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Abstract

The transatlantic perspective on general extenders (GEs) illuminates an aspect of linguistic change that is rarely observed in the language variation and change literature -- the incipient stage. This paper considers some characteristics of the incipient stage of an innovation in the context of a close examination of a change in progress in the GE system of York English and asks, who are the innovators in a speech community? This data is contrasted with similar findings from the Toronto English Archive (Tagliamonte and Denis 2010). In both communities there is a change in progress such that one type of GE in the system is increasing. In Toronto, this increase is monotonic and spans the apparent time range of the corpus. However, in York, the same rise is not present until after the 1960s. This observation is leveraged to investigate the incipient stage of linguistic change.

Innovators and Innovation: Tracking the Innovators of *and stuff* in York English

Derek Denis*

1 Introduction

Recent literature shows that the transatlantic perspective on general extenders (GEs) is particularly revealing with respect to the grammaticalization of discourse markers (see Cheshire 2007, Pichler and Levey 2009, Tagliamonte and Denis 2010). Additionally, this transatlantic perspective illuminates the incipient stage of linguistic change, an aspect of linguistic change that is rarely observed in the language variation and change literature. This paper considers some characteristics of the incipient stage of an innovation and asks, who are the innovators in a speech community?

These questions are addressed in the context of a close examination of a change in progress in the general extender system of York English, a variety of British English spoken in Yorkshire in the northeast of England, as represented by the York English Corpus (Tagliamonte 1999–2001). This data is contrasted with similar findings from the Toronto English Archive (Tagliamonte and Denis 2010). In both communities there is a change in progress such that one type of GE in the system (*stuff* type GEs) is increasing. In Toronto, this increase is monotonic and spans the apparent time range of the corpus.¹ However, in York, the rise of *stuff* is not present until after the 1960s. Thus, the inception of innovative *stuff* is captured in the York data. This observation will be leveraged to investigate the incipient stage of a linguistic change.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 I first provide background on both the diffusion of innovations and general extenders. In Section 3, the nature of the innovators of linguistic change is critically examined and I devise a novel metric for characterizing these speakers. Lastly, in Section 4 I conclude that the characteristics of innovators I identify in York parallel the characteristics of the leaders of linguistic change identified in previous literature (Labov 2001). The only difference between the innovators and the leaders is the stage of the change in which each is participating.

2 Background: Innovation and GEs

Figure 1 shows Rogers' (1962) classic illustration of the diffusion of innovations. Included are Rogers' innovation adopter types along with the proportion of the community that adopts an innovation through time and the cumulative slope of adoption. In linguistics, this slope is known as the S-CURVE of linguistic change (e.g., Kroch 1989). If the cumulative slope is thought of in terms of linguistic changes, each adopter category roughly corresponds to Labov's (2001:132) five levels of linguistic changes. INNOVATORS are those who adopt a change when it is INCIPIENT. EARLY ADOPTERS adopt a change when the change is NEW AND VIGOROUS. The EARLY/LATE MAJORITY adopt MID-RANGE changes and the LAGGARDS are adopting changes that are NEARLY COMPLETE.²

Most linguistic change discussed in the language variation and change literature synchronically falls along the latter two-thirds of the S-curve. That is, most changes studied are Labov's (2001:132) mid-range changes. At this point in the change, the majority of a speech community is adopting the innovation.³ The reason for this concentration is a practical consideration. In order to study a change in progress, we need to be aware of the change. To be aware of the change, the innovation usually

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¹Speakers' years of birth range from 1905 to 1982.

²Labov's (2001:132) fifth level is COMPLETED changes.

³Of course there have been studies of all other levels of linguistic change as well.

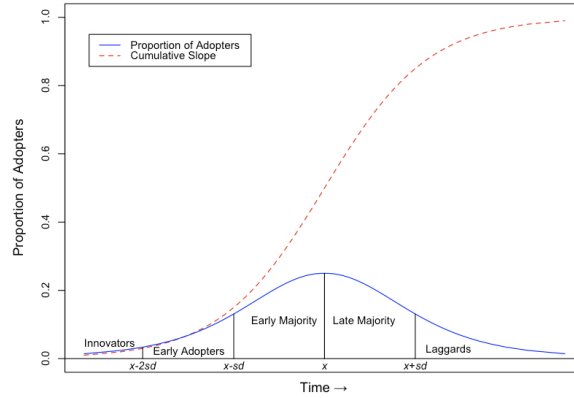


Figure 1: The diffusion of innovations (Rogers 1962). x is the mean adoption time and sd represents one standard deviation from the mean.

must reach a critical mass of adoption for it to come within the analysts' scientific purview. As such, the literature contains detailed accounts and observations of linguistic change in progress, including portraits of the leaders of change at the later levels of a change. However, we cannot predict changes before they start. Thus, we know little about the beginning of a change and less about those who introduce the innovation to a community at the incipient stage. As I will show, we may sometimes unintentionally capture the early stages of change in corpora.⁴ Such cases allow us to examine the *innovators* of linguistic change, much in the same way as others have examined the leaders of linguistic changes (Labov 2001:Part C).

This paper seeks to address the question of who the linguistic innovators in a speech community are. What are the characteristics of the first speakers to introduce linguistic innovation to a speech community, at the incipient stage of the change? More narrowly, what do the innovators have in common with Labov's (2001) leaders at other levels of a change?

To examine these questions, I consider a subset of English discourse markers referred to as *general extenders* in the literature.⁵ Cheshire (2007:156) defines general extenders as "a class of expressions that typically occur in clause final position and have the basic form of conjunction (*and* or *or*) plus noun." Tagliamonte and Denis (2010), following Dubois (1992) among others, have noted the templatic structure of GEs as in Table 1.

Connector	Quantifier	Generic	Comparative
and	all	thing(s)	like that
or	every	stuff	sort of
	some	people	kind of
	any	one	type of
	no	shit	of that kind
<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>	<i>etc.</i>

Table 1: The general template of general extenders (Tagliamonte and Denis 2010:337).

The prototypical GE template includes four parts: connectors, quantifiers, generics and comparatives.⁶ These four parts combine in various ways as in the examples in (1). The first element is a connector, though not all GEs have a connector element. Often, there is a quantifier after the

⁴Trudgill (1988) found that what he thought was an individual speech impediment in earlier data from Norwich (labio-dental *lr/*) was actually the early stage of a change. Gordon and Trudgill (1999) discuss other so-called embryonic variants in New Zealand English. Perhaps the most discussed innovation in English is the quotative *be like* that was first observed in the early 1980s (Butters 1982) and has since been investigated world-wide (i.e., Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999, Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2007, Buchstaller and D'Arcy 2009). Furthermore, Buchstaller et al. (2010) discuss a failed innovation, quotative *be all*.

⁵Other names for this feature include set-marking tags (Dines 1980), extension particles (Dubois 1992), terminal tags (Aijmer 1985) and approximation markers (Erman 1995).

⁶Some comparatives (*sort of*, *kind of*, *type of*) come before the generic as in (1-a).

connector combining with the third element, the generic noun. The fourth element is an optional comparative. As Tagliamonte and Denis (2010:337) observe, there are no GEs with a comparative that lack a generic.

- (1) a. I believe in extra-terrestrials and like other life out there somewhere, but ghosts *and all that kind of stuff*, I don't know!
- b. I can see all this multiculturalism *and everything like that*.
- c. A lot of it was talking and listening and listening to people talk and the performances *and things*.
- d. So it was- it was pretty general, you know, nice and quiet, never a lot of noise *and stuff like that*.

The literature on GEs can be split into three separate approaches: sociolinguistic issues; pragmatic issues; and grammaticalization theory issues. Dubois' (1992) examination of GEs in Montreal French is one of few studies that address the sociolinguistic nature of GEs. Pragmaticians are particularly concerned with the multiple functions that GEs perform in discourse (Aijmer 1985, 2002, Overstreet and Yule 1997). As is consistently observed, the main function of general extenders is set-marking: "by noting the particular named item(s) preceding the form (e.g., *tents and stuff*) listeners are assumed to be able to interpret the set of items (category) that the speaker intended to refer to" (Overstreet and Yule 1997:251). Closely related to the observation of the multiple, simultaneous, discourse/pragmatic functions of GEs is the recent work from a grammaticalization theoretic perspective (Cheshire 2007, Pichler and Levey 2009, Tagliamonte and Denis 2010, Denis 2010).

Tagliamonte and Denis (2010) investigation of the Toronto English Archive (Tagliamonte 2003–2005), although focused on grammaticalization, found a change of a different kind to be active in Toronto (lexical replacement). There is a monotonic, incremental increase of variants with the form *stuff* at the expense of a rapid decrease of the variants with *thing(s)*.

In light of conflicting findings on grammaticalization (see Tagliamonte and Denis 2010), Denis (2010) replicated the Toronto study on the 700,000 word York Corpus (Tagliamonte 1999–2001). Following the variationist method (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001, Tagliamonte 2006), approximately 2200 tokens of 87 different GE variants were extracted and coded.

As in Toronto, GEs with the *stuff* generic stand out from all the other forms in York. These STUFF TYPE GEs are only frequent in the youngest generation and in the youngest generation are the single most frequent type of GE. In Figure 2, two scatterplots of the frequency of *stuff* type GEs per 10,000 words by speaker's birth year are presented for both York and Toronto. Additionally, a scatterplot smoothing line is added to visualize the trend.

In Toronto, there is a steady increase over time. In York, there is a flat line with relatively few individuals using *stuff* type GEs before 1960. After 1960, there is a sharp rise of *stuff* tokens.

Of the 87 different GE variants in York, 32 are unique to individual speakers. Furthermore, nearly 80 percent of the individual types of GEs (68/87) contribute less than one percent each to the

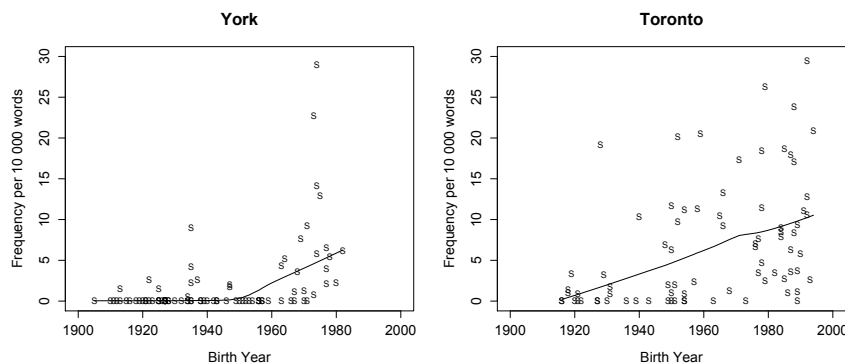


Figure 2: Scatterplot of individuals' frequencies of *stuff* type GEs in York and Toronto.

total number of tokens. This suggests that there is a core set of GEs used by the entire population embedded in a much larger set of peripheral forms. The time span of the York Corpus captures two separate systems: one in which *stuff* GEs are in the periphery; and, one in which *stuff* GEs are part of the core system.

Considering Roger's (1962) demonstration of the diffusion of innovation, the trajectory of *stuff* type GEs in York spans the very base of the S-curve. This gives us a chance to examine an innovation in a speech community at the incipient stage.

3 The Innovators of Linguistic Change

In this section, I will explore the characteristics of the INNOVATORS of linguistic change. The section draws from Labov's (2001) critical examination of the leaders of change. Labov (2001) devises a number of indices that target aspects of a speaker's social network. Along these lines I develop a novel measure of social network size and I incorporate this metric into my analysis of the innovators.

3.1 The Innovators: Who Are They?

A reasonable null hypothesis is that the innovators of a linguistic change will be of the same socio-cultural and sociometrical make-up as the speakers that Labov (2001:409) identifies as the leaders of a linguistic change. The only difference then between an innovator and a leader of a linguistic change is the position on the S-curve of the change in question. In other words, speakers who innovate in a speech community are the same type of speakers who will continue to push at the threshold of a change in progress, pressing innovating forms further along the S-curve in terms of community-level frequency. As more speakers adopt a linguistic innovation in a speech community, it will be the same type of speakers who initially adopted the innovation who will push the linguistic boundaries and remain in the vanguard of the rising frequency associated with the form as it diffuses through the community.⁷

Labov (2001:360) observes that the leaders of linguistic change in the Philadelphia Neighborhood study tend to be:

- (2) 1. women;
2. who are centrally located in the socioeconomic hierarchy;
3. with intimate contacts throughout their local groups/neighborhood;
4. but who are not limited to their local networks;
5. and have contact with people of different social statuses.

For example, one of the leaders identified by Labov (2001) in the Clark St. neighborhood of Philadelphia is Celeste S. She is an upwardly mobile lower middle/upper working class woman who is "the central figure of the Clark St. network" (Labov 2001:203). Do such individuals, like Celeste S., exist in York? To what extent can they be empirically identified? Are the trends that characterize the leaders of change consistent with the innovators in York? As a starting point, I turn to the data in question.

The scatterplot of the frequency of *stuff* type GEs for individuals in York above reveals that there are a number of speakers whose usage of *stuff* type GEs appears to greatly exceed their peers' usage of the innovation. These advanced speakers are the innovators of *stuff* in this speech community. Table 2 provides a socioeconomic portrait of each of these speakers.

There is no one good socioeconomic characteristic that constitutes the innovators of *stuff* in this speech community. Diverging from the trends observed by Labov (2001), half the innovators of *stuff* are women and half are men. They range in age from 22 to 62, though most are in their early twenties. Lastly, three speakers are classified as white collar and three are classified as blue collar.

A binary class distinction is not useful for assessing which speakers are in the center of the social hierarchy. Partly because class was not considered at the time of data collection and partly because of

⁷The leaders will not necessarily be the same individuals who first adopted the change. What is important is that they are the same type of person according to some social measures.

Speaker Code	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	SEC	Occupation
bs	J. Lowe	Female	62	White Collar	Office worker
bI	S. Watkins	Male	37	White Collar	Telecommunications
ay	P. Gregory	Male	23	Blue Collar	Driver
bA	M. Aspel	Male	24	Blue Collar	Shop fitter/Painter
bg	S. Boggin	Female	23	Blue Collar	Waitress
aZ	S. George	Female	22	White Collar	Psychiatric nurse

Table 2: The innovators of *stuff* type GEs in York.

“the notorious difficulties in categorizing speakers for social class” (Tagliamonte and Ito 2002:245), the classifications of a speaker as blue collar and white collar in York are *a posteriori* labels derived from a speaker’s education level and occupation (or parents’/spouse’s occupation if applicable). Although three of the York innovators are classified as blue collar and three are classified as white collar, these speakers tend to fit into a centralized location in the hierarchy (though skewed to the higher-end) when only years of education completed is taken into account.

The characteristics of the leaders of change that Labov (2001) identifies in (2) are thus far only partly consistent with the innovators of *stuff* in York. The innovators are both women and men and are located, for the most part, higher than the center of the social hierarchy. However, presently, we have no details about the innovator’s social networks, a key component of Labov’s (2001) characterization of the leaders of change.

Labov (2001:Chapter 10) discusses a number of Communication Indices used in the Philadelphia Neighborhood Study. These Communication Indices were composed based on answers to a variety of questions about speakers’ social networks and behaviours. The indices were correlated with several linguistic changes in progress. As in (2), the leaders of change are those with vast social networks. Celeste S., Labov’s (2001) exemplary leader, ranks high on these indices. Similarly, Milroy’s (1980) seminal investigation of the vernacular in Belfast utilized network scores based on a series of conditions indicating the density and multiplexity of a speakers social network. These scores were found to correlate with vernacular features in the Belfast working-class speech community.

Thus, to determine whether the innovators of *stuff* type GEs in York share the same characteristics as the prototypical leaders of change, some measure of a speaker’s social network is required. However, the York Corpus was collected more than 13 years ago. The interviews were standard, unstructured, free conversation and did not contain any direct questions about social networks which could be used to develop Communication Indices like Labov’s (2001) or network scores like Milroy’s (1980). To investigate a speaker’s social network requires some indirect measure. In the next section I develop such a metric.

3.2 An Apparent Gregariousness Metric

In devising an indirect measure of social network structure for the York Corpus, the basic intuition of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), Milroy (1980) and Labov (2001) can be employed to estimate social network size. The more friends a speaker in the corpus has, the denser and more multiplex their social network will likely be. How do we go about assessing the number of friends a speaker has?

Given that the interviews in the York Corpus are free with respect to topic and discussions, the amount of discussion revolving around an interviewee’s friends and social circle is taken to be some measure of the interviewee’s social network. Furthermore, in free discourse between interlocutors who have just met, a discussion about one’s friends will involve the introduction of a person as one’s friend, followed by the friend’s name and thereafter, use of the friend’s name only, as in the excerpts from the York Corpus in (3).

- (3) “He used to own The-Chapmans. And he sold The-Chapmans to who has it now, **Dot and Ron**, who are **friends** of mine now, but Jarvis bought next door. [...] That year. I was in a bad little state but we had these parties and then I took in these guests you-know and eventually Jarvis left. And **Dot and Ron** bought next door. **Dot and Ron** that have

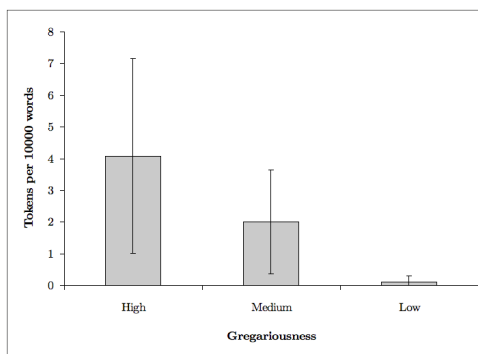


Figure 3: Frequency of *stuff* type GEs per 10 000 words by level of Apparent Gregariousness, error bars indicate 95% confidence limits.

Chapman’s now you-know.” [C. Spence]

Thus, we can index a speaker’s social network by counting the raw frequency of the word *friend* in each interview.⁸ The assumption is that the more tokens of *friend* in an interview, the more friends a speaker has and the higher their APPARENT GREGARIOUSNESS.⁹

Upon extraction hits were manually filtered to be sure that each token was indeed a token of *friend* like in (3). A measure of central tendency of the frequency of *friend* (etc.) in an interview was taken as a benchmark by which to classify each speaker. Speakers with greater than the mean of 3.6 tokens were classified as highly gregarious, speakers with more than zero tokens but less than the mean were classified as having medium gregariousness and speakers who mentioned no friends in their interviews were classified as having low gregariousness.

Figure 3 groups together speakers of the same Apparent Gregariousness level and plots these levels by the frequency of the innovative *stuff* type GEs per 10 000 words. Speakers with high gregariousness use the innovative *stuff* type GEs the most frequently while those with low gregariousness use the least forms. A two sample t-test indicates that the difference between high and low Apparent Gregariousness is statistically significant ($t = -2.64$, $df = 31.26$, $p = 0.01$). Considering that the mean frequency of *stuff* type GEs in the York Corpus is 2.43 tokens, the speakers rated as highly gregarious average well above that mean at about 4.1 tokens per 10 000 words and those rated as having medium gregariousness are just below that average at about 2.0 tokens of *stuff* GEs per 10 000 words. Although a two sample t-test indicates that this difference is not significant ($t = -1.2125$, $df = 48.41$, $p = 0.23$), as Labov (2001:328) observes “most studies of social networks are limited in the numbers of their subjects, and even the univariate statistics on the influence of network position often fail to reach significance.” There is also a significant difference between the medium and low levels ($t = 2.34$, $df = 41.146$, $p = 0.02$). Regardless, the trend is apparent and the contrast between high (and medium) and low gregariousness significant.

Figure 3 shows that on average, speakers in the York Corpus with high levels of gregariousness tend to also be the more linguistically innovative. However, the particular perspective that Figure 3 provides collapses across speakers and thus we know nothing about individual speakers. Table 3 is a different perspective, showing the number of speakers of the three Apparent Gregariousness levels that fall into three levels of *stuff* usage.

Speakers were classified into the three levels of *stuff* usage by examining the central tendencies of the frequency of *stuff* type GEs in the York Corpus. Because GEs with the *stuff* generic were peripheral before 1960, the mean rate of these forms from young speakers (i.e., those speakers who have *stuff* forms in their core GE systems) was taken as the benchmark of usage. The mean rate of all GEs with a *stuff* generic was 7.42 tokens per 10 000 words. Speakers were deemed to be high *stuff* users if their frequency exceeded this mean. Medium *stuff* users used the form more than 0

⁸In addition to *friend*, there were a number of synonyms that were also included in the measure. The most prominent of these synonyms was *mate*. Other rarer synonyms included *pal*, *chum* and *bud(dy)*.

⁹Even if there are inconsistencies with the trend in (3), how often one discusses friends and social circles is still representative of a speaker’s gregariousness.

Gregariousness	Rate of <i>stuff</i> forms (Tokens)		
	High (> 7.42)	Medium (> 0)	Low (0)
High	5	11	16
Medium	3	10	28
Low	0	1	14

Table 3: Distribution of speakers by apparent gregariousness and rate of *stuff* type GEs.

times but less than the mean. Low *stuff* users never used the form.

Table 3 further demonstrates the relationship between gregariousness and high *stuff* usage. The first column indicates that no high *stuff* user was rated as having a low level of Apparent Gregariousness. Of high frequency *stuff* speakers, five are rated as highly gregarious and three are rated in the middle. Medium frequency speakers are also primarily characterized as gregarious (whether high or around the average). The vast majority of speakers who are rated low on the gregariousness scale are non-users of the innovative form. In fact, only a single speaker who uses *stuff* type GEs at all (speakers rated as having either a high or medium rate) is rated as having a low level of gregariousness, reinforcing the observed trend.

There are speakers who have a high or medium level of gregariousness but who have a low level of *stuff* usage. This is not pertinent to the connection between gregariousness and innovativeness. Not all gregarious speakers will be innovators. It is only relevant that the innovators are gregarious. For whatever reason, some gregarious speakers have yet to adopt the innovation. As Labov (2001:409) notes:

“There is no evidence that attitudes, ideologies and opinions that people express in so many words will bear directly upon linguistic change from below. These attitudes may influence who a person talks to and how often they talk, and so affect the flow of linguistic influence and the diffusion of [linguistic] changes within and across local social networks.”

In essence, I suggest that a high rate of Apparent Gregariousness does not entail linguistic innovativeness, but rather, innovativeness is epiphenomenal to gregariousness. The more gregarious a person is, the more likely they are to talk to many people more often. The sheer frequency of diverse interactions increases the probability that these speakers will hear novelties and therefore the probability of adopting a linguistic feature not native to the speech community increases.¹⁰

Code	Speaker	Sex	Age	SEC	Stuff/10 000 words	Gregariousness
bs	J. Lowe	F	62	White	8.94†	High**
aZ	S. George	F	22	White	12.86	High
bg	S. Boggin	F	23	Blue	14.11	Medium
bA	M. Aspel	M	24	Blue	22.66**	High**
ay	P. Gregory	M	23	Blue	28.97**	Medium
bI	S. Watkins	M	37	White	42.53**	High

** Note that these speakers are exceptionally high.

† Note that for this speaker’s age, this rate is exceptionally high.

Table 4: High *stuff* users in York.

Table 4 focuses on the innovators identified in Table 2. The table includes a speaker’s sex, age, socioeconomic class, rate of *stuff* GEs per 10 000 words and Apparent Gregariousness. Additionally, the rate of *stuff* GEs per 10 000 words and Apparent Gregariousness are appended with an indication of those speakers who are exceptionally high. Speakers were deemed to be exceptionally high if their rate/gregariousness exceeded the mean by more than one standard deviation.¹¹ Table 4 shows that the innovators of *stuff* type GEs are, for the most part, highly or exceptionally highly gregarious.

¹⁰Rogers (1962/1983:259) makes similar observations regarding the innovators of technology.

¹¹For the rate of *stuff* type GEs, this label applies to speakers with more than 15.3 tokens per 10 000 words and for gregariousness it applies to speakers who mention more than 7 friends in their interview. There is one speaker identified as having an exceptionally high rate of *stuff* type GEs for her age. The benchmark for the

To reinforce this entirely quantitative data, I now turn to more qualitative data that can confirm the validity of the gregariousness metric. Contained in each interview, there is considerable supporting evidence that the innovators are gregarious. Those speakers who have a high rate of Apparent Gregariousness and a high rate of the innovative *stuff* forms make a number of comments throughout their interviews that support the conclusion that these speakers are highly gregarious. For instance, M. Aspel discusses his multiplex social network in (4).

- (4) Oh yeah, see him at the pub every once in a while, but got like two or three sets of mates. There's not enough nights in t'week really to go out with you know every one of them.

Furthermore, he discusses his friends from work in (5).

- (5) I've got another mate who I used to- well I've got one mate who I used to work with who I'm sort of best mates with at the moment. Well, at the moment, always have been, since we started work. He's the one that I go into town with, actually in town. And I've got some more lads that I used to work with, but they're all about twenty six, twenty seven.

Example (5) is particularly interesting in light of Milroy's (1980) network scores. One aspect of the network survey in Belfast considers whether or not a speaker's social network includes people who he works with, as is the case for M. Aspel. Furthermore, his description of a friend as being his "sort of" best mate "at the moment" suggests that his social circle is constantly evolving. His social network could be described as consisting of weak ties.

S. Watkins and J. Lowe's interviews contain less obvious indications about their gregariousness. Example (6) demonstrates J. Lowe's high opinion of her friends. In response to the question "would you like grandchildren?" J. responds:

- (6) Yes I wouldn't mind yeah, yeah. I mean all my friends have got them.

J. Lowe and S. Watkins both mention community groups that they belong to. J. Lowe belongs to a Church Fellowship group where she spends time with "a lot of good friends." She also notes that most of her friends are friends she has kept for "all these years." Similarly, S. Watkins belongs to a Model Railway Society with "a few friends."

Likewise, the content of the interviews of the speakers rated as low on the Apparent Gregariousness scale also confirms the validity of the metric. As an example, consider the excerpts from interviews with three younger, non-gregarious speakers. V. Lock, when discussing her children's involvement in community groups, says that she "weren't [sic] sort of into like, that." The interviewer reports makes special note of speaker J. Robinson. He is "so reticent" that the interviewer does the majority of the talking. Lastly, C. Beale is perhaps the least gregarious of all those interviewed, as can be seen in (7).

- (7) a. [C. Beale] So what do you want to know? [Interviewer] Oh anything you want to tell us. [C. Beale] There's not that much to tell really. [Interviewer] Oh I see.
b. [Interviewer] Right well what do you want to tell us? [C. Beale] Oh not a lot.

These interview excerpts confirm the empirical relevance of the Apparent Gregariousness metric, and, in addition to the metric, further discern the innovators of *stuff* type GEs. Those speakers with high rates of *stuff* type GEs have a high rate of Apparent Gregariousness and present themselves as highly gregarious in their interviews. Those speaker with no tokens of *stuff* type GEs have a low rate of Apparent Gregariousness and present themselves as not being very gregarious in their interviews.

Returning to Labov's (2001) characteristics of the leaders of linguistic change in (2), we are now in a position to determine whether or not the innovators of change are the same as the leaders of change, differentiated only by position on the S-curve. Table 5 provides a detailed break down of the characteristics of Labov's (2001:360) leaders and York's innovators of *stuff*.

whole community was the mean rate of *stuff* type GEs of the younger age group. Although J. Lowe does not exceed one standard deviation from the younger age group mean, she does exceed one standard deviation of the mean frequency the whole community (mean = 2.44, mean+1s.d. = 8.79).

Characteristic	Labov's leaders	York's innovators
Position on S-curve	-after critical mass	-base
Sex	-women	-women and men
SEC	-centrally located	-centrally located but skewed upward
Social networks	-contacts of different social statuses -intimate local contacts -non-local contacts	-highly gregarious -intimate local contacts -possibly non-local contacts

Table 5: Comparison of the leaders and innovators of linguistic change.

Considering the facts in tandem, we can tentatively conclude that Labov's leaders and York's innovators generally share the same set of traits. With respect to social networks, the innovators, like the leaders, are highly gregarious and have intimate contacts within their local community. M. Aspel has a network at his workplace, J. Lowe has a close church group and S. Watkins has his model railway society. The status of non-local contacts is less clear. It seems that M. Aspel has a variety of different social circles given that, according to (4), there is not enough time in the week to socialize with all of them. The interviews with S. Watkins and J. Lowe provide less direct evidence of non-local contacts. Both Labov's leaders and the York innovators are centrally located in the socioeconomic hierarchy. Lastly, although the leaders in Labov's Philadelphia study are all women, the innovators in York are evenly divided among the sexes. However, the non-characteristic leading role of men in this case has precedence. In Toronto, the rise of *stuff* type GEs is male led. In a variable rule analysis of *stuff* type GEs in Toronto, Tagliamonte and Denis (2010:360) found an effect of speaker sex such that males favour the incoming form. Female speakers were found to favour the receding *thing* generic. If the *stuff* generic is associated with males generally, it is not surprising that the innovators of *stuff* type GEs in York would include males. Moreover, Labov's (2001) gender-asymmetric model of language change predicts that females advance sound changes throughout adolescence while males simply inherit the level of a change from their female caregivers. The nature of transmission and incrementation in Labov's (2001) model results in a peak in apparent time, centered around late adolescence.¹² Because females drive change, the adolescent peak in apparent time is only present with females. However, Tagliamonte and D'Arcy's (2009) study of the incrementation of linguistic changes above the level of phonology in Toronto found the characteristic adolescent peak in apparent time with male speakers, suggesting that males too can drive linguistic change, depending on the change in question.

4 Conclusion

This paper sought to investigate the social characteristics of speakers in a speech community who first adopt a linguistic innovation. In the course of this investigation, a new social network metric was used. The Apparent Gregariousness metric used in this paper is a new tool for the sociolinguist's toolbox. The metric could easily be extended to research that involves any other corpus, like the York Corpus, that does not include an explicit questionnaire about social networks. As this paper has done, the measure should be corroborated with descriptive evidence from individual interviews.

An investigation of innovation is difficult because sociolinguists are rarely able to capture a linguistic change in its very beginning stage. The case of the rise of *stuff* type general extenders in York, England provides a perfect opportunity for such an investigation. Whereas in Toronto English there is a steady rise of *stuff* type GEs, in York, the variant appears to have suddenly diffused to the speech community some time after the late 1960s. A feature that first appears in a North American variety spread to the UK, perhaps due to advancing globalization and increased transatlantic contact in the latter half of the twentieth century. That said, none of the innovators mention travel to or friends and family in North America that may be the original source of diffusion. Despite lacking

¹²See Labov (2001:Part D) and Tagliamonte and D'Arcy (2009) for further discussion.

a defined source of diffusion, at some point within the apparent time range of the York Corpus, the form was adopted in this community. Some speakers in the corpus are, in Rogers' (1962) sense, the innovators of this adoption. A critical comparison of the characteristics of the innovators of *stuff* type GEs in York with the leaders of change as described by Labov (2001) suggests that the leaders of linguistic change and the linguistic innovators in a speech community share the same essential characteristics. The only difference between linguistic innovators and leaders of linguistic change is the position along the S-curve of the change in question.

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