it has provided some further aspects to London as taking part in a dialect levelling process, by showing that forms have also diffused into London, rather than only diffusing out.

The results provided here are however rather limited since this study has only looked at a very limited amount of different realisations for the six variables, this is particularly evident with the MOUTH variable where a number of different realisations were left out. So it would have been interesting to investigate the linguistic variables including other realisations as well, since operating only with binary variants can lead to less precise accounts of the linguistic features. The sample of the current study could also benefit from including more

informants, for instance it would be possible to consider the distribution of the linguistic variables in correlation with gender in the older group if the sample had consisted of more adult females. It would also have been interesting to include people with different ethnic origins as well, as Kerswill et al. have showed that the independent variable of ethnicity is central when investigating the accent spoken in the East End of London. Furthermore, it would be interesting to include speakers belonging to higher social classes as well, to investigate how the correlation is between the linguistic variables and different social classes within the traditional East End.

As stated in the very beginning of this thesis; the London varieties are very complex indeed, and there are many different factors having an effect on accent change in this area. This thesis has sought to provide gained insight into some of the factors for accent change, but there are many still to investigate. So, further research on London English is necessary to be able to completely understand the magnitude of the mechanisms behind accent change, and also the overall impact of the changes.

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