Supralocal regional dialect levelling

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1. Introduction

“Regional dialect levelling” or “supralocalisation” are the terms used to label the process by which, as a result of mobility and dialect contact, linguistic variants with a wider socio-spatial currency become more widely adopted at the expense of more locally specific forms. The classic example of this phenomenon is the ascendance, in Newcastle in North-East England, of the glottal stop [ʔ], a non-standard, geographically and socially widespread supralocal variant of (t), at the expense of both the much more localised North-Eastern ‘glottal-reinforced’ variant [ʔt], as well as the standard variant [t] (see, for example, Milroy, Milroy, Hartley and Walshaw 1994). Figure 1 shows the use of the glottal stop and glottally reinforced variants across apparent time from two studies combined into one graph, one of 5 and 10 year old children and the other from younger and older adults.

Figure 1 here.

Important for our discussions here:

- Note the rise across apparent time in the use of the supralocal [ʔ]…;

- …and the fall across apparent time in the use of the local [ʔt];
• Note that the supralocal form is in the ascendancy most obviously among middle class women, and the local form has persisted most among men;

• These studies make it clear that the standard variant [t] plays relatively little role in the ongoing changes to (t) in this community.


2. Deconstructing supralocal regional dialect levelling

2.1 Levelling:

Levelling is a widely used term in dialectology to denote the process by which, over time, a reduction of variants\(^1\) of the same variable occurs. It is used in two distinct contexts. In, for example, studies of verbal morphology, “levelling” is often used to describe analogical developments leading to a reduction of forms within a paradigm. For example, Schilling-Estes

\(^1\) As is standard in the Anglophone variationist tradition, the terms ‘variant’ and ‘dialect’ include standard variants and dialects. I do not regard standard forms as being especially forceful or dominant in the supralocalisation process per se. The British literature (e.g. the classic example above) suggests they tend to play a role commensurate with the relatively low numbers of speakers of standard varieties in most British speech communities.
and Wolfram (1994) examine how, in Ocracoke, North Carolina, speakers are gradually adopting *was* as the form of past BE in affirmative contexts, irrespective of person and number (cf. Standard: *was* and *were*) - “was levelling” (e.g. 1994: 284) - and in negative contexts they are adopting *weren’t* (cf. Standard: *wasn’t* and *weren’t*) – “were/n’t levelling” (e.g. 1994: 285). Here one form is spreading across the person/number paradigm, at the expense of other forms normally used in other parts of the system – this process is sometimes also labelled ‘simplification’ as it reduces paradigmatic redundancy in the grammar (e.g. Mühlhäusler 1980, Trudgill 1986).

More commonly, “levelling” is the term used to show how, in dialect contact situations (such as in the aftermath of colonial migrations, or in recently established New Towns), one variant emerges victorious from the mixing of many different dialect variants of the same variable. For example, Prompapakorn (2005) analysed the consequences of dialect contact in Ban Khlong Sathon (BKS) in north-east Thailand, a town established in the 1960s originally to rehouse people from around the country following the establishment of National Parks to protect vulnerable rainforest. Prompapakorn recorded representatives of the settler generation as well as their descendants to examine the consequences of contact. One variable examined was the use of [r], [l] or [h] in words such as /rian/ ‘study’, variably realised as [rian], [lian] and [hian]. [r] is the standard variant, [l] the variant used in central Thailand, including Bangkok and the area surrounding BKS itself, and [h] the form found most often in the Isan region near the border with Laos, though all areas use [l] to some extent. As expected, she found that [l] was dominant in her data, but that over time the other variants gradually disappeared from the community. [h], for example, represented 31% of all tokens among the settler population that had come from Isan, but only 2% among their grandchildren. [h] and [r] had, then, been levelled away in favour of the majority [l]. As we will see, it is this form of levelling which is the most relevant in the supralocal contexts under discussion here.
One question which has arisen in the context of levelling is the extent to which we can predict the forms that will emerge as victorious in such contact situations. It is very often the case that majority variants in the contact community will level away all others (regardless of whether that majority form is a standard form or not, stigmatised or not). A case has also been put forward suggesting a role for (i) markedness – all other things being equal, unmarked forms survive at the expense of marked forms, (ii) a role for social/regional stereotyping – forms which do not have strong social/regional connotations are likely to be successful, as well as (iii) a (controversial) role for ‘perceptual salience’ (see Trudgill 1986, Kerswill and Williams 2002). In the majority of cases of contact, of course, these issues do not arise because there is one clear majority form in the dialect mix.

Some accounts of levelling incorporate other factors. Williams and Kerswill (1999) propose the following definition: ‘a process whereby differences between regional varieties are reduced, features which make varieties distinctive disappear, and new features emerge and are adopted by speakers over a wide geographical area’ (1999: 13, my emphasis). However, the emergence of new features and geolinguistic spread is usually classed as ‘innovation diffusion’ rather than ‘levelling’, as the outcome of ‘levelling’ is the victory of a pre-existing form, rather than the emergence of a new one (see Trudgill 1986, for example). The inclusion of innovation diffusion in the definition of supralocalisation could be seen as problematic, however, since many of the (especially consonantal) innovations spreading, for example, across Britain at the present time have by no means operated at a regional level, but at a supra-regional, national one (see Kerswill’s (2003) discussion of the diffusion of TH fronting). It is also the case that many diffusing innovations do not have the effect of eradicating a diverse range of different local forms, but simply replace one conservative form with one innovative one. In the case of TH fronting, the arrival of [f v]
represents a relatively simple replacement of the overwhelmingly dominant conservative forms \([\theta \delta]\) (cf Britain 2005: 1016). In those places which had other local variants (e.g. Liverpool (Watson 2007) with plosive variants), the diffusion of \([f \nu]\) has been hindered.

There is a sense, though, in which the rapid diffusion of innovations may well be particularly vigorous and less constrained in communities where processes of levelling have been highly active. It is often argued that in fluid, highly mobile communities of the kind that are predisposed to levelling, social networks into the local community tend to be relatively weaker than in more stable communities (see, for example, Milroy and Milroy 1985, Trudgill 1992). Given James and Lesley Milroy’s (1985: 375) convincing argument that “linguistic change is slow to the extent that the relevant populations are well established and bound by strong ties, whereas it is rapid to the extent that weak ties exist in populations”, it is not surprising that in those very areas where we find mobility, levelling and supralocalisation, new changes will find fewer barriers preventing their diffusion (see also Milroy 2003).

2.2 Regions

Important, I believe, to our understanding of the geographical scale of the linguistic developments under discussion here is a recognition of the fact that regions are not “pre-given bounded spaces” (Allen, Massey and Cochrane 1998: 137) awaiting analysis, but are formed by social practice. They are, then, processes, subject to change as human practices change, always in a state of ‘becoming’ (Pred 1985: 361). Following the lead of Allen et al (1998), then, we need to apply a “strongly relational approach to thinking about space and place” that “understands both space and place as constituted out of spatialized social relations – and narratives about them –
which not only lay down ever-new regional geographies, but also work to reshape social and cultural identities and how they are represented” (1998: 1-2). I’ll argue that dialectological ‘regions’ are formed as individuals interact while they go about their everyday lives, free to move but constrained in that movement by institutions of capital and the state (cf Johnston 1991:51).

This approach forces us to recognise that space is not only physical, but also social and perceptual (Britain, in press a, b). Social space is important because it highlights how past events and manipulations of space can shape future ones. And our actions (and those of capital and the state) have the potential both to trigger change or cement past practices even further. Since the performance of routinised face-to-face interaction entails movement across time and space, so these routines build up spatialised patterns - life-paths - for individuals and communities. Routine behaviours ensure that some “paths” are well-worn, paths around our homes, paths to work, paths to consume, leading over time and on a community scale, to the emergence of “places” and “regions”. Viewing places and regions in this way emphasises that they are shaped by practice, that they are processes rather than objects. We produce places and regions, but they in turn provide the context – enabling as well as constraining - for that production. And of course we live in a socioeconomically differentiated world, and some will have more power and resources to shape space than others (see Johnston 1991: 67-68). Allen et al (1998: 32) argue that “thinking a region in terms of social relations stretched out reveals, not an ‘area’, but a complex and unbounded lattice of articulations with internal relations of power and inequality and punctured by structural exclusions” (1998: 65).

2.3 Supralocal
The view of ‘regions’ as ‘complex and unbounded lattices of articulations’ rather than sharply predefined bounded entities lends preference to the term ‘supralocal’ as part of the descriptor for the sociodialectological processes under discussion here. ‘Supra’ denotes ‘above’, ‘beyond’, ‘transcending’, without having to commit to a particular geographical scale – it denotes simply a higher scale –, and without having to commit to a perspective that forces all variables to be analysed at that same scale. ‘Regional’ forces us to define the scale at a particular level, and has the unhelpful connotations of fixed geographical space that Allen et al (1998) are keen to contest. ‘Supralocal’ conveys the desired message that what is happening is at a scale higher than that of the local, without being more precise. It allows us to examine: processes that are taking place, say, across the still fairly narrow geographical sphere of a large town relative to individual villages within that sphere; changes across a whole county or group of counties or districts relative to one large town in those counties; and significant chunks of a whole nation-state relative to counties within it. Some variables may only show levelling at one of the lower scales, others possibly at the higher scales, but all can then rightly be classed as supralocal levelling, and examined in the context of the eradication of features with a more circumscribed geographical and social distribution.

3. Why is supralocalisation happening?

It is generally agreed that this process is a result of the increased mobility and contact characteristic of everyday life in late modernity, as well as an increase in the scale of people’s routine day-to-day spatialities. The linguistic accommodation that takes place in face-to-face interaction, particularly when it is routinely sustained over long periods, can lead to the stabilisation of accommodated linguistic behaviour (Trudgill 1986, Kerswill 2002). Since one product of convergent linguistic accommodation is levelling, highly local dialect forms are often beginning to be eroded, levelled away in favour of spatially more widely distributed variants.
Since the levelling of local dialect forms is driven by contact and mobility, it has to be recognised that supralocalisation at some level is not new. Ellis (1889), for example, over a century ago, reported that:

> There are so many causes for interference with the natural development of speech, and the population is so shifting, that it would be misleading to suppose that there was any real hereditary dialect or mode of speech….the enormous congeries of persons from different parts of the kingdom and from different countries, and the generality of school education, render dialect nearly impossible (Ellis 1889: 225).

It is probably not controversial, however, to argue that the scale of mobility and contact in the past half century may well be unprecedented\(^2\). Spatial practices have changed, for example in England, as a result of, amongst other reasons:

- **Increasing urbanisation**: Champion (2001: 144) shows that between 1950 and 2030, the proportion of Northern Europe’s population living in urban areas is set to increase from 72.7% to 88.8%, but also that urbanisation levels are beginning to plateau and that these figures hide important changes in the distribution of the urban population across different sizes of settlement, with the very largest cities having shrunk over the past half century (Oswalt and Rieniets 2006). That urbanisation has considerable linguistic consequences has long been recognised: Calvet (1994: 10) argues that “partout les ruraux se précipitent vers les fausses promesses de la cité, vers ses lumières, vers l’espoir d’un travail plus lucrative. Et cette convergence de migrants vers la cité a sa contrepartie linguistique” [Everywhere people are rushing from the countryside to false promises of the city, to its lights, to the hope of a more

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\(^2\) The 19th century saw rapid urbanisation as a result of triggers in industrial development. The massive population rises seen at the same time are only partly due to mobility and migration, but also to falling mortality rates, higher birth rates, and increasing life-expectancy.
lucrative job. And this convergence of migrants to the city has linguistic repercussions – my translation] (see also Bortoni-Ricardo 1985, Kerswill 1994). His claims of continued urbanisation no longer hold true in many parts of northern Europe and north America, however, with demographic trends reversing…

- **Increasing counterurbanisation**: migration out of cities and large towns to places of lower population concentration. Champion (1998) demonstrates that in the UK the greatest ‘beneficiary’ of counterurbanisation has been the “remote rural” and “most remote rural” settlement categories, with London and the other metropolitan cities shedding the largest proportions of their population;

- **Increased migration**: Tolfree examines migration within the area immediately to the south and west of London showing some areas with very high district-internal migration (e.g. North and East Kent) and some with very low levels of such migration (Surrey) (2004: 6). The pattern for cross-district migration is very different (see Figure 2). It shows heavy levels of migration in the areas bordering London, but also a lack of migration (where there are no arrows) at the supra-regional level on the western side of the area covered by the map. There is also a concentration of migration across the south coast, with noticeable breaks between it and the dense network of migrations nearer to London.

Figure 2 here

- **The normalisation of distance commuting**: Tolfree (2004) presents two patterns of commuting behaviour – one showing the strong pull of London for commuters (Figure 3) and one showing other travel-to-work patterns in the area (Figure 4). The
distances over which people commute to London are markedly greater than those to other places within the region, though interdistrict commuting is nevertheless widespread (see also Green, Hogarth and Shackleton 1999;)

Figures 3 and 4 here

- An expansion in uptake of higher levels of education (in places often well away from the local speech community): In a report on widening participation in Higher Education, the UK National Audit Office (2008: 12) show that university attendance rates have more than trebled since 1978;

- Increases in public and private transportation: The Department for Transport shows that: distances travelled by train increased by 55% and by car by 1087% between 1952 and 2007 (2008: 14); the average distance travelled per person per year increased by 45% between 1995 and 2006 (2008: 16) and the size of the road network increased by 32% between 1952 and 2007 (2008: 125).

- A shift from primary and secondary to tertiary sector employment as the backbone of the economy, where “many branches of industry have become increasingly freed from locational ties to natural resources” and “many parts of the economy [have been given] an enormously high degree of potential mobility” (Allen et al 1998: 141-2). Furthermore, there is a well reported tendency for tertiary sector employment to relocate to financially more advantageous locations (Coe and Townsend 1998: 392);

- An increase in mobile and flexible working facilitated by transportation developments, the internet (allowing home-working, rapid connectivity from remoter rural areas,
allowing businesses to relocate to financially advantageous locations, etc), and employment legislation (e.g. flexibility around childcare);

- **Geographical reorientations of consumption behaviours** (shopping in out-of-town malls and hypermarkets, entertainment complexes, etc). Findlay, Stockdale, Findlay and Short (2001) demonstrate that recent migrants to rural areas are much more likely than longer term residents to: commute to work rather than work locally (2001: 6) and do their shopping for milk, other food, petrol and newspapers in a town or city rather than locally (2001: 6).

- **Increasing geographical elasticity of family ties.** While the population of England increased by 9.5% between 1971 and 2006, the proportion of single person households under retirement age rose between 1971 and 2007 by 133% (Self 2008: 2, 17).

There have, then, been a multitude of triggers that have made people mobile. Given these high levels of mobility - 11% of the population of England and Wales moved in the year up to April 2001\(^3\) of which over a third were moves of over 10km – the levelling of distinctive highly localised dialect variants is none too surprising.

Allen et al (1998)’s discussion of the ongoing reformation of the south-east under neoliberal economics comes to some important conclusions about ‘the region’ relevant to our discussion. Firstly, they make it very clear that the ‘region’-forming developments of the past half-century are extremely *unevenly distributed*. So rather than, for example, the south-east showing a rapid

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geo-economic homogenisation, on the contrary, they argue it became the region with the widest gap between rich and poor (1998: 139), as some parts of the area were excluded from the benefits of economic growth. Secondly, they argue that the ‘free market growth dynamics increased the separation of this part of the country from the rest’ (1998: 138), not just in economic terms but also ‘the relative importance of the social relations linking the south-east with the rest of the country was quite considerably diminished. In part this was the result of ongoing processes of globalization and the more general effect of spatial disarticulation within local areas to which this leads ’ (1998: 139). Together these paint a picture of rapid but socially and geographically uneven developments within the region, but an increasing disengagement at the supraregional level. From the point of view of dialectology, therefore, we must not be too hasty in nailing the coffin on intraregional diversity, but, on the other hand, it is important – (witness Watt, Llamas and Docherty’s current work on the English-Scottish border4 and Britain 2001) - to look at the boundaries between regions as places where, if Allen et al (1998) are right, we may well find increasingly heightened diversity. The literature suggests a good deal of validity in their arguments.

Let’s take, first of all, the idea of intra-regional diversity. It is undoubtedly the case that ‘supralocalisation’ is underway. One highly convincing piece of evidence supporting convergence in the south-east of England, for example, is the work of Torgersen and Kerswill (2004) examining the phonological convergence of Ashford in Kent, and Reading in Berkshire. Here they found what were two quite distinct vowel systems which, over time, changed in different ways making them very much more alike. Ashford had to change most to achieve this, lowering the vowels in the DRESS and TRAP lexical sets (Wells 1982), backing STRUT, somewhat raising LOT and fronting FOOT and KIT (Torgersen and Kerswill 2004: 40), while Reading simply lowered STRUT, and, like Ashford, fronted FOOT (2004: 45).

4 ESRC Grant: RES-062-23-0525; Linguistic variation and national identities on the Scottish/English border.
But few, perhaps apart from “Estuary English”-obsessed journalists, would claim that regional dialect levelling has eradicated (or will in the future) all local diversity. The evidence we have reminds us not only that this a process, not a fait accompli, but also that supralocalisation can be spotted even in its relatively early stages. In the classic Newcastle (t) example, the supralocal glottal stop variant did not account for more than 50% of the tokens for any of the social groups considered. Empirical studies of the south-east of England have, on the one hand, found evidence of convergence, but, nevertheless, still found considerable diversity in the extent to which the convergent forms have been adopted in different parts of the region. Przedlacka (2002), for example, shows that while four of the counties surrounding London appear to be dialectally converging, they are doing so to different extents, at different speeds, for different variables. Half of the variables she examined in her recordings of young speakers showed statistically significant differences between different counties, showing that while convergence may be underway, it is by no means complete or evenly distributed. She claimed, consequently, that “the extent of geographical variation alone allows us to conclude that we are dealing with a number of distinct accents, not a single and definable variety” (2002: 97). Furthermore, for some variables, she found no change across real time at all - her teenagers had levels of glottal stop use for (t) that matched speakers in the Survey of English Dialects born a century before. Research in other south-eastern communities has found some supralocal forms being adopted, others not, and others still morphing into localised hybrid interdialect forms (Britain 2005), while an examination of relative pronoun choice contrasting London and the East Anglian Fens showed little evidence of structural similarity (Figure 5).

Figure 5 here
We must also not forget social diversity in supralocalisation. One consistent finding, for example, is the leading role played by women in the adoption of supralocal forms (Milroy et al 1994, Milroy 1999, Watt and Milroy 1999). In discussing this robust finding, Holmes (1997: 199) argues that “women are often the family brokers in interaction with outsiders: it is more often women than men who interact with others in shops and neighbourhood interactions, as well as in communications with schools, and between institutional bureaucracies and the family…women’s social activities and jobs often involve them in interaction with a wider range of social contacts than men’s”. Demographic data from England also suggest that women are much more likely than men to work in (spatially fluid) ‘linguistic marketplace’ tertiary sector employment (Self 2008: 51), such as sales and customer service, and are more likely than men to move home in their late teens and early 20s (Champion 2005: 94, see further Sayers 2009).

Furthermore, not everyone is equally mobile. Social inequality may well hinder mobility and consequently restrict interaction with people outside the immediate neighbourhood. Some people therefore have a greater potential to come into contact with non-locals than others and this undoubtedly has consequences for processes such as supralocalisation. Trudgill, for example, has argued that the south-eastern supralocal dialect is a “lower middle class” variety (2002:180). We must, in sum therefore, recognise “the fact that social processes take place over space and in a geographically-differentiated world affects their operation” (Massey 1985: 16).

Variationist dialect boundary work in England in many ways supports Allen et al’s view of *regional* divergence. My own work (e.g. Britain 2001) on the section of the TRAP-BATH boundary which runs through the Fens, often seen as a marker of the separation of the linguistic ‘north’ (where the vowels of TRAP and BATH are homophonous) from the ‘south’ of England (where they are distinct), showed a *sharpening* of the boundary over apparent time, with the
geographical distance across the transition zone becoming narrower and variability within the zone more polarised in favour of one or other of the variants.

4. Supralocalisation, attitudes and identities.

This discussion concludes with a look at the rather controversial issue of the role of active identity work in bringing about the adoption of supralocal forms. It has often been stated that dialect contact produces ‘neutral’ outcomes as distinctive socially or regionally marked forms are levelled away (e.g. Mæhlum 1996, Kerswill and Williams 2000: 89).

One consequence of this has been that levelled contact varieties have often been viewed by non-linguists as relatively ‘standard’-like (e.g. Gordon 1983, Bernard 1969, Trudgill 1986). So, Ellis (1889) is able to cite both Froude’s view that mid-19th century Australian English was “free from provincialism, not Americanised, of soft tone, good language and correct aspiration” (1889: 237) as well as that of a Mr Little who claimed that the levelled dialect of Fenland Wisbech had “very little dialect proper” (1889:253) and that “the fen country generally is the home of pure speech, by which I mean, of language but little differing from the ordinary literary English” (1889:254). The question that arises about this apparent ‘neutrality’, and supralocalisation more generally, is the extent to which it is a relatively unmotivated product of dialect contact (Trudgill 2004, 2008) or the product of deliberate speaker choices. This neutrality, proposed in the context of supralocalisation, is driven by a desire not to “signal a strong or specific local affiliation” (Kerswill 2002: 198).

Watt’s approach (1998, 2002) adds an extra dimension. In arguing that young Newcastle speakers are using supralocal forms of some variables to ‘sound like Northerners, but modern Northerners’ (1998: 7), we see a claim that there may be some positive association with a more
regional identity (as a Northerner more broadly rather than as someone from Newcastle), as opposed to simply a negative reaction to local forms. Foulkes and Docherty (1999) follow this up by suggesting that speakers have to negotiate a somewhat difficult path between not sounding too local, but also not overly disassociating themselves with the locality thereby showing apparent disloyalty (see also Kerswill 2002).

Llamas (2007) also seeks to shed light on the agency driving supralocal changes in her investigations of change in Middlesbrough. She outlines the historical reorientation of the city – politically, socially, perceptually – from firstly looking to Yorkshire, south of Middlesbrough, then to Tyneside, north, and finally gaining some local political independence. The variables she examines are (p t k) which in this part of England have (at least) three variants each: standard [p t k], glottally reinforced [ʔp ʔt ʔk] often associated with Tyneside, and glottalled [ʔ] which, for (t), have a wide geographical distribution. She finds that:

- (p): [ʔp] is dominant, with higher levels found among older and younger speakers and a dip among the middle-aged showing stereotypical stable variability (2007: 590);
- (t): [ʔ] has gone from being the minority variant among the old to almost categorical among the young (2007: 592);
- Only a minority of tokens show either of the two glottal forms of (k), with [k] dominant (2007: 594).

Overall, speakers combine a variant largely restricted to the North-East, (p): [ʔp], with a non-standard form widespread across the whole country (t): [ʔ], alongside a more standard-like (k): [k]. In addition, she presents an analysis of comments made by her informants about their perceptions of their dialect and their area. These largely reflected the changing orientations,
though with little positive association at any point with Tyneside. The younger speakers, according to Llamas, demonstrate “an increased confidence … in the status of Middlesbrough both in terms of its accent and in terms of it as a “place.” (2007: 601).

How can we reconcile these somewhat different approaches? First of all, we have to recognise that our choice of variables for analysis may lead us to different conclusions, given, as was argued earlier, it is extremely unlikely that all local features would ever be levelled away. Secondly, supralocalisation is socially differentiated: class, gender, economic activity, and many more factors intermingle to ensure that regional homogeneity would be an unexpected outcome. I would want to argue that we should look more readily to spatial practices wherein we will find differing intensities of local, supralocal and regional engagement. The geographical dispersion of our life-paths and the consequent contact with other varieties does not preclude us still spending time moving in and around our neighbourhoods. We haven’t suddenly lost all contact with the local. It is hardly surprising then that we adopt locally specific constellations of regional, supralocal and local forms, rather than adopting forms from one scale alone. Towns and cities are perhaps more likely to retain local dialect forms in this context, because, given the geographies of service provision, they are more ‘self-sufficient’ than many rural communities.

Earlier, it was proposed that ‘places’ and ‘regions’ were created through densities of routinised socially and institutionally constrained mobilities in space. Seeing space as something we interact with as we go about our daily lives enables us to be sensitive to changes in spatial orientations as a result of changes in spatial practice, to see how these practices are variable, socially differentiated, and mediated by institutional forces, and to see how the intersection of our spaces with those of others can give them social meaning. We draw our spatial identities from the routinised practices we engage in in space and the ways those practices connect (or not)
with those of others. In turn, these identities contribute towards the creation of contexts for subsequent spatial behaviour.

More and more, in late modern Western societies, our spatial practices routinely take us further and bring us in contact with those of others who speak differently from us. Consequently, processes of levelling affecting some variables in our speech lead us to adopt forms which have a broader supralocal or regional currency. Our spatial interactions are multiscalar, however, and consequently we are able to combine more supralocal forms with more locally focussed ones too. And all of this is, of course, still passed through a complex sociolinguistic filter of diversity and differentiation.

References:


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Figure 1: The use of glottal stop [ʔ] and glottally reinforced [ʔt] variants of (t) in Newcastle. The data for this graph are drawn from Milroy, Milroy, Hartley and Walshaw (1994) and Docherty, Foulkes, Milroy, Milroy and Walshaw (1997).
Figure 2: Cross-district migration in the South-East of England. Darker arrows signify larger proportions of the population are migrating (Tolfree 2004: 7)
Figure 3: Commuting flows into London: Darker arrows signify larger numbers of people travelling (Tolfree 2004: 26)
Figure 4: Travel to work patterns in the southeast. Darker arrows signify larger numbers of people travelling. (Tolfree 2004: 11)
Figure 5: Distribution of relative markers in subject and object function in (inner) London and the Fens (from Cheshire, Fox and Britain 2007)