

LATIP 2021**International conference «Language and Technology in an Interdisciplinary Paradigm»****AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCE OF
EXTRALINGUISTIC FACTORS ON COCKNEY DIALECT**

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AB.Galina@gmail.com**Abstract**

The article highlights topical issues of social marking of speech. The significance of the research has been determined by the need to establish the presence of various markers in speech and their influence on the pronunciation system, thus allowing us to trace the general tendencies that occur in modern society. Through the age factor, which we regard as the index feature of a person, we attempt to determine the degree of pronunciation variability as well as to identify direct and indirect relationships between this extralinguistic factor and phonology of native English speakers. The postulate that the older generation adheres to conservative pronunciation can be partially refuted by the results of the conducted auditory analysis of modern speech of the native English-speakers. Having the policy of multiculturalism, mass communication, issues of social adaptation and accommodation of pronunciation in the focus of our study, we find proof that the influence of those aspects on speech behaviour leads to the formation of the image of a person, their speech portrait and self-identification in a speech community. Our analysis also shows that the traditional working-class accent is alive and has an impact on other variants of the English language, on representatives of various social classes and age groups.

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1. Introduction

The problem of languages and cultures and their connection in the aspect of interpersonal communication in its verbal and non-verbal means of its implementation has long been an important area of research for linguists. Social, geolinguistic, anthropocentric approaches to studying the problem of language communication and language development have been developed. A so-called socio-linguistic reality is comprised of gender, age, social status or a more specific group formation. Of those, the concept of age is universal and nowadays it is one of the most important categories of social interaction and organization of modern society. In recent years, the analysis of the youth speech has been carried out within the framework of a general anthropocentric approach in linguistics and linguoculturology. Since speech behavior is characterized by a complex of linguistic and extra-linguistic means, the phonetic analysis of transmitting semantic information on a par with socio-cultural and socio-linguistic specifics is of particular importance. The key focus of the present study is on the human factor, national identity, speech portrait and linguistic personality. These aspects determine the relevance and significance of the current research that represents a scientific and systematic description of the specifics of new language formations, the problems of English language variants, and the analysis of index characteristics, i.e. those that identify a person in the society in various types of discourse.

2. Problem Statement

The hypothesis of the research is that despite the general trend of dialect levelling and the uniformity of speech, the local English dialects to a varying degree undergo the processes of convergence and divergence, i.e. accommodation. In the researchers' view, the pivotal role in speech behavior in society is given to young people, who are more reactive to any changes that occur and are responsible for the majority of new trends in pronunciation. The speech of the youth, especially its phonetic features, is indicative of the broader changes that modern society is facing. However, in order to find common ground with this social group, some representatives of older generations are inclined to change their phonetic features in order to fit in. We tend to think that index characteristics are innate; however, recent studies show that they are "elastic" and have become tools to influence the person's perceived status in their social context. In the course of analyzing the speech of young native English speakers, the authors of the article attempt to define the value of an extralinguistic factor that affects pronunciation. It is important to identify how such information is manifested in speech, and what processes in modern society contribute to certain trends in speech formation. We look at the dependence of language variation upon internal and external factors, in other words we trace the direction of the influence in Cockney dialect: whether these are countries from the expanding circle that influence Cockney or the inner circle local varieties exert a certain influence upon some new sociolects.

Consequently, the speech of young representatives of different social classes taken from modern British TV interviews is at the heart of our investigation. The complexity of the extra-linguistic factors leading to the mutual influence of one upon the other is defined and interpreted, and the perceptive analysis is implemented to find out the most indicative segmental characteristics used by the native

British English speakers, which will give us ground to make conclusions about the degree of influence of extralinguistic factors upon new language formations.

3. Research Questions

This article is based on some works of the researchers in social linguistics (Karasik, 2002; Labov, 1972), contact variantology of English and World Englishes Paradigm (Crystal, 2002; Kachru, 1985; Proshina, 2012; Seargeant, 2012), comparative studies in the areas of social and regional variation, dialect contact (Abramova, 2012; Hughes et al., 2012; Mikhaleva, 2012; Shevchenko, 2017; Wells, 1999).

Globalization is a complex process. According to sociolinguists it affects not only the culture and national features of the people but also the language which reflects the mentality, national consciousness and identity of the language speakers. International and intercultural communication and even uniformity of different cultures under the influence of globalization lead to the fact that each culture and, consequently, the language of each nationality start losing their identity. As far as recent studies (Ivanova, 2018; Ivanova et al., 2020) focusing on national identity and the impact of internationalization on language and culture are concerned, they confirm and explore the irreversible changes that happened to the Russian and English languages as a consequence of the influence of globalization.

Along with that, the internationalization of the English language makes it acquire specific features in each speech community or individual locality, without eliminating the phonetic heterogeneity of national pronunciation types; it manifests ethnic and national identities. The term "glocalization" describes the phenomenon that arose "as a protective reaction to total unification and which is characterized by a surge of ethnic and national identity" (Kornilov, 2015, p. 170).

The phenomena of a person's identification, social marking and consequently accented speech have long been of interest to many Russian and foreign scholars. In sociolinguistic theories, two aspects of variability of the English language are mentioned: "the manifestation of trends in language development and ... a means of identification and cognitive development of the speaker-listener personality in society" (Shevchenko, 2017, p. 183). Shevchenko states that some new variants undergo a long process before they are widely distributed and fixed in the language; others at some stage in the language development lose to the more prestigious versions existing in the language.

People who use it consciously or unconsciously have a social marker in their speech that characterizes its socio-cultural level. Such information, which is manifested in speech, is called index information: it serves the purpose of recognition, i.e. identification of a person. (Shevchenko, 2017, p. 183)

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the sociolinguistic core concept - speech community or social network theory (Labov, 1972) – the study of the status of a person and their speech in relation to their lifestyle. Researchers Britain and Matsumoto (2005) present an overall view on language and communities, compare the two concepts and single out some differences in them:

Social network measures actual connections in a “community” whose members know each other, and assesses the extent to which those members are differentially grounded in that community. Speech Community approaches, however, do not insist that members actually know each other or interact regularly and make few claims (beyond nativeness) about the extent to which members are integrated socially into communal life. (p. 7)

The main aspect of differentiation of the terms is the level of social and cultural ties of the members.

Kerswill’s (1994) statement: “migrants form a linguistically heterogeneous group speak regionally differentiated varieties” (p. 37) correlates with the generalisations made by Patrick (2002, p. 581) who gives a detailed review of speech community and points out “an appropriate interfacing with indexicality;... handling multivariety situations; ... linguistic uniformity in the light of structured variations”. Representatives of high-density communities and social network tend to preserve local linguistic features, in contrast to representatives of low-density communities. Since any type of pronunciation, as Trudgill (1974) notes, is an important sign of group solidarity, the involvement into social networks can be regarded as an extra-linguistic factor, as the driving force behind the changes that occur in the language.

The concept of multiculturalism allows immigrant communities to preserve their traditions and culture. At the same time, state and public institutions try to integrate immigrants into society. The latest population census recorded an uneven proportion between native residents of London and immigrants. This fact of migration and ethnic mixing naturally leads to the changes in the language on all levels (lexical, grammatical and phonetic).

In order to achieve the communicative goals and neutralise the differences, which might impede successful speaker-interlocutor interaction, the speakers might use different accommodation strategies of “convergence” and “divergence” (Giles, 1975, p. 74) where “convergence” reduces differences in communication with a focus on the communication partner whereas “divergence”, on the contrary, is a strategy for emphasizing such differences. The realization of the strategies can be non-verbal and verbal including among many things: body language, distancing, the speaker’s language, lexico-grammatical varieties, phonological differences on segmental (phonemic and allophonic realizations) and suprasegmental levels (speech tempo, pausation, rhythm, etc.) (Abramova, 2012).

Accommodation leads to the appearance of local modified regional types of pronunciation despite the conservative nature of some dialects (Mikhaleva, 2012) and modern dialect forms of World Englishes due to the interaction of people from different social strata, regions and the spread of English worldwide (Kazakova, 2019). Proshina in a series of studies emphasized the dialectics of global and local, the importance of the “intercultural literacy”, the inseparability of language and culture, the ability to diversification and convergence of the English language development. Among the divergency factors for varieties of English, the author mentions the blending of culture and language. As the major factor, which leads to the formation of new variants, she names the awareness of cultural and linguistic identity of its users (Proshina, 2012).

Linguists raise a question about the causes of the phenomenon of “accommodation” in speech behaviour and explain it by the fact that motivation and opportunity play a major role in any human activity. Motivation in this case may be the speaker's desire to be communicatively effective, to achieve social acceptance and be positively perceived in this social network. A balance is sought between one's own identity and the characteristics associated with the aspirations to adapt to a certain social group. It should be mentioned that accommodation in communication, on the one hand, can be used as a way to level out vivid social traits associated with belonging to a speech community, and on the other hand, as a way to project a desirable self-image of the speaker in order to increase the effectiveness of communication.

4. Purpose of the Study

The immediate purpose of this article is to look into the modern linguistic form of Cockney dialect through an extra-linguistic index factor of age. We examine some samples from modern British television interviews aiming at identifying phonetic characteristics of representatives of different strata of the British society (native speakers of English and British English mass culture specimen) and establishing trends and extra-linguistic factors contributing to the changes. Thus, we attempt to consider a bi-directional influence of extra-linguistic factors (age being the key) upon Cockney. On the one hand, we assume that the influence occurs from within the language of the native English speakers, i.e. an image component. On the other, Cockney has been under a significant external impact of multiculturalism.

5. Research Methods

The aim of this article predetermined the methods of the study. As a whole, this work is an interdisciplinary research based on anthropology, social linguistics, sociophonetics. Furthermore, a general scientific descriptive method (observation, generalization, interpretation, comparison and classification) is applied. Alongside with these methods a proper linguistic method is used: a method of socio-phonetic investigation which allows observation of whether or not the dialect is exposed to the process of internationalisation and how susceptible to the influence of the chosen dialect different strata of the British society are.

6. Findings

An external influence on Cockney we find in Multicultural London English, which is a sociolect spoken by Londoners of different nationalities as their lingua franca. MLE is characterized as a hybrid dialect as a mix of variants formed it: Standard English, Cockney, Creole, Bangladeshi, etc. This multicultural language variant being a blending of various ethnic forms influenced Cockney and borrowed some features of the working class accent (an internal influence of the dialect within one speech community). Recapitulating the research of the linguistic innovation undertaken by Cheshire et al. (2011) MLE has following phonemic instances:

- monophthongisation:
- /oi/ (as in CHOICE) is pronounced as /a:/;

- /ei/ (as in PLAY) - /e/;
- /ai/ (as in PRICE) – either /e/ or /ei/;
- words like GOAT are pronounced as /o/ or /ou/;
- front vowels become back;
- l-vocalization;
- absence of h-omission;
- t-glottalling;
- fricative interdental /th/ becomes labio-dental fricative /f/ or /v/ and /d/ in the initial position;
- plosive velar /k/ is pronounced as a uvular [q].

On the suprasegmental level variations in rhythm refer mostly to syllable-timed languages with syllables being equally prominent. It is considered that such type of accentuation arises in dialects due to language contacts (Torgersen & Szakay, 2011).

The choice of Multicultural London English by predominantly young British people of African descent speaks of its popularity and indicates the levelling of class differences in the youth environment. At the same time, this relative neutrality preserves a mix of ethnic characteristics. Native Londoners – Cockney speakers – tend to switch to this form of speech to hide their identity. As Medvedeva and Bezborodova (2015) fairly states:

Phonetic phenomena that are condemned by society are often deliberately assimilated by teenagers and young people under 25 years of age in protest against parents and in a broader sense against the inertia and conservatism of the entire adult society – there is a manifestation of linguistic nonconformism, which can cause language development. (p. 156)

These factors of code switching demonstrate not only the strategy of convergence in the language but also an image role of the dialect. The Guardian describes the new variant as a cool, non-racial, our language (Quinn, 2011) with Ali G, Point B, Dizzee Rascal and other representatives of hip-hop culture being the icons of the young generation. At the same time, some language specialists speak negatively of the dialect: the whites have become black. A particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic, gangster culture... (Quinn, 2011). Still some experts are confident that the dialect will be lost by its speakers at a more mature age.

Successful communication within this social group is achieved not only by creating an attractive and accessible image for the target audience, but also through speech behavior and the use of convergence strategies. Participants of the survey, carried out by the authors, gave positive evaluation to the informants, who were middle class representatives of pop culture, coming across as friendly and pleasant people. We assume that the mismatch between the real age, the low educational level of the informants and the pronunciation features used in their speech caused such an estimation of the participants. This is a clear example of "accommodation" of the respondents' speech behaviour: it imitates the speech typical for young people, their target audience, in particular, which is formed mainly by young Britons (Abramova, 2011).

It can be stated that along with the combination of social and status factors of pop singers and their target audience, British English pop musicians implement convergence strategies in order to create an image attractive to this audience, a favorable harmonious atmosphere for communication and increase its effectiveness. Here convergence serves as a means of integration of the middle aged into the social network of the young by disguising their social identity.

In order to win the attention of the young audience, representatives of British English pop culture feel compelled to switch codes and speak to them in "their" language, thus unwittingly promoting new fashion trends in the language that become very popular among young people.

As our observations have shown, the main tendency among the representatives of mass culture is downgrading their language to sound less posh and appear younger in order to get closer to their younger fans. An intentional use of some elements of Cockney - the cockneyfication or 'mockney' phenomenon - is not only a popular trend in modern British English, but also an effective way to enable successful communication. Mockneys are people, who try to imitate the speech of Cockneys without being native Cockney speakers. The results of our perceptive analysis show that Mockney is used to:

- deliberately lower the social status of the speaker in the eyes of the listener (features of Cockney accent are often put on as a mask in order to hide high or middle-class origin of the speaker);
- minimise the distance between the speaker and the listener and to establish a more trusting relationship, that is, to create an image of "one of the guys";
- intentionally lower the intellectual level of the speaker according to the one of the listener;
- keep up to date with modern trends;
- "rejuvenate" the real age of the speaker by the way they sound (typical of pop culture representatives).

There is no doubt that the use of Cockney elements in speech can be both intentional and unintentional, and can be conditioned by the influence of:

- any subculture;
- democratization of mass communication and media discourse.

Our analysis has also shown that Mockney is popular among the young British English native speakers who sometimes choose Cockney elements in order to seem more fashionable. A popular British writer Jonathan Coe (2010) gives the following description of one of his characters in his novel: "She had an English accent, quite posh, but with that hint of Mockney that posh young people these days seem compelled to affect" (p. 31).

The descriptions demonstrate that the working-class accent is alive and still having its influence on other variants of the English language. In the examples above, we see that the multicultural variant has partly borrowed Cockney features but also influenced Cockney, which initiated its revival, and brought a whole range of new features to its form. At the same time, we can see the re-birth of Cockney initiated from "the inside" by native speakers themselves: a particular age group – the youth and a social group – British musicians. With the wide spread and increased influence of social network and mass media, the power of their impact on language and society has also increased. As a result, the role of media

personalities in young people's lives has increased too; them being the social group that is prone to external influence the most.

7. Conclusion

The findings of the analysis of the issues of convergence of pronunciation, social adaptation, multiculturalism allow us to state that nowadays Cockney accent is undergoing a significant revival, and there is a number of reasons to it. Firstly, there is a variety of external influence to it, i.e. globalization, World Englishes, and on the other hand, a variety of internal impact determined by an innate quality of a human being to be liked and accepted by a certain social group.

Several modern language trends have been identified regarding the differences in segmental features in the speech of native English speakers, as well as a trend towards conscious use of the language.

In addition to what they represent verbally, index features that affect speech give a lot of information about the speaker. This fact plays a huge role in interpersonal communication and helps to build an "image" of the person with whom we communicate. Typical characteristics are mixed with individual characteristics, which make a person's speech unique. The analysis of the speech of native English speakers has established the relationship of social factors (age) that have a complex effect on pronunciation and as a result form the image of a person, their speech portrait.

Social and cultural diversity affects language variation and language development, and the source of innovation can be found within the speech community having the internal impact on the language, and can arise from the outside, i.e. an external influence of the countries from the outer circle upon the language variants of the norm-setting countries. Index features to a certain extent characterize the social and cultural levels of a person, and correct interpretation of these social features contributes to the effectiveness of intercultural communication.

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