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## Changing Dialects and Identities in a Scottish- English Community

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## 1 Introduction

In the last decade there has been a burgeoning interest in dialect contact (Kerswill 1994, 1996; Milroy 1997; Britain 1997; Auer & Hinskens 1996) prompted by linguists' awareness of the insights this phenomenon can provide into the processes and outcomes of language change. In particular, recent research has shown that the process of leveling may be responsible for dialects losing their local features and becoming more homogeneous, this, according to Chambers (1999), occurring across national boundaries as between Canada and the U.S. If, as is suggested, leveling does lead to dialect homogeneity, this might also indicate a parallel shift in the orientation of speakers away from a local to a supra-local identification. In this paper, using a variationist analysis to examine the reflexes of two phonological variables, I chart the formation of a new dialect in a contact situation. Using a language ideology model, I suggest that speakers' own comments on various aspects of group identity provide the best insight into the results of the analysis.

## 2 Corby, "Little Scotland"

Corby, the site of research, is located about 100 miles north of London and around 400 miles south of Glasgow, Scotland (see map on following page). Corby grew from a village of 1500 inhabitants in the early 1930s to a new town with a population of 24 times that size (36,000) in the 1960s. This was a direct result of the construction of an iron and steel works by a Scottish company from Glasgow. Since over half the new in-comers came from Scotland (Pocock 1959) and the largest proportion from Glasgow itself, in the early days Corby became known locally as *Little Scotland*.

Corby is indeed like a Scottish island in the English Midlands. There are Scottish churches, fan clubs for supporters of Scottish soccer teams, and shops sell Scottish food, newspapers, and magazines. This cozy tartan-clad description of the town is, however, only one side of the story. Locally Corby has a reputation for drunkenness and violence. Stories of headless

bodies, schoolgirl murderers, and axe attacks in the town pub occur frequently in the local repertoire.



The steel-making plant or “the works” as it was known, was shut down in 1980, and the flow of Scottish migrants to Corby ceased with the closure, but the Scottish legacy lives on in the town, not least in the speech of the younger inhabitants.

### **3 Descriptions of the Corby Dialect**

Before the steel works was built, people in Corby spoke a rural English dialect similar to those in the surrounding villages. That dialect can still be heard today, spoken by the oldest inhabitants of the town who were born before the steelworks was built. However, the younger people in the town speak a dialect that sounds Scottish in some aspects, even when they have no Scottish ancestry. Apart from my own intuitions about the dialect as a native of the town, comments of the older inhabitants and outsiders testify to Corby's Scottish accent.

- (1) I know lots of people still who've been born in Corby and they've got a stronger Scottish accent than I have. (TF, age 49, born in Glasgow)

### **4 Research Issue**

While the aim of the larger study (Dyer 2000), of which this is a small part, was to describe the new dialect and investigate the linguistic and social processes that have led to its formation, in this paper on identity I hope to show how the social significance of some phonological variants may index different identities for different generations living in the same town. In particular I inquire into what speaking a dialect with Scottish features means for English young people in the town. Given the general negative evaluation of Glasgow English, the dialect spoken by many Scottish in-comers to Corby, an accent "associated with the unwashed and the violent" according to one of Macaulay's speakers (Macaulay 1975: 94), this seemed a particularly pertinent issue to pursue in the present context.

### **5 Methods**

#### **5.1 Sampling of Population**

As the aim was to chart dialect change in apparent time from the Scottish influx to the present day, speakers from three generations living in Corby were interviewed. The core sample included 27 speakers. The oldest generation (the first generation) was split between Scots and English-born speakers, but all speakers in the second and third generations were English-born except for one Scottish-born second generation man, TF. So that observations could be made about age and sex as well as ethnicity a stratified

sample was designed. Speakers were located through second order network contacts, and speech data in two different contextual styles (Labov 1966)—conversation and a word list given at the end of each interview—were collected in interviews in the homes of the participants. This paper is concerned only with the conversation data.

## 5.2 Sampling of Language

Firstly, in order to assess the influence of the Scottish in-comers on the Corby dialect, six phonological variables characteristic of Scottish-English were chosen, and treated as indicators of relative Scottishness. The speech of all three generations was coded for the six vowel variables in order to discover whether characteristically Scottish variants had been adopted by younger speakers. The choice of variables was guided partly by personal observation, but more systematically by previous research on Scottish-English. (I use the term Scottish-English to refer to English spoken with a Scottish accent.) The terms Anglo-English and Scottish-English refer to the distinct phonological systems (Wells 1982; Giegerich 1992), but of course this is a vast simplification, each being a composite term, itself encompassing a large number of different dialects. However, I am dealing with categories the speakers themselves use and understand, although they would not refer to Scottish-English as such but as *Scots* or *Scotch* and Anglo-English simply as *English*.

In this paper I discuss two of the variables. I have followed the practice of Wells (1982) using keywords (in capitals) that characterize the lexical sets of English when referring to the respective variables. The first variable is one of the Scottish mergers—the COT/CAUGHT variable. There is no contrast between the vowels in these words in Scottish-English, unlike in most varieties of Anglo-English which make a distinction between them. Thus in Anglo-English the vowels are realized as COT [kɒt] and CAUGHT [kɔ:t], while in Scottish-English both are realized as [kɒt].

The second variable discussed in this paper is one of the Scottish monophthongs—the HOME vowel. Scottish-English generally uses a more monophthongal variant /o/ and Anglo-English a diphthongal variant /ou/ for this vowel.

## 6 Results

Patterns found across all six variables were movements both towards Scottish-English and towards Anglo-English. Movements towards Anglo-

English could be further subdivided into movement towards established Anglo-English norms (somewhat RP-like (Received Pronunciation) realizations) or innovatory Anglo-English norms.

### 6.1 COT /CAUGHT

Coding the COT/CAUGHT variable was relatively easy since there was little variation. Speakers used either both variants (as in Anglo-English) or just one, /ɒ/, if they merged them (as in Scottish-English). Thus the relative Scottishness of a speaker could be judged as to whether the vowels were merged or not.

In the following tables, arranged according to generation, the percentage of merging for the COT/CAUGHT variable is given. This was calculated by giving the number of realizations of the Scottish merged lax variant out of the total number of possible realizations of /ɔ:/, (the Anglo-English variant for the CAUGHT vowel). Therefore, the higher the percentage of the lax variant /ɒ/, the more characteristically Scottish a speaker's phonology might be said to be.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Generation</b>	<b>Conversation: % of merging</b>	<b>Total N of tokens</b>
<b>FEMALE</b> MS (Sc)	83	38
JC (Sc)	88	58
RT	0	74
JT	0	85
<b>MALE</b> RS (Sc)	50	60
TT (Sc)	51	86
RP	0	81
PT	0	74

Table 1. Distribution of merged variants for first generation women and men for COT / CAUGHT variable (% of [ɒ] out of total possible realizations of /ɔ:/)

As can be seen, the first generation Anglo-English speakers do not merge the variants at all, but Scottish-English speakers, and especially women, do. In the second and third generations, no speakers (except Scottish born TF), merge the vowels. The use of the Anglo-English variant /ɔ:/ is very high (the lowest being 81%).

2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation		<u>Conversation:</u> % of merging	Total N of tokens
<b>FEMALE</b>	MF	3	77
	KJ	0	93
	JD	0	98
	CT	7	103
<b>MALE</b>	JJ	0	96
	DH	4	105
	IB	0	65
	TF (Sc)	61	49

Table 2. Distribution of merged variants for second generation women and men for COT / CAUGHT variable. (% of [ɒ] out of total possible realizations of /ɔ:/)

3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation		<u>Conversation:</u> % of merging	Total N of tokens
<b>FEMALE</b>	SB	0	57
	CJ	0	67
	SM	19	99
	LW	0	45
	KF	0	92
<b>MALE</b>	MB	0	65
	JH	0	73
	GS	3	47
	CIT	0	46
	RD	0	73
	AD	0	21

Table 3. Distribution of merged variants for third generation women and men for COT / CAUGHT variable. (% of [ɒ] out of total possible realizations of /ɔ:/)

This analysis of the COT/CAUGHT variable therefore provided some clear results. There is a movement from the second generation onwards, away from Scottish-English norms, that is, away from merging the vowels towards a conservative Anglo-English norm. From these results it would appear then that younger speakers are avoiding distinctly Scottish features in their speech, and adopting conservative Anglo-English features. The results for the HOME vowel, however contest this interpretation.

## 6.2 HOME vowel

For the HOME vowel, again the first level of analysis assessed the influence of Scottish-English on the dialect, so these data were coded for relatively monophthongal or diphthongal realizations of the variable. In the tables below, the higher the percentage of monophthongal variants the more characteristically Scottish the speaker sounds.

First generation speakers are clearly divided between those who use relatively diphthongal variants and those who use monophthongs. This split concurs with the ethnicity of the speaker, that is the monophthongal speakers are Scottish-born and the diphthongal English, again showing this variable to be a useful indicator of relative Scottishness. By the second generation, however, some of these English born speakers are monophthongizing this vowel (JD, CT, JJ), and by the third generation the range of variation in the frequency of the Scottish monophthongal variant is extensive, from 0% to 87.5%. Clearly the Scottish variant is in current conversational use among the younger members of the town community, especially among the young men. A more detailed analysis of the phonetic realizations of the diphthongal variants, however, shows the picture to be considerably more complex.

1 <sup>st</sup> Generation	Diphthong	Monophthong	Row Total	% monophthongization
<b>FEMALE</b>				
MS (Sc)	3	28	31	90
JC (Sc)	4	22	26	85
RT	49	0	49	0
JT	42	0	42	0
<b>MALE</b>				
RS (Sc)	0	42	42	100
TT (Sc)	0	33	33	100
RP	42	0	42	0
PT	23	0	23	0

Table 4. Distribution of Scottish English monophthongal variant of HOME vowel for first generation speakers

2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	Diphthong	Monophthong	Row Total	% monophthongization
<b>FEMALE</b>				
MF	32	0	32	0
KJ	41	0	41	0
JD	15	38	53	72
CT	1	27	28	96
<b>MALE</b>				
JJ	16	11	27	41
DH	36	0	36	0
IB	20	0	19	0
TF (Sc)	0	48	48	100

Table 5. Distribution of Scottish English monophthongal variant of HOME vowel for second generation speakers

3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation	Diphthong	Monophthong	Row total	% monophthongization
<b>FEMALE</b>				
SB	12	20	32	62.5
CJ	23	0	11	0
SM	26	23	49	47
LW	48	3	51	6
KF	46	2	48	4
<b>MALE</b>				
MB	12	13	25	52
JH	34	0	34	0
GS	26	5	31	16
CIT	4	28	32	87.5
RD	5	31	36	86
AD	3	16	19	84

Table 6. Distribution of Scottish English monophthongal variant of HOME vowel for third generation speakers

Three diphthongal variants were coded as realizations of the HOME vowel for the third generation:

[əʊ] a diphthongal variant with closing glide found in the Midlands and the South of England

[æʏ] a diphthongal variant with fronted unrounded onset and fronted rounded offset gaining ground in South East England (fronting)

[æɪ] a diphthongal variant with fronted, unrounded onset and offset (fronting and unrounding)

When using a diphthong, the first and second generations favored the conservative Anglo-English norm [əʊ] for the diphthong and there were few instances of the two fronted variants (the fronted and the fronted unrounded) in the speech of the second generation. The data for the third generation females, however, showed a movement towards the innovatory Anglo-English variants [æʏ] and [æɪ] with only one female speaker not using them at all. On the other hand only one man from the third generation used one of these innovatory variants with a very low frequency. Rather, as mentioned above, the third generation men appear to favor the Scottish monophthongal variant.

## 7 Interpretation

It seems likely, considering leveling processes, that conservative Anglo-English norms have been adopted for the COT/CAUGHT variable because they are less locally marked than the Scottish merged variant. Furthermore the Scottish merged variant may also be stigmatized given the general negative evaluation accorded Glaswegian English.

As for the HOME variable, by the third generation there appears to be a split between men and women, with young men favoring the historically Scottish monophthongal variant, and young women a range of diphthongal variants. It seems then from the results of the two variables shown here that young men are simultaneously indexing both a Scottish and an English identity, while young women tend to favor Anglo-English variants, both conservative and innovatory. Before an interpretation of these results, a brief overview of the theoretical framework used is provided below.

Barbara Johnstone (1999:19), among others, has observed that it is only through local knowledge that researchers may come to understand that the social value of phonological variants may differ from community to community, and, I would add, within a community itself as well. One problem for researchers, of course, has been how to access the local knowledge of speakers in a community. Silverstein's theory of second order indexicality (1992, 1995) offers one way of accessing such knowledge. While sociolinguists since Labov have tended to assume a direct correlation between a linguistic variable and a social characteristic (Irvine & Gal 2000), Silverstein has argued that the only way to make sense of such indexicality inherent in language is to see ideology as the link between the linguistic

feature and the social group. He suggests that there are two levels of indexicality; the first is this direct correlation between linguistic feature and social group, but the second order of indexicality is a metapragmatic concept and involves "the noticing (overt or covert), discussion, and rationalization" (Milroy, in press) of basic first order indexicality. In my interpretation of the data in this study, I suggest that comments concerning ethnic identity, language, and the town community display instantiations of second order indexicality, and as such offer a means of tapping into the ideologies underlying language use in the community.

In terms of identity, how then can we explain young men's use of both historically Scottish and conservative Anglo-English variants? Does the use of historically Scottish variants actually index a Scottish identity? A comparison of the discourses of identity about language, ethnicity and town community of the first and third generations displays how the identities of the inhabitants of Corby have changed. For first generation speakers the salient social category in Corby is shown to be ethnicity, and the linguistic differences between the Scots and the English represented that divide. Comments such as that about the Scots and their language in Transcript A are typical of those from first generation Anglo-English speakers.

#### Transcript A (1<sup>st</sup> Gen. M.)

Sid: yes the Scots were helluva different cos we couldn't understand them for a start

J: really so was that a problem

S: it was a helluva job to understand them

Equally frequent are comments of first generation Scots about how their dialect was mocked. Take for example Betty's story about working in the belt factory in Transcript B below.

#### Transcript B (1<sup>st</sup> Gen. F.)

Betty: they used to make fun of us talking you know, and one who especially made fun of me, I don't know whether I had a right twang or not, but I was the one, I wasnae there as long as the other ones

J: uh huh yeh

B: and she used to make fun of me, and I says I says you better watch it I says,

J: yeh

B: because I says I'm just talking the way I I says,

J: yeh

B: I'm talking proper for you to understand me,

J: yeh

B: but I I says you've got a twang as well,

Comments concerning the resentment of the Scots by the English and arguments that broke out between them in the early days are also very common as exemplified in Transcript C below. Archie, a first generation Scotsman, enacts a dialogue between a Scot and an English man in a pub.

Transcript C (1<sup>st</sup> Gen. M)

Archie: a lot of resentment if a Scotsman was in the pub and just saying  
eh phew this beers rotten  
"nobody asked you to come here"  
yeh nobody asked you to come here  
eh God almighty this is terrible look at this place here  
"Glasgow's a lot worse"

These first generation excerpts display an orientation towards ethnicity as the primary means of social identification. In their discourse they construct their town as divided along ethnic lines. In contrast, the third generation, the youngest speakers, identify themselves as a homogeneous community displaying a change in orientation from ethnic group to town community. Thus in Transcript D, Andrew, a third generation man, comments on the non-salience of ethnicity as a social category for these younger speakers. (His grandparents were originally from Scotland.)

Transcript D (3<sup>rd</sup> Gen. M)

J: do you ever think of yourself as part Scots or not  
Andrew: not really cos everyone in Corby is

This perception of homogeneity extends to their language as exemplified by Calum in Transcript E.

Transcript E (3<sup>rd</sup> Gen. M)

J: are you conscious of who comes from a Scottish family and  
who doesn't  
Calum: No not really we all speak the same around here

In fact, although the first generation perceive the speech of the third generation as sounding Scottish, (or "broad," as some of them describe it), the third generation themselves appear surprised when outsiders ask them if they are from Scotland.

My belief is that the monophthongization of the HOME vowel and other historically Scottish features adopted by young Corby people (mostly men), are no longer perceived as Scottish norms by the third generation, but as local ones, and in adopting them, speakers are expressing an orientation to their local community. In using them, speakers are explicitly signaling that they come from Corby, and not any of the surrounding villages, and certainly not Kettering, the rival neighboring town seven miles away. This hypothesis is founded on statements made by speakers in conversation. In their discourse, young men strongly align themselves with the Corby community against the people of Kettering, commenting on Kettering people's dialect and other characteristics. Third generation Michael's comments on Kettering people, shown in Transcript F, are typical.

#### Transcript F

J: Um do you think that Corby and Kettering people are the same kind of people?

Michael: No not at all

J: Can you say how you think

M: Well they're they're idiots

J: In what particular way

M: They talk funny for starters

J: Yeh

M: "alright mate" sort of stuff like that

Similarly, fights with the lads from Kettering is as frequent a topic in the data as Scottish-English fights is for the first generation. The fact that young men favor a conservative Anglo-English norm for the COT/CAUGHT variable instead of a historically Scottish norm might then be explained through the notion of salience. That is, the COT/CAUGHT merger is somehow perceived as too Scottish to be adopted as a new local norm.

If we interpret the historically Scottish features in young men's speech as new local features, how then can we interpret young women's lesser use of these and in particular their favoring of innovatory variants, for example for the HOME vowel? In Britain, leveled phonological features such as these from the south of England appear to be spreading throughout urban centers in England and Scotland. Estuary English,<sup>1</sup> with features ranging from RP to

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<sup>1</sup>Estuary English was a term coined by David Rosewarne (1984) to refer to the Cockney-influenced accent, which is now identified with the Thames estuary—Essex, North Kent, and London itself.

Cockney, is frequently cited as the source of these variants. Kerswill and others have suggested that adolescent speakers are conforming to peer group norms in adopting these new features (Kerswill 1994, 1996; Foulkes and Docherty 1999; Stuart-Smith 1999) which appear to index a hip and trendy identity associated with London lifestyles, signalling solidarity with one's peer group and youth culture. In their use of supra-local features, young women appear to be expressing an outward-looking identity, an identity that is not embedded in the local community, perhaps even an identity that distances itself from the Corby community. A comparison of discourse of the third generation men and women certainly supports this hypothesis. While young Corby men are proud to identify themselves as such, women are frequently ashamed to tell outsiders where they are from. For Corby *men*, a locally embedded identity has its advantages—they are feared and respected. For the women in these data there appeared few advantages in expressing a locally-oriented identity. One hypothesis to be followed up in later work is that women who do use some of these historically Scottish but now Corby features, thereby indexing themselves as Corby women, are constructing a 'tough' identity for themselves. In other words, phonological variants are perhaps being used to manipulate gendered identities in Corby.

## 8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the new Corby dialect is a mixed dialect containing both Scottish-English and Anglo-English features. Far from falling prey to leveling, the new Corby dialect is locally distinct, with historically Scottish features being reallocated to local features in the speech of the third generation. Young inhabitants of the town possess the phonological resources not only to index themselves as Corby people but also as young people with more outward-looking identities. In their use of innovatory supra-local features, young women appear to be distancing themselves from the stigma of coming from Corby. For the first and third generations in the town, similar phonological variants also seem to index different identities, with young speakers perceiving the historically Scottish norms as a badge of local belonging. In fact, the Corby data provide convincing evidence that for many people, local belonging continues to be an important aspect of identity.

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