



## New Dialect Formation and Contact-induced Reallocation: Three Case Studies From the English Fens

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### ABSTRACT

When mutually **intelligible**, but distinct dialects of the same language come into contact, linguistic accommodation occurs. When this contact is long-term, for example in the emerging speech communities of post-colonial **settings**, such as the English in **Australia and New Zealand** (Trudgill 1986; **Trudgill 2004**; Britain, in press); or as a **result** of, say, New Town development (Omdal 1977; **Kerswill** and Williams 1992, 2000; Dyer 2002; Britain and Simpson, forthcoming); indentured **labour** schemes (**Barz** and Siegel 1988; Siegel 1987, 1997; Moag 1979, Domingue 1981, Mesthrie 1992); or land reclamation (Britain 1991, **1997a, 1997b, 2002a, 2002b**), the accommodation can **become** routinised and permanent, and, through the process of koineisation, a new dialect can emerge when children acquire accommodated language as their L1. These new dialects are characteristically less 'complex', show **evidence** of intermediate 'interdialect' forms, and contain fewer marked or minority linguistic **features** than the dialects which **came** together in the original mix. In this **paper** we wish to **highlight** another possible **outcome** of koineisation, namely **reallocation**. Reallocation occurs where two or more variants in the dialect mix **survive** the **levelling** process but are refunctionalised, evolving new social or linguistic **functions** in the new dialect. We **provide** a range of examples of social and linguistic reallocation, from a number of historical and contemporary speech communities around the world, the dialects of which **have** developed from long-term contact and linguistic accommodation. We then focus on examples of phonological, **morphological** and lexical reallocation in one speech community affected by dialect contact, the Fens of **Eastern** England.

**KEYWORDS:** reallocation, dialect contact, new dialect formation, English dialects, koineisation, sociohistorical **linguistics**, Canadian Raising, Fens, allophonic variation

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In **earlier** work on new-dialect formation (Trudgill 1986), it was indicated that in **certain** sorts of sociolinguistic situation involving contact between **mutually** intelligible dialects – colonial situations, new towns, rapid urbanisation — new dialects may **develop**. Drawing on a number of case studies involving different types of new-dialect formation in different languages from different **parts** of the world, an analysis **was arrived** at in which the processes involved in **new-dialect** formation were described as follows. In a dialect mixture situation, such as in a **newly** settled colony, large numbers of variants from the different dialects involved in the mixture will be found. As time passes and focussing begins to take place, particularly as the colony or new **town** begins to acquire an independent identity, the variants present in the mixture will gradually be reduced in number. This reduction will take place as a **result** of accommodation between speakers in face-to-face interaction, which may **also** lead to the development of new, intermediate or hyperadaptive or other interdialect forms which were not actually present in any of the dialects in the original mixture.

Part of Trudgill (1986) was devoted to an examination of the extent to which this reduction **does** and **does** not take place in a random **manner**. It turns out, in fact, that a number of generalisations can be made about the non-haphazard nature of this reduction process. In determining who accommodates to who — **and** therefore which forms are retained and which lost — demographic factors involving proportions of different dialect speakers present will be vital. Purely linguistic forces will **also** be at work: the reduction of variants that accompanies focussing, in the course of new-dialect formation, **takes** place through the process of **koineization**. This **consists** of **levelling**, which involves the loss of linguistically marked and demographically minority variants; **interdialectformation** involving the **emergence** of forms that are linguistically (e.g. phonetically) intermediate between the ingredient variants; **and simplification**, by means of which even minority forms may be the ones to **survive** if they are linguistically **simpler**, in the technical sense, and through which even forms and distinctions that are present in **all** ingredient dialects may be **lost**.

**Here** we concentrate on the interesting fact that it is not always necessarily the case that the final **outcome** of the reduction process will be a single victorious variant. In some cases, even after koineization, a number of competing variants **left** over from the original mixture may **survive**. Where this happens, **reallocation** (also sometimes **referred** to as **rule-governed contact** (Taeldeman 1989) occurs. What this means is that two or more variants will only **survive** — or so it seems — if they acquire distinct functions in the new dialect. In other words, variants in the mixture which were **originally** from different regional dialects may avoid extinction by acquiring different sociolinguistic or other functional roles in the **outcome** of the mixture. We can **classify** the **examples** of reallocation in the literature to date into two types: **socio-stylistic reallocation** and **structural reallocation**. After having presented examples of these two types of reallocation from a range of communities around the world that **have** witnessed dialect contact, we look in

more detail at three examples from the English Fens, an area of reclaimed marshland in Eastern England which has **seen** two phases of contact —the first from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards following reclamation by Dutch engineers, and the second from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards as the area **came** under the ever-increasing **influence** of varieties from London and the **South-East** of England.

## II. SOCIO-STYLISTIC REALLOCATION

First, originally *regional* variants in the dialect mix may acquire a new role as *stylistic or social status* variants in the new dialect. Trudgill's (1974) **research** on the East Anglian city of Norwich **provides** an interesting example of this. In the expansion of the population of Norwich during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and thus in the development of a new or at least modified urban dialect in the city, **migration** from surrounding rural **areas** played a big **part**. There was not in any case an **enormous** amount of regional variation within the relatively homogeneous area that **formed** the hinterland of Norwich, but in the koineization process most **instances** of regional variation that were brought to the city were levelled out, with only one **variant surviving**. For example, the eastern Norfolk usage of the TRAP-vowel rather than the DRESS-vowel before front voiced fricatives, e.g. never /nævə/, together /təgæðə/, has given way in the urban dialect to southern and western /ɛ/. The typical north Norfolk pronunciation of word-final unstressed -ed as -əɪt/ as in 'wanted', 'naked', 'hundred' disappeared. The Suffolk version of the MOUTH vowel, approximately [ɛu], has disappeared in favour of the more widespread eastern Norfolk form [æu], while the old-fashioned postvocalic clear /l/ of Norfolk has given way to the nationally more widespread Suffolk dark /l/.

However, in one particular case, not just two but three different regional variants **survived** in the urban dialect. Of **all** the phonological variables investigated in Norwich (see Trudgill, 1974), one of the most complicated was that which involved a very small set of lexical items of the type 'room', 'broom', 'groom'. **The** complication lies in the fact that words in this class **have** three different phonologically distinct pronunciations in the Norwich urban dialect. They can be pronounced with /u:/, the same vowel as in 'school' (and, in Norfolk, 'goal' —see Table 1); they can be pronounced with /ʊ/, the same vowel as in 'pull' (and 'home'); and they can be pronounced with /ɜ:/, the same vowel as in 'you'.

**Why** should the urban dialect of Norwich **have** three different pronunciations available for this small set of words? The answer lies in the sociolinguistic history of the city. As we **have** noted, like many other British cities, the population of Norwich increased massively **during** the course of the 19th century from around 35,000 to more than 120,000 (see Green and Young, 1964). Much of the increase was due to in-migration to the city from the surrounding rural **areas** which looked to Norwich as their nearest urban centre. This area would **have** included most if not **all** of the county of Norfolk, in which Norwich is situated, as well as a fairly large area of north-eastern Suffolk. The work of the Survey of English Dialects (Orton and Tilling 1969), as

well as Trudgill's own observations, shows that **all** three of these pronunciations are to be found —as regional variants— in the local dialects of Norfolk and Suffolk. Broadly **speaking**, /u:/ is found in the local Traditional Dialects to the west of Norwich, /ʊ/ in the dialects to the south, and /ɜ:/ in the dialects spoken to the north and east. These **three** pronunciations **have been** refunctionalised in the city dialect with rather clear social status differences (Trudgill 1974, 1986). The **first** has higher status than the second, which in **turn** has higher status than the third (see Table 1 below). We are not able to say exactly why this has happened, but the western variant no doubt has the highest social status **because** it happens to coincide with the RP pronunciation.

Table 1: The reallocation of pronunciations of the ROOM lexical set in Norwich  
**Stage 1: The ROOM lexical set in Norfolk before the exoansion of Norwich.**

| Region of Norfolk      | Pronunciation of the ROOM lexical set in this region |
|------------------------|--|
| West Norfolk           | /u:/   |
| South Norfolk          | /ʊ/  |
| North and East Norfolk | /ɜ:/   |



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Stage 2: The social status of different variants of the ROOM  
lexical set in Norwich subsequent to urbanisation

| The social status of the different variants used in Norwich | Pronunciation of the ROOM lexical set | Other words pronounced using this variant in Norwich English |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| High status —middle class users                             | /u:/                                  | <i>school, goal, nose</i>                                    |
| Middle status   | /ʊ/                                   | <i>pull, put, home, froze</i>                                |
| Low status —working class users                             | /ɜ:/                                  | <i>you, soon, loose</i>                                      |

Examples of socio-stylistic reallocation can **also** be found beyond anglophone speech **communities**. Domingue (1981) reports examples of regional variants of Bhojpuri from the Indian sub-continent —see Table 2 below— being reallocated to perform stylistic functions in the Bhojpuri dialect of the Indian **Ocean** island of Mauritius following indentured labour movements from India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Table 2: Reallocation in Mauritian Bhojpuri (based on Domingue 1981)

|          | Dialects of Bhojpuri from the Indian sub-continent |          |          | Mauritian Bhojpuri |          |
|----------|--|----------|----------|--------------------|----------|
|          | Eastern  | Central  | Western  | Informal           | Formal   |
| 'big'    | /bara:/  | /bara:/  |          | /bara:/            | /bara:/  |
| 'temple' |  | /mandir/ | /mandil/ | /mandil/           | /mandir/ |
| 'road'   |  | /ra:hta/ | /ra:sta/ | /ra:sta/           | /ra:hta/ |

Siegel (1997) provides evidence from Fiji Hindi, formed similarly to Mauritian Bhojpuri by the contact of many Hindi- and Bhojpuri-speaking indentured labourers sent to the South Pacific in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He shows that the third person possessive 'okar', which

originated from certain Bhojpuri dialects, and a more common Hindi form 'uske' co-exist in Fiji Hindi, but that the former is "considered **rustic** and ... is used by 'country bumpkin' characters in dramas or comedy routines" (Siegel 1997:127), whereas the latter has a wider and more prestigious currency. He also finds geographical reallocation, where two variants from different dialects of Hindi **have become** regional dialect markers in Fiji. The example he provides concerns the glide inserted before the perfective suffix **ā** when it is added to a verb stem ending in 3. So, on the main Fijian island of Vitilevu, 'sang' is 'gāyā', but it is 'gāwā' in the northern islands of Vanualevu and Taveuni (Siegel 1997: 127).

Khamkhong (2004), investigating new dialect formation in Ban Khlong Sathon (BKS), a small settlement in northeastern Thailand that was established in the 1970s and attracted migrants from across the country, found that reallocation accounted for the distribution of the Thai negators *bor* and *mai*. *Mai* is the negator used in Central (and Standard) Thai (spoken to the west of BKS) and *bor* the form used in the Isan dialect of Thai spoken to the north and east of BKS, and these forms were preserved by the original migrants. Khamkhong's analysis of the grandchildren of the original migrants, however, found both forms being used by individual children but each was reallocated according to topic, with *bor* being used most and when discussing informal everyday topics, and *mai* reserved for discussions about more formal topics, such as lessons at school, health issues and the local administration.

We conclude this review of socio-stylistic reallocation with a fascinating example from Penny's (2000:54-5) research on the formation of Latin American Spanish. He notes that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Spanish was being taken over to the Americas, some parts of Spain dropped the /h/ in words which had descended from Latin <f-> e.g. *hilar* (to spin) and *humo* (smoke) and other parts of Spain retained it. He points to the fact that today, right across the Spanish-speaking Americas, /h/ retention is a characteristic of uneducated speakers and /h/ deletion is used by middle class speakers.

### III. STRUCTURAL REALLOCATION

Structural reallocation occurs when two or more ingredient variants are allocated in the new koinéized dialect either to different phonological environments (Trudgill 1986: 159, Taeldeman 1989; Britain 1997a, 1997b), to different lexical environments (Taeldeman 1989, Britain 2001), or to different morphosyntactic contexts (Britain 2002b). Taeldeman gives the example of intervocalic /g/ in the borderland of East and West Flanders in Belgium (1989).

|                        |          |                   |
|------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| East Flemish:          | [bræ:ɔ]  | 'brugge' (bridge) |
|                        | [li:ɔn]  | 'liegen' (to lie) |
| West Flemish:          | [brɛrɦo] |                   |
|                        | [li:ɦo]  |                   |
| Intermediary dialects: | [bræɦo]  |                   |
|                        | [li:ɔn]  |                   |

In the east intervocalic /g/ is always deleted, and in the west it is always preserved as a glottal fricative [h]. In the contact dialects between east and west, however, deleted forms are reallocated to positions preceding /əɪ/, and glottal forms to environments preceding /ɔ/.

Another rather clear example of **structural** reallocation is provided by a relatively new colonial dialect of English, that of Australia (Horvath and Horvath 2001). Broadly speaking, at the time when Australia was **first** being settled by English speakers from the British Isles, about 200 years ago, northern English dialects retained, as they do to this day, the original pronunciation of the **BATH lexical set** with /æ/. Dialects in the south of England, on the other hand, had probably already by this time acquired the newer pronunciation with /ɑ:/, although it is recognised that the lengthening process in this lexical set was linguistically unstable. Ellis (1889), for example, demonstrates that whilst, overwhelmingly, the north had short vowels and the south had long, a few tokens with long vowels were found, amongst other places, in Bradford in the north, and a few with short vowels in London in the south. In addition, the prestige of the two variants was, at that time, contested (see, for example, Mugglestone 1995; Bailey 1996; Beal 1999). Both variants were, however, well represented in the dialect mixture that formed the original input for the formation of Australian English. Interestingly, although Australian English has in most other cases favoured south of England variants, as in the distinction between the vowels of **STRUT** and **FOOT**, in the case of the **BATH lexical set**, both the northern and the southern variants **have been** retained, at least in **some parts** of Australia (Horvath and Horvath 2001). They **have been broadly** reallocated, however, to different phonological environments with /æ/ being restricted, for the most **part**, to positions before nasal clusters (e.g. 'dance', 'advance', 'plant') and with /ɑ:/ being used before other phonological contexts. Horvath and Horvath show (2001: 350) that this pattern is regional to **some extent**, with **cities in** South Australia using /ɑ:/ more than elsewhere, and that, in Sydney especially, words in which the vowel is followed by /sp/ (e.g. 'grasp') are more likely to **have** /æ/ than elsewhere, but their results **provide** strong evidence of a rather **sharp** (albeit still somewhat variable) allophonic distinction.

Lodge (1999; 2004) **provides** evidence of reallocation from 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century **Parisian** French. Paris witnessed great numbers of migrants flocking into the city during this period, and Lodge demonstrates how a number of different regional and social variants of French in Paris were, over time, reallocated lexically. He claims (1999: 63; 2004: 187-8) that the (oi) variable had **three** variants: [wa] (associated with the merchant **classes**); [we] (an aristocratic **form**) and [ɛ] (a **Normanism**—Lodge 2004: 132), but that over time each **variant** was reallocated **its own** exclusive **chunk** of the lexicon, with [wa] being used consistently in words such as 'voir' (see) and 'François', [we] in 'couettes' (bunches (of **hair**)) and [ɛ] in **Français** (French) and '**verre**' (glass).

Long **provides** another example, this time from Japanese dialects. He finds (forthcoming),

in the interdialectal area lying between the large cities of Osaka and Kyoto, a clearly reallocated negation system. He discusses the way in which Osaka and Kyoto Japanese form negative and potential negative morphemes to be affixed to final consonant root verb stems. The system is presented in Table 3a below.

**Table 3a: Reallocation in the regular and potential negative morpheme systems in Kyoto and Osaka (Long, forthcoming)**

| Dialect | Negative<br>(i.e. 'do not')                             | Potential negative<br>(i.e. can not)                        |
|---------|---|---|
| Kyoto   | -ahen<br>(e.g. <i>kakahen</i> — <i>I do not write</i> ) | -chen<br>(e.g. <i>kakehen</i> — <i>I cannot write</i> )     |
| Osaka   | -chen<br>(e.g. <i>kakehen</i> — <i>I do not write</i> ) | -arehen<br>(e.g. <i>kakarehen</i> — <i>I cannot write</i> ) |

Notice, importantly, the homonymic clash: the Kyoto potential negative is the same as the Osaka regular negative. In the geographical areas (e.g. Takatsuki) which lay between these two cities a reallocated system has developed —see Table 3b below— combining the regular negative of Kyoto with the potential negative of Osaka, and thereby avoiding the clash that the potential alternative reallocation system would have produced.

**Table 3b: Reallocation in the regular and potential negative morpheme systems in the transition zone between Kyoto and Osaka (Long, forthcoming)**

| Dialect   | Negative<br>(i.e. 'do not')                             | Potential negative<br>(i.e. can not)                        |
|-----------|---|---|
| Takatsuki | -ahen<br>(e.g. <i>kakahen</i> — <i>I do not write</i> ) | -arehen<br>(e.g. <i>kakarehen</i> — <i>I cannot write</i> ) |

Trudgill (1985, 1986) has argued that so-called Canadian Raising may also have arisen out of a process of reallocation. Canadian English —and, crucially for this argument, a number of other colonial varieties of English such as that of St Helena in the South Atlantic — is characterised by very distinct allophones of /ai/ as in PRICE and /au/ as in MOUTH. Before voiced consonants and word-finally these diphthongs have open onsets, and before voiceless consonants central onsets: 'out loud' [aut laud]. The suggestion in Trudgill (1985, 1986) was that this was due to the process of new-dialect formation which led to the development of Canadian English as a new variety. Scottish-type diphthongs, with central onsets in all environments, and south of England-type diphthongs, with open onsets in all environments, were both present in the original dialect mixture which preceded the eventual focussed variety. Both variants survived, but were reallocated a new function as positional allophonic variants. This reallocation was according to the very logical principle that the narrower diphthongs were confined to the pre-voiceless consonant environment where all English vowels have shorter allophones (Laver 1994:446).

### 111.1. The Fens: Historical and linguistic evidence of dialect contact

For most of recorded history the Fens were a more or less uninhabitable and uninhabited part of the UK!. The area between Cambridge and the Wash was for the most part undrained marshland which was subject to very frequent flooding. Up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century the northern coastline lay up to 12 miles further south than at present. Most of the Fenland population at that time lived on a few **islands** of higher ground and in **small** communities on this northern coastline. The southern two-thirds of the Fenland consisted of undrained marshland which was subject to tidal flooding in summer, more continuous flooding in winter and was hence too unstable in most places for permanent **settlement**.

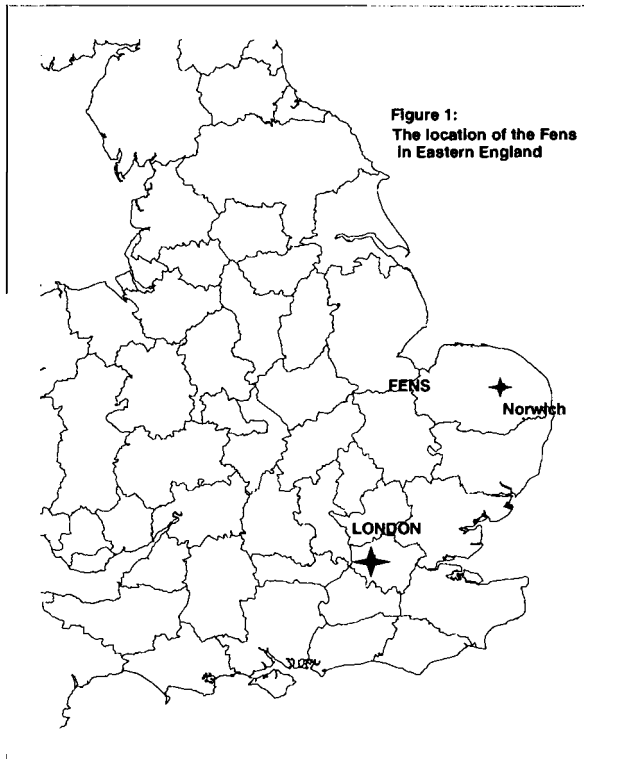


Figure 1: The location of the Fens in Eastern England

The Fens were **seen** as a miserable place, where its inhabitants eeked out a meagre living in the most **difficult** of circumstances. White (1865: 264) claims, for example, that "on these [Fenland] banks, the inhabitants for their better security erect their miserable dwellings, at a great **distance** sometimes from each other and very **remote** from their parish churches to which they rarely resort ... so that they seem to be cut off from the community and are deprived of almost every



advantage of social life", and Darby (1931: 40) quotes from Samuel Pepys who in a diary entry of 18<sup>th</sup> September 1663, describes his travels "over most sad fenns, all the way observing the sad life which the people of the place do live, sometimes rowing from one spot to another and then wading". A strongly negative reaction to the area was engendered. Darby (1931: 61) cites Felix who claimed the Fens were "especially **obscure**, which **oftimes** many men had attempted to inhabit, but no man could **endure** it on account of manifold **horrors** and fears and the loneliness of the wide wilderness—so that no man could **endure** it, but everyone on this account had fled from it".

The physical impenetrability of the Fens to outsiders, the concentration of socio-political spheres of **influence** to the East and West, and the almost demonic **external** perception of the area and its inhabitants led to the Fens becoming **seen** as a **major** boundary between the East and the Midlands. These social, political and psychological **barriers** led to the development of linguistic ones which **have survived** to this day—the Fens are the **site** of one of the most important bundles of isoglosses in English dialectology—see Table 4 below for **some** examples.

Table 4: The Fens as a dialect transition zone: the realizations of a number of variables in Western, Central and Eastern Fenland English

| Lexical set<br>(after Wells 1982)                   | Western Fens | Central Fens | Eastern Fens |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>STRUT</b>  | [ʊ]          | [y]          | [ʌ]          |
| <b>ONE</b>  | [ɒ]          | [y]          | [ʌ]          |
| <b>CASTLE</b>                                       | [a]          | [a:]         | [a:]         |
| <b>MOUTH</b>  | [e:]         | [e:]         | [eu]         |
| <b>NOSE</b>   | [ʌu - eu]    | [ʌu - eu]    | [uu]         |
| <b>Hill</b>   | ∅            | [h]          | [h]          |
| <b>buyING</b>                                       | [ɪn]         | [ɔn - ɪn]    | [ɔn]         |
| <b>TAKE/MAKE</b>                                    | [tæk/mæk]    | [tæɪk/mæɪk]  | [tæɪk/mæɪk]  |
| <b>third person singular present tense marking?</b> | present      | present      | variable     |
| <b>do-conjunctions? (Trudgill 1995)</b>             | absent       | variable     | present      |

Then, from the mid-17th century onwards, Dutch engineers were commissioned to begin drainage work in the Fens. This drainage work continued **until** the early years of the 20th century, and **gradually** this large area of more or less impassable **marshland** was turned into a **highly** fertile **farming** area of arable land. The reclamation naturally led to very considerable in-migration, especially into the more central and hitherto most **inaccessible parts** of the central Fens, and rather rapid demographic growth. Much of the in-migration (see Britain 1997a) was from the area immediately to the west of the central Fens (and to the west of the bundle of isoglosses)—**Lincolnshire** and Peterborough—and from the area immediately to the east of the Fens and the isogloss bundle—**Norfolk**. Between the householder count of 1563 and the **first** national census of 1801, the populations of the central Fenland towns of March and Chatteris rose by around 140%, and that of Wisbech by over 280% (Pugh 1953), growth levels much higher than those in other neighbouring towns and villages. The in-migrants had arrived to

exploit the new fertile land and to inhabit settlements that promised a much more stable and prosperous lifestyle than the Fens were able to offer before. During the 18th and 19th centuries, this process of steady land-reclamation followed by in-migration from neighbouring **areas** must **have** led to considerable dialect contact and dialect mixture.

**Despite** the drainage, the Fens (particularly the central Fens, focussing on the towns of Wisbech, March and Chatteris) today still remain relatively isolated. Socio-economic developments in Britain during the second half of the twentieth century, which had particular momentum **in** the south-east of England (see Allen et al 1998), opened the Fenland up to greater influence from **outside**, and, consequently, to dialect contact. Certain local demographic factors **also** intervened which help shape our understanding of the influences on this speech community. **Because** of the poor quality of housing in many of Britain's urban centres, particularly London, both before and **after** World War II, successive governments embarked on a number of large-scale programmes of urban redevelopment. As part of this, New Towns (e.g. Milton Keynes, Telford, Corby) were built —**some pretty** much from scratch and others, **later**, representing major expansions of already sizeable towns. **These** New Towns were supposed to **provide** complete self-contained new communities for their residents, with carefully integrated industrial, entertainment and infra-structural provision. Peterborough, on the western edge of the Fens, witnessed New Town development as part of the **later** tranche expanding a middle-sized town of the 1960s into a city of over 150,000 people by the end of the century. **Although** dialectologically Peterborough **is** of the northern English type (with [a] **in** the BATH lexical set and [u] **in** the STRUT set —see Britain 1991, 1997b, 2001), many of the migrants to Peterborough were from the (dialectological) south-east. It is **highly** likely that Peterborough is and will continue to act as a significant 'staging post' for the spread of linguistic innovations into the Fens, **given** its excellent **service** infrastructure (unrivalled in the north of East Anglia), its relatively young population, and its local reputation as a modern **forward-looking** and 'connected' city. In the late 1960s and **early** 1970s this New Town development was supplemented, especially in the south-east, by so-called 'overspill' expansion —like New Towns in that large new residential **areas** were built for former residents of urban **areas**, but not as grand in scale or provision. Typical of such developments, the overspill expansion in King's Lynn —**on** the eastern edge of the Fens— consists of a very large housing **estate** on the edge of a medium-sized town. In the case of King's Lynn, most of the overspill population were from London and its immediate hinterland. The linguistic consequences of overspill development are, in the same way as New Towns, likely to be that urban variants come into contact with rural Fenland ones. In addition, therefore, to the more general socio-economic, including linguistic, changes in the south-east that are pulling the Fens out of their somewhat secluded position, New Town and overspill developments nearby are **also** acting as sociolinguistic catalysts of dialect contact.

Today, the dialect of the central Fenland area shows many of the signs of having undergone koineization. There are some intermediate interdialect forms, notably the [ɪ] vowel

in the lexical set of **STRUT** which is phonetically intermediate between [u] and [ʌ]. There is also quite a lot of **evidence** of levelling: Ellis (1889: 253-4), for example, reports an area which has "very little dialect proper", and similar sentiments were expressed by Miller and Skertchley (1878: 115-6). Britain (1997b: 146-147) reports that the typical western Fenland forms of 'make' and 'take' with /e/ have given way to the more widespread, and eastern, forms with /æɪ/. On the other hand, the typical eastern **preservation** of a distinction between the lexical sets of **NOSE** and **KNOWS** has given way to the much more widespread, and western, merger.

Our interest **here**, however, lies in the extent to which the two catalysts of contact —**reclamation** from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards and late 20<sup>th</sup> century migration gave rise to reallocation. We look **here** at three characteristics of Fenland English which **exemplify** reallocation: one phonological, one lexical and one morphological. In order to demonstrate that reallocation has **taken** place as a result of contact, we need to:

- a) demonstrate that the distinct linguistic forms which were reassigned to new functions existed independently in those varieties which came into contact;
- b) attempt to show why the different forms are reallocated in the way they are.

### III.2. Sources of data

The **variationist** analysis was conducted on three datasets of recordings from the Fens. The **first**, and most substantial, was the corpus of recordings of Fenlanders **in** informal conversation collected by Britain (1991). 81 speakers of both sexes, who were living within a 5 mile radius of their birthplace, were selected from **all areas** of the Fens. Two age groups were chosen for the study: 45-65 year olds and 15-30 year olds (who grew up during the period of **overspill**/New Town expansion of Peterborough and King's Lynn). **All** informants **fall** into the broad category of 'working class' —**none** of the informants had received formal education beyond the age of 16, **all** were either current or **retired** agricultural workers, **unskilled/manual** labourers or **low**-status clerks. The numbers of informants according to age and sex are shown **in** Table 5.

Table 5: The number of informants taking part in the Fenland survey according to age and sex.  
(All informants were working class, and were living within 5 miles of their birthplace)

| Age                | Men       | Women     | Total     |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 15 to 30 years old | 19        | 17        | 36        |
| 45 to 65 years old | 22        | 23        | 45        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>41</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>81</b> |

The availability of additional recordings with which data can be compared is **unusual** but an obvious advantage. **The** remaining two corpora consist of recordings which, although not collected for sociolinguistic purposes, were collected in such a way that they fortuitously **provide** valuable data for such research. The King's Lynn Corpus, housed in that town's local **library**, was recorded as part of a Manpower Services **Commission** Local History Project **carried** out in the mid 1980s. Ten speakers were interviewed, 7 men and 3 women. Four of the recordings came

from the "Northenders", once a small poor fishing sub-community in the **north** of the **town**, now almost totally demolished following an urban land clearing and renovation scheme. The other speakers had **been** active in a **number** of other local trades and **services**: the **railways**, chemicals, engineering and market trading. **All** the speakers were over 55 years old and most in their 70s. The Chatteris corpus in the local museum is a collection of 11 individual recordings made over a number of years between 1974 and 1985 by the curator. Ten of these recordings, which are of **varying length**, formality **and** sound quality were of **working** class residents of Chatteris. Most were at least 70 years old. The other recording was of an ice-skater from Outwell, near Wisbech in the central Fens.

### III.3. Case study 1: "Canadian Raising" of the PRICE diphthong

The first detailed case of reallocation that we present shows similarities **with** the Canadian **example** that we presented **earlier** and affects the diphthong **in** the **PRICE** lexical **set**. The dialect of the central Fens is characterised by what **Britain** (1997a) calls "Fenland Raising", parallel to the "Canadian Raising" of both **PRICE** and **MOUTH** discussed above. That **is**, the **PRICE** **vowel** has central onsets [əɪ] before voiceless consonants, but has [aɪ] or [a:] elsewhere.

The **variationist** analysis of the 81 recordings of Fenlanders **highlights** this allophonic distribution in more detail and establishes its socio-geographical distribution. A six-point quantitative index was set up. The **variants** and index scores assigned to each were as follows:

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| [vɪ]      | 5 |
| [vi]      | 4 |
| [əɪ]      | 3 |
| [ʌɪ]      | 2 |
| [ai - vɪ] | 1 |
| [a:- D:]  | 0 |

In order to investigate the allophonic variation of the onset between pre-voiceless environments and other environments, each token was **coded** according to following phonological segment. 18 possible following environments were analysed:

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>voiceless:</b> | /p f θ s k t/        |
| <b>voiced:</b>    | /b m n z v ð dʒ l ɹ/ |
| <b>boundary:</b>  | # /+1ŋ/              |
| <b>schwa</b>      | /ə/                  |

A quantitative index score was calculated for each of the 81 informants of the Fens study. The 81 speakers produced a total of 10835 tokens of /ai/—4783 before voiceless consonants and 6052 in other environments. In the King's **Lynn** corpus there were 1405 tokens and 1170 tokens in the Chatteris recordings.

Table 6: (ai) Index Scores for Speakers Aged 15 to 30 years in 8 Fenland Urban Centres

| Urban centre  | lail preceding voiceless consonants |       | /ai/ preceding voiced consonants, tal and # |       |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------|---|-------|
|               | men                                 | women | men   | women |
| Western Fens: |                                     |       |   |       |
| Peterborough  | 0.50                                | 0.54  | 0.39  | 0.58  |
| Spalding      | 0.51                                | 0.54  | 0.48  | 0.56  |
| Central Fens: |                                     |       |   |       |
| Wisbech       | 3.06                                | 3.01  | 0.97  | 0.26  |
| March         | 1.93                                | 2.88  | 0.96  | 1.02  |
| Chatteris     | 1.68                                | 1.86  | 0.92  | 0.95  |
| Eastern Fens: |                                     |       |   |       |
| King's Lynn   | 3.11                                |       | 1.47  |       |
| Downham Mkt.  | 3.27                                | 3.19  | 2.43  | 0.99  |
| Ely           | 1.64                                | 2.44  | 1.08  | 0.96  |

Table 6: (ai) Index Scores for Speakers Aged 45 to 65 years in 8 Fenland Urban Centres

| Urban centre  | lail preceding voiceless consonants |       | lail preceding voiced consonants, /ə/ and # |       |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------|---|-------|
|               | men                                 | women | men   | women |
| Western Fens: |                                     |       |   |       |
| Peterborough  | 0.55                                | 0.69  | 0.57  | 0.64  |
| Spalding      | 0.71                                | 0.68  | 0.47  | 0.62  |
| Central Fens: |                                     |       |   |       |
| Wisbech       | 3.00                                | 3.02  | 0.94  | 0.51  |
| March         | 2.97                                | 2.99  | 0.90  | 0.63  |
| Chatteris     | 2.94                                | 1.97  | 0.93  | 0.78  |
| Eastern Fens: |                                     |       |   |       |
| King's Lynn   | 3.18                                | 3.05  | 1.97  | 1.63  |
| Downham Mkt.  | 3.08                                | 3.14  | 2.14  | 1.49  |
| Ely           | 3.09                                | 2.00  | 2.32  | 1.14  |

Tables 6 and 7 show the (ai) index scores for both men and women, 15-30 years old and 45-65 years old, in the main urban centres in the Fens and compare realizations of /ai/ before voiceless consonants with /ai/ preceding other environments.

The most striking feature of note in this data are the scores for the central Fenland towns, where there is a clear preference for central onsets (index score 3) in pre-voiceless positions yet open diphthong onsets (index score 1) or open monophthongs (index score 0) before other environments. The pattern is most marked among the older speakers, but also holds for the younger speakers where despite a tendency towards more open onsets in March and especially Chatteris, there is still a clear allophonic distinction. In the western Fens, the data show that all speakers have (ai) index scores of less than 1.0 in all environments, in other words, all speakers have at least some monophthongal forms of /ai/ in all phonological positions. In the eastern

Feniand, onsets are altogether more close than in the **western** or central Fens, with central onsets in pre-voiceless positions, and onsets which are less open than in other parts of the region. It is **also** interesting to note that although monophthongal forms are present among **all** the informants in the west, they are only common among women in the central Fens. These data clearly show, therefore, that a Canadian Raising-type allophonic distribution of the (ai) variable is present in the central Feniand.

Table 8 shows the (ai) index scores for the speakers in the King's Lynn corpus, and the speakers from Chatteris and Outwell in the Chatteris corpus. This data supports the **results** of my own survey: a distinct Canadian **Raising-type** distribution in the central Fenland sites of Chatteris and Outwell, and generally more close onsets in **all** environments in the data from King's Lynn, a town to the east of the Fens.

Table 8: (ai) Index Scores for Speakers from the King's Lynn and Chatteris Corpora

| Corpus      | N' of informants | /ai/ preceding voiceless consonants | /ai/ preceding voiced consonants, /ə/ and # |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| King's Lynn | 10               | 3.36                                | 268   |
| Chatteris   | 10               | 2.99                                | 96  |
| Outwell     | 1                | 300                                 | 102   |

We can now relate this historical and geographical evidence to a **possible** —and in our view the most probably accurate — explanation of Canadian Raising in the Fens. Ellis (1889), the *Survey of English Dialects* (see Britain 1997a) and Britain's own survey show that to the east of the Fens people tend to **have** raised onsets of /ai/ in **all** phonological positions, and people to the west **have** much more advanced open ones (see Table 9 below for **some** evidence from Ellis 1889). East **Anglia**, to the east of the Fens, is well **known** to be sociolinguistically conservative **relative** to many other varieties of **southern British** English whereas the East Midlands to the west are less so. It is quite likely therefore that the raised onsets in the east are due to a lag in the advancement of /ai/ from ME /i:/.

The developmental process which resulted in the **emergence** of reallocated allophony in the Fens can be reconstructed as follows: as the area was reclaimed, not only would mobility **have become** greater for the few native Fenlanders, allowing them more contact with neighbouring communities and the **outside** world, but **also** they were joined in **large** numbers by in-migrants from both east and west who moved on to the area to take advantage of the improved agricultural prospects. The native population would **have** interacted with speakers of less advanced forms of (ai) from the east and more advanced forms from the west. The initial post-reclamation speech community would **have** spoken a **very** mixed dialect containing [ai]-type forms, [əi]-type forms and whatever the native variant was. Importantly, we can point to the fact that no one area appears to **have** dominated in providing migrants to the central Fens. Thus no one input dialect was present in the new speech community in such numbers to enable it to 'swamp' other varieties.

Table 9: Realizations of the PRICE lexical set from locations to the east and west of the Fens in Ellis's (1889) survey of British dialects. Eustace (1969) was used to 'translate' Ellis's phonetic script into IPA.

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*East of the Fens:*

|                          |         |         |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Narborough (Norfolk):    | [ʌi]    | 'I'     |
|                          | [rʌit]  | 'right' |
|                          | [sʌid]  | 'side'  |
|                          | [fʌind] | 'find'  |
| North Walsham (Norfolk): | [əi]    | 'I'     |
|                          | [rəit]  | 'right' |
|                          | [səid]  | 'side'  |
|                          | [fəind] | 'find'  |
| Norwich (Norfolk):       | [əi]    | 'I'     |
|                          | [pəip]  | 'pipe'  |
|                          | [həi]   | 'high'  |

---

*West of Fens:*

|                                |          |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Huntingdon (Cambridgeshire):   | (o i)    | 'I'      |
|                                | [rɒ it]  | 'right'  |
|                                | [sɒ id]  | 'side'   |
|                                | [fɒ ind] | 'find'   |
| Peterborough (Cambridgeshire): | [noit]   | 'night'  |
|                                | [toim]   | 'time'   |
|                                | [laik]   | 'like'   |
| Oakham (Rutland):              | [roit]   | 'right'  |
|                                | [tʃɔild] | 'child'  |
|                                | [foind]  | 'find'   |
| Northamptonshire:              | [main]   | 'mine'   |
|                                | [dai]    | 'die'    |
|                                | [laiklɪ] | 'likely' |
|                                | [ta imz] | 'times'  |

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Very gradually following settlement, over a number of generations, intercommunication among the new residents would **have** become more regular and routine. According to the social network model proposed by J. Milroy and L. Milroy (1985), we might expect more dense and multiplex network **ties** to develop over time in the new community, and, since "a **close-knit** network has an intrinsic capacity to function as a norm-enforcement mechanism" (J. Milroy and L. Milroy 1985: 359), the pressures of speech accommodation processes to reduce linguistic differences in such circumstances would **have** promoted the regularization of the variant aspects of the mixed dialect. Children would be hearing the different /ai/ variants of their peers as **well** as their **parents** and, as **part** of their language acquisition process, would seek to impose regularity on this linguistic **mêlée**. Speakers would begin to focus a new koinéized variety. In the case of /ai/, speakers appear to **have** simplified the mixture of variants by reallocating them according to **principles** of phonological naturalness —[ɔi] before voiced consonants and [ai] before other environments.

As time went on, the structure of /ai/ would **have** become gradually more focused with successive generations more completely reallocating the different variants to different respective environments, as more and more individual speakers acquired the allophonic distinction. Eventually a new koinéized Canadian Raising-like system would **have** crystallized in the Fens. Stages 1 to 3 in Table 10 below represent the development of the Raising acquisition process from the immediate post-reclamation period to the completion of dialect focusing. The patterns showing the allophonic variation that results from reallocation are italicized.

Table 10: The development of the Fenland **Raising** acquisition process from the immediate post-reclamation period to the completion of dialect focusing

|   | k speakers  |      |         |      |
|---|-------------|------|---------|------|
|   | older ----- |      | younger |      |
|   | A           | B    | C       | D    |
| <b>STAGE 1</b> (immediately following reclamation)<br>(approx. 1680-1750) |             |      |         |      |
| /ai/ preceding voiceless consonants                                       | [ɔi]        | [ai] | [ai]    | [ai] |
| /ai/ preceding voiced consonants, # and /ɔ/                               | [ɔi]        | [ai] | [ɔi]    | [ai] |
| <b>STAGE 2</b> (2nd/3rd generation)<br>(approx. 1730-1800)                |             |      |         |      |
| /ai/ preceding voiceless consonants                                       | [ɔi]        | [ai] | [ɔi]    | [ɔi] |
| /ai/ preceding voiced consonants, # and /ɔ/                               | [ɔi]        | [ai] | [ai]    | [ai] |
| <b>STAGE 3</b> (reallocation complete)<br>(approx. 1800 onwards)          |             |      |         |      |
| /ai/ preceding voiceless consonants                                       | [ɔi]        | [ɔi] | [ɔi]    | [ɔi] |
| /ai/ preceding voiced consonants, # and /ɔ/                               | [ai]        | [ai] | [ai]    | [ai] |



Further evidence for a contact origin for allophony in the Fens is the *absence* of allophonic variation in (au). In Canada, Raising occurs in both /ai/ and /au/, and although the former is more commonly found outside Canada, the latter is the more salient (Chambers 1989: 76). Canadian Raising of /au/ does not occur in the Fens at all. For /ai/, the *emergence* of allophony is dependent on the *existence* in the unfocused dialect of allophones with onsets of differing degrees of openness which can be reallocated to different phonological contexts. We saw earlier that onsets were predominantly less open in the east than in the west. In the case of /au/, however, the onsets used by speakers on *all sides* of the Fens are consistently *very* similar, a half-open front [ɛ] (Britain 1991: Chapter 6; 2003). Since there were no different onset realizations in the dialect mix, reallocation simply did not occur.

### III.4. Lexical reallocation of short and long variants of the BATH vowel

Similarly, the contact in the Fens between different variants of the BATH lexical set has resulted in *lexically-determined reallocation* (Britain 2001). As can be *seen* from the examples from Ellis's (1889) survey in Table 11 below, *typically* Northern short vowel forms of BATH-[a] —were (and still are) used in the dialects to the west and north-west of the Fens whilst those dialects to the south and east had and retain typically Southern long vowel forms-[a:].

Table 11: Realizations of the BATH lexical set from locations to the southeast and northwest of the Fens in Ellis's (1889) survey of British dialects. Eustace (1969) was used to 'translate' Ellis's phonetic script into IPA

#### *South and East of the Fens:*

|                    |                   |          |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Stanhoe (Norfolk): | <b>[tʃa :ns]</b>  | 'chance' |
|                    | <b>[gra :s]</b>   | 'grass'  |
|                    | <b>[fa :st]</b>   | 'fast'   |
|                    | <b>[bra :ntʃ]</b> | 'branch' |

Mattishall (Norfolk) &  
Framlingham (Suffolk):

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| <b>[la :f]</b>  | 'laugh' |
| <b>[a :sk]</b>  | 'ask'   |
| <b>[la :st]</b> | 'last'  |

#### *North and West of the Fens:*

Kettering (Northamptonshire) &

Eye (Cambridgeshire):

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| <b>[gra s]</b> | 'grass' |
|----------------|---------|

Cottesmore (Rutland):

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| <b>[tʃa ns]</b> | 'chance' |
| <b>[da ns]</b>  | 'dance'  |

Stukely (Cambridgeshire):

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| <b>[tʃa ns]</b> | 'chance' |
|-----------------|----------|

The result of the contact between these two systems has been that some Fenland speakers have neither a typically southern nor typically northern system, but a mixed one, with short vowels used in some words and long vowels in others. This reallocation, however, appears not only to be purely lexically determined, with no apparent phonological conditioning of the placement of the different forms, but also is different from speaker to speaker. Table 12, for example, shows the variants used by a number of speakers from the Fenland town of Wisbech. Although three of them are consistent users of the long vowel, the other four speakers each have differently configured alternations of long and short. Yet these seven speakers are all brothers and sisters from one family.

Table 12: The BATH lexical sets used by 7 speakers from Wisbech in the central Fens

| Sex of speaker | Age of speaker | Realisations of the BATH lexical set.   |
|----------------|----------------|---|
| Female         | 47             | categorical [a:]                        |
| Female         | 51             | [afta], othenwise [a:]                  |
| Male           | 53             | categorical [a:]                        |
| Female         | 55             | [bras], [glas], [plant], othenwise [a:] |
| Female         | 57             | categorical [a:]                        |
| Male           | 62             | [plant], othenwise [a:]                 |
| Male           | 65             | [kas ], [aftə], [staf], othenwise [a:]  |

Speakers are, nonetheless, consistent in their use of one form or the other in specific words, i.e. each *speaker* does have a system, their use of this variable is not characterised by free and haphazard variation<sup>2</sup>. Such variability suggests that the reallocation has taken place within a significant cross-section of the speech community—predominantly the older population of the Fens—but with different consequences at the level of the individual.

This example of reallocation, therefore, is somewhat unlike the others in the literature since it shows no apparent linguistic motivation for the redistribution patterns, nor community-wide acceptance of which lexical items should be reallocated to which vowel. Perhaps not surprisingly then, the reallocated mixture is also in decline, with fewer and fewer speakers over apparent time having such a mixture. Most younger speakers in the Fens are showing a preference for either the Northern short vowel system, or the Southern long vowel system, and are avoiding the mixed systems more typical of older generations. The consequence of this avoidance is that an isogloss appears to be emerging, with only an extremely narrow—a couple of kilometres—and sparsely populated transition zone between the two core areas (see Britain 2001, 2002a for more details).

### III.5. The reallocation of past tense 'be' morphemes

The final detailed example of reallocation we will discuss here involves morphological reassignment following more recent dialect contact in the Fens, showing evidence of innovative forms typical of the influential dialects of the South-East of England interacting with more traditional Fenland and Midland ones.

Non-standard systems of past tense BE are common in many varieties in the English-speaking world (see, e.g., Britain 2002b for a review). In the Fens, the present system is sensitive only to polarity and not to number or person. Positive forms predominantly are *was* throughout the person and number paradigm, and negative forms, conversely, are *weren't* as in 1-4 below:

1. he was right, weren't he?
2. You weren't ready in time, was you?
3. There was lots of people drinking coffee
4. There weren't a soul there.

Historical evidence (as well as that from Britain's own research on the Fens) shows that this was not always the case, however. Ellis (1889) focuses rather little on morphological variation, but demonstrates, for example, that in parts of the East Midlands (slightly to the west of the Fens) the predominant form in clauses of positive polarity was *were* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From Bedford, for example, he reports 5-7 below (Ellis 1889:207):

5. It were so queer
6. I were a-whining
7. The kettle were a-boiling

In addition, from different parts of East Anglia he reports 8-10:

8. As I were a-saying (Ellis 1889: 273)
9. I were 4 score year last Paschal Tuesday (Ellis 1889: 277)
10. Time the kettle were a-boiling for tea (Ellis 1889: 288)

The Survey of English Dialects (Orton and Tilling 1969) from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century shows not only a very wide range of patterns of past BE systems around the region, including several places showing *were* for standard *was*, but also a dazzling array of variant pronunciations of these forms. Table 13 shows the entries in the Basic Materials for a number of sites around the Fens. Other evidence from this region comes from two studies of nearby counties. Kökeritz (1932) provides close transcriptions of a number of early recordings of Suffolk speech which include tokens of past BE. A number of examples are present of levelling to *were* (e.g. 'he were [we :ɾ] a-whinnocking' (1932:214); 'I were [wɛɾ] a-saying' (1932: 214)). Ojanen investigated past BE among NORMs (Chambers and Trudgill 1998) in the south-east of Cambridgeshire in both affirmative (Ojanen n.d., a) and negative (Ojanen n.d., b) contexts. Her work found that "the forms *was* and *were* show a striking distribution" for affirmative clauses. Six of her 18 speakers (living in four villages) showed a predominant use of *were* in non-standard positions, and the remaining 12 showed levelling to *wus*. The distribution of these different systems was geographical. The *were* levellers were all located to the north of her study area — nearer to the Fens — and showed no non-standard tokens of *wus* at all, with *were* levels in non-standard positions all over 90 percent. The 12 *wus* levellers were in more southern villages.

Geographically, then, *was* levelling is found in the far south of the county, with *were* levelling further north, in the part of the county neighbouring the Fens. Negative forms show a dominance of *weren't* regardless of the levelling orientations of individual speakers in affirmative clauses. Overall, levelling to *weren't* in non-standard contexts was at a level of 86.5 percent [N=52], with only one token of non-standard *wasn't*. (Ojanen n.d., b: 5, 8).

Table 13: Prevalence of BE in the Survey of English Dialects for selected locations in East Anglia/East Midlands (Orton and Tilling 1969: 1187-1189, 1295-1297)

| Location   | 1 <sup>st</sup> singular affirmative | 3 <sup>rd</sup> singular pronoun affirmative | 1 <sup>st</sup> plural affirmative | 3 <sup>rd</sup> plural pronoun affirmative | 1 <sup>st</sup> singular negative | 2 <sup>nd</sup> negative | 3 <sup>rd</sup> singular pronoun negative | 3 <sup>rd</sup> plural pronoun negative |
|------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1 (L12)    | [wəz]                                | [wəz]  | [wəz]                              | [wəz]                                      | [wɔnt]                            | [wɔnt]                   | [wɔnt]                                    | [wɔnt]                                  |
| 2 (L13)    | [wə]                                 | [wəz]  | [wə]                               | [wəz]                                      | [wɔznt]                           | [wɔznt]                  | [wɔznt]                                   | [wɔznt]                                 |
| 3 (L14)    | [wəz]                                | -  | [wəz]                              | [wəz]                                      | [wɔ:nd]                           | [wɔ:nt]                  | [wɔənt]                                   | [wɔənt]                                 |
| 4 (L15)    | [wəz]                                | [wəz]  | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔznt]                           | [wɔnt]                   | [wɔnt]                                    | [wɔnt]                                  |
| 5 (Hu1)    | [wəz]                                | [wə]   | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔ:nt]                           | [wɔ:nt]                  | [wɔnʔ]                                    | [wɔ:nʔ]                                 |
| 6 (Hu2)    | [wə]                                 | [wə]   | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔnt]                            | [wə:nt]                  | [wɔnt]                                    | [wɔnt]                                  |
| 7 (C1)     | [wə]                                 | [wə]   | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔ:nt]                           | [wɔ:nt]                  | [wɔ:nt]                                   | [wɔ:nt]                                 |
| 8 (C2)     | [wə]                                 | [wə]   | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔ:nd]                           | [wɔ:nt]                  | [wɔ:nt]                                   | [wɔ:nt]                                 |
| 9 (Nf7)    | [wəz]                                | [wəz]  | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔənt]                           | [wɔənt]                  | [wɔənt]                                   | [wɔənt]                                 |
| 10 (Sf1)   | [wəz]                                | [wəz]  | [wəz]                              | [wəz]                                      | [wɔznʔ]                           | [wɔznʔ]                  | [wɔnt]                                    | [wə:nt]                                 |
| 11 (Sf4)   | [wə]                                 | [wə]   | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔnd]                            | [wɔ:nt]                  | [wɔnʔ]                                    | [wɔ nʔ]                                 |
| 12 (Ess 1) | [wə]                                 | [wə]   | [wə]                               | [wə]                                       | [wɔ:nt]                           | [wɔ:nt]                  | [wɔ:nt]                                   | [wɔ:nt]                                 |

It is clear then that at an earlier stage in the history of the areas neighbouring the Fenland speech community, *were* for standard *was* was predominant. An analysis of the data archive from Chatteris mentioned earlier also revealed a preference for *were*. Figure 2 shows the results of the analysis of the Archived Chatteris data (speakers born between 1899 and 1911) compared with speakers from the Fens born later ('Old' = born between 1925 and 1945; 'Young' = born between 1960 and 1975). Whilst speakers born after 1925 almost consistently use *was* in positive contexts of standard *was*, the oldest speakers only do so roughly half the time. The oldest speakers are also somewhat behind in the use of *was* in positive contexts of standard *were* (see Britain 2002b: 32). Clearly, the use of *was* across the positive paradigm increased systematically throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The picture for negative forms of BE is quite different. Here, the use of *weren't* irrespective of person and number has a long tradition.

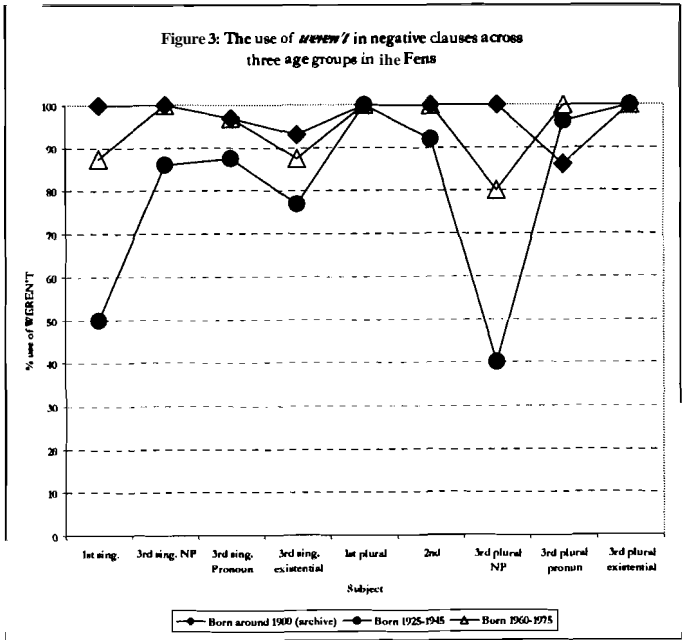
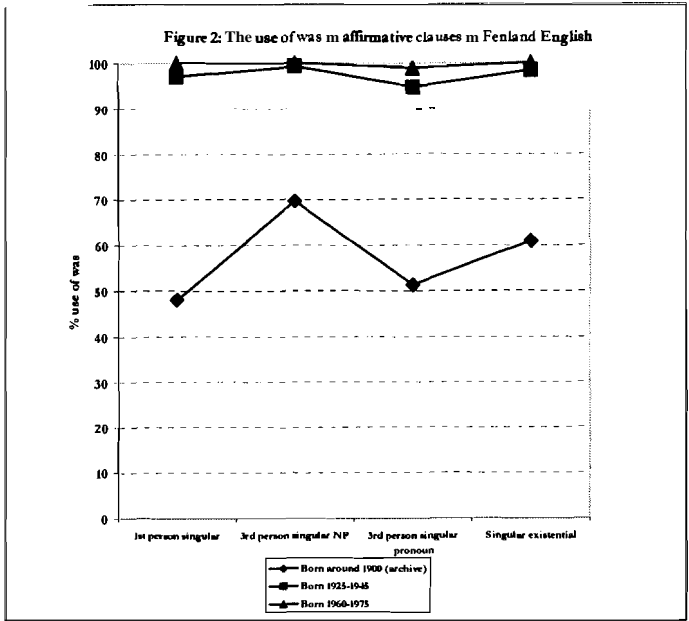


Figure 3 shows the **results** of the analysis of the three age-groups in the Fenland data for negative past BE. **Here** levels of weren't use are very high right across the speech community, and it **is** those speakers born between 1925 and 1945 who show the lowest levels of weren't use. But clearly weren't has **been** a robust and dominant **feature** of the Fenland variety for well over a century.

We **have** a mixed system therefore. A predominant use of *was* across contexts of positive polarity is a recent 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon in the Fens, but the use of weren't is clearly a much more long-standing and characteristically local **feature**. In order to seriously **propose** a reallocation analysis of past BE in the Fens we need to ask why, in this case, weren't is the pivot form in the negative and *was* in affirmative contexts, since most forms of reallocation appear to be motivated either linguistically or **socially**.

Schilling-Estes and Wolfram (1994: 289) discuss why these two allomorphs of past BE are being used to transparently mark polarity rather than person and **number**, as is the case in the formal standard. They point, for example, to the clear analogy with other frequently **occurring** verbs in English, such as 'doldon't', 'will/won't' and 'can/can't', where the positive and negative forms are phonetically quite dissimilar, involving vocalic alternation as well as the insertion of negative marking [nt]. In the Fens, this polarity marking **also** applies to the verbs 'be' (which is realised as [m] in first person contexts, [s/z] in third singular or [a] in all other (conversational) **affirmative** contexts) and auxiliary 'have' ([v] (in 1<sup>st</sup> singular, 2<sup>nd</sup> and plural contexts) or [s/z] (in 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular position) which are *all* realised as [ɪn? - i:n?] in negative clauses, hence, again, with quite distinct positive and negative root forms. Another possible reason for the success of weren't may well be 'faulty' analysis by language acquirers. The SED data make clear that negative past BE was realised in a wide range of forms. It is possible that forms such as [wɔ:nt] or [wɔn?] (commonly found in the SED data, but not in the Fens today) —**which** may **have** derived from phonetic processes reducing [wɔznt]— may well be *analysed* by acquirers and **learners** as weren't and **adjusted** phonetically accordingly. Such imperfect analysis is a recognised cause of such contact phenomena as interdialect (see, for example, Trudgill 1986) and supports a view of weren't as a single suppletive (monomorphemic) lexical item, rather than a separable root and negative **particle** (Zwicky and Pullum 1983; Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1994).

Schilling-Estes and Wolfram (1994) **also** explored possible explanations for the **favouring** of *was* as a pivot form for analogical levelling in positive contexts, highlighting:

- The linguistic 'basicness' (Hock 1986: 214-237) of *was* whereby 3<sup>rd</sup> person is more basic than other persons, singular more basic than plural, etc (Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1994: 276).
- Broader based analogy with other verbs, including the sibilant similarity with regular present tense verbs (ibid., 276). This factor opens up the possibility that the spread of *was* levelling in East Anglia from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards may well **have been**

accelerated by the gradual loss of zero marking on 3<sup>rd</sup> person present tense verbs in parts of East Anglia. Until fairly recently, East Anglian varieties had no 3<sup>rd</sup> person present tense marking (see, for example, Trudgill 1974, 1997; Kingston 2000; Spurling 2004), and hence sibilant similarity with the present tense could not have been a driving force for analogy.

- The fact that 3<sup>rd</sup> person forms are considerably more frequent in conversation than other forms, and are hence more likely to act as pivot forms (Hock 1986: 220; Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1994: 276). In the Fens data discussed here, for example, 2168 out of a total of 3770 examples (57.5%) of past BE in affirmative contexts were 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular tokens.

Given these factors, and given the robust evidence of both *was* and *weren't* as potential ingredient forms at earlier stages of these dialects' evolution, reallocation is clearly the most plausible explanation for the development of a solely polarity-sensitive system over a person/number/polarity-sensitive one. Cheshire, Edwards and Whittle (1989: 209) provide a further example of dialect contact —this time in an urban setting— leading to what amounts to a similar reallocation of past BE. Their *Survey of British Dialect Grammar* showed that a considerable amount of *were* levelling was reported in contexts of standard *was* in the East and West Midlands. 12 out of 14 schools reported '*I were singing*', for example. In addition, the same schools report levelling to *was* in contexts of standard *were*. '*You was singing*' was reported by 10 out of 14 schools. In Birmingham, the mostly highly urbanised city of the Midlands, however, a *was/weren't* variety is reported: there were no reports of non-standard *were* in positive contexts, but 50 percent of all negative contexts were reported as being *weren't* —'*Mary weren't singing*'— whilst levelling to *was* in plural contexts reached 75 percent.

## V. CONCLUSION

The linguistic outcomes of dialect contact are not haphazard, but tend to follow a relatively limited range of possibilities. Levelling and simplification are probably the most common (Trudgill 1986, Kerswill and Williams 1992), and the evolution of interdialect forms another not infrequent possibility (Chambers and Trudgill 1980: Chapter 8; Britain 1997b, 2001). Here we have outlined another potential consequence of contact —reallocation. This reallocation, as exemplified above, can be either socio-stylistic, where ingredient forms to the dialect mix take on different roles as markers of social status, or structural, where distinct variants in the mix are repositioned to serve linguistic functions. Such outcomes appear to be rarer, but should, nonetheless, be fully considered as potential explanations for both sociolinguistic and lexical variability and complex allophony and allomorphy.

**NOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> The location of the Fens in Eastern England can be seen in Figure 1.

<sup>2</sup> With a couple of interesting exceptions, see Britain (2003).

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