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Dialect Contact and Social Networks

Language Change in an Anglophone Community in Japan

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1 Introduction

This book explores the consequences of frequent interaction between native speakers of different varieties of English in a dialect contact situation in a country where English is not the primary language but is used as a medium of international communication. This study's aims are twofold: to examine the linguistic change caused by dialect contact in a community where speakers do not have close-knit social networks but have short- to medium-term contact with speakers of different regional dialects of the same language; and to illustrate the impact of social network effects on the speakers with regard to linguistic variation and change.

The mechanisms of dialect acquisition/accommodation in English dialect contact situations have been uncovered by a number of studies performed in the United States (Bigham 2008; Kirke 2005; Payne 1980; Roberts and Labov 1995), the United Kingdom (Chambers 1992; Kerswill 1994, 1996; Kerswill and Williams 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Shockey 1984; Tagliamonte and Molfenter 2007; Wells 1973), Australia (Foreman 2000; Rogers 1981; Trudgill 1982, 1986), and New Zealand (Starks and Bayard 2002). A number of studies in dialect contact situations of languages other than English have also been performed in countries including Norway (Kerswill 1993; Mæhlum 1992, 1996; Omdal 1994), Sweden (Ivars 1994), the Netherlands (Vousten and Bongaerts 1995,[1] cited in Siegel 2010: 44; Rys and Bonte 2006), Germany (Auer, Barden and Grosskopf 1998, 2000; Auer and Hinskens 2005), Switzerland (Berthele 2002), Greece (Papazachariou 1998), Jordan (Al-Wer 2002), Kuwait (Al-Dashti 1998), China (Stanford 2008a, 2008b), Spanish in the United States (Amastae and Satcher 1993) and Brazil (Bortoni-Ricardo 1985).

Dialect contact occurs in many different types of contexts. It may occur, for example, in a place where a regional dialect has been established for a long time, in a postcolonial country, or in a New Town. The regions where the English-focused studies mentioned above were carried out are the traditional bases of

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1   Vousten, Rob, and Bongaerts, Theo. (1995). Acquiring a dialect as L2: The case of the dialect of Venray in the Dutch province of Limburg. In W. Viereck (ed.), *Verhandlungen des internationalen dialektolo-genkongresses Bamberg 1990. Band 4*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner. 299–313.

English which B. Kachru (1985: 12)[2] calls the 'Inner Circle'. In each of these regions, then, English is the primary language. Dialect contact may, however, occur in a place where English is not the primary language, but is used as a medium of international communication and taught as a foreign language. This type of area belongs to what B. Kachru (1985: 13) calls the 'Expanding Circle'. There are few studies which have been conducted in such an L2 (second language) situation, and little is known of the dialect contacts in such contexts (Hirano 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012; Rigsby 2010[3]). It is, therefore, useful to investigate an English dialect contact situation in a region other than an Inner Circle country, and particularly within an Expanding Circle area where there is no established regional dialect and no institutional norm that privileges one dialect of English over another, to analyse and assess the relevant processes and outcomes.

Many of the aforementioned studies in dialect acquisition/accommodation in English dialect contact situations target dialect acquirers who are transplanted from one city to another, or from one country to another, and involve a substantially long period of residence in the new linguistic environment. In an Expanding Circle area, on the other hand, Anglophones are often socially and geographically highly mobile. As they often go to foreign countries only for relatively short periods of time as non-permanent residents, the members are constantly being replaced by new arrivals. Thus, their relationships are often established on a short-term basis. Of course there are also a number of people who live in the area for a long time and establish long-term relationships. This research focuses on a particular type of community where short- to medium-term temporal residence is involved, and attempts to demonstrate the extent to which linguistic modification actually occurs among speakers in a short- to medium-term dialect contact situation.

In order to explore the consequences of dialect contacts in an Expanding Circle area where speakers often have short- to medium-term contact with speakers of different dialects and varieties of the same language, an Anglophone community in Japan has been chosen as the target community. This research in-

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2   In his model of 'Three Concentric Circles', B. Kachru (1985: 12–15) labels the varieties of worldwide English as the 'Inner Circle', the 'Outer Circle' and the 'Expanding Circle'. See also Crystal (2003: 107), Y. Kachru and Smith (2008: 4) and Schneider (2007: 13–14). In terms of their membership countries, the three circles largely correspond to the distinction made by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1972, 1985): ENL (English as a Native Language); ESL (English as a Second Language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language). See also McArthur (2002: 429–430) and Schneider (2007: 12).

3   Rigby (2010) investigates English spoken by 'Anglos', Spanish and other Europeans living in Spain.

vestigates the linguistic changes in individual native speakers of English (NSsE) who come to Japan from different parts of the world as English teachers, and focuses on the effects of their social networks on their linguistic changes. The linguistic changes observed in the Anglophone community of Japan are considered to be the consequences of frequent face-to-face interaction with speakers of different varieties and dialects of English, and frequent accommodation of the linguistic features of the people with whom the speakers have close contact. The individual speakers' interpersonal ties, which compose their social networks, become, therefore, an important factor that influences the linguistic behaviour of the speakers in a dialect contact situation.

The argument of the present research is mainly based on accommodation theory (Giles 1973; Giles and Powesland 1975), and in particular, long-term accommodation in a dialect contact situation (Trudgill 1986), and social network theory (L. Milroy 1980). Accommodation theory suggests that an individual adjusts his/her speech style according to the interlocutor (Giles and Powesland 1975), and this theory has been examined by a number of sociolinguistic researchers as well as social psycholinguistic researchers (Bell 1984, 2001; Bourhis 1984; Buzzanell, Burrell, Stafford and Berkowitz 1996; Coupland 1988; Fitzpatrick, Mulac and Dindia 1995; Gregory and Webster 1996; Hannah and Murachver 1999; Kemper, Vandeputte, Rice, Cheung and Gubarchuk 1995; Lawson and Sachdev 2000; Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994; Williams and Giles 1996).

Trudgill (1986) indicates that if accommodation takes place frequently enough and over a long period of time, modifications may occur regardless of the interlocutor or setting. This so-called long-term accommodation can often be observed when speakers of different regional varieties of the same language come into contact with one another. Studies of the acquisition of a second English dialect by children who have moved from one dialect area to another (Berthele 2002; Chambers 1992; Foreman 2000; Mæhlum 1992, 1996; Payne 1980; Roberts and Labov 1995; Rogers 1981; Rys and Bonte 2006; Stanford 2008b; Tagliamonte & Molfenter 2007; Trudgill 1982; Watts 2000) have found that acquisition of the target dialect took place to some extent. The same tendency was observed with adult speakers in the same situation (Bowie 2000; Conn and Horesh 2002; Evans and Iverson 2007; Foreman 2000; Kirke 2005; Nycz 2011; Shockey 1984; Trudgill 1986; Wells 1973).

A number of studies have demonstrated the importance of strong social network ties to linguistic behaviour (Cheshire 1982; Eckert 1988, 2000; Edwards 1992; Gal 1978; Labov 1972a; Lippi-Green 1989; Li Wei 1994; Marshall 2004; Matsumoto 2001, 2010; J. Milroy and L. Milroy 1978; L. Milroy 1980; Zentella 1997). For example, L. Milroy (1980) studied the linguistic behaviour of people

who had strong social network ties within a community and demonstrated that a social network with close-knit ties helped to enforce localised norms, including linguistic norms. On the other hand, adopting Granovetter's (1973) idea of weak-ties, which will be fully discussed in 3.4.2, some studies have demonstrated that linguistic behaviour in a social network with loose-knit ties was susceptible to innovation, and thus, such an environment facilitated change (Bortoni-Ricardo 1985; J. Milroy and L. Milroy 1985; L. Milroy and J. Milroy 1992).

The English dialect contact situation in the Anglophone community of Japan is rather different to the communities typically studied for dialect contact. Dialect acquisition or long-term accommodation is often observed when speakers of different regional varieties of a language come in contact, and regionally mobile individuals or minority groups in this case accommodate to the non-mobile majority that they have come to live amongst. The Anglophone community in Japan, however, consists of a mixture of nationalities, and this community is not at all homogeneous. Indeed, it is markedly heterogeneous in terms of its members' dialects and the varieties of English that they speak. This dialect contact situation may remind the reader of transplanted areas, for example Fiji (Moag 1977,[4] cited in Trudgill 1986: 101), New Zealand (Trudgill 2004b) and the Falkland Islands (Sudbury 2000), where koineisation (Siegel 1985, 2001), or new-dialect formation (Trudgill 2004b), took place. Although the dialect contact situation in the Anglophone community in Japan is different from those transplanted areas, the situation can be considered to be comparable to the extreme beginning stages of koineisation or new-dialect formation.

Moreover, the Anglophone community members are socially and geographically mobile. In particular, most of those who come to Japan from overseas to teach English usually return to their home country after one to three years and are constantly being replaced by new arrivals. Their relationships are, therefore, often established on a short-term basis, but they are linked with people from a wide range of social contexts. This suggests that social networks in this context do not usually become close-knit but instead are loose-knit and weak, with little density. Thus, the following questions arise: (1) What happens to the linguistic behaviour of NSsE in an L2 situation in an EFL/Expanding Circle country like Japan where dialect mixing is constantly taking place?; (2) Do NSsE acquire or accommodate different dialects even in a community where speakers only have short- to medium-term contact with other speakers?; (3) If they do, who accommodates to whose dialect?; (4) How can the social networks of the speakers be influential on the speakers' linguistic behaviour if their network ties are not necessarily strong and close-knit?

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4   Moag, R. (1977). *Fiji Hindi*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

   In the present research, the variation and modification in the informants' pronunciation of selected consonantal and vocalic variables are observed over a period of one year from arrival in Japan. The informants consist of NSsE from England, the United States (US) and New Zealand (NZ). The informants are all adults employed as English teachers in Japan. Their age means that they are actually known for being less adept than children at acquiring a second dialect (Tagliamonte and Molfenter 2007: 650; Trudgill 1986: 31). They are, however, considered to be capable of participating in koineisation processes such as creating interdialect forms and levelling out minor forms in a dialect contact situation. The changes observed in the current study are expected, therefore, to represent a highly subtle and slow process rather than provide evidence of dramatic transformations. The linguistic data is analysed quantitatively and examined statistically alongside social network data. The social network data include the index scores of the individual speakers' British, North American, Australasian and various non-native speakers of English (non-NSsE) network strengths. Correlations between the change in the choice of variants of the linguistic variables of individual speakers and their social network index scores are statistically tested by multiple regression analyses.

   The results reveal evidence of the strong impact of a speaker's social networks with both NSsE and non-NSsE on his/her modification of eight of the 12 linguistic variables.[5] The present study demonstrates that the direction and the amount of dialect accommodation in an L2 situation is greatly affected by the people with whom the speaker has close contact, and that the speaker's social network structures can be reliable predictors of dialect maintenance and shift of individual speakers in the Anglophone community in Japan. The linguistic shifts are subtle and small, but show strong interactions with social network ties.

   This book is structured as follows. Chapter 2 introduces English education, and native-speaking English teachers and their Anglophone community in Japan. First, it outlines the brief history of English education in Japan, the strong demand for native English-speaking teachers both in the past and presently, and the growing population of Anglophone residents in Japan. Second, it introduces the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and other English teaching jobs available to NSsE in Japan. Third, it describes the contact situation of the Anglophone community members with NSsE of different English varieties and dialects as well as with non-NSsE while they are in Japan. Lastly, it illustrates the possible social network effects on their English usage.

   Chapter 3 presents the theoretical background and previous research closely related to the theme of this book: linguistic change in a dialect contact situation

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5   See Chapter 5 for a full description of linguistic variables for the present research.

and the social network effects on it. In this chapter, first, theoretical issues and studies in the field of dialect contact including speech accommodation, second dialect acquisition, long-term accommodation, and new-dialect formation are reviewed. Second, studies in contact with non-NSsE are discussed. Third, studies related to social networks are considered.

For the purpose of exploring the linguistic behaviour of NSsE in Japan and the influence of their social networks, Chapter 4 proposes hypotheses and presents research questions for the present research.

The linguistic variables, six consonants and six vowels, examined in this research are presented in Chapter 5. The chapter begins by reporting which linguistic variables were selected and how they were selected, and continues by providing a brief description of the three relevant varieties of English, namely that of England, the US and NZ. Then, the chapter describes each linguistic variable in connection with these three varieties of English, focussing on the regional and social backgrounds of each variable.

Chapter 6 addresses the methodological approaches used in the present research, focussing on how the data were collected and analysed. The chapter begins by specifying when and where the conversational data were collected and describing the informants. Then, it illustrates how linguistic tokens were extracted from the recorded conversational data and analysed auditorily. It continues with a discussion on how information about the informants' social networks in Japan was collected and analysed, then presents the results of the social network analysis. The social networks that are considered in this study are the networks with NSsE, namely, British, North American and Australasian networks, and networks with non-NSsE. The chapter ends with a description of the methods of statistical analysis performed on the data of the present study and lists the apparatus and software used for recording and analysing the linguistic audio data.

In Chapter 7, the results of the linguistic data analysis are presented focussing on the effects of the speakers' social networks. The presentation of results for each linguistic variable consists of four parts: a brief introduction; a discussion of the change in the choice of variants over real time; the change in relation to social networks; and a discussion of the results. In the section on the changes in the choice of variants over real time, the mean percentage use of variants for the first dataset and that for the second dataset are compared and examined respectively. An SPSS paired-samples *t*-test is used to assess the extent of change and to demonstrate whether there are any significant changes among variants. In the section that considers the change in relation to social networks, the social network effects on the change in the speaker's choice of variants of the linguistic variables are statistically tested according to the speaker's nationality. This

section investigates the extent of change in the use of each variant of the linguistic variables in individual speakers. This is then statistically tested alongside social network index scores. A statistical analysis including Pearson correlations and multiple regressions reveals whether there is a significant correlation between the change in the speaker's use of the particular variant and his/her social network strengths, and which of the social networks is strongly influencing the linguistic change. Lastly, a section to discuss the results will be presented. This section will attempt to explain the outcome in terms of long-term accommodation towards a particular English variety and the social network effects involved.

Chapter 8, discussion of the results of this study, first illustrates the findings for 10 individual informants who have very high or very low index scores for particular social networks. Next, the chapter discusses the results presented in Chapter 7 in relation to the theories introduced in Chapter 3 and attempts to verify the hypotheses and answer the research questions presented in Chapter 4.

Finally, Chapter 9 will conclude the book by reviewing the characteristics of the community under study and the findings of the present research, expressing the theoretical implications of the findings, outlining the limitations of the study and suggesting directions for future research.