Investigating the effects of mobility on language variation and change in Glaswegian

Jane Stuart-Smith and Claire Timmins

Department of English Language, University of Glasgow

Department of Language and Linguistics, Essex University

4 November 2004

Investigating the effects of mobility on language variation and change in Glaswegian

Paper overview

This paper tackles the question of dialect contact as an explanation for variation in consonantal variables in the Glasgow data. This paper presents the same profiling for mobility and contact as given at Sociolinguistics Symposium 15, but includes data from spontaneous speech. The statistical analysis has now moved to multiple regression (backstep).

The profiling results remain, but the linguistic analysis, and in particular the multiple regression analyses have now been superceded. See most recently, our paper, “Investigating the effects of television on change in urban accents: The story so far”, presented at Lancaster, 15 March 2005.

JSS/CT 31/03/05

Investigating the effects of mobility on language variation and change in Glaswegian

- Mobility and contact in language change
- New data from Glasgow - the media project
- Research questions
- Methodology
- Indexing direct and mediated contact
- Results - Contact and communication
- Results - Linguistic variables
- Results – Statistical analysis
- Conclusions

Background

‘mobility causes people to speak and sound more like people from other places’

Chambers (2003: 73)

‘In each case, there will be local outcomes determined by local circumstances’

Britain (2002: 618)

Background

- dialect contact (Trudgill 1986; Trudgill and Britain in press)
- geographical and social mobility leads to dialect contact, and with it processes of linguistic change

  e.g. Milroy (2002):
  - linguistic consequences
  - language attitudes and ideologies
  - cognitive constraints
- impact on social networks

The Glasgow conundrum

- rapid linguistic change in least mobile, more closely-knit individuals (WC adolescents):
  - e.g. TH-fronting, L-vocalization, R-vocalization
- least change in more mobile more weakly tied individuals (MC)
- why?
- dissolution of social networks through destruction of inner city
- active construction of specific local identity by WC adolescents using all possible linguistic resources

linguistic diffusion in geographically less mobile speakers

Trudgill (1986: 53f.)

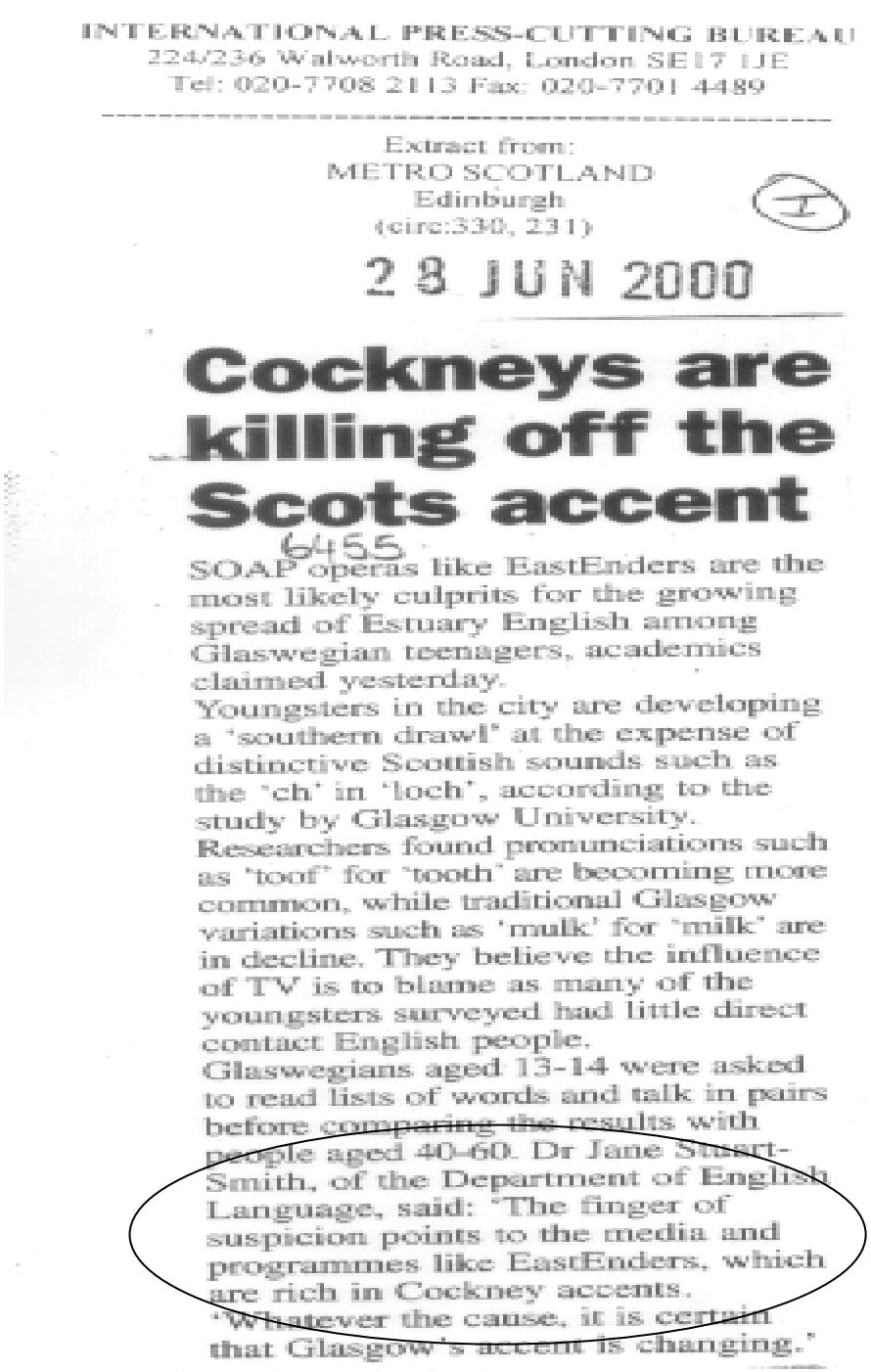
‘fifth columnists’

‘language missionaries’

Kerswill (2002: 681)

‘identity projection model’

OR …



INTERNATIONAL PRESS-CUTTING BUREAU
224/236 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JE
Tel: 020-7708 2113 Fax: 020-7701 4489

Extract from:
METRO SCOTLAND
Edinburgh
(circ:330, 231)

28 JUN 2000

Cockneys are killing off the Scots accent

6455

SOAP operas like EastEnders are the most likely culprits for the growing spread of Estuary English among Glaswegian teenagers, academics claimed yesterday.

Youngsters in the city are developing a 'southern drawl' at the expense of distinctive Scottish sounds such as the 'ch' in 'loch', according to the study by Glasgow University.

Researchers found pronunciations such as 'toof' for 'tooth' are becoming more common, while traditional Glasgow variations such as 'mulk' for 'milk' are in decline. They believe the influence of TV is to blame as many of the youngsters surveyed had little direct contact English people.

Glaswegians aged 13-14 were asked to read lists of words and talk in pairs before comparing the results with people aged 40-60. Dr Jane Stuart-Smith, of the Department of English Language, said: "The finger of suspicion points to the media and programmes like EastEnders, which are rich in Cockney accents.

"Whatever the cause, it is certain that Glasgow's accent is changing."

New data from Glasgow
the media project

Is TV a contributory factor in accent change? (ESRC R000239757)

Same working-class part of city as 1997

5 groups of adolescents; 12 adults

Longitudinal - tracks 2 age groups across 2 years

Range of data –

spontaneous conversations, read speech, questionnaire, informal interviews, language experiment (quiz show), diaries

Research questions

- What patterns of direct (face to face) and mediated contact (speech and text-based) do our (adolescent) speakers show?

- What are their patterns of linguistic variation for a set of selected variables?

- Are there relationships between contact and communication and linguistic variation?

Methodology

- 36 speakers
- 3 age groups
  - Age group 1: 10-11 years
  - Age group 2: 12-13 years
  - Age group 3: 14-15 years
- male and female
- high quality digital (DAT recordings (read; conversational speech)

Linguistic variables

- (th) – realization of /th/ in e.g. *think, tooth*

  [th] [f] [h]
- (dh) – realization of /dh/ in e.g. *that, brother*

  [dh] [v] [r] [0]
- L-vocalization – realization of /l/ as vowel in e.g. *milk, well, middle* (Scots L-vocalization *fitba'*)

  [l] [V] [l/V]
- R-vocalization – realization of postvocalic /r/ as vowel in e.g. *car, card*

  [r] [V] [r/V]

Analysis

- auditory analysis of
  - all instances of variable in wordlists
  - first 35 tokens of variable in conversations
- descriptive indices of contact and communication
- multiple regression analysis on coded questionnaire data

  (logistic regression: backwards stepwise – exploratory: statistical adviser: G.Pryce)

Indexing contact and communication

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

Substantial questionnaire yielded data on:

- Location of family and friends
- Direct (face to face) contact with family and friends
- Mediated (speech/text) contact with family and friends
- ‘active mobility’ in terms of visiting specific cities

Indexing contact and communication

Family and friends – location of family within and beyond Glasgow

Direct contact external – face to face contact with family beyond Glasgow (incl. frequency)

Mediated contact external – indirect contact with family beyond Glasgow (incl. frequency)

City visiting – place and amount

Indexing contact and communication

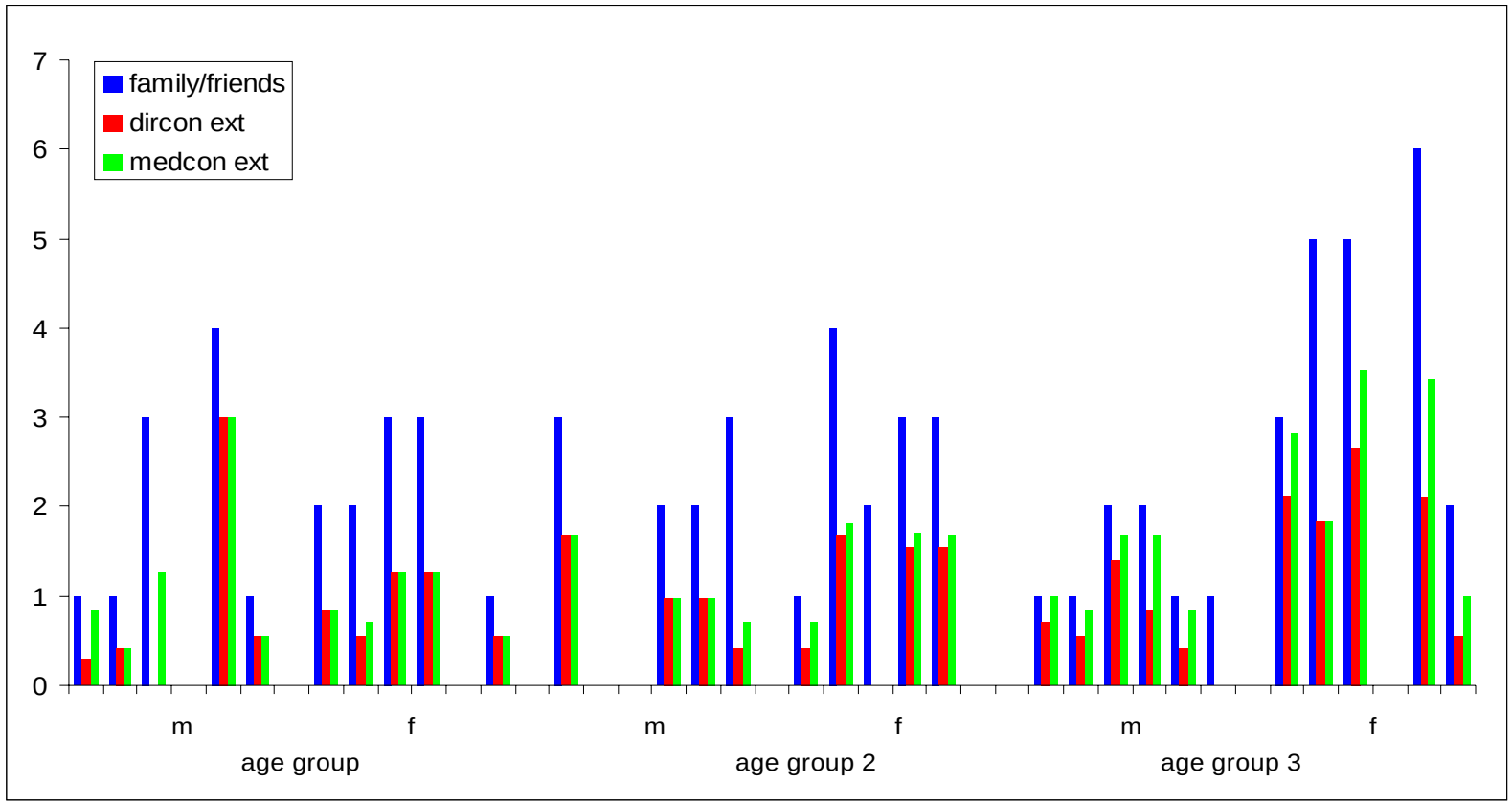
Direct contact internal – face to face contact with friends/bestfriend/boyfriend within Glasgow (incl. frequency

Mediated contact internal – indirect contact with friends/bestfriend/boyfriend within Glasgow (incl. frequency)

Mediated text contact external – email, chat, text with those outside Glasgow

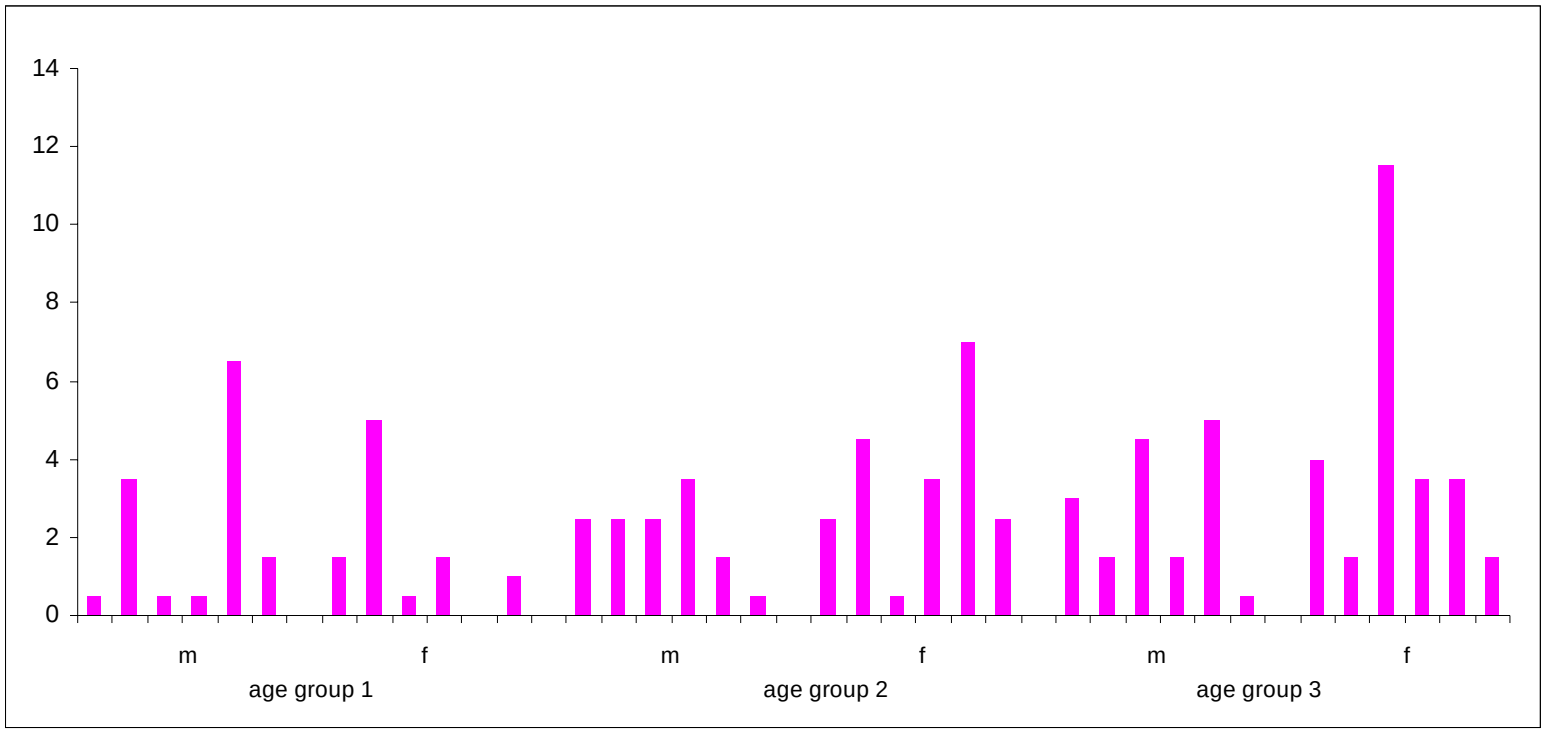
Mediated text contact internal – email, chat, text with those within Glasgow

Contact/communication – beyond Glasgow



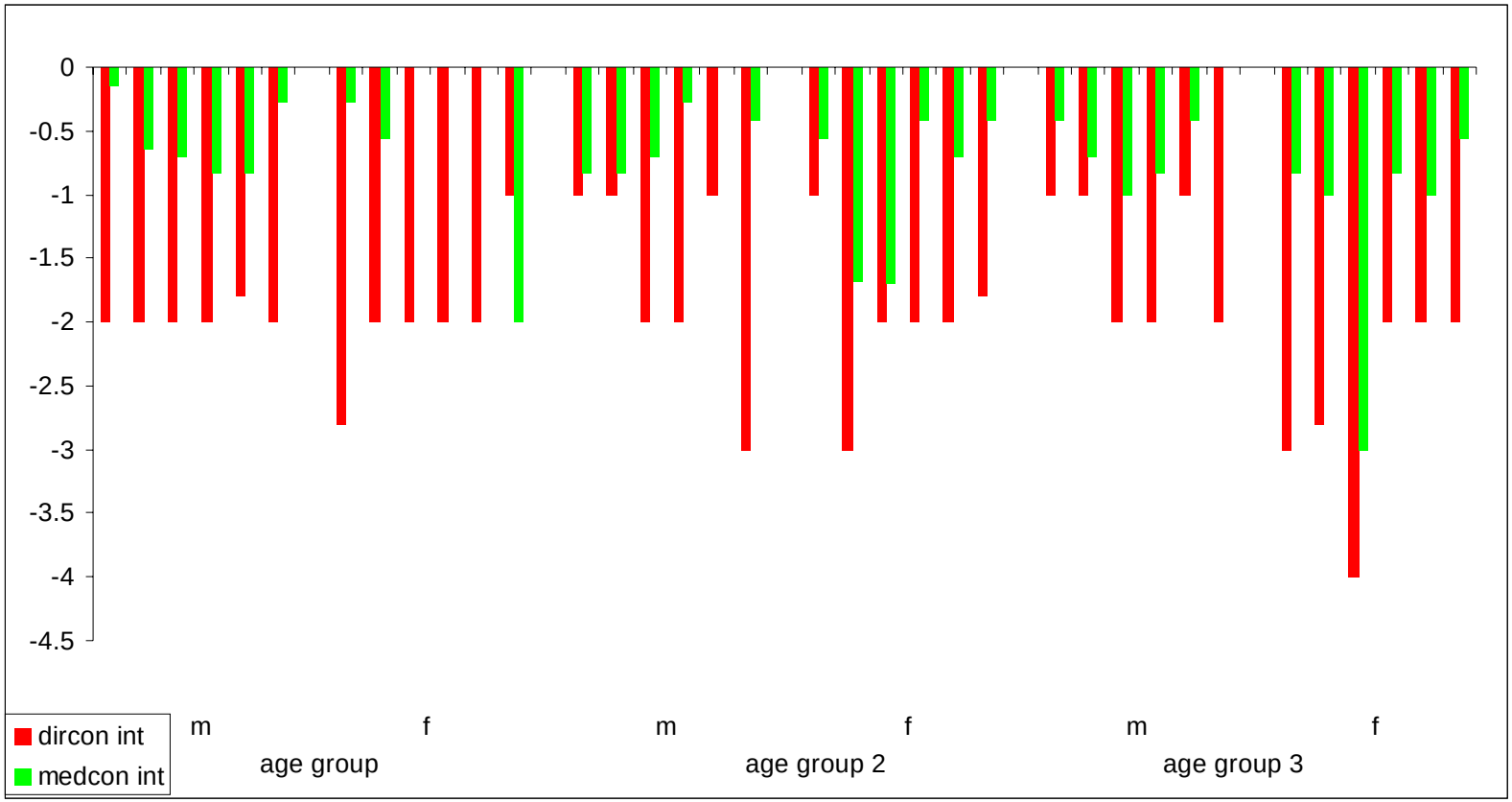
Most have a few relatives who have moved away from Glasgow.
More mediated contact than face to face contact.
Older informants have more mediated contact than younger ones.

City visiting (active mobility)



Most have visited at least one city (Edinburgh).
No differences according to age and gender.

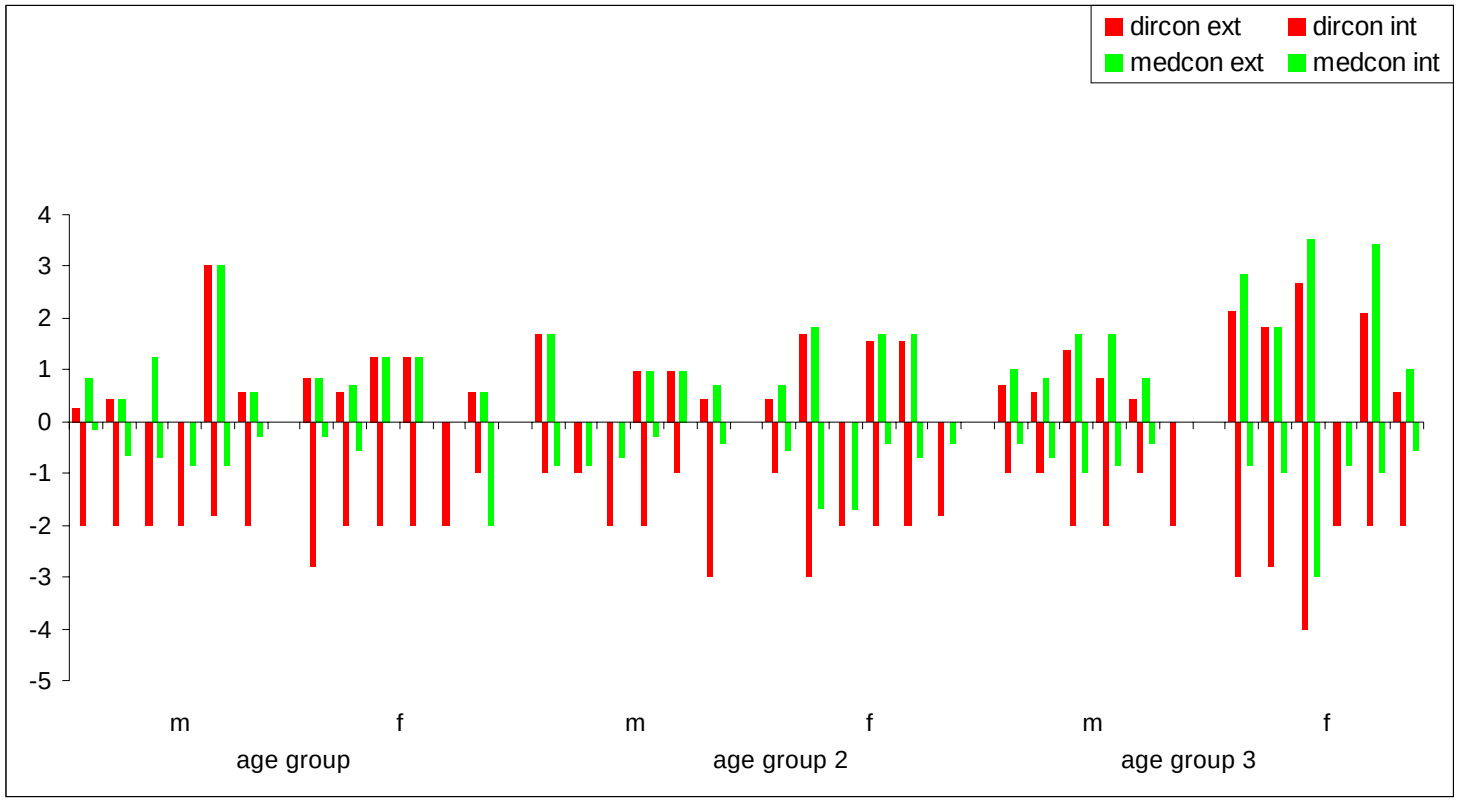
Contact/communication – within Glasgow



Most have friends in same area.

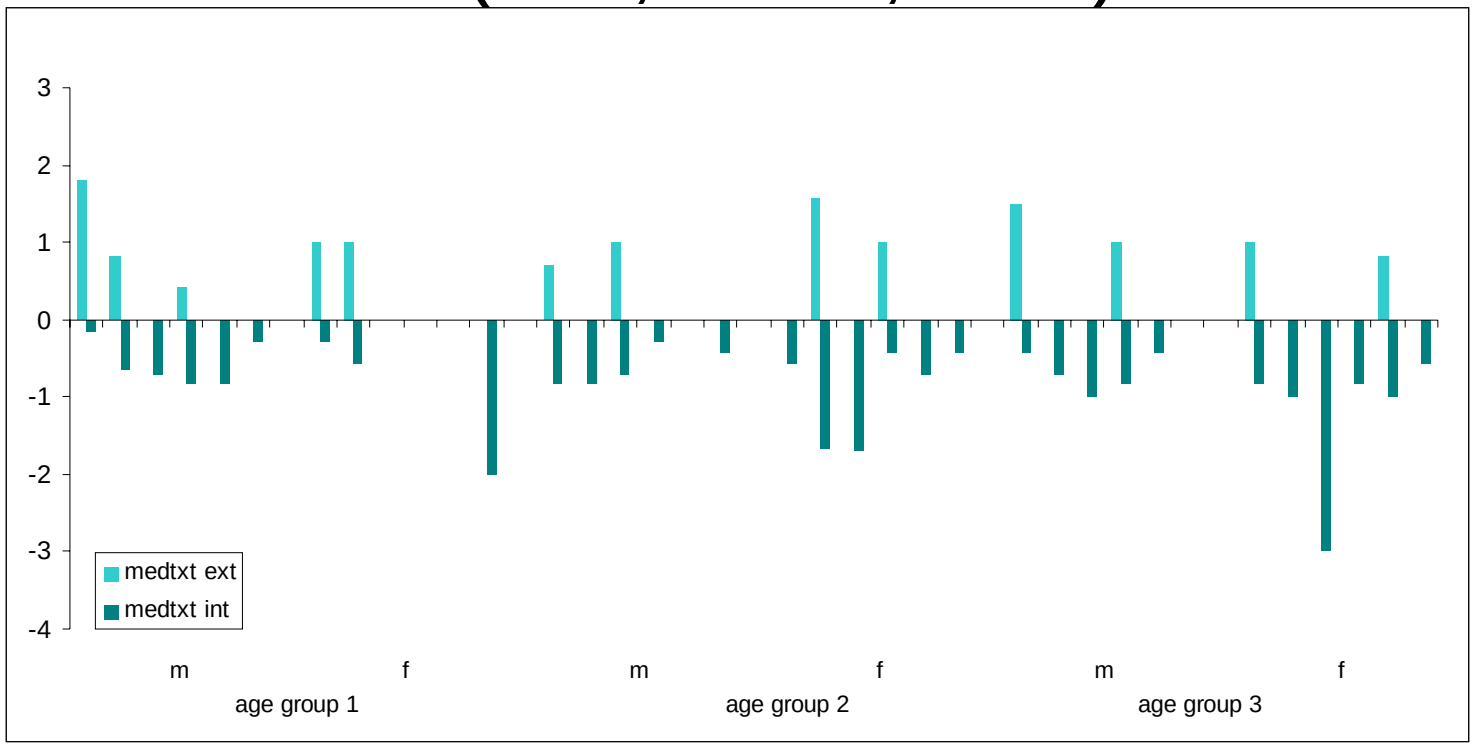
More face to face interaction than mediated interaction.

Contact/communication - general



Those who have more contact/communication outside the city also have more within the city (and this is also linked with having relatives outside the city).

Text-based communication (text, email, chat)



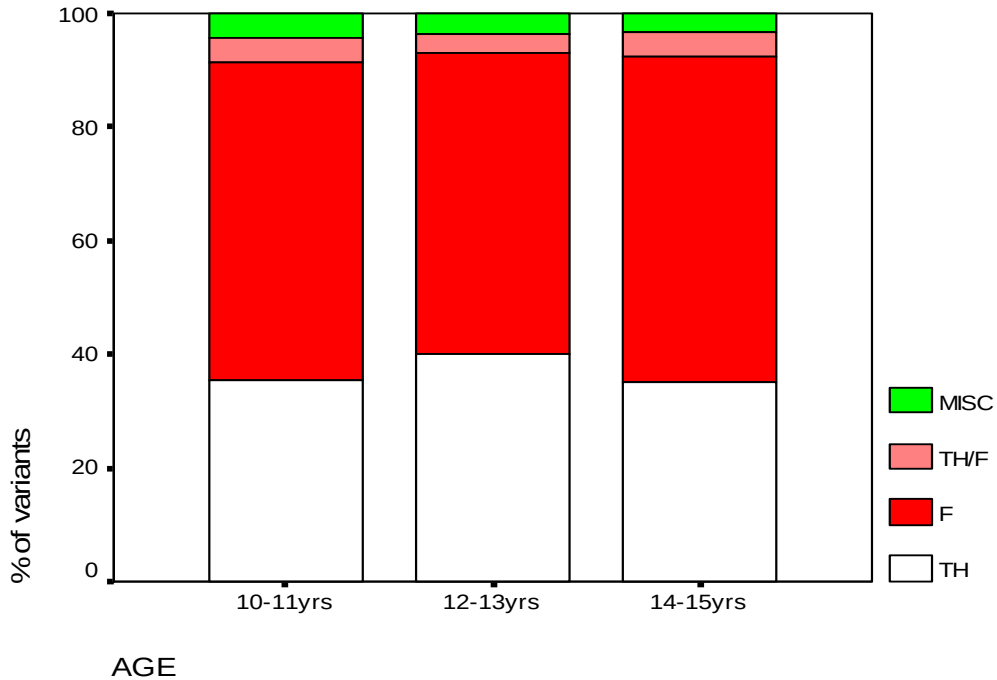
- Not all participate in text-based communication.
- Link between communicating outside the city and within the city.

Contact/communication profile

- Majority have a few relatives beyond Glasgow, whom they talk to more than they see (when the relatives visit them).
- Most show a low degree of active mobility outside the city.
- Majority have face to face contact with friends (and family) within Glasgow.
- Those who communicate do so beyond and within the city.
- Those who use text-based communication do so beyond and within the city.

(th) – read speech

N = 756



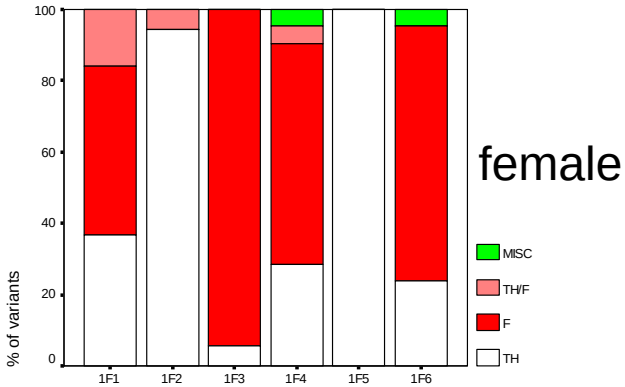
No differences according to age or gender.

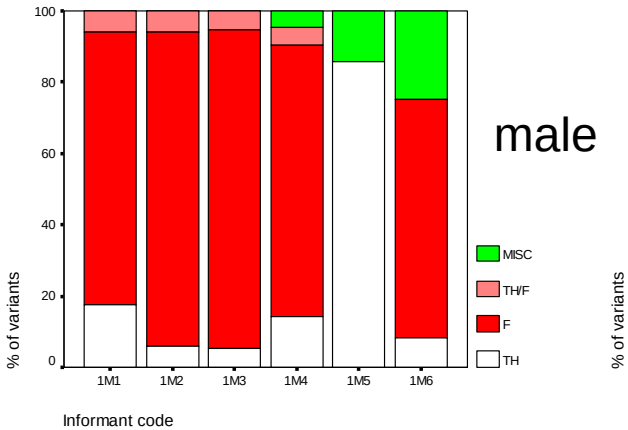
More [f] than in 1997.

More word-finally/internally than word-initially.

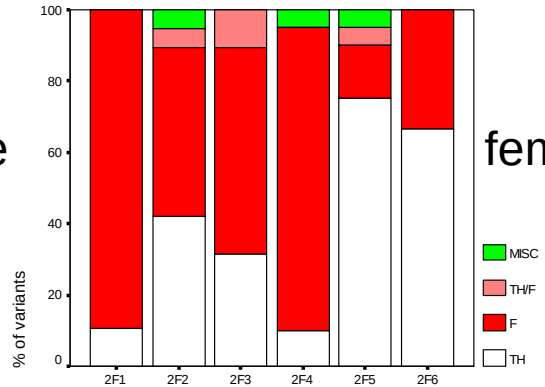
(th) – individual variation – read speech

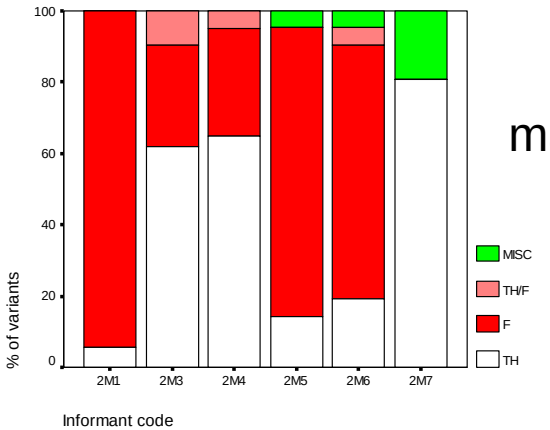
Group 1



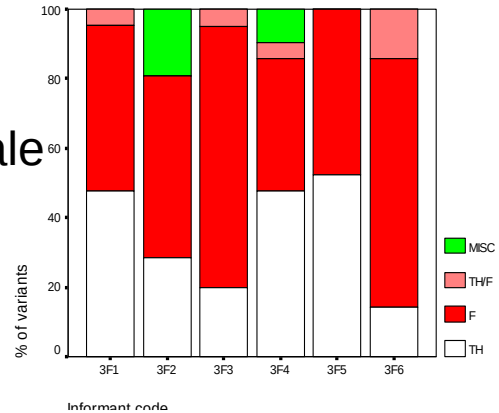


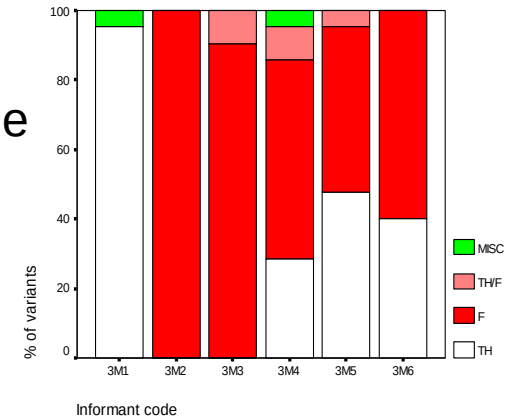
Group 2





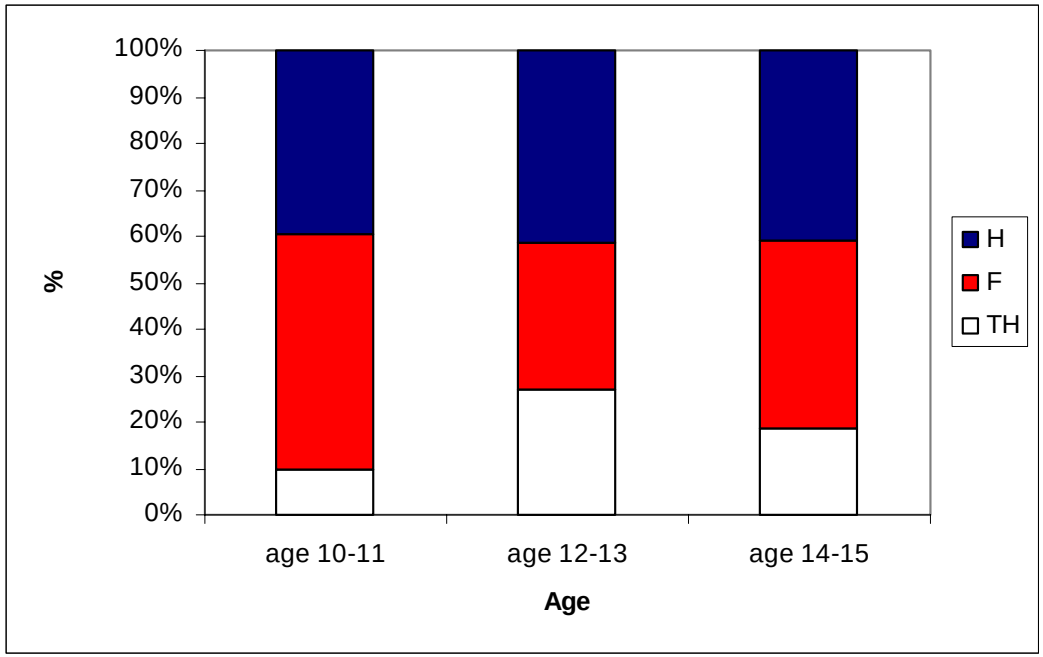
Group 3





(th) – conversations

N = 1031



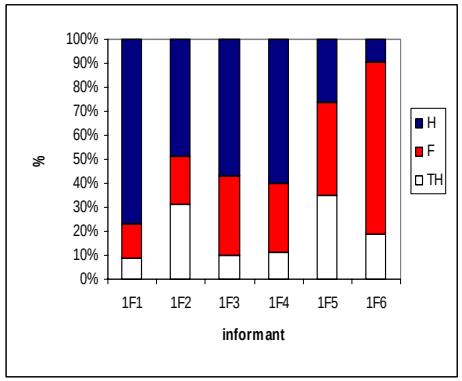
Younger speakers use more [f]; no gender differences.

More [f] than in 1997.

More word-finally/initially than word-internally.

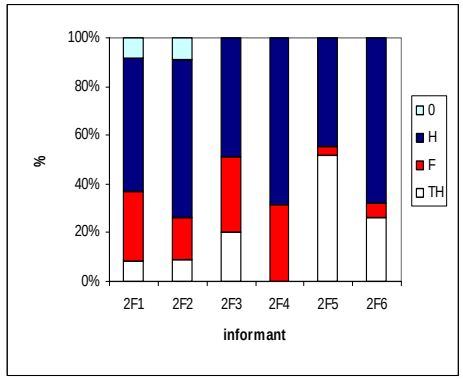
(th) – individual variation – conversations

Group 1



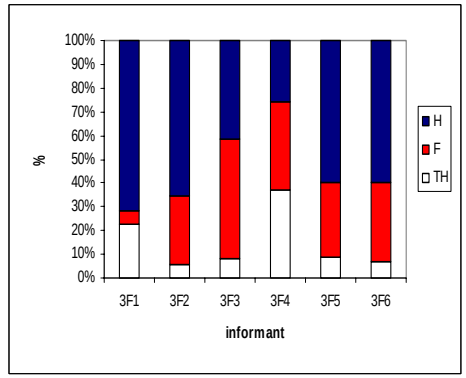
female

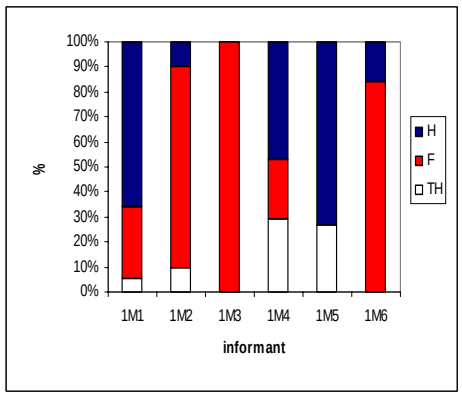
Group 2



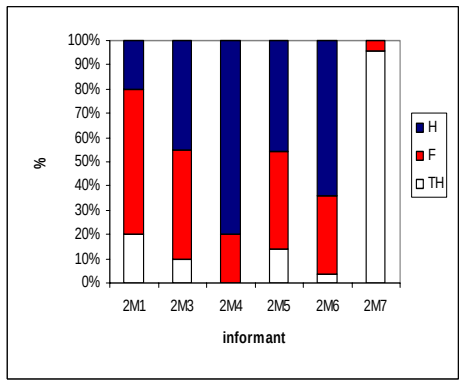
female

Group 3

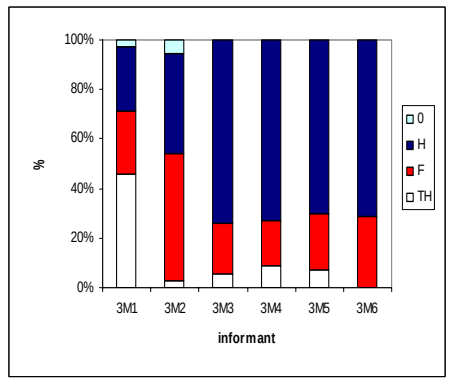




male

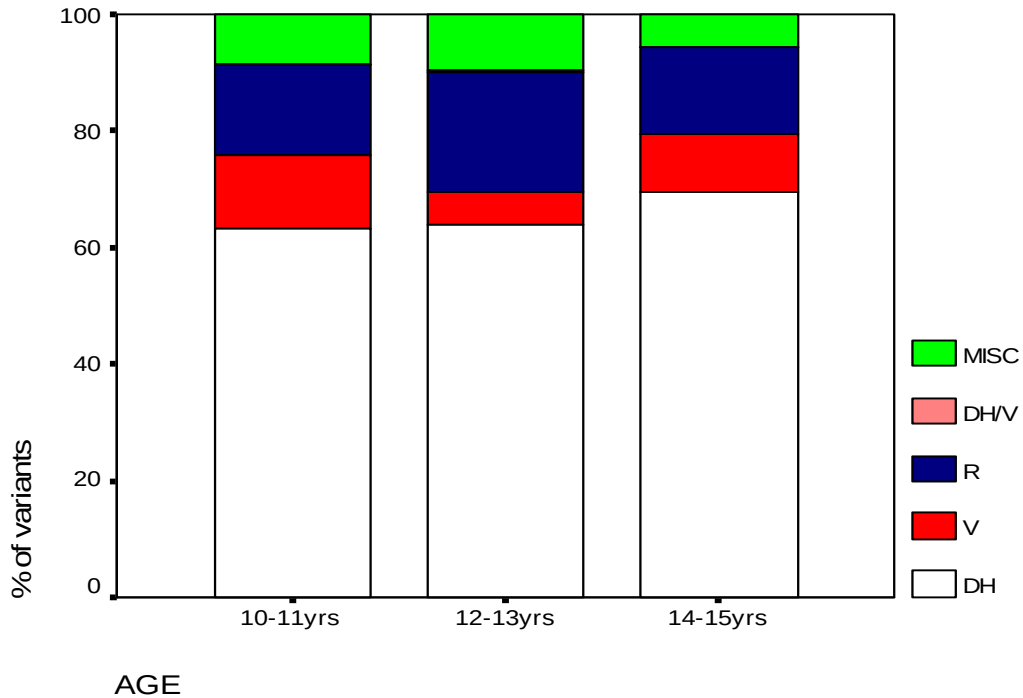


male



(dh) – read speech

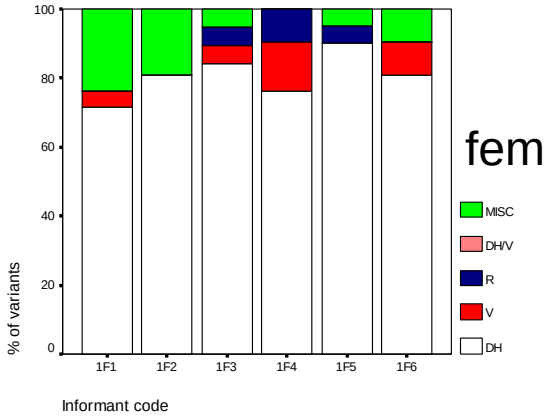
n = 720



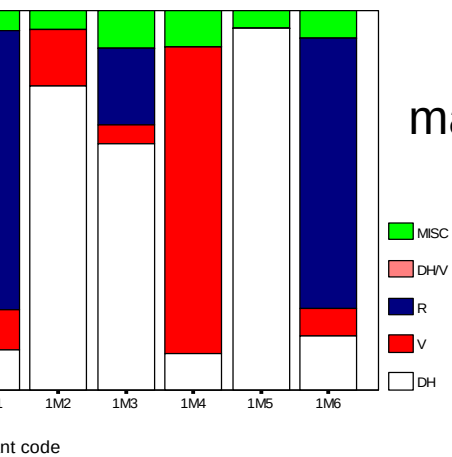
No differences according to age and gender
Less [v] than 1997, but more pervasive across speakers.
[v] mainly in word-final position, but occurs word-internally.

(dh) – individual variation – read speech

Group 1

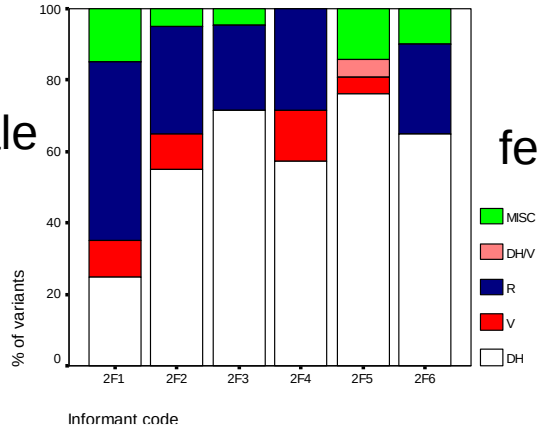


female

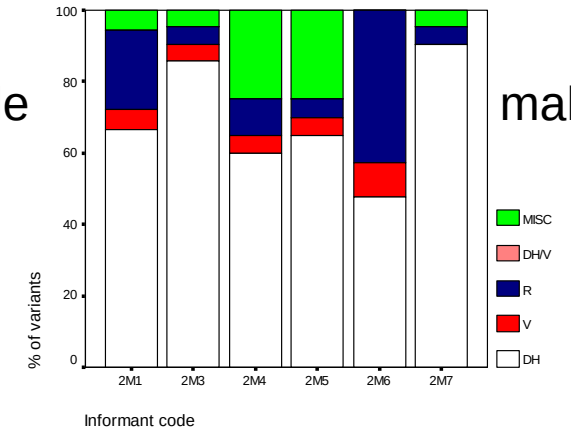


male

Group 2

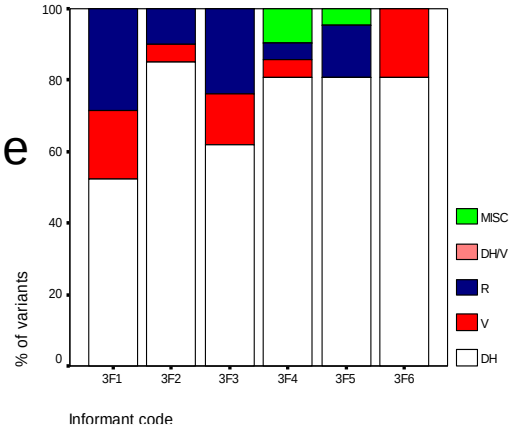


female

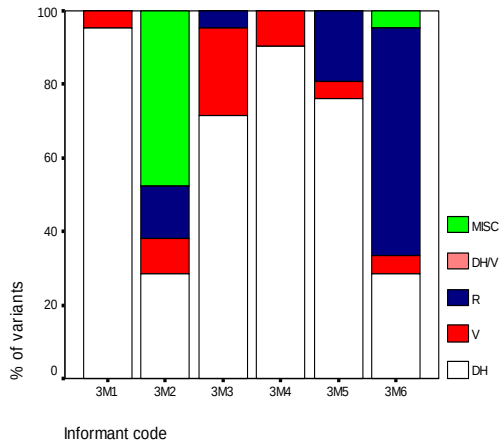


male

Group 3



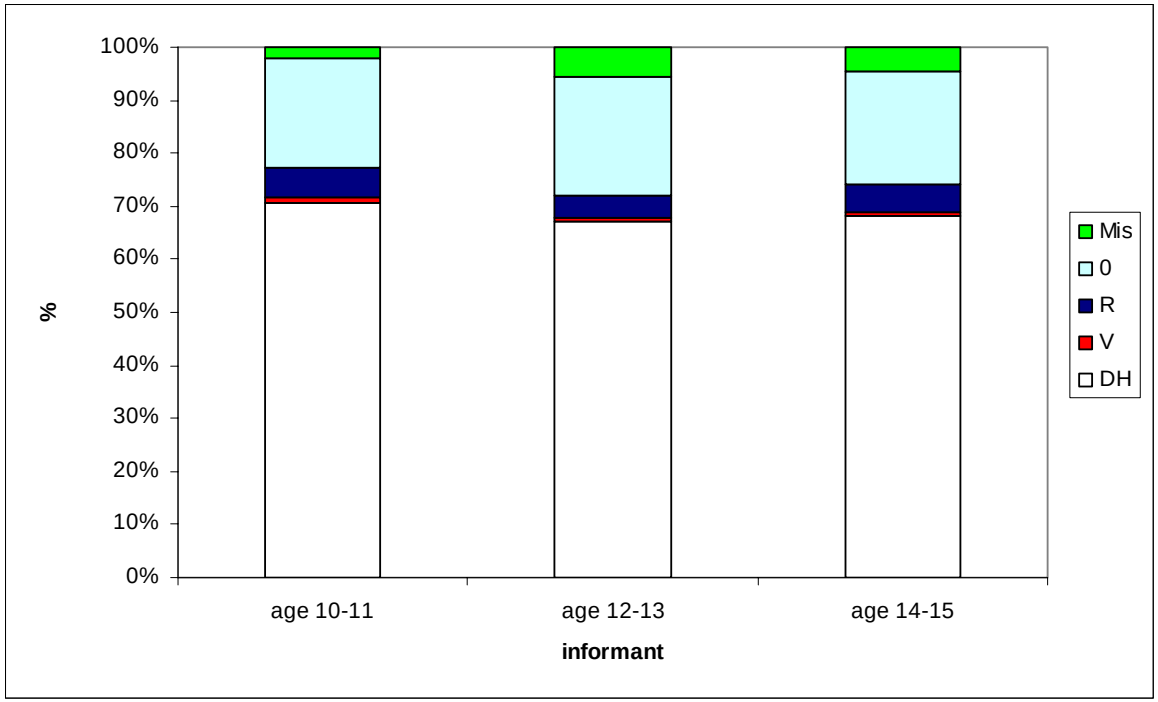
female



male

(dh) – conversations

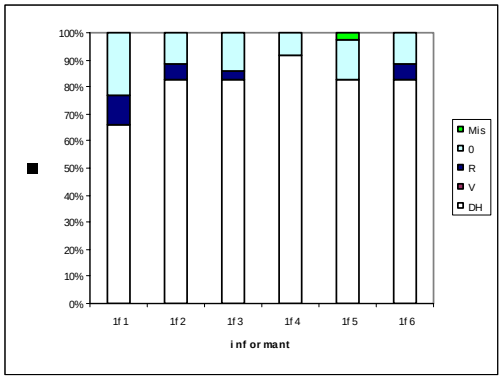
n = 1257



No differences according to age and gender
More [0] than 1997, but more pervasive across speakers.
[r] word-internally; [0] mainly word-initially.

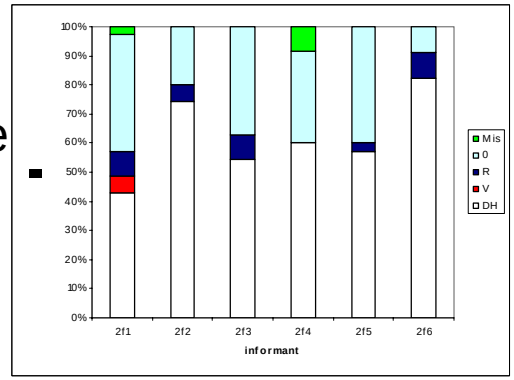
(dh) – individual variation - conversations

Group 1



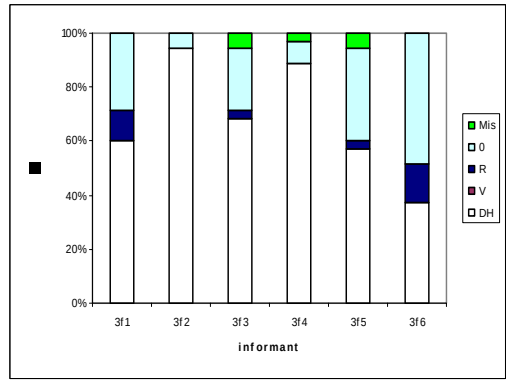
female

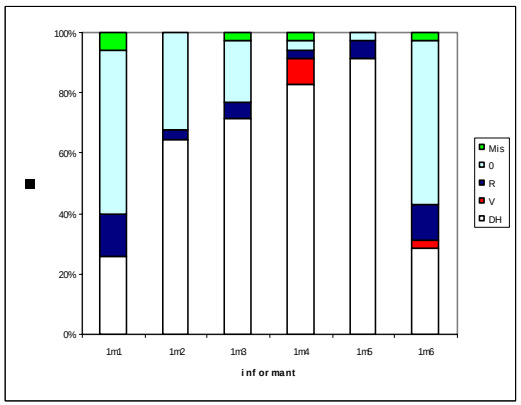
Group 2



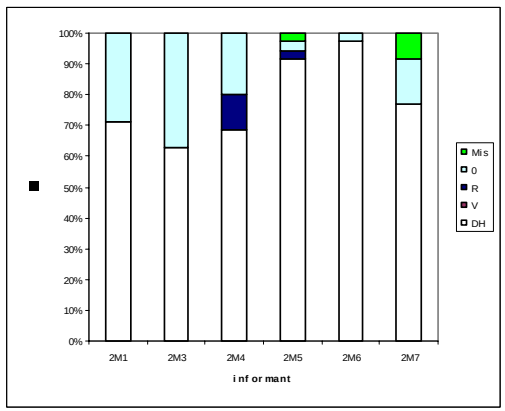
female

Group 3

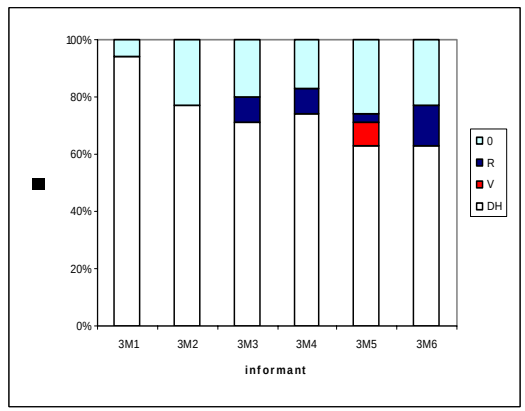




male

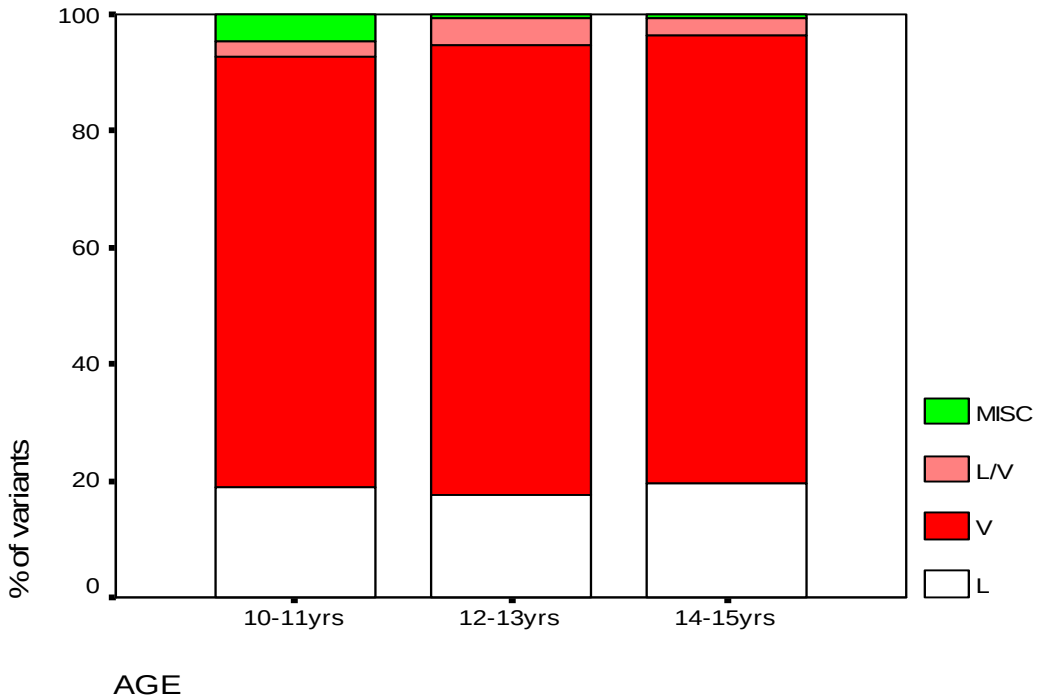


male



L-Vocalization – read speech

n = 900

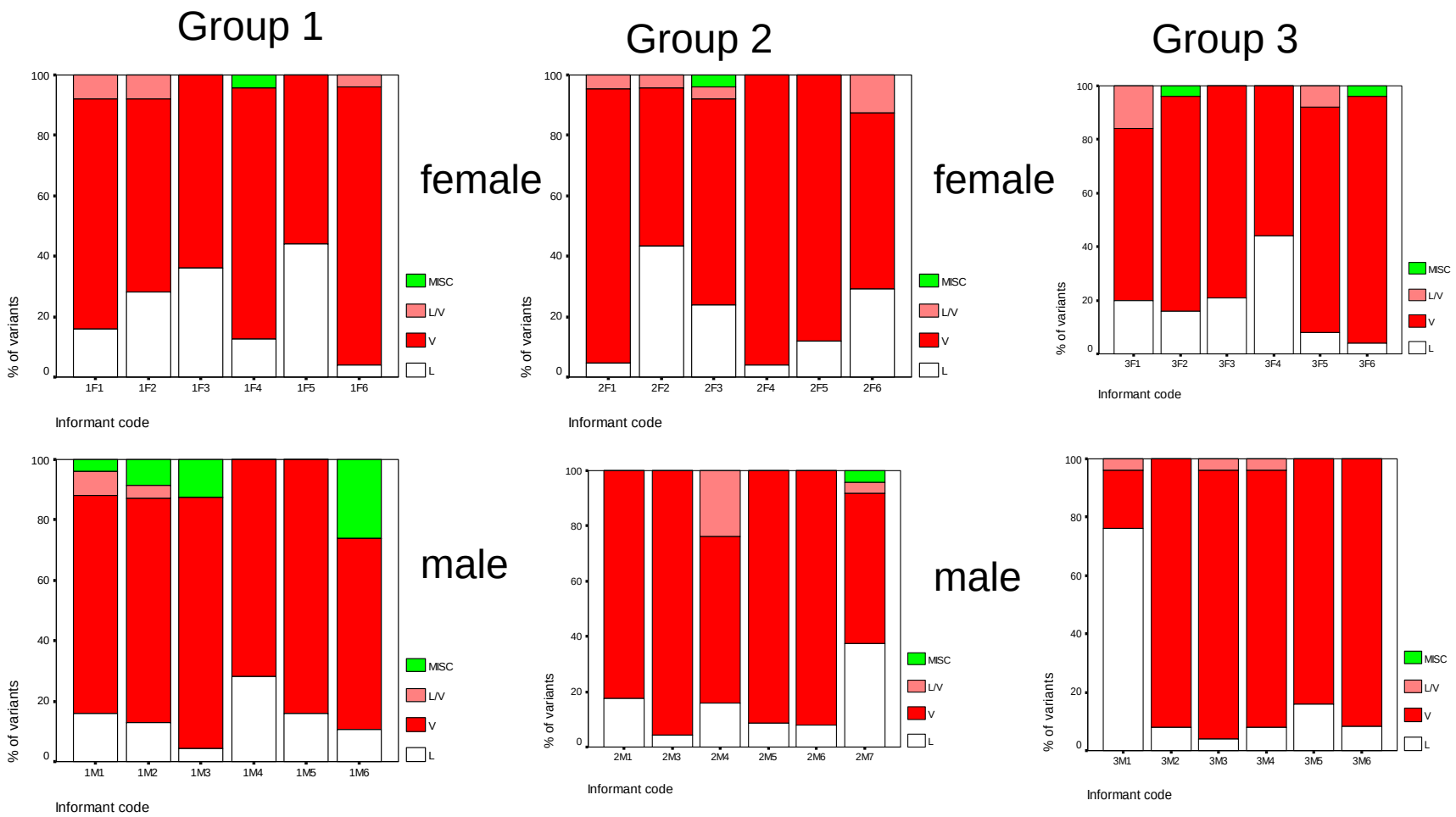


No differences according to age and gender.

More [V] than in 1997.

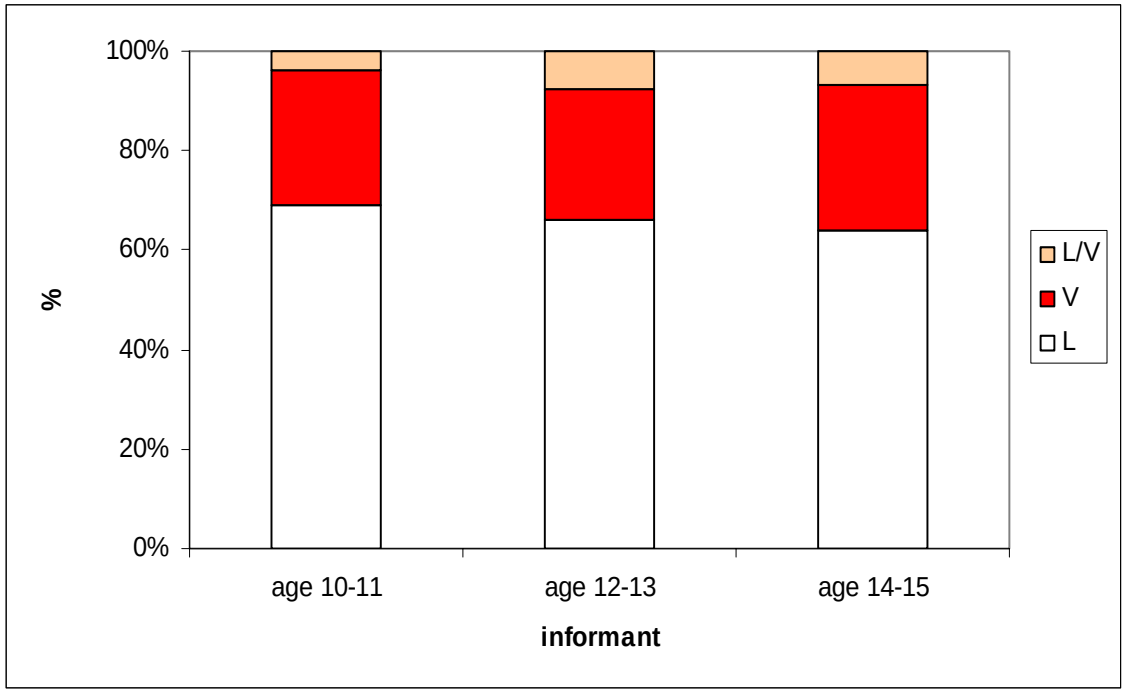
More common in word-final, but most in syllabic position.

L-vocalization – individual – read speech



L-Vocalization – conversations

n = 886

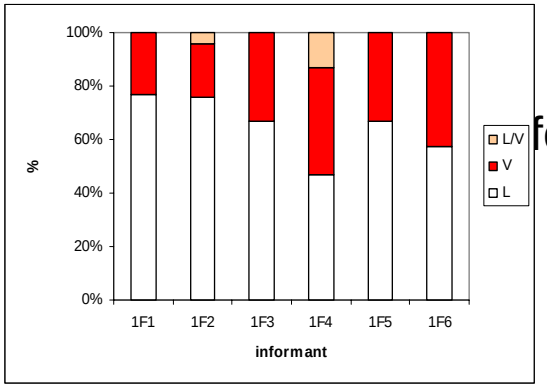


No differences according to age and gender.

Less [V] than in 1997.

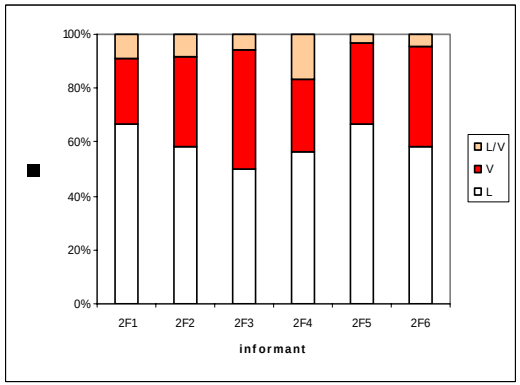
L-vocalization – individual – conversations

Group 1



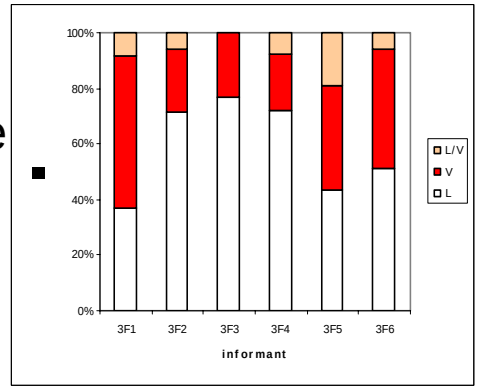
female

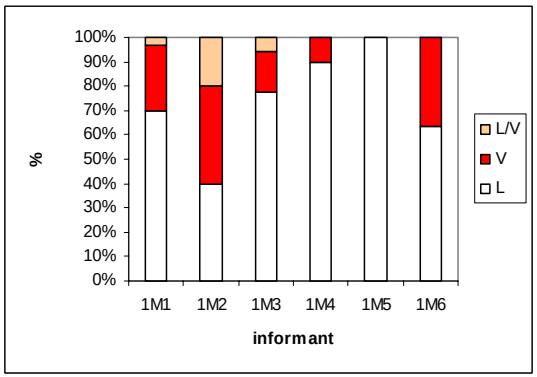
Group 2



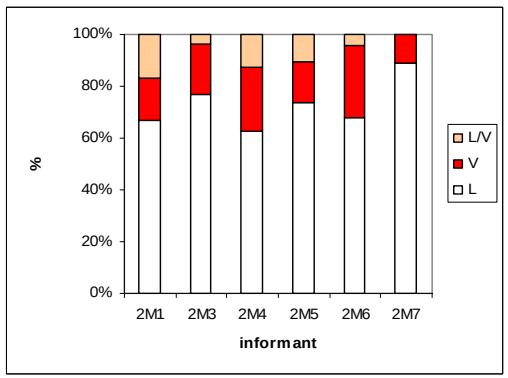
female

Group 3

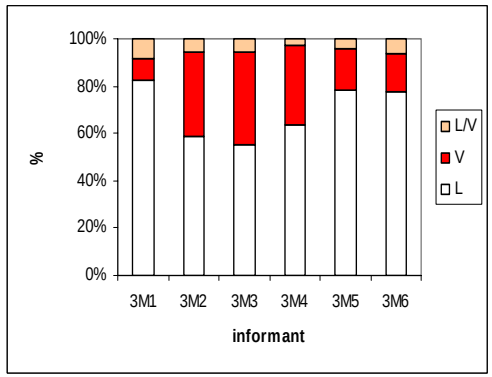




male

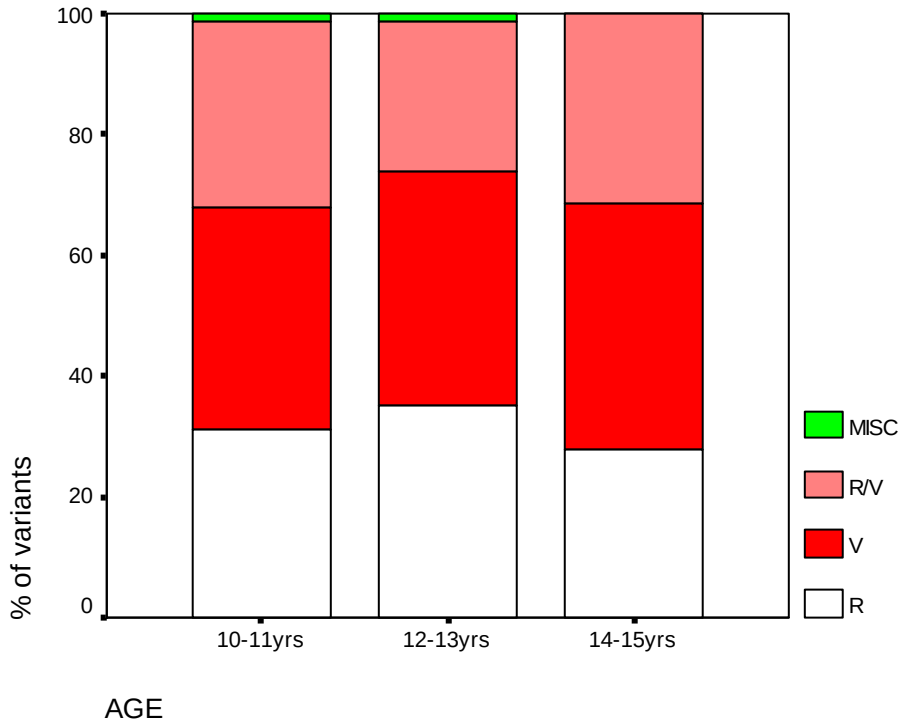


male



R-vocalization – read speech

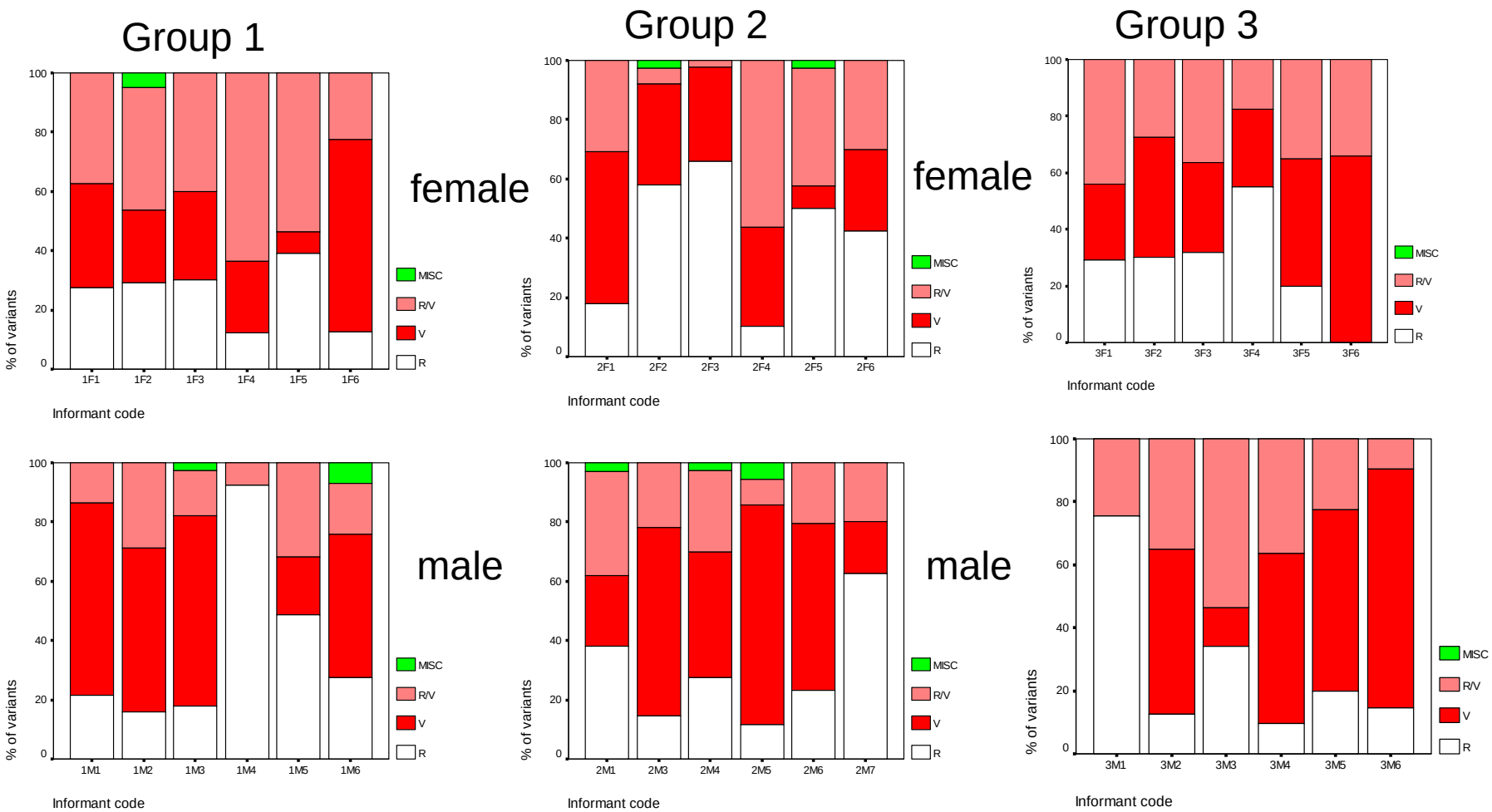
n = 1476



No differences according to age and gender.

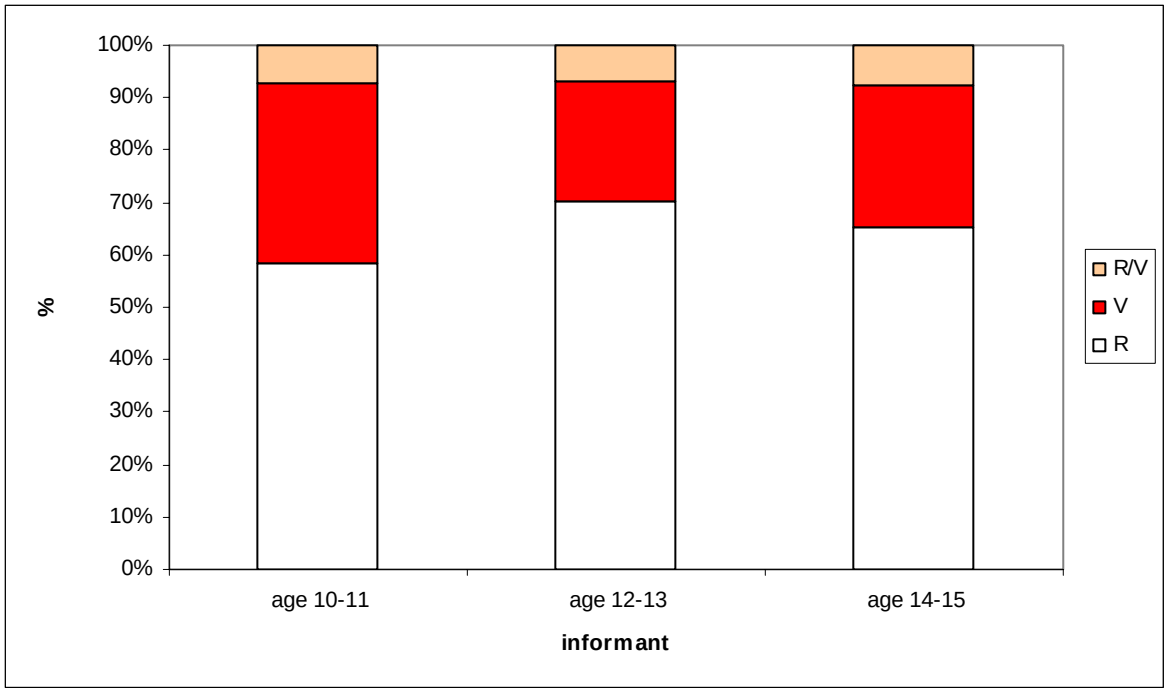
Less [V] than 1997, but more [r/V].

R-vocalization – individual – read speech



R-vocalization – conversations

n = 1282

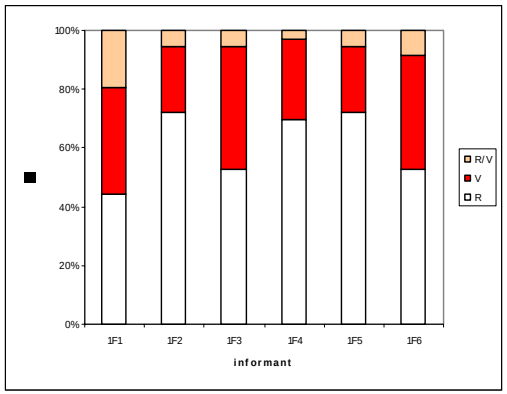


Younger group use more [V]; no gender difference.

Less [V] than 1997.

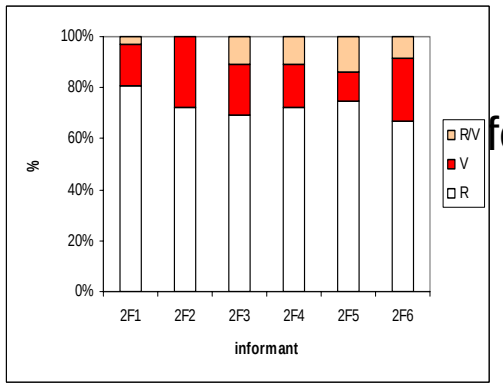
R-vocalization – individual – conversations

Group 1



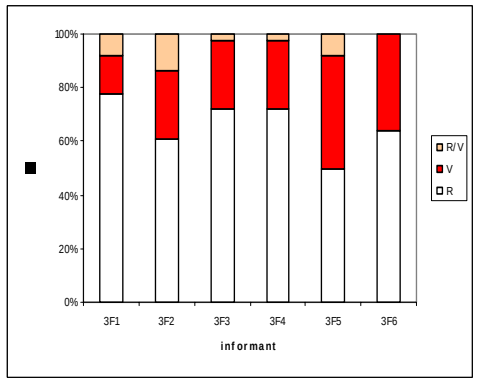
female

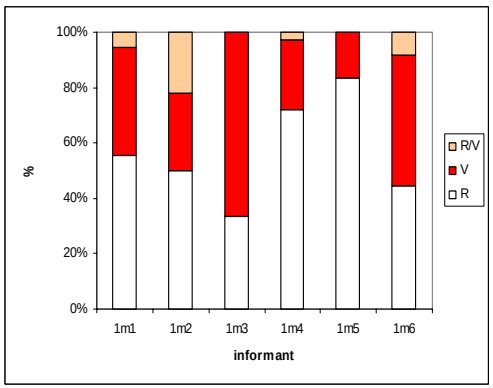
Group 2



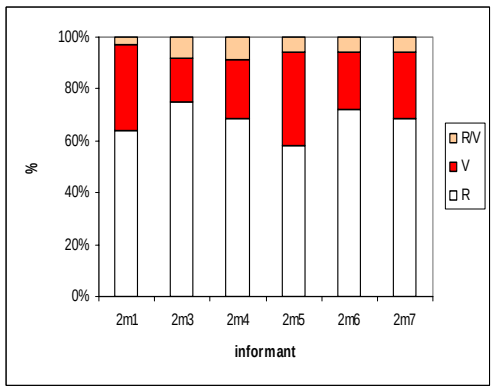
female

Group 3

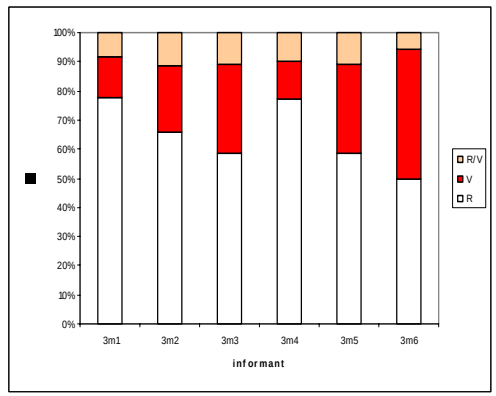




male



male



linguistic variables - summary

- no gender effects
- age: younger speakers sometimes use more vernacular (th):[f], (r) :[V]
- more vernacular in read speech
- individual variation

- real time?

  more (th):[f], (dh):[0]; less (l):[V], (r): [V]

  (more L-voc/R-voc in read speech)

statistical results

- substantial collinearity between independent variables (direct/mediated contact with family/friends)
- 3 variables consistently emerged across all variants for all variables in all conditions
  - number of people in household
  - number of relatives living elsewhere in Scotland
  - number of relatives living in N England
- several variants showed no relationships, and (dh) none at all

statistical results

number of people in household

positive link (th): [th] read speech
(r): [r] read speech

negative link (th):[f] read and conv. speech
(l):[V] read speech

… closer ties inhibit diffusion?

statistical results

number of relatives living elsewhere in Scotland

positive link (th):[f] read speech

negative link (th):[th] read speech

(r):[r] read speech

local contact promotes diffusion ?

extended locality/identity reduces local ‘standard’?

statistical results

number of relatives living in Northern England

positive link (th):[f] conv. speech
(r):[r] read speech

negative link (th):[h] conv. speech

contact inhibits local variant … levelling?
contact promotes supralocal variant – diffusion
(but also local ‘standard’ variant ?)

summary

Our speakers vary in their contact/communication profiles (as determined by these – gross – indices).

Evidence of continued diffusion (th), but also stabilization (dh l r)

Few statistical links with explanatory contact variables, but a few intriguing correlations do show

Concluding remarks

Not much empirical evidence for contact affecting variation, but a few tantalizing hints

- will these persist once other categories of variables are included:
  - social practices
  - attitudes to accents
  - engagement with sport, music, film
  - engagement with television
- what about vowels?