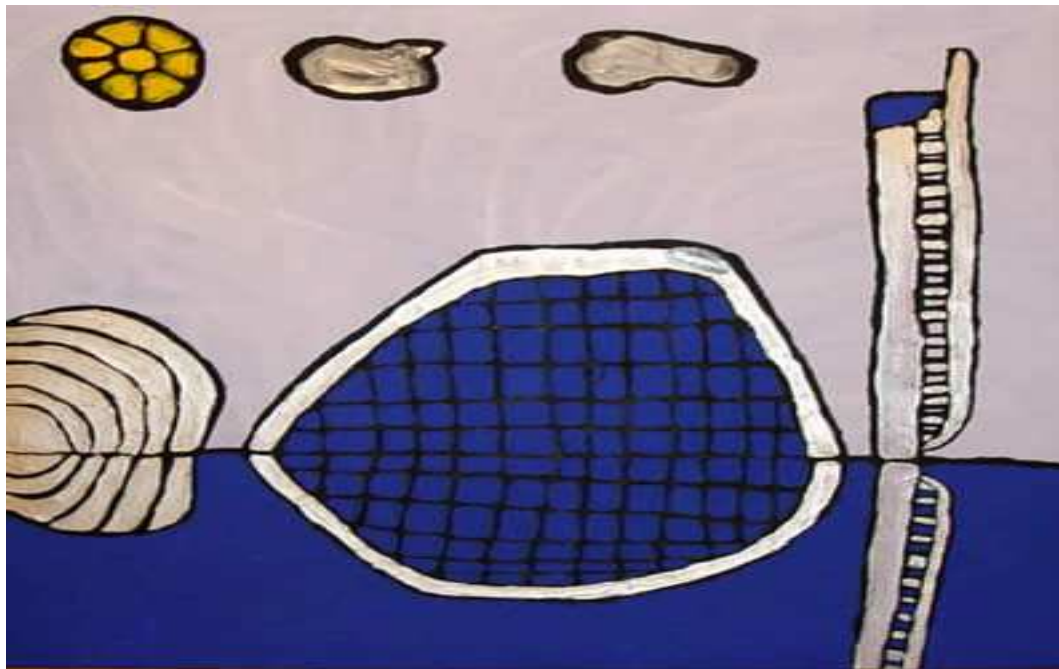


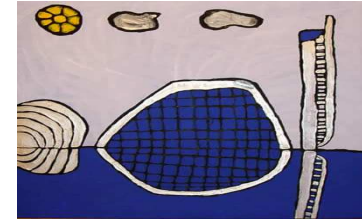
The role of television in the spread of L-vocalization in Glaswegian vernacular

Jane Stuart-Smith, Claire Timmins, Gwilym Pryce+ and Barrie Gunter*
*Depts of English Language, Urban Studies+, University of Glasgow,
Dept of Media and Communications*, University of Leicester*



NEW, 16-17 March 2007, University of Edinburgh

The role of television in the spread of L-vocalization in Glaswegian vernacular

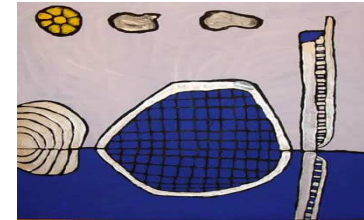


Paper overview

This paper extends the correlational study to include the results for L-vocalization.

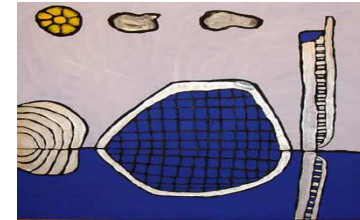
The paper presents the thematic (dialect contact, attitudes, social practices, TV) regressions, and then the overall, multi-theme regressions. L-vocalization, like TH-/DH-fronting, shows robust statistically significant links with a number of factors, including engagement with TV. At this point in the research we emphasise the need for models to work with several theoretical models (dialect contact, social practices, TV) and not just one. We also argue for a positive interpretation of the results with TV in terms of media influence on core features of grammar, but again in terms of appropriation on the part of the speaker-viewer.

The role of television in the spread of L-vocalization in Glaswegian vernacular



- Background
- Glasgow media project
- L-vocalization in Glasgow
 1. Is L-vocalization spreading in Glaswegian?
 2. If so, which social factors are involved?
 3. Are Glaswegian adolescents aware of this feature in 'media-Cockney'?
 4. Can they successfully imitate 'media-Cockney'?
- Concluding remarks

Consonant changes in UK urban accents

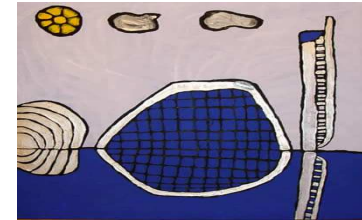


- Certain consonant features appear to be spreading across UK urban accents, e.g. [f] for (th), TH-fronting, in e.g. *think*, or L-vocalization, e.g. *milk*

e.g. Wells (1982), Foulkes and Docherty (1999)

- working-class adolescents
- low social and geographical mobility
- is this to do with the media, e.g. London-based dramas, e.g. *EastEnders*?

Media and language change?



- Within quantitative sociolinguistics, media thought to:
 - raise awareness of linguistic varieties/variation
 - affect attitudes towards linguistic varieties/variation(e.g. Milroy and Milroy 1985)
- If core features of grammar are affected by media
 - voluntary orientation towards media
 - conscious copying from media modelsTrudgill (1986), Carvalho (2004)

The Glasgow media project



Is TV a contributory factor in accent change in adolescents?
(2002-5) ESRC R000239757

Does TV play a role in the appearance of ‘Cockney’
accent features in the speech of Glaswegian
adolescents?

The research team

- The Research Fellow
Claire Timmins
- The Statistician
(Prof) Gwilym Pryce
- The Media expert
(Prof) Barrie Gunter

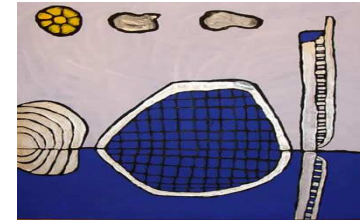
- a group of kids (and adults) from Maryhill in Glasgow



Kippochill Road. As with many other parts of the city, new housing has been built on

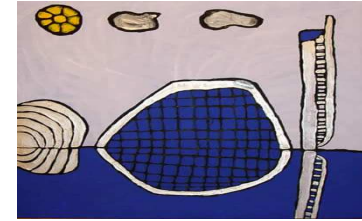


Method



- sample
 - 36 adolescents; 12 adults (working-class)
- data
 - speech: wordlist and spontaneous
 - Questionnaire; informal interviews
- design
 - Experiment; correlational study
- analysis
 - auditory transcription
 - all tokens of wordlist
 - first 30 tokens of spontaneous speech

L-vocalization in Glaswegian



- ‘Scots’ L-vocalization

- historical process: /l/ after Older Scots /a o u/
- small set of lexical alternations, e.g. *all/a’*, *football/fitba’*

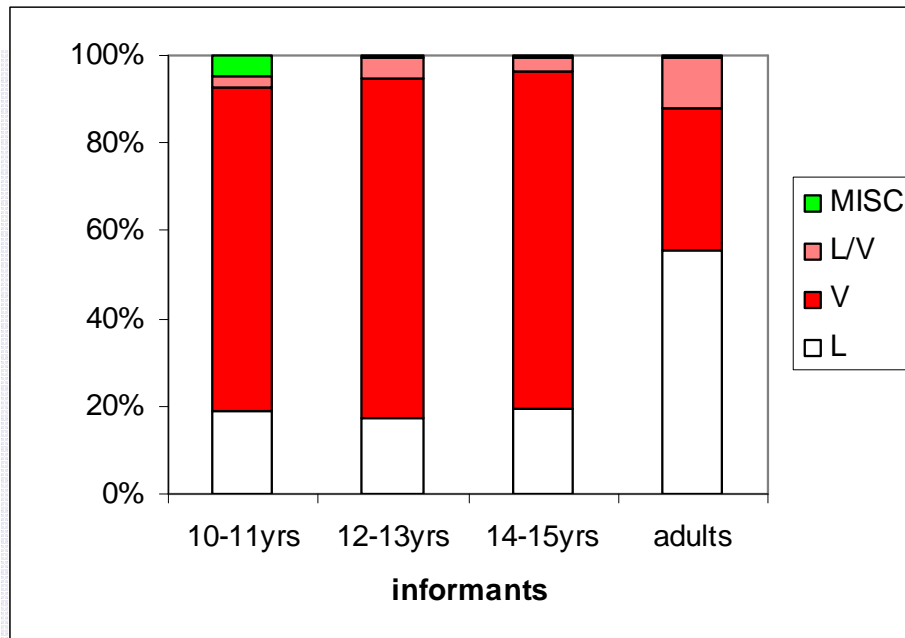
Macafee (1983: 38)

- ‘innovative’ L-vocalization

- productive process: /l/ vocalized to high back (un)rounded vowel
e.g. *people, milk, well*
- noted sporadically in early 1980s (Macafee 1983)
- confirmed in late 1990s, especially in working-class adolescents

Stuart-Smith *et al* (2006), Stuart-Smith *et al* (in press)

1. L-vocalization is spreading in Glaswegian

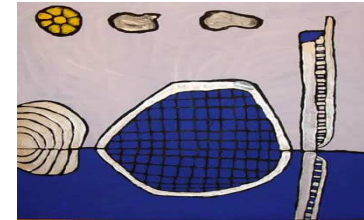


e.g. wordlist data
n = 1165

[V] e.g. *people*

- apparent-time change: adolescents use more [V] than adults
- real-time change: we find more [V] in 2003 than in 1997

2. Extra-linguistic variables

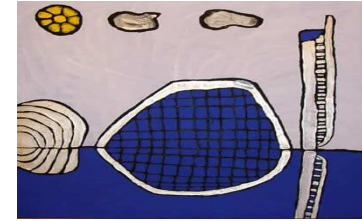


linguistic (word-position); age; gender

thematic 'categories' of variables:

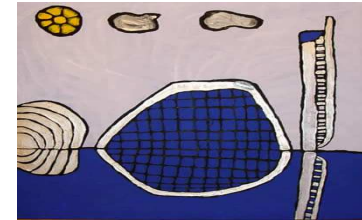
- dialect contact
- attitudes to urban accents
- social practices/identities
- music (incl. radio)
- computers (incl. internet)
- film (incl. video/DVD)
- sport
- TV

2. Statistical analysis



- logistic regression
- 'general-to-specific' model
- create list for each thematic category
- run regressions on each category list (e.g. dialect contact, attitudes, TV, etc.)
- significant variables from each list + theoretically interesting variables
- > overall shortlist
- run regressions on list until only significant variables remain

2a. L-vocalization and dialect contact



Initial baseline criteria: informants born and raised in area
(2.8% born in England, 2001 Census)

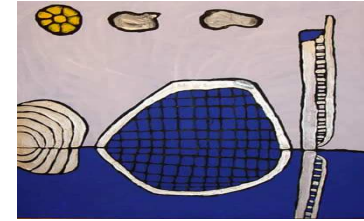
Most have few relatives beyond Glasgow, whom they talk to more than they see. Main contact with friends and family within Glasgow.

L-vocalization is linked positively with

- talking to, and seeing, relatives in North and/or South England

(only 6% variance explained)

2b. L-vocalization and accent attitudes



Attitudinal survey of 7 urban accents, and 'mental' image of 8 urban accents.

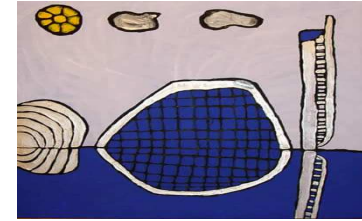
London accents rated lower than other accents.

L-vocalization is linked positively with

- liking Manchester speech sample
- liking London speech sample
- but negatively with liking the Newcastle speech sample
- and the mental image of the Manchester accent

(only 8% variance explained)

2c. L-vocalization and social practices



Our sample captures some existing groups and fragments of others

The majority of the sample identify each other as 'neds', i.e. young urban delinquents

"I'm a wee Glasgow person. I wouldnae say I'm a ned 'cause I don't like go oot and start fights an' aw that." (2m3)

L-vocalization is linked positively with

- deviating from uniform policy at school

(only 6% variance explained)

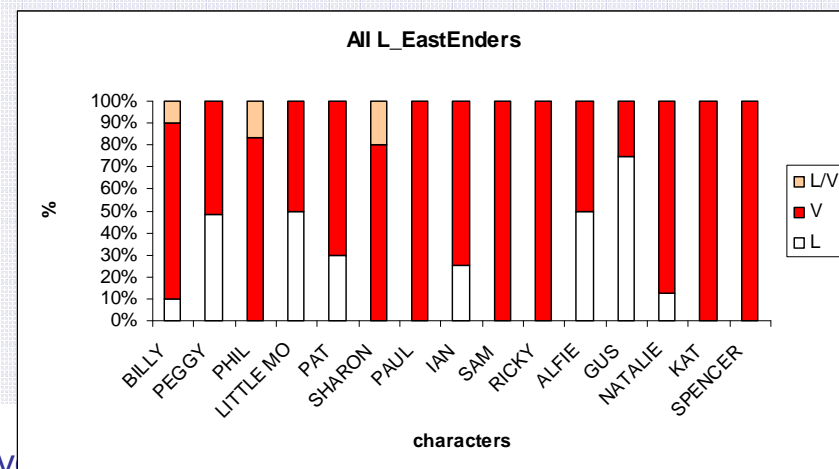
2d. L-vocalization and TV



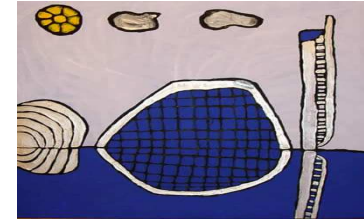
Our informants report access to 3+ TV sets at home, and say that they watch TV every day, with average exposure of around 3 hours/day.

London-based programmes are rated highest for soap (*EastEnders*), comedy (*Only Fools and Horses*), and police drama (*The Bill*).

L-vocalization occurs (variably) in 'media-Cockney'



2d. L-vocalization and TV



L-vocalization is linked positively with

- watching *EastEnders*
- giving *EastEnders* as favourite programme/favourite characters
- liking *EastEnders* (also *Only Fools and Horses*)
- criticizing soap characters
- talking about TV programmes in the conversations

but negatively with

- general exposure to TV; watching US-based dramas
- mentioning London programmes in the conversations

(only around 5% variance explained)

2e. L-vocalization across categories



Variables tested:

linguistic

music

sport

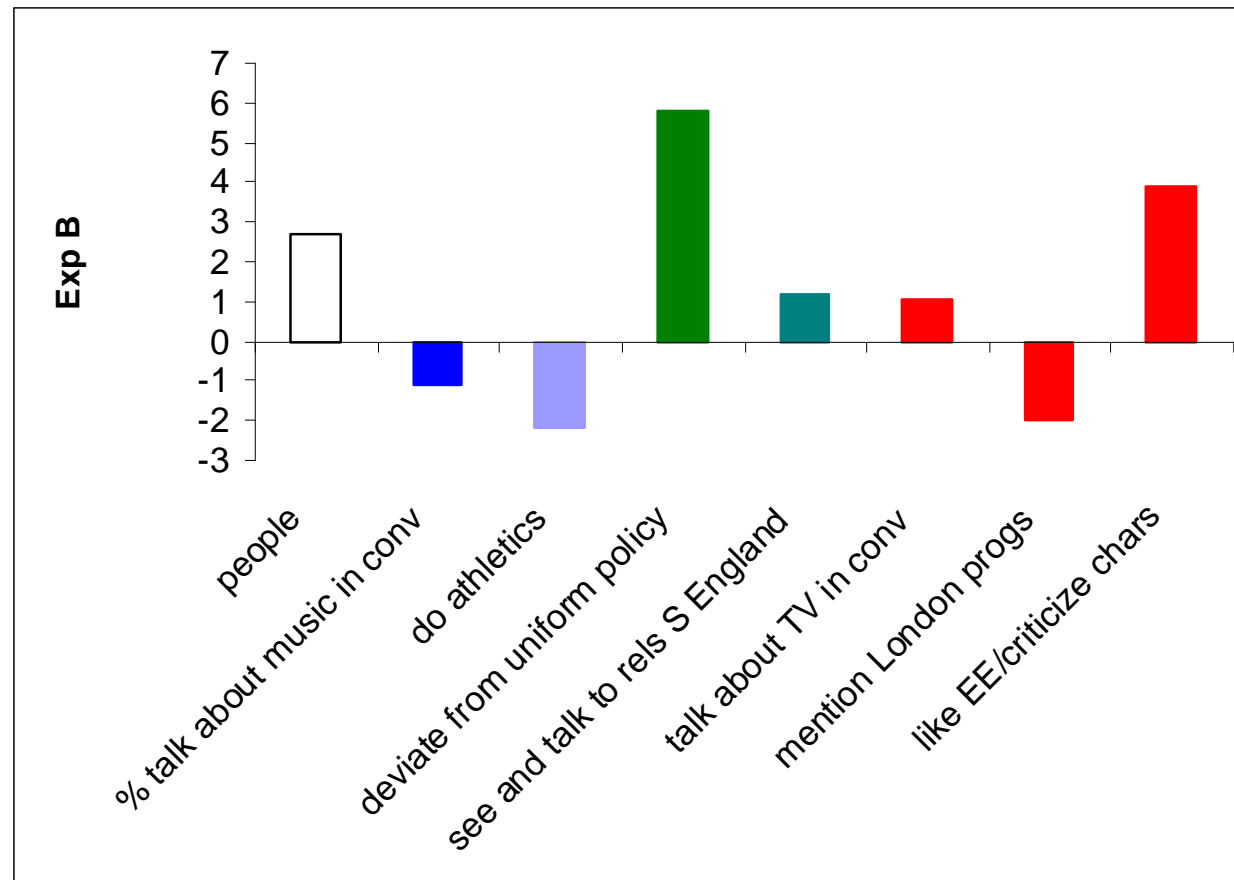
social

attitudes

dialect

contact

TV



Reg 1: $n = 900$, $r^2 = 20.2$; Reg 2: $n = 900$, $r^2 = 18.4$

2e. And in spontaneous speech?



no significant variables:

dialect contact

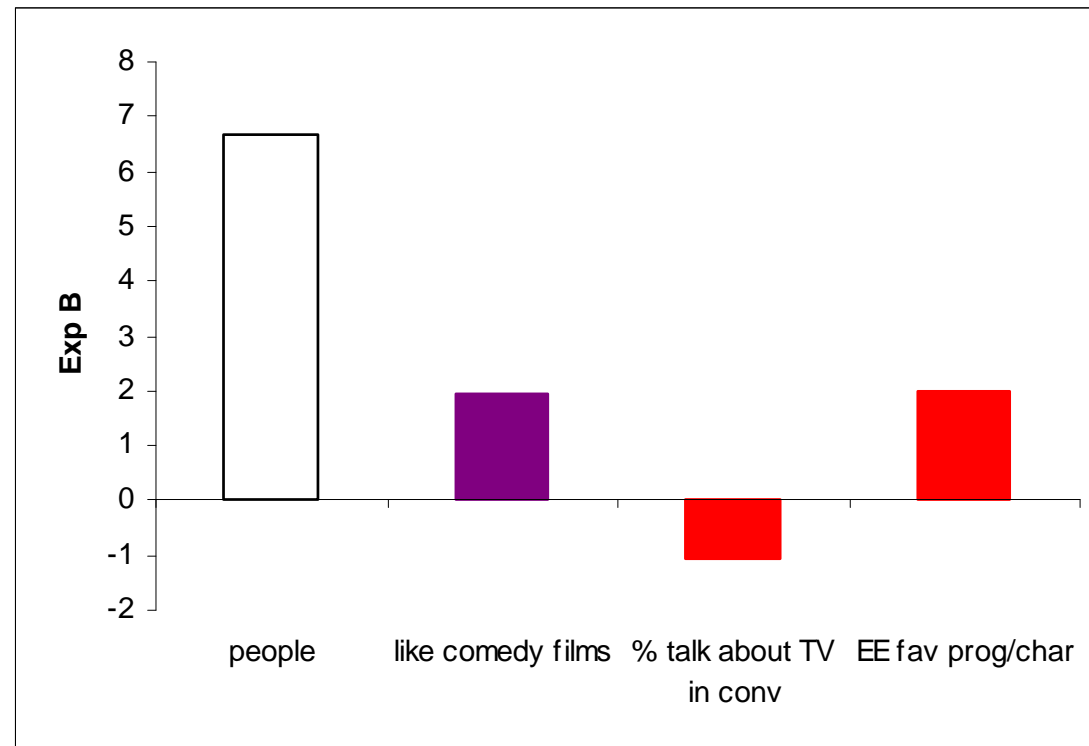
attitudes

social practices:

deviate uniform

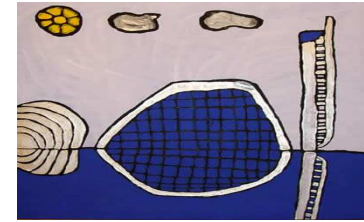
TV:

Watching, liking *EE*,
EE favourite
programme/character



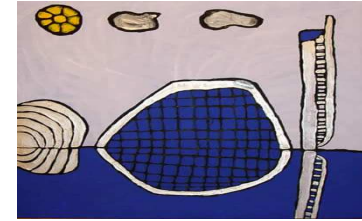
Reg 1: $n = 1015$, $r^2 = 20$; Reg 2: $n = 1015$, $r^2 = 19.1$

2. Summary of results



- Combined analysis shows
 - **several** factors are involved
 - **engagement** with TV (*EastEnders*) is robust alongside dialect contact and social practices
 - attitudinal factors are weaker than other factors
- These results echo those for TH-fronting and DH-fronting in the same speakers

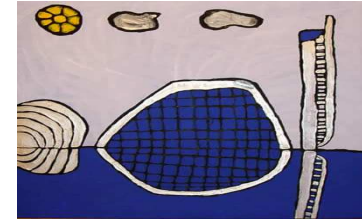
2. Interpreting the correlations with TV



- may stand for another factor unaccounted for within the model, e.g. possibly covert positive attitudes towards Cockney (cf. Kristiansen 2003)
- may refer to those adolescents, who show such features, and who also prefer *EastEnders*/other programmes set in London
- may result – in some way – from their engagement with popular programmes set in London

NB other significant factors in model are unlikely to be assumed to have a direct causal effect on L-vocalization, e.g. deviating from school uniform

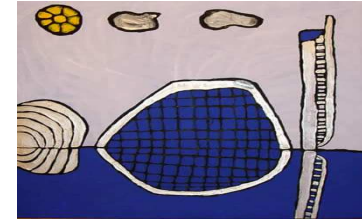
3. Awareness of 'media-Cockney'?



- Explored using informal imitation task (boys only) given during informal interview (cf Preston 1992)
 - informants shown a set of picture cards
 - asked to pronounce words first in their own accent
 - shown a picture of a leading actor from *EastEnders*
 - asked to talk about his accent and theirs
 - asked to say words again, but with the same accent as the actor
 - Fine phonetic analysis of the pairs of words



3. Awareness of media-Cockney



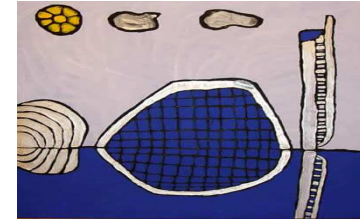
All thought the character's accent was different from theirs

- *'he's from a different place ... just different'*
- *'English' 'he's fae England' 's just ... pure English, no?'*
- *'English snobby' 'says it posher'*

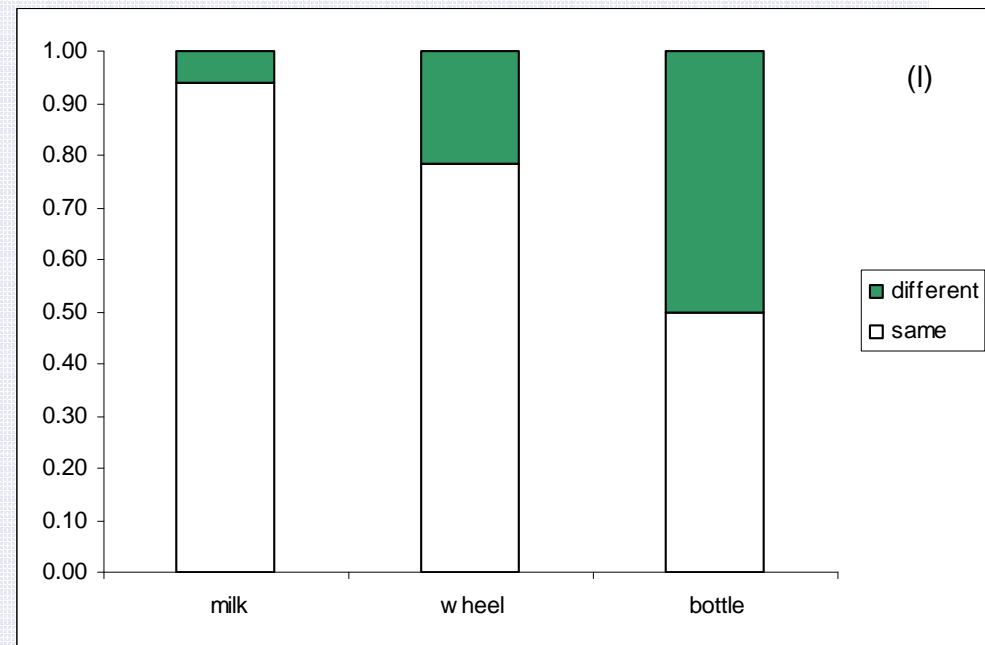
- *'It's like a sore throat accent ... or ... they took his tonsils oot or something'*
- *'Ah 'hink they pronounce more'*
- *'He changes the letters, if it was 'f' he'd use 'v''*

- *'he talks different' 'he talks more tough'*
- *'It's aw right ... I wouldnae like to speak like it but'*

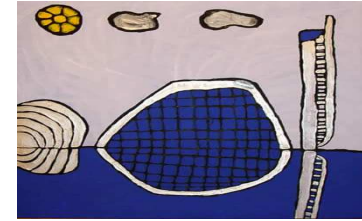
4. Imitation of 'media-Cockney'



- idiosyncratic, subtle, alteration of segments
- more alteration to suprasegmentals
- no apparent systematic alteration of (l)
- no evidence from this, of awareness of L-vocalization as feature of this character's speech



Concluding remarks



- Previous work on these changes in speakers from the same area of Glasgow emphasizes the role of local context, and construction of local identities relevant within the city.
- These results demonstrate the contribution of other, and ‘external’ factors.
- Both the correlations (implicitly), and other evidence (e.g. the experiment, qualitative analysis) highlight the role of individuals.
- Modelling the results for TV (amongst other factors) probably requires us to return to individual speakers in their local environment.
- and with that a shift of perspective, specifically to one which emphasizes watching TV as a socio-culturally embedded activity during which viewers appropriate such elements as fit their view of the world (‘communicative appropriation’), cf. e.g. Holly et al (2001).