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ETHNICITY, FRIENDSHIP NETWORK AND SOCIAL PRACTICES AS THE MOTOR OF DIALECT CHANGE: LINGUISTIC INNOVATION IN LONDON

1. Introduction

In this paper we consider whether ethnicity is a significant determinant of variation in the spoken English of young working-class people in London. We base our analysis on a corpus of 1.4 million words of informal speech from 100 people aged 16–19, from one inner London and one outer London borough. Many (mainly white) Londoners moved from the inner city (the 'East End') to the outer London borough and further afield, particularly Essex, in the 1950s; by contrast, the inner London borough has a high proportion of recent migrants from overseas. We explore whether the nature of a speaker's friendship group is a key factor in the diffusion of linguistic innovations, and whether this interacts with ethnicity. We hypothesise that speakers draw on a range of linguistic forms that cannot necessarily, or at least can no longer, be attributed to specific ethnic groups.

1.1 Ethnic variation in London English

London has long been a 'point of arrival' for immigrants (Bermant 1975), both from elsewhere in the British Isles and overseas. However, there is little information about possible change to the English spoken in London brought about as a result of immigration, despite the importance of changes in London English for the language as a whole. For example, Wells claimed that 'its [London's] working-class accent is today the most influential source of phonological innovation in England and perhaps in the whole English-speaking world' (1982: 301).

Despite overseas immigration to London over several centuries, there have been few systematic investigations of the 'foreign' influence on its dialect. As late as the 1960s, Beaken could assert that there was no appreciable difference between the accent of white and minority-ethnic Londoners, at least in his sample:

> 'Large-scale immigration into the area [Tower Hamlets in London's traditional East End] had not taken place, either of native English speakers from other parts of London, or of English-speaking but not native-born immigrants. Fordway School had a small minority of children of Asian origin who were not native English speakers. There were also some West Indian children, but those were mainly from families which had been in the area for some time: some of these "West Indians" were in fact English, having been born in the district. The speech of the older ones was to all intents and purposes indistinguishable from that of the white children. In other words, a slight influx of

> immigrants into the area had not significantly affected the linguistic homogeneity of the community.' (Beaken 1971: 14)

The children in question were attending primary school and were around 9 years old. Likewise, Labov (2001a: 507) states that 'in London, locally born members of Jamaican families use a dialect that is not clearly distinguishable from that of other working class Londoners.' A footnote on the same page describes a perceptual study he carried out:

> 'In the 1980s, I recorded a series of Jamaican youth in Battersea Park, London. I returned the next day with a tape which had six extracts from their speech, and asked a series of white Londoners to identify their ethnic background. Two of the six were identified as white by the majority of listeners, and none of them were unhesitatingly identified as black.'

Sebba (1993) states that no obvious pronunciation differences existed between young black and white Londoners (his data are from 1981), asserting (p. 64): 'Black Londoners sound for the most part *very* London'. Yet he cites evidence that the ethnicity of most young Londoners *could* be identified from recordings alone – *contra* Labov, and a finding which is more in tune with other research, in particular that of Hewitt.

Hewitt's work in London, also in the early 1980s, gives us a substantially different picture. Of British black children, he states that 'through their association with white children in the local neighbourhoods and schools, their speech has come to have an impact on the new generations of white Londoners' (Hewitt 1986: 126-127). On the impact of the Caribbean immigration on London English, he notes that 'we are able to observe a sociolinguistic process as it is occurring' (Hewitt 1986: 126). Lexical items of creole origin were used by white children amongst themselves, and he states that 'in some areas of London [these items] are employed by them *unmarked with regard to ethnicity*' (1986: 127; emphasis in original). He further states that a 'local multi-ethnic vernacular … is the language of white as well as minority youth …' (Hewitt 2003: 192-193). He mostly discusses lexis, but mentions that some white young people 'unselfconsciously' use a creole-like pronunciation [ɔ] in two items: *come* and *fuck* (Hewitt 1986: 134). This, we suggest, foreshadows the general extreme backing of the STRUT vowel in London today, to be discussed below.

What is the situation today? We can start by trying to reconcile the contradictory accounts given above. The situations they describe are very different, covering largely mono-ethnic neighbourhoods in the late 1960s (Beaken) or multi-ethnic South London 15 years later (Hewitt). Sebba's North London data and Labov's Battersea (South London) recordings may have been collected in locations which were less multi-ethnic, or more recently so, than Hewitt's districts. Today, young people across much of inner London and beyond appear to employ something akin to Hewitt's 'multi-ethnic vernacular' characterised by both lexis and, perhaps more markedly today, pronunciation. It has only recently been the subject of systematic media comment (e.g. The Guardian 2006; The Sunday Times 2005). Media reports have on occasion talked of 'Jafaikan', but we prefer the more neutral 'Multicultural London English'.

The first large-scale variationist study of the English of both minority ethnic and Anglo London youth is Fox's (2007) investigation in the East End borough of Tower Hamlets. Fox, who recorded young people in 2001-2, found effects of ethnicity and friendship network on the use of a number of innovatory phonetic/phonological features, with young speakers of Bangladeshi origin (Bangladeshi families settled in the area mainly in the early 1980s) and young white British speakers with dense multi-ethnic networks in the lead. The diphthongs of FACE and PRICE had acquired near-monophthongal qualities, while there was a lack of allomorphy in the definite and indefinite article system – a possible influence from language contact and L2 varieties of English.

In this article, we take the view that the influence of minority ethnic English(es) is well advanced, but still an ongoing process. We will try to answer the following questions: are there still today effects of ethnicity? Do friendship networks form a channel for the transmission of originally minority ethnic variants? At the same time, we will identify particular individuals who are the most advanced in the cohort in terms of their use of new features and, on the basis of their social profiles, attempt to draw conclusions about the kinds of people who might be innovators or, at least, early adopters.

1.2 Ethnicity and friendship networks: summary

It is clear from our work that ethnicity is a crucial determinant for both phonetic and discourse variables in inner London. Minority ethnic speakers lead innovations, regardless of which minority they belong to, while outer London speakers, who in our sample, reflecting the local population, are mainly Anglo, use a combination of less marked variants of the inner-London features, more traditional London features, and features that form part of wider south-eastern supralocalisation (dialect levelling; Kerswill, Torgersen, & Fox 2008). The link between ethnicity and innovation is crucial for our understanding of variation and change in all large multicultural cities. People of recent immigrant descent do not form a majority of Londoners, and no one group dominates.[1] Their influence on the capital's speech is, arguably, disproportionate to their numbers, though there are substantial pockets where a particular non-Anglo ethnic group are in a majority. The most notable example is Tower Hamlets, where Bangladeshis are numerically dominant in the under-24 age group. In London as a whole and, presumably, other multiethnic cities, complex social factors must be at play for the minority ethnic influence to be as great as it is. The spread of linguistic features in the multi-ethnic networks may simply be the consequence of face-to-face interaction, and indeed our own data and that of Fox (2007) in London and Khan (2006) in Birmingham show, using a quantitative methodology, that networks are a conduit for the spread of 'ethnic' features to majority groups. Alternatively – or additionally – the adoption of these forms by young speakers may constitute an act of identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985), signalling allegiance to the dominant youth

[1] We are not concerned with the recent large-scale immigration of people from Central and Eastern Europe since the accession of their states to the European Union on 1st May 2004. Their long-term effect on local speech will, we assume, only be felt when the first generation of British-born children approaches adulthood.

culture, with its Afro-Caribbean influences. In either case, long-term accommodation (Trudgill 1986) can lead to language change.

1.3 Practice and personality

We will try to establish the *social types* who are likely to be the linguistic innovators through examining the speakers' friendship networks and social practices. To what degree does the multi-ethnic friendship network influence the speaker's choice of certain linguistic features? What are the social practices of the members of the friendship group? What are the effects, if any, of a speaker's personality on the spread of innovations (Eckert 2000; Fox 2007)? Do common interests in sport, music, fashion or belonging to particular friendship groups or gangs influence the speakers' linguistic choices?

2. Data

Our data were collected as part of the project *Linguistic innovators: The English of adolescents in London*,[2] with informants from two boroughs: Hackney (inner London) and Havering (outer London). The localities (shown in Figure 1) were selected on the basis of demographic and social differences: Hackney is ethnically very diverse and economically relatively deprived, while Havering is an area with higher mobility and higher levels of prosperity. Hackney is in the traditional East End, close to the City of London, whereas Havering is in the east, formerly a part of Essex, but now administratively a London borough. According to the 2001 Census, 10.29% of people in Hackney were Afro-Caribbean and 11.98% black African (the largest non-Anglo ethnic group in Hackney). In total 40.6% of people in Hackney were non-white. In our current sample, second and third generation Afro-Caribbeans are the largest single non-Anglo group (11 out of 27).

[2] Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, 2004–2007, ref. RES 000-23-0680.

Figure 1 Map of London, with the boroughs of Hackney and Havering highlighted (from www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/maps/london_map.htm).

2.1 Speakers

We recorded elderly and young speakers. The elderly informants in Hackney and Havering are in their 70s and 80s and come from local families. There are 4 women and 4 men in each group. In Hackney, around half of our young informants have a 'white London' background; that is, their families have relatively local roots ('Anglo'). The other half is made up of the children or grandchildren of immigrants mainly from developing countries ('non-Anglo'). With just a few exceptions, the young speakers in Havering are of Anglo origin. We also included some non-Anglo speakers who attended college in Havering but who commuted daily from other boroughs. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the speakers. The 'commuters' are listed after the '+' symbol.

	Elderly	Anglo girls	Non-Anglo girls	Anglo boys	Non-Anglo boys
Hackney	8	10	12	11	15
Havering	8	17	3+3	22	1+6

Table 1 Breakdown of speakers.

This paper will focus on data from Hackney, the ethnically mixed research site.

2.2 Social network scores: ethnicity

Hackney (inner London) turns out to be more innovative on all linguistic levels than Havering (outer London). Perhaps surprisingly, we have not been able to isolate distinct (discrete) ethnic styles – differences between ethnicities, where they exist, are quantitative in nature. However, as we shall see, both ethnicity (as independent variable) and ethnicity of friendship networks do produce significant effects. By including ethnicity as part of our

analysis we do not wish to impose classifications on speakers. We asked each adolescent to give a self-definition of where they belong in terms of their own identity, and these are the definitions we used in our analysis. The ethnic distribution of the young speakers' friendship networks was examined by asking questions such as: How many close friends have you got? What ethnicity are they? Each speaker was then given a score of 1–5 depending on the ethnic distribution of the friendship network:

1 = all friends same ethnicity as self
2 = up to 20% of a different ethnicity
3 = up to 40% of a different ethnicity
4 = up to 60% of a different ethnicity
5 = up to 80% of a different ethnicity

None of the young speakers in Hackney scored 1 or 2. Most Hackney adolescents scored 5 (30 speakers); eleven speakers scored 4 and seven speakers scored 3. Of the non-Anglo speakers, one had a score of 3, five scored 4 and twenty-one scored 5. Of the Anglo speakers six scored 3, six scored 4 and nine scored 5. Table 2 displays sociodemographic information about the young speakers.

The network analysis shows that *all* the Hackney Anglo adolescents have higher network scores than any of their counterparts in Havering, where the maximum score was 3. This means that much of the linguistic difference between the boroughs can be linked to the ethnic composition of networks. However, the network score is a fundamentally different measure for the two groups. For the ethnically homogeneous Anglos, it measures the proportion of non-Anglos amongst the friends, and can be used in a quantitative analysis. Because non-Anglos as a group are ethnically heterogeneous (about 11 different self-defined ethnicities can be counted), such a quantitative analysis would not be meaningful. For this reason, we discuss only the Anglos' networks.

(a) Anglo speakers (ranked by network score)

Group (broad ethnic classification)	Sex	Network score
Anglo	Female	3
Anglo	Male	3
Anglo	Male	3
Anglo	Male	3
Anglo	Male	3
Anglo	Male	3
Anglo	Female	4
Anglo	Female	4
Anglo	Female	4
Anglo	Female	4
Anglo	Female	4
Anglo	Male	4
Anglo	Female	5
Anglo	Female	5

Anglo	Female	5
Anglo	Female	5
Anglo	Male	5
Anglo	Male	5
Anglo	Male	5
Anglo	Male	5
Anglo	Male	5

(b) Non-Anglo speakers (ranked by network score)

Group (broad ethnic classification)	Self-defined ethnicity	Sex	Network score
Non-Anglo	Bangladeshi	Male	3
Non-Anglo	Bangladeshi	Female	4
Non-Anglo	Bangladeshi	Female	4
Non-Anglo	Afro-Caribbean	Male	4
Non-Anglo	Columbian	Male	4
Non-Anglo	Nigerian	Male	4
Non-Anglo	White British/Indian	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Moroccan	Female	5
Non-Anglo	White British/Afro-Caribbean	Female	5
Non-Anglo	White British/Afro-Caribbean	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Nigerian	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Moroccan	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Nigerian	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Chinese	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Afro-Caribbean	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Afro-Caribbean	Female	5
Non-Anglo	Middle Eastern	Male	5
Non-Anglo	White British/Afro-Caribbean	Male	5
Non-Anglo	Ghanaian	Male	5
Non-Anglo	Bangladeshi	Male	5
Non-Anglo	Afro-Caribbean	Male	5
Non-Anglo	Portuguese	Male	5
Non-Anglo	Afro-Caribbean	Male	5
Non-Anglo	White British/Indian	Male	5
Non-Anglo	Afro-Caribbean	Male	5
Non-Anglo	White British/Afro-Caribbean	Male	5
Non-Anglo	Afro-Caribbean	Male	5

Table 2 Network scores of Young Hackney speakers

2.3 Linguistic features discussed in this paper

The phonological features we will discuss are the short monophthongs (KIT, DRESS, TRAP, STRUT, LOT and FOOT), the long monophthong GOOSE and the diphthongs FACE, PRICE,

GOAT and MOUTH, as well as the consonants /h/, /k/, /θ/ and /ð/. We also discuss the use of innovative quotatives to introduce reported speech. These features are considered in relation to ethnicity, ethnicity of personal social network, social practice, and the personality of the speaker.

3. The short vowel shift in Hackney

Table 3 presents normalised average formant frequencies, using the Lobanov formula (Lobanov 1971), amongst elderly and young speakers in Hackney. F1 (first formant) is a representation of vowel height while F2 (second formant) describes frontness/backness.

	KIT	DRESS	TRAP	STRUT	START	LOT	FOOT	GOOSE
	F1/F2	F1/F2	F1/F2	F1/F2	F1/F2	F1/F2	F1/F2	F1/F2
Elderly	343/22	504/19	622/18	664/13	596/10	497/9	326/10	321/15
	11	37	18	97	30	15	07	57
Young	336/22	486/19	685/15	603/11	598/10	481/9	337/12	302/20
	47	09	77	54	20	92	21	35

Table 3 Normalised average formant frequencies amongst elderly and young speakers in Hackney.

Figure 2 shows a plot of these vowel qualities. Statistical testing was carried out using Multivariate ANOVA on average formant frequencies per speaker per vowel. There is no significant change for KIT, DRESS, LOT or START (the last of these included here as an anchor). A more open and more centralised TRAP amongst the young speakers compared to the elderly speakers is significant ($p<0.001$). The young speakers also have a more back and less open STRUT than the elderly speakers ($p<0.001$), and this suggests the completion of a change in this vowel alluded to by Hewitt. Finally, the young speakers have a more central FOOT ($p<0.05$) and a substantially more front GOOSE than the elderly speakers ($p<0.001$).

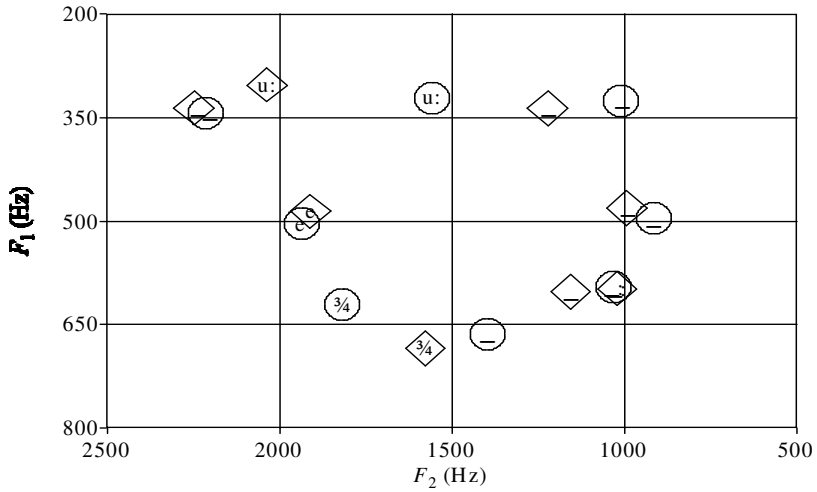

Figure 2 The south-eastern short vowel shift in Hackney amongst elderly speakers (circles) and young speakers (diamonds).

The changes in TRAP, STRUT and FOOT are identical to what we have previously described as the south-east short vowel chain shift, based on data from Reading and Ashford (Torgersen & Kerswill 2004). As elsewhere in the south-east, London also shows the fronting of GOOSE. Interestingly, there is, *taken overall*, little or no further development amongst the young speakers in Hackney of the short vowel shift already noted in these towns. In Torgersen and Kerswill (2004), we concluded that the changes in the short vowel system were most likely due to a regional levelling process. The question we can ask now is whether certain groups in London are ahead, or behind, in the changes. Will there be differences between the groups of young speakers?

Figure 3 takes the Anglo and non-Anglo distinction into account, showing the short vowel system for these two groups and the elderly speakers.

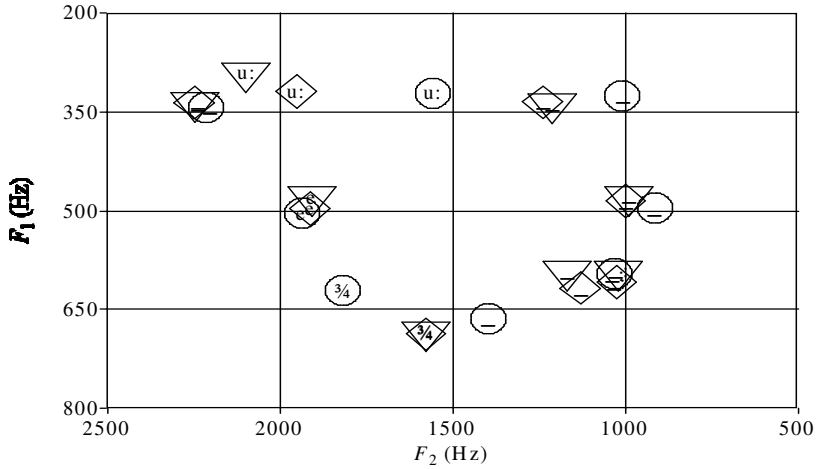

Figure 3 The south-eastern short vowel shift in Hackney amongst elderly speakers (circles), non-Anglo speakers (reversed triangles) and Anglo speakers (diamonds).

The differences between the Anglo and non-Anglo speakers are mainly very small, but significant differences are found for STRUT and GOOSE. The non-Anglo speakers have a more raised STRUT vowel than the Anglo speakers ($p<0.05$) and they also have a more close ($p<0.005$) and more front GOOSE ($p<0.05$) than the Anglo speakers. This means that the non-Anglo speakers are leading the raising of STRUT – very much in line with Hewitt's representation of a creole-like raised quality for *come* and *fuck* – and fronting of GOOSE.

Figure 4 presents the results for friendship networks. The Anglo speakers are divided into two groups: Anglo speakers with a predominantly Anglo network (score 3) and Anglo speakers with a predominantly non-Anglo network (score 4 and 5).

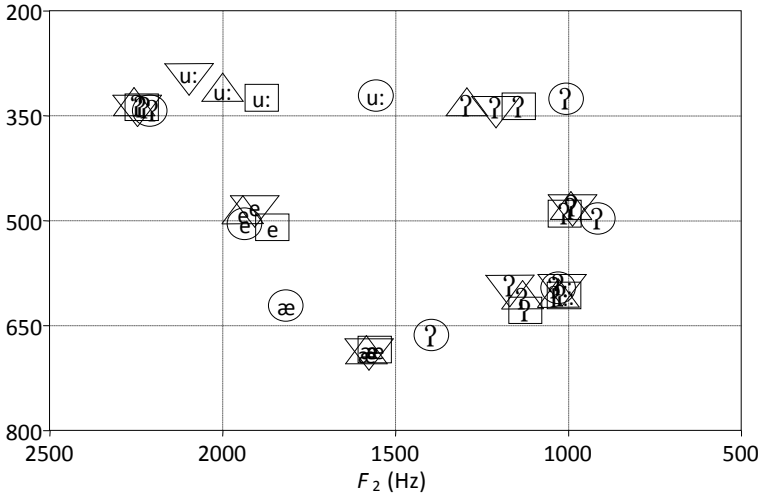

Figure 4 The south-eastern short vowel shift in Hackney amongst elderly speakers (circles), non-Anglo speakers (reversed triangles), Anglo speakers with a predominantly non-Anglo network (triangles) and Anglo speakers with a predominantly Anglo network (squares).

The non-Anglo speakers also have a GOOSE vowel which is significantly more front and close than Anglo speakers with a largely Anglo network ($p<0.05$ on both measures), but *not* significantly more so than Anglo speakers with a largely non-Anglo network. We have already seen that GOOSE appears to be a strong indicator of ethnicity, albeit a gross 'non-Anglo' ethnicity; we now see, however, that an equally strong factor correlated with changes in the GOOSE vowel is, for Anglo speakers, belonging to a multiethnic friendship group. We will return to this below.

4. Diphthong changes

The monophthongs DRESS, TRAP, STRUT, START and FOOT are included for reference. As before, the formant data have been normalised using the Lobanov formula (Lobanov 1971). Both the data for young and elderly speakers have been included in the calculation, so as to allow a direct comparison between them. Figure 5 shows the diphthong system for an elderly speaker in Hackney, represented as the mean of the vectors (trajectories) in F1–F2 space between the onsets and offsets of each vowel; there is an average of 15 tokens per vowel. This speaker has shifted diphthongs (Wells 1982): the onsets for FACE and GOAT are relatively open and there is a back and raised onset for PRICE. MOUTH is fronted and near-monophthongal, while the onset is closer to DRESS than TRAP. FOOT is quite back. GOOSE is not fronted and the central nucleus indicates a diphthongal quality. This system is typical of traditional London accents, having been widely reported in previous research there and across the south-east (Tollfree 1999).

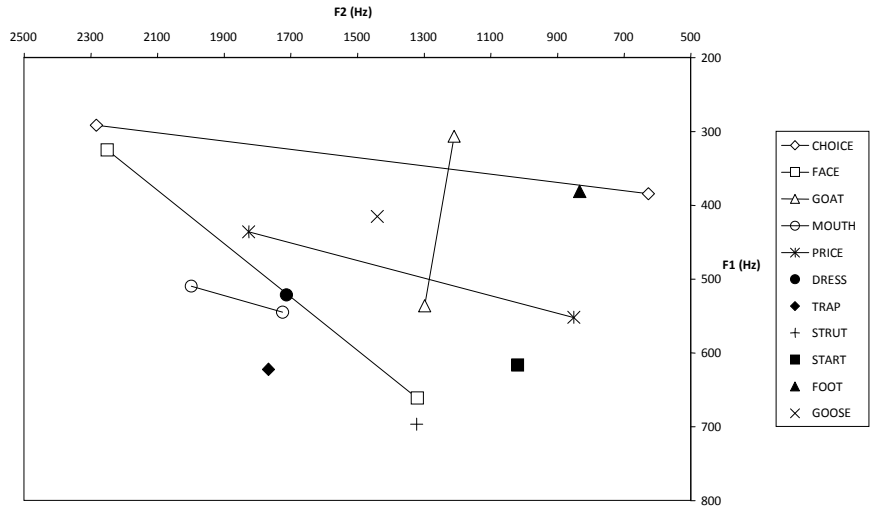

Figure 5 John (born 1938), elderly male speaker from Hackney.

Recent years have seen changes in the diphthong system in accents in south-east England, including London. The diphthongs are becoming less shifted and are acquiring RP-like qualities (Kerswill & Williams 2005). In inner London, this diphthong shift 'reversal' (see Kerswill, Torgersen & Fox 2008 for further discussion of this concept) is particularly dramatic, with the young non-Anglo speakers leading the change, followed by the Anglo speakers with non-Anglo friendship networks. As an example, consider Figure 6, which shows a young speaker in Hackney, Zack, who has the emerging system. He is an Anglo speaker with a largely non-Anglo friendship network. There is fronting of PRICE, raising of the onsets of FACE and GOAT and also backing of GOAT. There is also backing and lowering of MOUTH. In total, there is dramatic diphthong shift reversal, coupled with very short trajectories, indicating near-monophthongal qualities. Zack has the most raised FACE, and amongst the most raised GOAT, fronted GOOSE and fronted PRICE of all the young speakers in Hackney. He is also amongst the speakers with the shortest trajectories, as measured by Euclidean distance. In general, it is the male non-Anglo speakers who are in the lead in diphthong shift reversal.

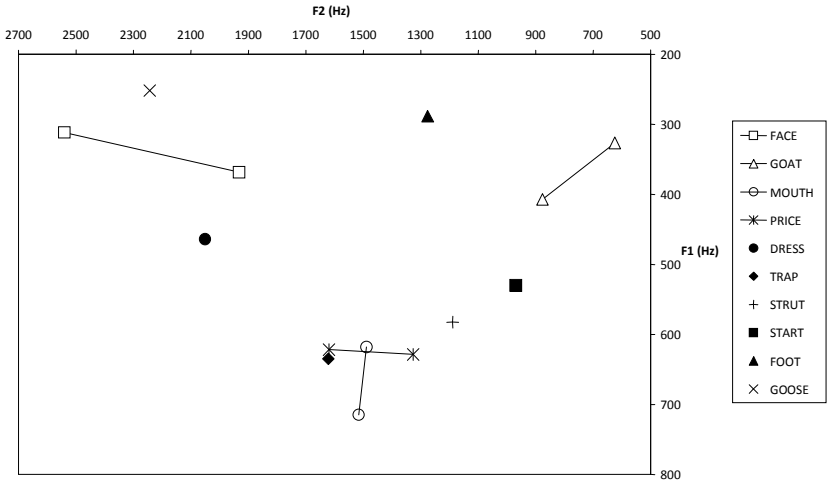

Figure 6 Zack, male young Anglo speaker from Hackney.

Tables 4 and 5 show significant effects for age and ethnicity in Hackney. The test used was multivariate ANOVA for average diphthong onsets per vowel per speaker. Note how the change in GOAT (backing and raising) is significant for ethnicity (and not age overall).

	MOUTH	PRICE	GOAT	FACE
Backing	yes	n/a	no	n/a
Lowering	yes	yes	no	n/a
Fronting	n/a	yes	no	yes
Raising	n/a	n/a	no	yes

Table 4 Significance of effects in Hackney – backing, lowering, fronting and raising refer to main effects of age.

	MOUTH	PRICE	GOAT	FACE
Sex	yes	no	no	yes
Ethnicity	yes	yes	yes	yes

Table 5 Significance of effects in Hackney – sex and ethnicity refer to main effects (young speakers only).

We shall now focus on effects of friendship network. In order to get an overall picture of the diphthong changes, as well as to see the quantitative effect of network differences, we can plot the elderly speakers' average scores alongside those for the young people. Figures 7–9 show plots for salient parameters along which each diphthong varies. Figure 7 illustrates the fronting of the onset of FACE. It is the only diphthong to show a significant effect for friendship network: non-Anglo speakers as a whole have a more fronted onset than Anglo speakers with a largely Anglo friendship network (score 3) ($p<0.05$), but not Anglo speakers with a largely non-Anglo friendship network (scores 4 and 5). As elsewhere in the data, Anglos with non-Anglo networks fall between the other two groups.

We can interpret their position as a kind of bridge for the transmission of minority ethnic features.

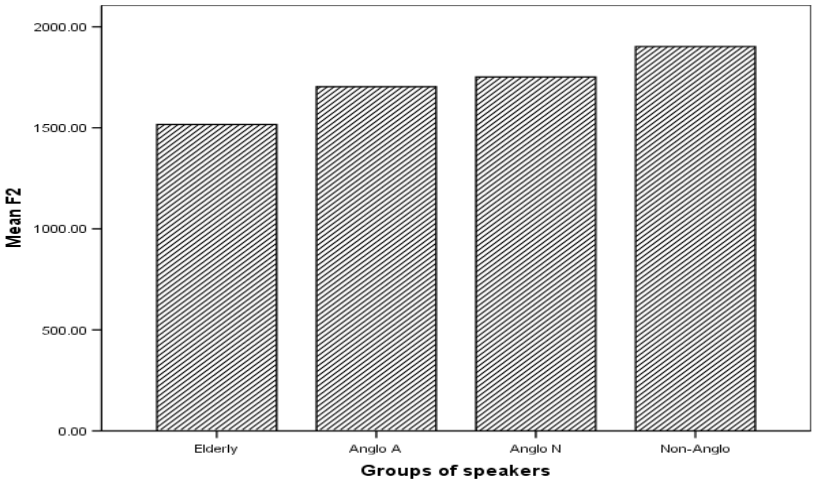

Figure 7 Bar chart illustrating the fronting of FACE, as measured by F2 (second formant). Anglo A= Anglo speakers with a largely Anglo friendship network; Anglo N= Anglo speakers with a largely non-Anglo friendship network.

Figure 8 displays the raising of GOAT. There is only a small difference between the groups of Anglo speakers for this diphthong. However, the overall difference between non-Anglo and Anglo speakers is significant and the differences between the non-Anglo and groups of Anglo speakers are in the same direction as for FACE.

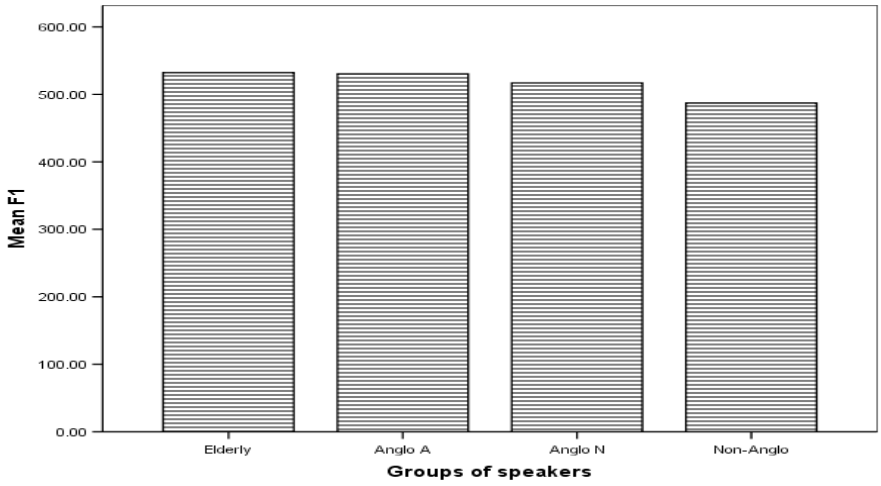

Figure 8 Bar chart illustrating the raising of GOAT, as measured by F1 (first formant).

Figure 9 shows fronting of GOOSE. This monophthong is included here because it displays significant variation according to friendship network, as we saw in the discussion of monophthongs. There is, thus, a significant difference between Anglo speakers with Anglo networks (score 3) on one hand and Anglo speakers with non-Anglo networks (scores 4 and 5) and non-Anglo speakers on the other.

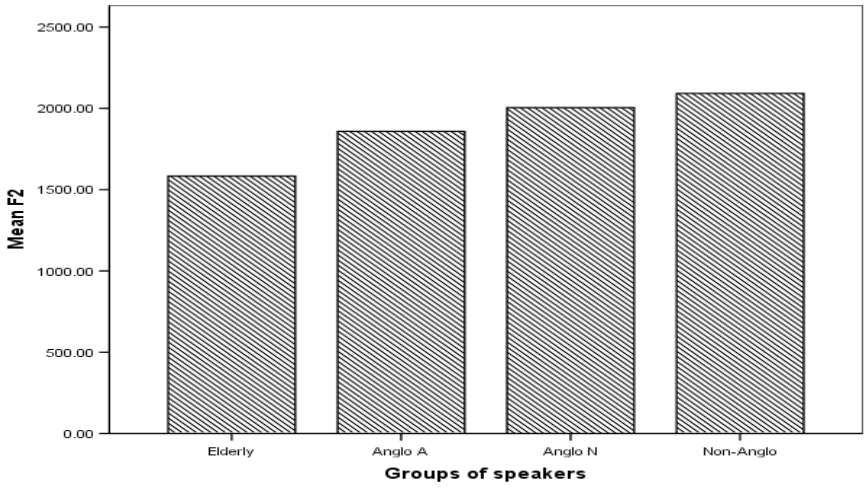

Figure 9 Bar chart illustrating the fronting of GOOSE, as measured by F2 (second formant).

We note that it is the non-Anglo speakers who are in the lead in the diphthong changes as well as the fronting of GOOSE, followed by the Anglo speakers with largely multiethnic networks.

5. Consonant changes

5.1 H-dropping

H-dropping is traditionally regarded as a feature of London English. Recent years have, however, seen a reduction in H-dropping in south-east England (Williams & Kerswill 1999). /h/ was analysed in stressed word-initial position. The young speakers in Hackney have less H-dropping than the elderly speakers overall ($p<0.001$). Average percentages of H-dropping for the young speakers are 11.0% in Hackney while it is 58.1% for the elderly speakers. The Anglo speakers (18.0%) have more H-dropping than non-Anglo speakers overall (3.9%; $p<0.001$). There are small differences between the groups of young speakers. Anglo female speakers have 18.6% H-dropping and the Anglo male speakers 17.5%. Non-Anglo female speakers have 0% and the non-Anglo male speakers 6.0%. There is no effect of friendship network on the amount of H-dropping in Hackney: Anglo speakers with Anglo network have 18.9% and Anglo speakers with non-Anglo network have 17.7%.

5.2 K-backing

Back /k/ was analysed in word-initial position in front of non-high back vowels (STRUT, START, LOT and THOUGHT). Examples are *cousin*, *car*, *cot*, *caught*. The variants [k–] and [q], which are auditorily relatively easy to perceive, were coded as 'back'. The feature was not used by elderly speakers at all. There is a small difference between the ethnic groups in their use of the back variants. The average frequency amongst the Anglo speakers is 70.2% and amongst the non-Anglos 65.0%, a difference which is not significantly different. The young female speakers are less likely to use the most back variants than the male speakers ($p<0.005$). Although ethnicity does not show up as a significant factor, there is a main effect of friendship network ($p<0.01$) and this is due to Anglo speakers with an Anglo network being less likely to use the back variants ($p<0.05$). The Anglo speakers with a non-Anglo network were not significantly different from the non-Anglo speakers.

5.3 DH-stopping

DH-stopping involves the use of [d] for word-initial /ð/. Average percentage word-initial DH-stopping in Hackney is 58.0%. DH-stopping is more common amongst non-Anglo than Anglo speakers ($p<0.001$): 67.2% vs. 42.0%. The feature is also slightly more common amongst female speakers, 61.7%, than male speakers, 55.7%, ($p<0.05$). Average use of DH-stopping amongst Anglo female speakers is 37.2% and amongst non-Anglo females 80.0%. Corresponding figures for Anglo male speakers are 46.1% and for non-Anglo male speakers 60.2%, differences for both sexes being significant ($p<0.001$). The Anglo speakers with non-Anglo networks have significantly less DH-stopping than the Anglo speakers with an Anglo network and the non-Anglo speakers ($p<0.001$). DH-stopping is a traditional Cockney feature and this is probably the reason for the high proportion amongst the Anglo speakers with Anglo networks. The highest individual users, however, are the male speakers with an Afro-Caribbean and African background, with near-categorical [d] for /ð/ in word-initial position.

5.4 TH-fronting

Not surprisingly, we find a massive difference between the young and old speakers in Hackney in their use of [f] for /θ/. The elderly speakers are less likely than the young speakers to have word-initial TH-fronting (29.7 %; $p<0.001$). Word-initial TH-fronting amongst the young speakers is high: 86.5%, and there are small, sometimes significant differences between the groups. The Anglos are more likely to have TH-fronting than the non-Anglos ($p<0.05$), 89.7% vs. 84.1%. Other than this, there are small and insignificant differences between the groups of young speakers with regard to ethnicity. However, amongst the groups of Anglo speakers, the Anglo speakers with a non-Anglo network have more TH-fronting that the Anglo speakers with an Anglo network, 91.3% vs. 84.7%. The Anglo speakers with a non-Anglo network are significantly different from the non-Anglo speakers ($p<0.01$), but the Anglo speakers with an Anglo network are not.

We also found other variants used amongst some of the non-Anglo speakers. [t^h] for word-initial /θ/ is regarded as a feature of Asian, Afro-Caribbean and L2 Englishes (Khan 2006; Sebba 1993). Two female Bangladeshi speakers have an equal amount of [t^h] and [f], and four male speakers with West-Indian, Indian, and Ghanaian backgrounds had a few tokens of [t^h] each. For the male speakers [t^h] typically occurs in a handful of lexical items, including 'thief' (*tief* being a well-established loan from creole – Hewitt 1986: 130) and 'thing'. One female West-Indian speaker had an idiosyncratic use of an unaspirated [t] for /θ/ near-categorically.

5.5 Summary for consonants

Figure 10 shows summary information for H-dropping, K-backing, TH-fronting and DH-stopping amongst Anglo and non-Anglo speakers in Hackney.

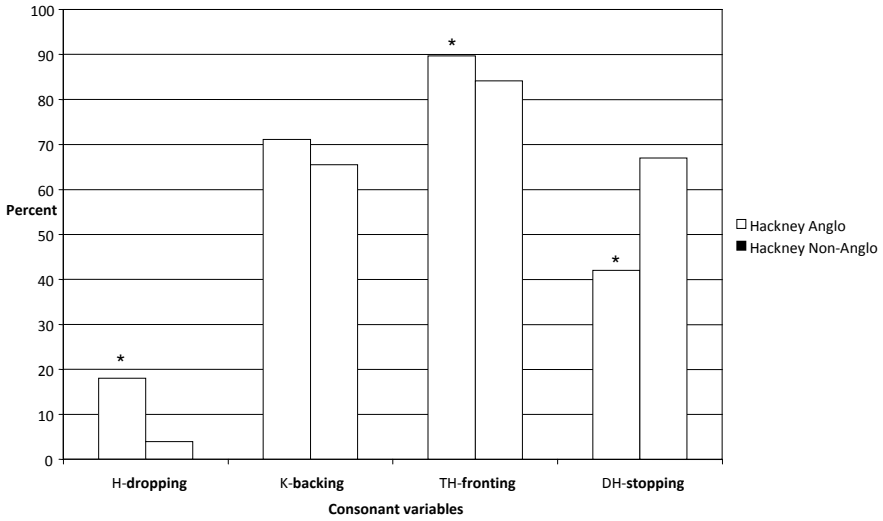

Figure 10 Summary information for H-dropping, K-backing, TH-fronting and DH-stopping in Hackney amongst Anglo and non-Anglo speakers. Asterisks indicate significant differences.

The figures show, first, that Hackney has a high percentage use of these features (counting the loss of H-dropping as a feature). Two of these can be regarded as 'new' in the sense of not being part of the traditional description of Cockney: loss of H-dropping and K-backing, while a third, DH-stopping, is a recessive old feature now reinforced by minority ethnic speech. Second, it is the non-Anglo speakers who use two out of three of the 'innovative' features more than the Anglo speakers. The difference between Anglo and non-Anglo speakers in Hackney is small, at least for K-backing, but there are significant differences for H-dropping, TH-fronting and DH-stopping (indicated with * on the figure).

Figure 11 shows the distribution of the consonant features by ethnicity and, for the Anglo speakers, for type of friendship network. There are significant effects of friendship

network for K-backing (Anglo speakers with an Anglo network have less use of the most back variant [q]), TH-fronting (Anglo speakers with a non-Anglo network have more) and DH-stopping (Anglo speakers with a non-Anglo network have less). The patterns are, however, varied. The fact that K-backing is greater for those with non-Anglo networks suggests that it may partly be an ethnic marker. This would be in line with the fact that its frequency in the largely mono-ethnic borough of Havering is much lower at 50.6%. However, this explanation does not work for TH-fronting, which is well established throughout the south of England, and is equally frequent in Havering (83.1%). DH-stopping is, as we have pointed out, an older Cockney feature, and this may explain its high use amongst those with Anglo networks – though this is not reflected in the Havering score for this variable of 30.0%. Presumably it is reinforced in Hackney by the high frequencies amongst Afro-Caribbean speakers.

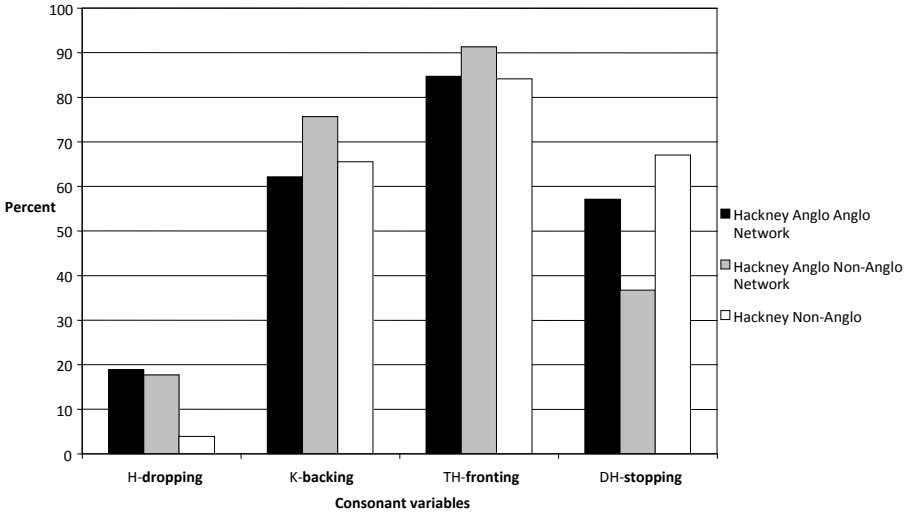

Figure 11 Summary information for H-dropping, K-backing, TH-fronting and DH-stopping in Hackney amongst non-Anglo speakers and Anglo speakers with different friendship networks.

6. Linguistic innovators

All the Hackney adolescents use the phonological innovations to some extent. The most extreme innovative variants, for both vowel and consonant variables, are used, as we have seen, by non-Anglo speakers in general and specifically by speakers with high multi-ethnic network scores of 4 and 5. A closer analysis reveals that there are seven individuals in particular who have a high degree of use of these phonological innovations. So what do these speakers have in common? It is not solely ethnicity, as they come from a range of ethnic backgrounds (White British, Black Afro-Caribbean, Columbian, mixed White British/Afro-Caribbean and mixed White British/Indian). Probably significantly, they all

have a network score of 5 (except one who has a score of 4). Observation and their own self-reports suggested that their friendship groups are also very large.

Figure 12 shows the relative degree of raised FACE and GOAT, fronted FACE, PRICE and GOOSE, H-dropping, K-backing and DH-stopping for these seven individual speakers. Although the results for these features are displayed together it should of course be noted that one feature cannot be directly compared with another.

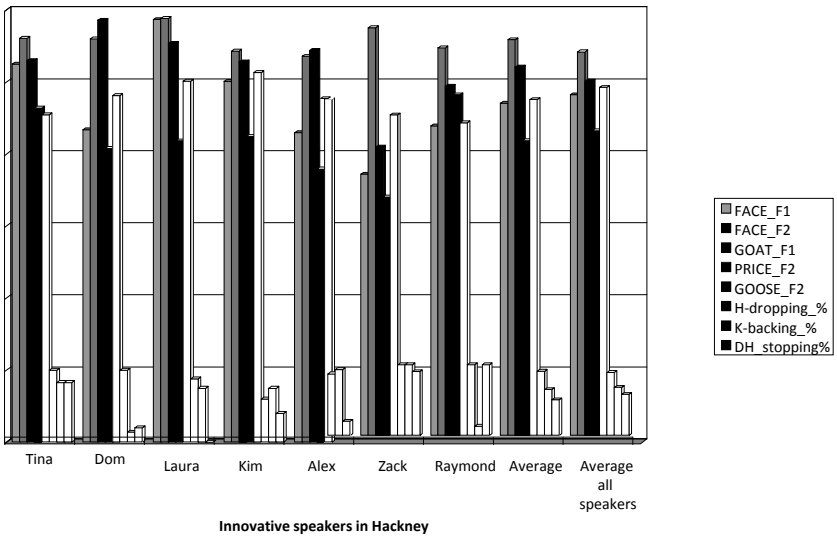

Figure 12 Relative degree of use of vowel and consonant features.

The bar chart shows Zack to have the most innovative vowel variants and also to have 100% H-retention and high levels of K-backing and DH-stopping. Raymond, who is Afro-Caribbean, is a close second. Both non-Anglo ethnicity and (for Anglos) multi-ethnic networks promote the use of innovative phonological features. So do these seven speakers display innovative use of other linguistic features?

7. Quotatives

In our analysis of the quotative system amongst adolescent speakers in London today we reported the use of a new quotative form – *THIS IS + SUBJECT* – used only by young speakers in inner London (Cheshire & Fox 2007). This new quotative accounts for 4.8% of all quotatives used and we demonstrated that it is used with a range of subjects as in the following examples:

i) ***This is them*** 'what area are you from . what part?' ***this is me*** 'I'm from Hackney'
ii) ***This is her*** 'that was my sister'
iii) ***This is him*** 'don't lie . if I search you and if I find one I'll kick your arse'

iv) ***This is my mum*** 'what are you doing? I was in the queue before you'
v) ***This is my mum's boyfriend*** 'put that in your pocket now'

We identified eight speakers who used this form in our sample, seven of whom are the same speakers identified above as using the innovative phonological forms. That is to say, this is the group of people who come from varied ethnic backgrounds but, who all have multi-ethnic friendship groups to a greater extent than the other adolescents in our sample. Of course, with quotatives, speakers have many choices (for example, *SAY, GO, BE LIKE* and a zero form) which are determined at least in part by pragmatic factors, so we would not expect the frequency of use of *THIS IS + SUBJECT* to parallel the frequencies of the innovative vowel or consonant forms – the usual pattern with discourse forms. However, the main point is the fact that these particular seven speakers *all* use the innovative quotative, not how often they use it.

We also looked at how this new quotative was being used and found that it frequently occurs in narratives in conjunction with other quotatives. The following is a typical example:

> "I literally walked past two thugs that I didn't not knew but they just grabbed me by the hood swang me in a alley and had me at knifepoint. and I couldn't do nothing but I said. And ***THEY SAID*** "where you from?" ***I SAID*** "east London that's where I'm from" ***THIS IS THEM*** "don't be funny" cos they're . I was right in a bit of east London so ***THEY SAID*** "don't be funny with me like that cos I'll stab you" and ***I SAID*** "I'm not trying to be funny" ***THIS IS THEM*** "what area are you from . what part?" ***THIS IS ME*** "I'm from (name of place)" and then like ***THEY JUST SAID*** "oh yeh I don't like that area rerere" and then like some hero. thank god there is some typical heroes who . it's like if you're short don't even bother come over because you're just gonna get stabbed yourself like".
> (Alex, Hackney)

Linked to its use in narratives, the new quotative is strongly favoured in first-person contexts, is used predominantly with the conversational historical present and is used categorically with direct speech. It often occurs at key moments in the narrative and functions to heighten involvement. In the narrative above, the speaker had been confronted on his way home by two other youths in the area. He starts by using *SAY* at the beginning of the narrative but when he comes to a key moment in the story and the situation becomes confrontational he switches to *THIS IS THEM* and *THIS IS ME*. This has the effect of putting the speaker(s) into focus and contributes to the construction of a narrative that is a performance.

Figure 13 illustrates the users of the new quotative *THIS IS + SUBJECT* and its frequency of use by the individual speakers.

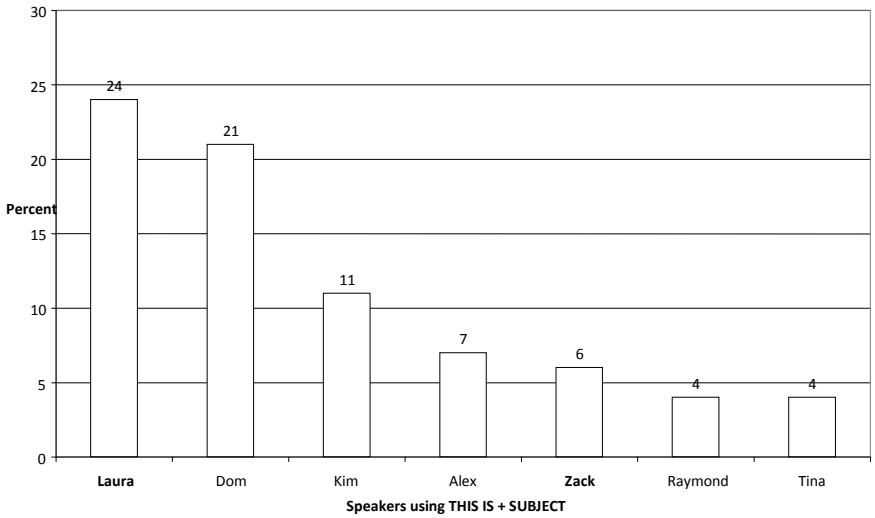

Figure 13 Use of *THIS IS + SUBJECT*.

How does this link to the phonological innovations used by these speakers? We can see from the analyses that the speakers are not identical in the frequency of use of the innovative forms. For example, Zack has the highest frequency of the phonological innovations, but he is only the 5th highest user of the new quotative form. Laura and Dom are the highest users of the new quotative forms but they vary in the frequency with which they use the innovative phonological forms. Overall, though, the seven adolescents are all frequent users of innovative phonological forms and it is only these speakers who use the new quotative. We need to consider whether there is a link to the mechanism of linguistic change.

8. Discussion

As we have stated, the seven speakers are all members of multi-ethnic friendship groups, a fact which seems crucial in this case of intense dialect/language contact. The fact that the groups are multi-ethnic probably allows for 'crossing' (Rampton 1995) and stylised speech to take place. That is to say, membership of a multi-ethnic friendship group probably allows a speaker to use language features associated with a particular social or ethnic group to which he/she does not belong. If the innovations are arising amongst the non-Anglo group then the contact with other ethnic groups within the friendship network allows the innovations to be taken up. Even if some of these types of speech performance start in a conscious way, it seems likely that as time goes on and the contact between the different ethnic groups intensifies, these innovations will lead to changes in the quasi-permanent phonologies and grammars of our speakers ('post-vernacular reorganization', in Labov's terms (2001b: 85)). As one of our seven linguistic innovators aptly puts it:

"when you hang around with someone things of that person will get stuck to you and things of you get stuck to him do you get me now?"
(Dom, Hackney)

Why, though, do these speakers seem to be ahead of the others in the use of innovations? We mentioned earlier that they belong to large friendship groups, and so the question arises as to why these particular speakers, and maybe not others, seem sanctioned to use the innovations? The notion of 'brokering' would appear to be relevant. Brokering is the 'use of multimembership to transfer some element of one practice into another' (Wenger 1998: 109) and is a term introduced by Eckert (2000) into sociolinguistics to describe how adolescents introduce new ideas into their friendship groups. These may be ideas about fashion and ways of doing things, as well as new ways of talking. Brokering entails spanning the boundaries between one group and another and transferring elements between those groups. It seems that some people are better at brokering than others and, as Wenger notes, some people even seem to thrive on being brokers, regularly creating connections and engaging in "import-export" (Wenger 1998: 109). In order to be a successful broker they must be able to exert enough influence in each group to be able to carry ideas from one group and introduce them to another. Personality factors would therefore seem to be a key factor to this notion.

The seven speakers who are the focus of this paper would seem to have more than multi-ethnic friendships as a common denominator. All are dominant characters within their friendship groups and highly regarded by their peers. Their friendship networks extend beyond the college grounds, giving them the opportunity for brokering. They are all involved in activities such as rapping and MCing either as participants or consumers, and these are highly valued resources in contemporary youth culture. These factors, together with the evidence from our analyses, lead us to conclude that these seven speakers are the leaders of change amongst the adolescent speakers in this study, and are representative of the social and personality types who are innovators within their group.

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