MIDDLESBROUGH ENGLISH: CONVERGENT AND DIVERGENT TRENDS IN A 'PART OF BRITAIN WITH NO IDENTITY'[1]

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Abstract

This paper investigates variation in the use of glottalling and glottalisation of the voiceless stops (p t k) in the urban vernacular of Middlesbrough. Data are taken from a socially homogeneous group of speakers who vary by age and gender. The linguistic variation and change revealed over apparent time is seen against the shifting identity of the urban centre. In addition, the convergence of Middlesbrough English with varieties from further north in England is correlated with attitudinal information and the informants' sense of the identity of the area, emphasising the fluid nature of regional identity construction and how it can be indexed linguistically and ideologically.

1.0 Introduction

In a recent article in a British national newspaper Middlesbrough was described thus: 'It is pretty much a place between places. It's not on the way to anywhere, it's not quite in Yorkshire, and in fact a lot of people don't know where it is. *It is a forgotten part of Britain with no identity*' (The Sunday Times, March 5, 2000) (my italics). In a more favourable light, the Middlesbrough Official Guide (1997: 16) describes the urban centre as a 'gateway to two regions', maintaining that 'Middlesbrough is at the gateway of Northumbria and Yorkshire, which makes the town an ideal place for exploring both regions'. Situated some 38 miles (61 kms) south of Newcastle in the North East of England and around 50 miles (80 kms) north of York in Yorkshire, Middlesbrough lies in something of a transition area between the lower part of the North East and the upper part of Yorkshire in the North of England. The transitional nature of the geographical location of Middlesbrough, with the sense of it being neither wholly in one region nor the other, has meant that the identity of the urban centre is not deep rooted and firmly felt by outsiders. In fact, the precise identity of Middlesbrough evokes an amount of uncertainty and confusion even amongst its inhabitants.

The problematising of issues of identity has been a feature of recent sociological work, with the processes of national identity construction being examined in recent work on the English town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, which lies very close to the Scottish border (Kiely, McCrone, Bechhofer and Stewart (2000)). The specific identity strategy of localism was found to be employed by the 'Berwickers' which prioritises the 'Berwicker' identity over the national and regional identities available. This strategy was more favourably viewed in some contexts than others, however, with inhabitants of nearby towns north and south of the border (respectively Eyemouth and Alnwick) rejecting the strategy of localism as used by 'Berwickers'. How the complex issues of identity which surround Berwick-upon-Tweed affect the Berwick accent are also currently under investigation (see further Watt and Ingham this volume).

The interest of the present study of Middlesbrough English is not in national identity, rather in regional identity and the strategies used by local people to define

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and delimit their identity in terms of the region, rather than the town, in which they live. Given that in a recent survey undertaken by the BBC the region of England defined as the North East was found to have the strongest sense of regionality in the country (BBC Online 2000), it would be expected that the inhabitants of Middlesbrough would have a strong sense of regional identity. However, combined with having something of a 'border town' status, which can entail a problematic construction of identity as noted, the complexity of ascertaining the identity of Middlesbrough is further confounded by the fact that it has witnessed a recent shift in identity. Despite previously being situated at the uppermost corner of the North Riding of Yorkshire, in the past 30-40 years Middlesbrough has come to be increasingly associated with the North East of England by the media, by outsiders and by the inhabitants of the area. This shifting identity of Middlesbrough, the pulling of it away from the upper part of Yorkshire into the lower part of the North East, is seen in the light of convergent and divergent linguistic trends. The linguistic trends under consideration are also seen in relation to the informants' sense of the identity of Middlesbrough.

This paper outlines findings from an ongoing study of Middlesbrough English (henceforth MbE) with analysis of glottalling and glottalisation of the voiceless stops (p t k) being presented. Age and gender variation in the data is analysed. The variation is considered both in terms of convergent and divergent trends in the North East of England, and in terms of current vernacular changes which are spreading throughout British English.

The paper begins with a brief description of glottalling and glottalisation (section 2). Particulars of the Teesside study are described in section 3. The individual phonological variables are presented (section 4), followed by a presentation of the sociolinguistic profiling of the variables (section 5). Section 6 then considers the speakers' perceptions of identity and the implications of the findings.

2.0 Background: glottalling and glottalisation

2.1 Description of phenomena

All three plosives, (p), (t) and (k), can be realised with either glottalled, glottalised or fully released variants. However, a distinction must be drawn between glottalling (the replacement of (p), (t) or (k) with a glottal stop) and glottalisation (also referred to as glottal reinforcement). Glottalisation refers to the realisation of (p), (t) and (k) as what is usually transcribed as a double articulation, [ʔ͡p], [ʔ͡t], [ʔ͡k] or [p͡ʔ], [t͡ʔ], [k͡ʔ].

Glottalisation has been variously described as 'glottal masking of the oral plosive burst' (Wells 1982: 374), or 'oral closure reinforced by a glottal closure' (Gimson 1989: 159). Giegerich (1992: 220) describes the phenomenon thus: 'in syllable final voiceless stops the bilabial, alveolar or velar closure is accompanied – often slightly preceded – by glottal closure, so that a glottal stop [ʔ] is co-articulated with the [p t k] articulation'. Recent acoustic analysis of glottalised variants of (t) has revealed a more complex picture, however. This is both in terms of a description of the phenomenon and in terms of the fact that variation found at an acoustic level of analysis correlates with particular speaker variables (for further discussion see Docherty and Foulkes 1999, and Foulkes, Docherty and Watt 1999). In terms of a description of glottalisation, acoustic analysis has led to the suggestion of [ɗ] being used to transcribe a glottalised (t) (Foulkes, Docherty and Watt 1999:7) given the

predominance of full or partial voicing and the lack of visual evidence of a glottal stop in spectrograms of the tokens analysed. Despite the somewhat arbitrary nature of the choice of terminology and transcription, then, for the purposes of this paper the term glottalisation will be used to refer to the phenomenon, with tokens transcribed as [ʔ͡p], [ʔ͡t] and [ʔ͡k].

2.2 Geographical distribution and spread of phenomena

The use of the glottal stop as a replacement for (t) is often cited as a Cockney characteristic (Wells 1982), or as a feature of Estuary English (Rosewarne 1984, 1994, Coggle 1993). It is difficult to say precisely how old the [ʔ] realisation of the voiceless stops is or where it was first noted as no alphabetic letter exists for the glottal stop. Old texts, therefore, offer little in the way of evidence. The glottal stop was first recorded as a feature of the west of Scotland, rather than London, however, by A. M. Bell (1860). According to Andrésen (1968), who offers a detailed history of (t)-glottalling, it was noted by Sweet (1908) as occurring in 'some North English and Scotch dialects' before it was noted as a feature of London pronunciation (by Jones 1909). Indeed, using evidence from the Survey of English Dialects (SED) (Orton et al. 1962-71), Trudgill (1999: 136) argues that glottalling of intervocalic (t) may have spread from the Norwich area to London, rather than from London to Norwich as often assumed.

Despite its general association with London English, however, use of the glottal stop for (t) is now much more widely distributed in urban areas of Britain. The spread of (t)-glottalling is seen as being a fairly recent phenomenon, the extent of its dissemination leading Trudgill (1999: 136) to call it 'one of the most dramatic, widespread and rapid changes to have occurred in British English in recent times'. It is traditionally a stigmatised feature which is 'widely perceived as a stereotype of urban British speech' (Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994: 5), and in Britain, according to Wells (1982:35), 'is widely regarded as ugly and also a lazy sound'.

Sociolinguistic profiling of the glottal stop has been undertaken by researchers in many areas (cf. Trudgill 1974, Newbrook 1986, Mees 1987, Stuart-Smith 1999). According to the recent work *Urban Voices* (Foulkes and Docherty 1999) such is the spread of glottal replacement of (t) that it is reported as being found in Newcastle, Derby, Sheffield, West Midlands, Milton Keynes, Reading, Hull, Norwich, South London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow and (London)Derry.

With emphasis on the spread of (t)-glottalling in recent work, glottal stop realisations of the other two voiceless stops, (p) and (k), in intervocalic word-internal positions appears under-researched in comparison. Early references to glottal replacement of the voiceless stops, according to Andrésen (1968: 25), are from Grant (1913), who mentions glottal replacement in Scotland, Hirst (1914), who states that glottal replacement of (k) is heard occasionally in Lancaster, and Matthews (1938), who states that '[ʔ] replaces [t] and [k] between vowels, and that there is a growing tendency for it to replace [p]'. Little evidence in recent works is available for the correlation of glottalling of intervocalic (p) and (k) with particular speaker variables, however. Also, little seems to be known of the geographical distribution of glottal replacement of intervocalic word internal (p) and (k) or of whether, like (t)-glottaling, it is spreading. Glottal replacement of intervocalic (p) or (k) is found in London English (Wells 1982), and has been noted in Edinburgh (Johnston 1985) and Glasgow (Macafee 1983). It was also reported for Milton Keynes and Reading (although interestingly not for the northern town of Hull) by Williams and Kerswill (1999).

Glottalisation of word medial (p t k) is a salient feature of Newcastle and Tyneside English (Wells 1982, Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994, Docherty et al. 1997, Watt and Milroy 1999). It is also found in Durham (Kerswill 1987). Docherty et al. (1997: 306) suggest that glottalisation, particularly of intervocalic (p) and (k), may be recessive, arguing that it is characteristic of Tyneside male speech and more conservative rural varieties as found in south-west Scotland and Northern Ireland. Although glottalisation is not recorded as a feature of Teesside English in the SED data, neither is it recorded as a feature of Tyneside (Orton, Sanderson & Widdowson 1978: Map PH. 239). Nevertheless, in the present paper it shall be taken as a localised feature of the North East of England and the extent of its usage in the urban centre of Middlesbrough, which lies south of Tyneside and Durham, will therefore be of interest.

3.0 The Teesside study

3.1 Location and issues of identity

Middlesbrough lies on the south bank of the River Tees in the North East of England. With a population of nearly 147,000, Middlesbrough is by far the most densely populated urban centre of the industrial conurbation along the mouth of the River Tees.

Figure 1. Geographical location of Middlesbrough

The history of Middlesbrough as an urban centre is a relatively short one. This adds to the lack of a deep-rooted sense of identity in the town. In the first Census of England of 1801, the agricultural farm which was Middlesbrough was recorded as having a population of 25. Middlesbrough became the world's first railway town when, to avoid the navigational hazards of the River Tees, a branch line of the Stockton to Darlington railway line was built in 1830. In just 40 years, Middlesbrough was to become the largest producer of pig iron in the world. The massive and rapid increase in population of Middlesbrough, described as an 'infant Hercules' by Gladstone, was based wholly on its growth as an industrial centre. Seen as the largest and most

impressive of the new towns of the nineteenth century (Chase 1993), by the turn of the twentieth century Middlesbrough was a boom town with a population of over 91,000. Migration into the area was largely Irish and Welsh. Such was the extent of the migration that, as one in five adult males was Irish, Middlesbrough was second only to Liverpool in terms of the size of its Irish population in the nineteenth century.

Middlesbrough, then, owes its 'birth' in the nineteenth century and its very existence as an urban centre to its geographical position along the River Tees. Its position on the river has continued to have significance to its identity in the twentieth century. Traditionally, the Tees stood as a boundary between the county of Durham to the north and Yorkshire to the south. Until 1968, Middlesbrough, lying on the south bank of the river, was included in the North Riding of Yorkshire. In 1968, the conurbation around the River Tees was drawn together with the formation of Teesside, which brought the urban centres north of the Tees together with those on the south bank. This gave the region an identity of its own. Six years later, however, this identity was changed and the region was expanded with the formation of County Cleveland. County Cleveland was then dissolved in 1996, and four local authorities were formed, each being regarded as a County in its own right, with the old county boundary between Durham and Yorkshire being reinstated for 'cultural and ceremonial purposes' (Moorsom 1996: 22). Since 1996, the urban centre of Middlesbrough has been an independent Borough. In the past 32 years, then, in terms of local government Middlesbrough has been assigned four separate identities.

In terms of popular culture, however, the conurbation both north and south of the Tees has become increasingly associated with the North East of England as opposed to with Yorkshire. Since the independent regional television groupings were formed and began broadcasting in January 1959, Middlesbrough has been included in the independent television group of Tyne Tees Television and not in Yorkshire Television. Similarly, news from Middlesbrough is included in regional newspapers which cover Tyneside and Teesside and not in local newspapers such as the *Yorkshire Post.* Middlesbrough Football Club is included in the mini North Eastern football league which includes Newcastle and Sunderland.

In other areas Middlesbrough is similarly associated with the North East. The regional economic strategy 'One North-East' includes Middlesbrough. Although the West Yorkshire-based University of Leeds has an outpost in Middlesbrough, the recently formed AHRB Centre for North-East England history includes the Middlesbrough-based University of Teesside, along with the universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria and Sunderland (all situated north of Middlesbrough). In general terms, then, Middlesbrough is now referred to as being in the region of England known as 'the North East'.

From a linguistic point of view, the situation is much the same. In terms of traditional dialectology, the River Tees is often seen as a boundary. Indeed, Harold Orton, when working on the Linguistic Atlas of England (1978), reportedly insisted that an isogloss be drawn along the River Tees (this being the only river to have an isogloss follow it) because he knew it to be a boundary between Durham and Yorkshire (Clive Upton, personal communication). However, in modern dialect groupings, both Wells (1982: 350) and Trudgill (1990) group Teesside with Tyneside in the 'north-east' or 'far north'. According to Wells, however, the accent of Tyneside differs from 'typical northern accents' considerably more than that of Middlesbrough (typical northern accents being Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, according to Wells (1982: 350)). Although the Tyneside accent is seen as

being a great deal more 'North Eastern' than the Middlesbrough accent, the two are usually grouped together. Indeed, Trudgill claims:

> …no one from Middlesbrough would mistake a Tynesider for someone from Middlesbrough – but the accents are sufficiently similar to be grouped together, and sufficiently *different* from those of other areas. Londoners, for instance, might mistakenly think that Middlesbrough speakers were from Newcastle, but they would be much less likely to think that they were from, say, Sheffield' (Trudgill 1990: 77).

Although, impressionistically, the Middlesbrough accent is arguably closer to that of Tyneside than those of Yorkshire, Middlesbrough lies between two regional accent types of British English which are relatively easily identified by the lay person: that of Geordie, which is the accent of Newcastle and Tyneside, and that of Yorkshire. This also adds to the transitional character of the area and often makes precise identification of the accent by an outsider difficult. The misidentification of the accent, usually as Geordie, is an interesting and emotive point to which we shall return later.

The geographical location of the conurbation around the River Tees, the location of Middlesbrough in relation to the river, and the ever-changing identity of the urban centre all add to its transitional character both geographically and dialectally. The shift in the identity of Middlesbrough, with the recent pulling of the town away from the north of Yorkshire and into the south of the North East, is what is of particular interest to the study, however. This shift is the principal reason for the choice of Middlesbrough as the location for a study in convergent and divergent linguistic trends and their relation with identity and perceptions of identity.

3.2 Sample

The data are taken from a sample of 32 speakers from Middlesbrough who form a socially homogeneous group (all the speakers come from what can be termed a 'working-class' background). Due to the somewhat fluid and symbolic nature of the concept of social class, informants' self-assessment of their class is taken as an indicator of what social group they belong to. This self-assessment is supplemented with information on the informant's occupation, housing and level of educational attainment.

Age is taken as a variable in the study, with four age groups identified, see Table 1 for details. The young adults and the adolescents, being almost contiguous, can be taken as a combined group of young speakers, thus giving old, middle and young groups. Gender is also taken as a variable. There are, therefore, four speakers per cell.

Table 1: Design of fieldwork sample

Old (60-80)		**Middle** (32-45)		**Young** (16-22)			
				Young adult (19-22)		**Adolescent** (16-17)	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
4	*4*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*4*

3.3 Method of data elicitation

The Teesside study is acting as a trial for a method of data elicitation which I have designed for use in a large-scale study of variation in British English. The proposed Survey of Regional English (SuRE) is a joint project of the universities of Leeds and Sheffield (see Kerswill, Llamas & Upton 1999, or Upton & Llamas 1999 for further discussion). As the only consistently-collected nation-wide survey of dialectal variation in England is still the Survey of English Dialects (SED) (1962-71), the basic intention of the SuRE project is to create a computer-held database of systematically sampled material from a planned network of localities throughout Britain. The survey must take into account a range of speaker profiles and social sampling of informants in locality after locality over a wide geographical area.

Such an undertaking as SuRE must collect data which can be analysed on three levels of possible variation, phonological, grammatical and lexical. To discount any of these levels would be to obtain an incomplete picture of regional variation found throughout Britain. The primary aim of the methodology for the project is to obtain samples of informal speech from which analyses can be made at the phonological and, to some extent, the grammatical level. The difficulty lies in combining this with the collection of comparable lexical data. For a discussion of the method of data elicitation see (Llamas 1999).

Part of the interview involves an Identification Questionnaire (IdQ), which elicits information on informants' attitudes towards their language and their area. Ideas on language and identity are sought, as are perceptions of variation and geographical and linguistic boundaries. Responses to the questions on the IdQ may show age and gender variation which can be correlated with any linguistic variation revealed. Figure 2 presents four questions from the IdQ of interest to this paper, the responses to which will be discussed in section 6.

Figure 2. Example questions from Identification Questionnaire (4 of 19)

Your language

- What accent would you say you had, and do you like it?
- What would you think if your accent was referred to as Geordie or Yorkshire?

Your area

- Do you remember when the county of Teesside was formed and Middlesbrough was no longer in Yorkshire? Do you think this change made a difference?
- Would you consider Teesside to be in the larger 'north-eastern' part of the country or a larger 'Yorkshire' part of the country? Why?

3.4 Linguistic variables and particular areas of interest

In the conversational Middlesbrough data, 30 tokens per speaker for all three variables (p t k) were sought and were subjected to auditory analysis. The chosen environment was word-medial intervocalic (e.g. *paper, better, wicked*) this being considered the most stigmatised position for the glottal stop (Wells 1982, Fabricius

2000). Instances of (p), (t) and (k) preceding a syllabic /l/ or /n/ were also included, as in *people, happen, bottle, Brotton, tickle, taken.*

The Middlesbrough data are compared closely with recent findings from the study of Tyneside English carried out by Docherty et al. (1997). This was undertaken because of the proximity of the urban centres and the fact that both localities are grouped together by Wells (1982) and Trudgill (1990), as noted. Therefore, whether what is taken as a salient feature of the North East is as prevalent in Middlesbrough as it is in Newcastle is of interest. Additionally, as use of the glottal stop in intervocalic positions is a feature which is spreading dramatically throughout British English, a comparable amount of glottalling in both localities would be expected. This is particularly the case in view of the fact that the spread of [ʔ] for (t) does not originate necessarily from the South of England, London and Glasgow/Edinburgh being 'dual epicentres' (Kerswill and Williams, 1997: 245). Therefore, the extent of the use of glottalling in both localities is also of interest.

Before analysing the data in terms of correlation with particular speaker profiles, variant usage of the individual phonological variables is considered.

4.0 Individual phonological variables

Although glottalisation affects (p), (t) and (k) in the Tyneside findings, glottal replacement [ʔ] was essentially found to affect only (t) (a 1% usage of [ʔ] for (p) and 0% for (k) was recorded in Tyneside, Docherty et al. 1997: 301). In the Middlesbrough data this is not the case, as Table 2 below reveals.

Table 2. Use of released, glottalised and glottalled variants of individual phonological variables (conversational style, all speakers)

Total (intervocalic)		[p] [t] [k]		$[\widehat{ʔp}] [\widehat{ʔt}] [\widehat{ʔk}]$		[ʔ]	
	n.	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
(p)	899	410	45.6	454	50.5	35	3.9
(t)	947	222	23.4	158	16.7	567	59.9
(k)	833	564	67.7	203	24.4	66	7.9

If we consider first use of the glottal stop, at the right of Table 2, an overwhelming difference in the use of the glottal stop for (t) as opposed to its use for (p) or (k) is revealed. Unlike the findings for Tyneside, 66 instances of glottal replacement of (k) and 35 instances of glottal replacement of (p) are in evidence in the Middlesbrough data. Table 2 indicates that (k) is twice as likely to be realised as [ʔ] than is (p). Although glottal replacement of (p) or (k) has been identified in such places as Milton Keynes, Reading, London, Glasgow and Edinburgh, as noted, little evidence is available to indicate which speakers use this particular variant for (p) and (k), or for which stop is more likely to be realised as [ʔ]. In Middlesbrough, however, the ordering would seem to be (t) > (k) > (p). Correlation with particular speaker variables will be considered in section 5.

Table 2 also clearly shows that glottal replacement of (t) is the preferred realisation of intervocalic (t) for the whole sample of speakers in Middlesbrough, with over half of all tokens being accounted for by [ʔ], in line with the general spreading of the glottal stop for (t) throughout Britain. As the Tyneside data revealed only a 16% female and an 8% male use of [ʔ] for (t) (Docherty et al. 1997: 301), the extent of the

difference between the Middlesbrough data and the Newcastle findings is perhaps surprising.

Considering overall scores for the whole sample of speakers for use of the glottalised variants [ʔ͡p], [ʔ͡t], [ʔ͡k], in the centre of Table 2, marked differences are again revealed. Table 2 indicates that (p) is far more likely to be realised as a glottalised variant than (k) or (t), with [ʔ͡t] being the least likely realisation. This is also in line with the findings for Tyneside. Although the glottalised variant is the preferred variant of (p) in the Middlesbrough data, its combined use appears substantially lower than in Tyneside (87% male and 58% female). Nevertheless, the higher susceptibility of (p) than (t) or (k) to glottalisation is found to be the same as in Tyneside (Docherty et al. 1997: 301).

As regards the use of the released variants for the individual phonological variables, as presented at the left of Table 2, again, marked differences between the three phonological variables are revealed, with (k) having a substantially larger number of tokens realised by the released variant.

Without yet considering age and gender variation, then, marked variation has already been revealed in the use of the variants of the individual phonological variables (p), (t) and (k). Scores for the whole sample of speakers show that the preferred variant of (p) is the glottalised realisation, the preferred variant of (t) is the glottal replaced realisation and the preferred variant of (k) is the fully released realisation.

We turn now to age and gender variation found for the individual phonological variables. General trends will be shown in the variation by age, followed by discussion of age and gender patterning in each variable.

## 5.0 Sociolinguistic profiling of (p t k)

5.1 (p)

Figure 3 below presents variant use of (p) by age, using the combined scores of the two young speaker age groups. Percentage scores, therefore, are given for old, middle and young speaker groups (actual scores for all variables are given in the Appendix).

Figure 3. Distribution of variants of (p) by age
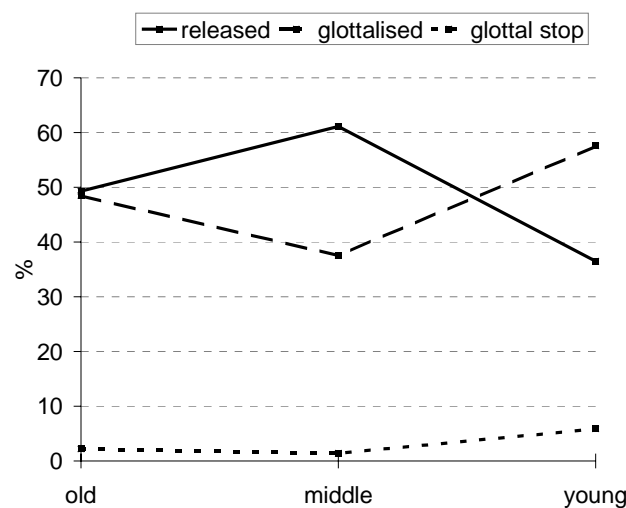
As can be seen in Figure 3, apparent time evidence suggests a considerable increase in the use of the localised [ʔp͡] and a marked decrease in the use of the non-localised [p]. [ʔp͡] accounts for almost two thirds of the tokens of the young speakers, which is higher than both the older and the middle speakers' scores. This indicates a degree of convergence towards the speech further north. As well as having the highest score for [ʔp͡], the young speakers demonstrate the lowest score for [p], indicating a degree of divergence away from the 'standard' variant. Additionally, although [ʔ] is found occasionally across age groups, there is an increase in its use amongst young speakers, indicating the increased adoption of what is possibly a current innovation whose use may continue to spread. Whether there is an age and gender correlation in some of the trends revealed in apparent time variation is discussed below. Figure 4 presents the four age groups (old, middle, young adult and adolescent) broken down by gender.[2]

Figure 4: Distribution of variants of (p) by age and gender
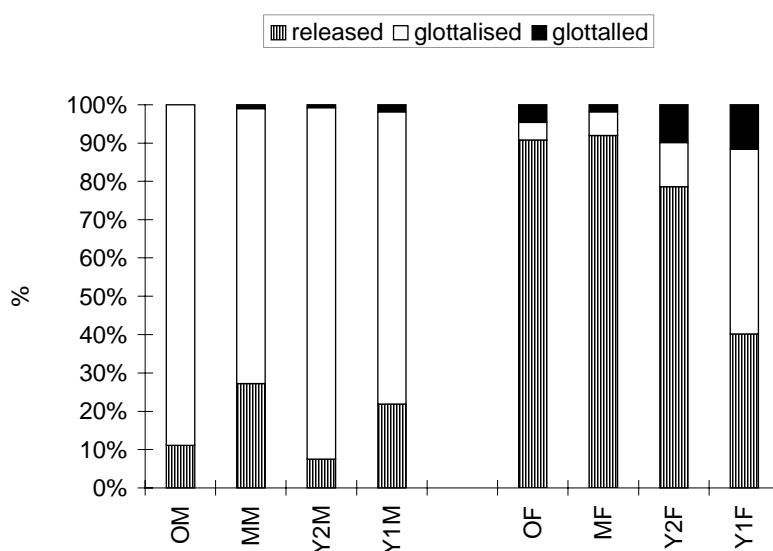
Looking first at the male scores to the left, Figure 4 indicates that [ʔp͡] is overwhelmingly the preferred variant of male speakers. The middle group of male speakers has the lowest use and the young adult male speakers reveal the highest use of [ʔp͡], which at over 90% is effectively categorical in sociolinguistic terms. All male groups' use of the localised variant is over 70%, however. Consequently, use of [p] is relatively low amongst the males. Also, [ʔ] is rejected virtually categorically by the male speakers, with the adolescents demonstrating the highest use. Overall, the male speakers reveal relatively little variation over age, with use of the preferred male variant, [ʔp͡], being comparable to the Tyneside male score of 87% (Docherty et al. 1997: 301) for this variant.

Turning to the female figures on the right, we can see not only the marked gender difference in the distribution of variants of (p) in Middlesbrough, but also a much higher degree of variation over age in the female data compared with the male

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[2] Along the abscissa of all bar charts, the 8 speaker groups are represented thus: old male (OM), middle male (MM), young adult male (Y2M), adolescent male (Y1M), old female (OF), middle female (MF), young adult female (Y2F), adolescent female (Y1F).

data. The old female group and the middle female group show similar patterns with almost categorical use of the unmarked [p], compared with marginal use of the other two variants. The young females, however, demonstrate a pronounced increase in the use of [$\widehat{\text{ʔp}}$], with it revealed as the preferred variant of the adolescent females. This stands in stark contrast to the marginal use of [$\widehat{\text{ʔp}}$] in the old and middle groups, and indicates that the female adolescents in Middlesbrough are at the vanguard of this suggested convergent trend in the variable (p). Young females in the sample also show a substantially higher use of [ʔ] for (p), which rises to its highest point amongst the female adolescents.

The distribution of variants of (p) in MbE, then, appears highly complex. Data presented reveal marked variation between male and female speech and considerable variation in apparent time. In many ways, the data support many other reports of male speakers using a higher proportion of localised forms, and female speakers using more unmarked forms. The sudden increase in the young females' use of the localised [$\widehat{\text{ʔp}}$], however, which has increased in apparent time from virtual rejection at 4.6% to the preferred variant at 48.2%, suggests that MbE is converging with the varieties found further north in Tyneside, Wearside and Durham. Additionally, the increased use of [ʔ] for (p), which has risen over time from 0% and 4.6% (amongst the old males and old females respectively) to 11.6% (amongst the adolescent females), may suggest that [ʔ] is extending its distribution. Rather than just being a variant of intervocalic (t), [ʔ] is increasingly used as a variant of intervocalic (p).

5.2 (t)

Figure 5, below, plots variant usage of (t) by age. Again, young speakers' scores are combined, giving the three age groups of old, middle and young.

Figure 5: Distribution of variants of (t) by age
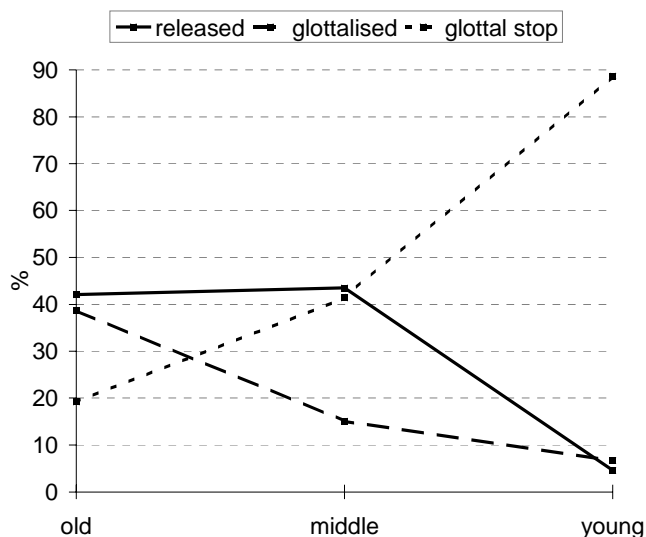

As Figure 5 reveals, there is a dramatic increase over age in the use of [ʔ] for (t), representing a marked change in apparent time. The increase in [ʔ] for (t) is in line with the general spread of [ʔ] in urban varieties of British English. The extent of its use amongst young speakers in Middlesbrough and the rapidity of its increase in apparent time are still quite remarkable, however.

Coupled with the huge increase in the use of [ʔ] is a corresponding decrease in the use of the other two variants. [t] has declined sharply from being the preferred variant of both the older and the middle speakers to virtual rejection amongst the young speakers, emphasising the rapidity of the changes which are taking place in MbE. Similarly, a marked decrease is noted in the use of the localised [ʔ͡t].

We turn now to consider the four age groups identified broken down by gender. Figure 6 shows the distribution of variants of (t) broken down by age and gender.

Figure 6: Distribution of variants of (t) by age and gender
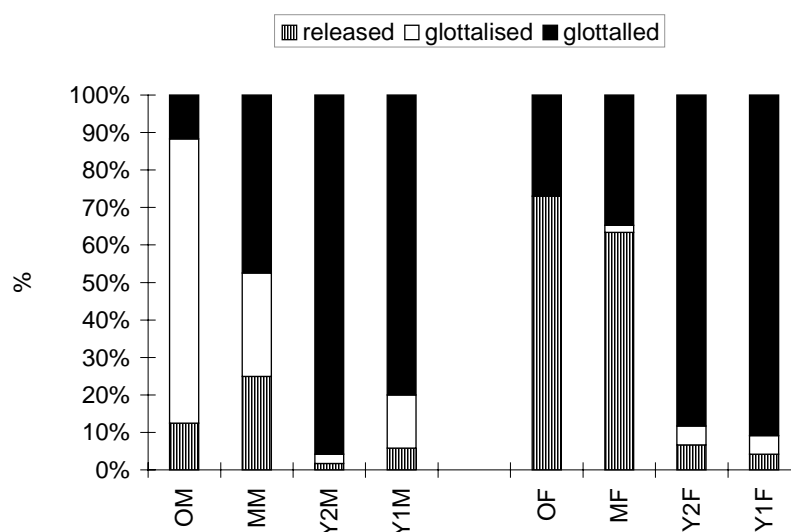
Considering first the male scores to the left, Figure 6 illustrates the extent of the variation and change in apparent time and the marked increase in the use of [ʔ] for (t). Incidence of [ʔ] rises steadily and sharply from the old to the young speakers, peaking at a virtually categorical 95.8% in the young adults. The corresponding marked decline in the use of [ʔ͡t] mirrors the increase in [ʔ]. [ʔ͡t] reaches virtual rejection at 2.5% amongst the young adults, but then, interestingly, rises in the speech of the adolescents. The use of the unmarked [t] amongst male speakers is low, dropping to virtual rejection in the young adults' and the adolescents' speech.

In the female scores, we can see an enormous amount of variation as found in the male scores. The marked increase in [ʔ] for (t) is similar to that found in the male data. [ʔ] reaches a near categorical incidence of over 90% in the adolescent speech. The old female speakers, however, also reveal a substantial use of [ʔ]. The decline that is the inevitable converse of a marked increase is demonstrated in the use of the unmarked [t], which falls to virtual rejection in the adolescent group. The young female speakers also demonstrate a sudden, albeit slight, increase in the use of the localised [ʔ͡t], with both the young adults and the adolescents showing a 5% use. Although incidence is low, it is in contrast with complete rejection by older females, which is interesting, again, in terms of convergence of MbE with varieties found further north.

With the variants of (t), then, a complex picture of variation and possible change has also emerged. Older and middle speakers show similar patterns to those

found in the variant usage of (p), as marked gender differences are revealed in the use of [ʔ͡t] (as preferred by the males) and [t] (as preferred by the females). The young speakers, however, have converged on a variant which seems to have taken the role of a supra-local norm and, in doing so, they have levelled out the gender variation found in the older groups. Every speaker in the sample shows some use of [ʔ]. However, with virtually categorical use amongst all young speakers, both male and female, [ʔ] for (t) seems to have levelled out both the localised [ʔ͡t], as preferred by the males, and the non-localised [t], as preferred by the females, almost completely. This finding is also interesting in view of the much lower use of [ʔ] in the Tyneside data, as noted in section 4. Indeed, such is the extent of young speakers' use of (t)-glottalling in Middlesbrough, that usage is higher than that found not only in the northern English city of Hull, but also in the south-eastern town of Milton Keynes as found by Williams and Kerswill (1999: 160).

5.3 (k)

    Figure 7 below presents variant usage of (k) by age.

Figure 7. Distribution of variants of (k) by age
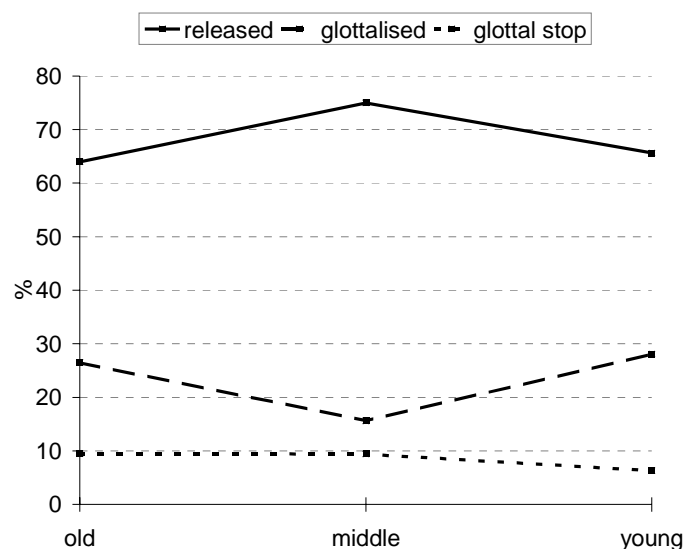
As can be seen in Figure 7, there is a certain amount of variation across age groups in variant usage of (k). The variation is not as marked as that seen for (p) and (t), however. In the distribution of variants of (k), all age groups show a much higher incidence of the released variant than of the other two variants under consideration. Over two thirds of the tokens in all age groups are accounted for by [k], with the middle group exhibiting the highest use.

    Use of the local glottalised variant demonstrates a similar pattern to that found for (p). The highest incidence of [ʔ͡k] is found amongst young speakers. This increase in use of the localised [ʔ͡k] is further evidence of the convergent trend in MbE with varieties from further north. Across age, incidence of [ʔ] for (k) is small but persistent. Unlike the findings for (p) and (t), however, [ʔ] for (k) surprisingly declines slightly amongst young speakers, with older and middle speakers having

virtually the same incidence as one another. We turn now to the distribution of variants of (k) broken down by age and gender.

Figure 8. Distribution of variants of (k) by age and gender
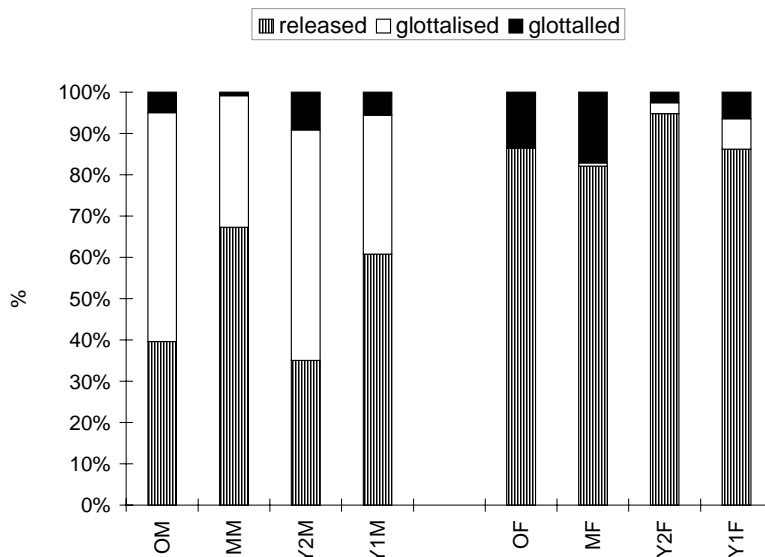
In the male data in Figure 8 we see a certain amount of variation across age. The old male speakers have a substantial preference for [ʔk] (although use of [ʔk] is much lower than the incidence of [ʔp] and [ʔt] in the old male group). Use of [ʔk] rises to its highest point in the young adult group, however, and then declines in the speech of the adolescent males. Use of [k] is fairly high amongst the males of all age groups. Also, [ʔ] rises slightly in the speech of the young males from virtual rejection by the middle and the old males.

In the female data in Figure 8, we can see that the level of variation across age groups in the distribution of variants of (k) is less than that found in the speech of the males. We also see the familiar gender difference in variant usage. In all age groups the preferred variant is by far the unmarked [k], which never drops below a very high incidence at 82%. Overall, use of [ʔ] is higher in the female speech than in the male speech, as was the case for (p) and (t). Unlike the use of [ʔ] for (p) and (t), however, use of [ʔ] amongst young females declines compared with the middle and old speakers' use. In the female data there is also the now familiar pattern of a sudden increase in the use of the North Eastern [ʔk] amongst young females, which was found for both (p) and (t). Use of [ʔk] is slight compared with the young male use. However, when seen in comparison with its total rejection by the old females and only one token recorded for the middle group, the young female use of [ʔk] gains significance and is seen in the light of convergent linguistic trends in the North East of England.

Over time, not as much variation is in evidence in the distribution of variants of (k)[3] as compared with variants of (p) and (t). Overall, [k] is the preferred variant for

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[3] Interestingly, three of the young speakers (one male and two females) revealed [x] realisations of (k), such as *knackered* [ˈnaxəd], *twockers* [ˈtwɒxəz], *Becky* [ˈbɛxi]. This is a feature associated with

both male and female speakers. Despite this, the data presented reveal the same pattern of gender variation as found in variant usage of (p) and (t). The female speakers overwhelmingly prefer the non-localised [k], whereas the male speakers show a high incidence of the localised [ʔ͡k], which is the preferred variant of the older males and the young adult males. The now familiar pattern of an increase in the use of the North Eastern glottalised variant has emerged, however. Despite the differences found between the two young groups of speakers, the combined young group has the highest incidence of [ʔ͡k] in the sample suggesting, again, the convergent trend of MbE towards varieties found further north, particularly in view of the increase in usage amongst young female speakers.

5.4 Summary of data: convergence and divergence

In all three variables analysed an increased use of the North Eastern variant, the glottalised realisation of the voiceless stops, has been demonstrated. This is most notable with the variable (p). Although the glottalised variants are not new to MbE, indeed, they are the preferred variants of the old male speakers, they are in a way new to the female speakers in intervocalic word medial position. The older female speakers of the sample virtually categorically reject [ʔ͡p], [ʔ͡t] and [ʔ͡k] in this environment. The sudden adoption of the glottalised variants by the young females coupled with the increased use of glottalised variants in the speech of the young males, suggests a degree of convergence of MbE with speech of further north in Tyneside, Wearside and Durham. The fact that [ʔ͡p] has become the preferred variant of the adolescent females suggests that the young females are at the vanguard of this change and that the variable (p) is most susceptible to glottalisation.

The decreasing use of the unmarked released variants particularly of (p) and (t), indicate a degree of divergence which can be seen not only as divergence from the standard British English unmarked variant, but also divergence from realisations found further south in Yorkshire.

In the use of the glottal stop, we see that [ʔ] is used for all three stops, with an increasing use suggested for (p) and a persistent use suggested for (k). Use of [ʔ] for (t) in the data, however, has increased to a dramatic degree, and is used almost categorically amongst the young speakers. In the increased use of [ʔ], we see in the speech of the young females, divergence from the unmarked [t] (which is the preferred variant of the old females), and in the speech of the young males, divergence from the localised [ʔ͡t] (the preferred variant of the old males). The young speakers, then, have converged on a variant which has taken the role of a supra-local norm and has levelled out the gender variation which exists in the older groups.

Overall, in the data analysed evidence for two processes of linguistic change can be seen. Accent levelling is demonstrated by the adoption of a supra-local norm in the near categorical use of [ʔ] for (t). However, we also have evidence for a simultaneous increase in a localised feature, particularly in the female use of [ʔ͡p], indicating the convergence of MbE with varieties found further north. Given the widespread and well-documented increase in the use of [ʔ] for intervocalic (t) throughout urban varieties of British English, the increase in the occurrence of this variant in MbE is not altogether surprising. The simultaneous increase in a localised

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Merseyside (Newbrook 1999, Wells 1982) and whether its use will spread in Middlesbrough will be an interesting line of further enquiry.

feature in the variables analysed is perhaps less predictable, and we turn now to consider possible motivating factors for the sudden increased use of the North Eastern feature in the data.

6.0 Discussion: mechanism of and motivation for linguistic change

Evidence suggests that the incidence of glottalisation of intervocalic (p t k) is considerably higher in Tyneside English than in MbE. Therefore, in increasing the use of word medial intervocalic glottalised stops the young speakers of the sample are bringing MbE closer to Tyneside English, suggesting a convergent linguistic trend. This convergence correlates neatly with the shifting identity of Middlesbrough and the pulling of the urban centre out of North Yorkshire and into the North East. In this light, the motivation for the sudden increase in the use of a localised North Eastern feature, thought to be recessive, may seem straightforward. We could hypothesise that the shifting identity of Middlesbrough has meant that the inhabitants now identify with varieties of English found further north, and particularly with the variety of the dominant urban centre of the North East, Newcastle. Consequently, they are increasing their use of a North Eastern feature. Compelling as this deduction may seem, however, this can only be conjecture and the question of how and why the linguistic changes are effected must be addressed in more detail. This section considers contact-based factors which may be instrumental in the increase of the feature in question. However, contact alone does not explain the motivation for the linguistic changes. Therefore, relevant attitudinal information is examined in section 6.1, with interpretations of this attitudinal information offered in section 6.2.

There may be evidence for increased short-term contact between people from Middlesbrough and people from Tyneside. Improved roads and public transport systems have made travel between the urban centres relatively easy (by road, almost the same time is needed to travel by public transport from Middlesbrough to Newcastle (38 miles) than from Middlesbrough to Hartlepool (an urban centre 15 miles away on the north bank of the mouth of the Tees)). Indeed, ten of the 16 young speakers in the sample claimed that Newcastle would be their usual destination for a day trip, as compared with four of the eight speakers from the middle group and one of the eight speakers from the old group[4].

This suggested increase in face-to-face contact with speakers in Tyneside is combined with the potential influence exerted through increased exposure to and awareness of accents from further north as presented through the media. Since 1959 Middlesbrough has been included in the independent regional television grouping of Tyne Tees, as noted in section 3.1. As a large part of regional television broadcasts concern local news or features, this involves the interviewing of 'local' people with 'local' accents. Although presenters and newscasters do not generally speak with marked regional accents, the appearance of 'local' people on regional television programmes has had the effect of exposing the inhabitants of Middlesbrough to varieties of English which are spoken in communities further north for the past 40 years[5]. Added to this is the recent popularity, on a nation-wide scale, of a number of television presenters and celebrities with North Eastern accents who appear on national television programmes aimed largely at a youth market, e.g. Ant and Dec,

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[4] The question 'If you wanted a day out shopping, where would you go?' was included in the interview to ascertain in which nearby urban centre speakers from Middlesbrough would be most likely to experience short-term face-to face contact with speakers of other varieties of British English.

[5] Some people interviewed did express the view that the inclusion of Middlesbrough in the regional television grouping of Tyne Tees had led to the accent becoming more like Geordie.

Jayne Middlemiss, Robson Green. Although no empirical evidence exists to determine the effect of the media on linguistic behaviour, it has recently been argued that:

> 'speakers of varieties which are linguistically close to socially influential models would be more likely to adopt patterns from those models than speakers whose native forms are very different. This ought to hold true for media-influenced change just as it does in the case of face-to-face accommodation' (Foulkes & Docherty 2001).

Following this argument, if North Eastern accents are becoming more socially influential (particularly in the youth market) as would be suggested by their increased use in the media, speakers from Teesside, being linguistically close to the model, would be those most inclined to adopt patterns from the model.

Although contact with and exposure to accents from further north appears to have increased, then, we cannot simply assume that speakers from Middlesbrough identify positively with varieties of English found further north and in particular the accent of the major urban centre of the North East, Newcastle. In order to gain insight into the motivation for the increased use of this North Eastern feature, we must attempt to access the local knowledge that speakers operate with when constructing and projecting their sociolinguistic identities and then correlate this attitudinal information with the linguistic evidence procured. To this end, we turn to a brief look at attitudinal information provided by the informants' responses to the questions in the Identification Questionnaire (IdQ) of the interview, as given in section 3.3, before interpreting this attitudinal information in section 6.2.

6.1 Identity: informants' attitudes

The first example question from the IdQ, 'What accent would you say you had, and do you like it?', seeks to establish what *label* the informants would give themselves. Responses to this seemingly straightforward question proved very telling. All groups of speakers showed variation in the responses to this question. However, the majority response of each age group tallied exactly with the history of the shifting identity of Middlesbrough. Amongst the old speakers, the most frequently given response was 'a Yorkshire accent'. The most frequently given response of the middle group was 'a Teesside accent', and amongst the combined group of young speakers the most frequently heard response was 'a Middlesbrough accent'. This suggests that speakers react to the identity of the area in which they live, and if the identity of that area changes, so will how they see themselves. The identity of the speech community can be seen to be realised through the individual inhabitants' perceptions of what accent they have and where they come from. Circumstances can be such as to change the labels people use to describe themselves, which can in turn change the label attached to the speech community by both the inhabitants and outsiders.

Lying between two relatively easily identified accents of British English, the Middlesbrough accent is not one that is readily identifiable by an outsider, as noted in section 3.1. Therefore, informants were asked how they would feel if their accent was referred to as either Geordie or Yorkshire. Informants' responses to this question also proved illuminating. In all groups of speakers the most frequently given response was that to be mistaken for Geordie would be more offensive, with only 5 out of the 32 informants claiming that they would prefer to be referred to as Geordie than as Yorkshire. Almost all informants had experienced being misidentified as a Geordie, yet only one or two informants remembered ever having been called Yorkshire.

Responses to the question ranged from feelings of mild dissatisfaction at being mistakenly identified as Geordie to pronounced anger and irritation. Reasons for the dislike of the Geordie label also seemed to vary across age. Virtually all of the old speakers (7 out of 8) expressed a dislike of being referred to as Geordie. However, as most of the old speakers considered themselves to have Yorkshire accents, many expressed incomprehension at being frequently referred to as Geordie with responses like 'I'm from Yorkshire not Geordieland….they might as well call you a Frenchman instead of an Englishman'. The middle group had the highest number of informants who said they would prefer Geordie to Yorkshire. Positive feelings towards Yorkshire were still in evidence among some speakers from the middle group, however, with these claiming that they would prefer the label 'Yorkshire'. The large majority of the speakers from the combined young group (13 out of 16) claimed that they would object to being mistaken for Geordie, with many professing a strong dislike of the Geordie accent. Most young speakers recounted the experience of having been mistaken for a Geordie. One adolescent male speaker even claimed to have been mistaken for a Geordie by a group of speakers from Sunderland which lies just 13 miles south of Newcastle and 25 miles north of Middlesbrough. Some young speakers expressed surprise at the idea of being mistaken for Yorkshire, as it did not seem a realistic possibility, the Yorkshire accent being associated with both rurality and / or a higher social class. Responses of young speakers ranged from the opinion that to be mistaken for Yorkshire suggested that people 'think you're posher than you are because that's a posh accent', to the straightforward 'I'm not a farmer'. In some cases a combination of the two ideas was in evidence, as in 'at least Yorkshire's got a bit of class innit?[6] They might be yackers [farmers], but they've got a bit of class'.

    The responses to the question concerning the formation of Teesside and the removal of Middlesbrough from North Yorkshire were equally illuminating. By far the majority of the old speakers expressed regret at no longer being part of the Ridings of Yorkshire, with responses such as: 'we still think of ourselves as Yorkshire. We didn't want to be Teesside', and the extreme: 'it was the saddest day of our life when we were taken out of Yorkshire'. In the middle group, a small majority of speakers thought the conurbation north and south of the Tees should be brought together and not divided by the river. Three of the speakers claimed that Middlesbrough should go back to Yorkshire, however. Amongst the middle group there was considerable expression of a lack of identity in Middlesbrough, with opinions such as: 'We're not Geordie. We're not Yorkshire. We're nothing really'; 'We're no-man's land, aren't we? We don't know what we are'; 'I remember people saying things like Geordies won't have you and Yorkshire won't have you and all that, as if we were almost sort of nothing really'; 'I don't feel we've got an identity, I don't know why'; 'We haven't got a status at all. They don't know what we are'. In the combined young group a much greater majority of speakers thought that the conurbation should be together (13 out of 16), two young speakers thought Middlesbrough should be a city by itself and only one expressed a desire to be in Yorkshire. A few of the young speakers were unaware of the association with Yorkshire and so were surprised at the question. Responses, then, correspond exactly to the fact that the speakers from the old group have spent the majority of their lives in Middlesbrough, Yorkshire; the middle groups' lifetime has seen constant changes of identity; and the young group have no memory, or in some cases no knowledge, of the Yorkshire identity.

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[6] The use of *innit?* as an invariant tag is noted in the speech of the young in the data. This is a feature associated with London English. As such its emergence in MbE is interesting in terms of the diffusion of grammatical, as well as phonological, innovations.

In terms of local allegiances, the importance of popular culture cannot be overstated, and the significance of sport in popular culture appeared central to many informants' sense of identity. Rivalry, particularly football rivalry, was often cited as a reason for the hostility towards Geordies amongst the young speakers, with no sense of rivalry felt towards football teams from Yorkshire. Although the rivalry is expressed as open hostility, rivalry also suggests a relationship. Where no rivalry is felt, no relationship can be seen to be in existence. Speakers from the old and middle groups who had strong feelings for Yorkshire often expressed their allegiance in terms of cricket, and the eligibility to play for Yorkshire Cricket Club was seen as a valid and emotive reason for wanting to be connected to Yorkshire. The declining popularity of cricket and the increasing popularity of football in recent years, then, may also have had a part to play in the shifting allegiance and sense of identity. Additionally, the view that an urban centre becomes prominent nationally when it has a football team in the Premier League in England was expressed several times by speakers. The fact that Middlesbrough Football Club has had a particularly high profile in the media since 1994, with the arrival of internationally renowned personalities at the club, was commented on frequently by informants and may also have contributed to the growing confidence of the young people in the status of Middlesbrough on a national scale.

Interestingly, in light of the responses to the previous question, in response to the last example question from the IdQ, that of whether informants would consider Middlesbrough to be in a larger 'North Eastern' part of the country or a larger 'Yorkshire' part of the country, all of the informants of the sample answered 'North Eastern'. Some of the old and the middle speakers did consider the 'Yorkshire' option, but all decided on 'North East'. Even those speakers who considered themselves to be from Yorkshire gave responses such as 'you're right at the top of Yorkshire, so to get it across you'd have to say North East'. Some informants had never really considered the proximity of Yorkshire before. The idea of classing Middlesbrough with Yorkshire in a geographical sense appeared strange, with responses such as 'it's weird, even though you're the same distance, how much you don't class yourself with them'; 'it's weird when you only go two minutes down the road and you're in like North Yorkshire. No I don't consider it at all. No I would definitely not say it [Yorkshire]'. In view of the unanimous answer of 'North East', then, it seems either that the geographical area of the locality and the actual identity of the region are not one and the same, or that speakers, even those who still consider themselves to be Yorkshire people with Yorkshire accents, now accept the label of North East as a response to the question 'where is Middlesbrough?'.

6.2 Identity: labelling and ideology

According to Johnstone (1999) regions are voluntary, as opposed to traditional, in that they are the results of how humans choose to divide up the world they experience. Thus 'speakers are seen as constructing place as they experience physical and social space, and different speakers may orient to place, linguistically, in very different ways and for very different purposes' Johnstone (1999: 2). The differences in linguistic orientation are clear in the Middlesbrough data as speakers' self-images in terms of what accent they have differ across age. The way speakers overtly define and delimit their accent is central to the construction of sociolinguistic identity. Just as 'popular labels for places often reflect the ways in which places are constituted through shared experiences and shared orientations' Johnstone (1999: 7), so the labels people choose to apply to themselves can reflect shared orientations. In

claiming to have a Yorkshire accent, then, speakers from the old group in the sample are demonstrating a shared orientation towards Yorkshire. Similarly, speakers from the middle group demonstrate a shared orientation towards Teesside and young speakers have a shared orientation towards Middlesbrough.

As well as the definition of self that the speakers operate with, however, the labels which are applied to the speakers by outsiders may be instrumental in the construction of these shared orientations and identities. The influential role of labelling has been investigated widely in sociological analyses of deviance (see Gove 1980). Part of the labelling theory may be applied to the picture of language variation under consideration. One of the most influential statements on deviance by Becker (1963: 9) contains the following tenet: 'The deviant is one to whom the label has been successfully applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label'. In other words, an act only becomes deviant when others perceive and define it as such. From this perspective, we can argue that an accent will become North Eastern when others perceive and define it as such. Becker goes on to argue that, as an individual's self-concept is largely derived from the responses of others, s/he tends to see her/himself in terms of the label. This may produce a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby the deviant identification becomes the controlling one. Given the extent of the application of the label 'Geordie' to the informants in the Middlesbrough sample, as noted in section 6.1, we could suggest that inhabitants of Middlesbrough are influenced subconsciously by the label 'Geordie' and not the label 'Yorkshire' in the construction of their identities. With the redrawing of administrative boundaries and the subsequent shifting identity of Middlesbrough, the label 'Yorkshire' has lost all relevance for the young speakers in Middlesbrough, for whom no connection is seen to exist between Middlesbrough and Yorkshire (recall older speakers consider themselves to be Yorkshire people with Yorkshire accents). Given this disassociation with Yorkshire, perhaps the ascribed status has become the achieved status, then, and the deviant identification of Geordie has become the controlling one. Thus, a self-fulfilling prophecy may have been produced whereby MbE has become more North Eastern, demonstrated in the fact that young speakers are increasing their use of a localised North Eastern feature.

There is evidence, then, of increased contact with and exposure to varieties of English found further north, and this is combined with the effects of an almost complete loss of relevance of the label 'Yorkshire' to the young speakers of Middlesbrough. However, does the linguistic convergence, as evidenced particularly in the higher level of use of intervocalic [ʔ͡p] amongst young speakers, represent a conscious identification with varieties of English found in Tyneside? By utilising an ethnographic approach to the sociolinguistic enquiry into MbE and by gaining access to speakers' opinions and overt discussion and awareness of what their language and area mean to them, we gain insight into the symbolic function of the dialect. A language ideology framework allows us a deeper understanding of the overt and covert social meaning attached to the linguistic forms under consideration. Such a language ideology framework, based on linguistic anthropological theories (see further Silverstein 1992, 1995, Woolard 1992) has recently been applied to sociolinguistic data (see further Anderson and Milroy 1999, Dyer 2000, Milroy 2000). If we take a model of language ideology as a neutral semiotic process (Silverstein 1992, 1995), as opposed to a strategy for maintaining power (Lippi-Green 1997), we can consider how language forms index the social identity of the speaker. Silverstein (1995) identifies two orders of indexicality. First order indexicality concerns the association of a linguistic form with a socially meaningful category. Second order

indexicality involves the overt or covert noticing, discussion and rationalisation of first order indexicality. The opinions expressed by the informants of the study, as noted in section 6.1, are thus overt instantiations of second order indexicality.

The instantiations of second order indexicality reveal the realignment of orientations across age groups and reveal the ideologies underpinning the speakers' choices of sociolinguistic variants. Middlesbrough, clearly, is a different place for the different generations in the sample. However, the instantiations of second order indexicality presented in section 6.1 would seem to refute the hypothesis that the increased use of glottalisation demonstrates a conscious identification or an 'act of identity' (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985) with Newcastle and Tyneside English. An ardent sense of rivalry and even hostility towards the Geordie accent and what it is perceived to stand for is demonstrated in the responses from the informants. This hostility is expressed by all four adolescent females of the sample (the adolescent females being the speakers with the most marked increase in the use of the glottalised stops, and therefore those at the vanguard of the convergent trend). The rivalry and hostility is expressed largely as a dislike of the accent and a resentment towards the perceived dominance of Newcastle in the North East. This open hostility would suggest that, on a conscious level, the young speakers from Middlesbrough do not identify openly and positively with Tyneside or the Geordie accent.

Instead, the higher level of use of glottalised stops is concurrent with an increased confidence expressed by young speakers in the status of Middlesbrough as both an accent and an 'place' in its own right. The hostility towards Newcastle and the Geordie accent, with the refusal of young speakers to see Middlesbrough as a satellite of the dominant Tyneside conurbation, suggests that young speakers see themselves as 'North Eastern', but as from Middlesbrough. The most plausible interpretation of the increased use of the glottalised stops then seems to be that in increasing their use of a localised feature, young speakers from Middlesbrough are not identifying with Newcastle, but are indexing their Middlesbrough identity. Although the question of the identity of Middlesbrough is still a matter for debate, for the young speakers it is not part of a larger Yorkshire region, as it is for the old speakers, nor is it a place without an identity, as it is for the middle speakers. Rather, for the young speakers of the sample the identity of Middlesbrough is simply Middlesbrough. As in Berwick-upon-Tweed, the young speakers are using the strategy of localism to construct their identities, and one way of indexing this identity linguistically seems to be by demonstrating a higher level of use of intervocalic glottalisation.

7.0 Conclusions

A picture of highly complex variation in variant usage of (p t k) has been presented. The variation not only has interesting implications at the phonological level and the sociolinguistic level, but also in terms of the processes of and motivation for linguistic change.

At the phonological level, the data presented would seem to reinforce one of the conclusions drawn by the Tyneside study (Docherty et al. 1997), that the glottalled and the glottalised variants represent different choices available to the speaker, which are not necessarily ranged on a continuum of increasing lenition. The female use of the released variant as an alternative to the glottalled variant of (t) is not linear, there being a rejection of the intermediary glottalised variant. Use of these variants, therefore, represent a set of choices which are available and systematically preferred and dispreferred by speakers. Additionally, by analysing use of the glottalled and the glottalised variants of the voiceless stops (p), (t) and (k), findings reveal the higher

susceptibilities of the individual phonological variables to glottalling and glottalisation. The pattern found in MbE is the same as that found in the Tyneside data, i.e. (p) is the most susceptible of the three stops to glottalisation and (t) is the most susceptible of the three stops to glottalling.

On the sociolinguistic level, the marked gender variation and age variation revealed in the data suggests that speakers within the speech community systematically choose variants to realise their sociolinguistic identity. In terms of gender variation amongst the older speakers, marked differences are demonstrated in the use of the North Eastern glottalised variants and the non-localised released variants. The patterns found to some extent reinforce the belief that female speakers use more unmarked variants whilst male speakers use more marked variants. However, in all three stops the female speakers reveal a higher use of [ʔ] than do the male speakers. Although [ʔ] is not a localised variant, it is a marked variant, and the higher female use of [ʔ] is in line with many recent studies and, moreover, runs contrary to the belief that the glottal stop is a working class male norm.

The variation across age is as significant as the gender variation found in the data, and reveals that young males and females appear to be converging and lessening the gender differences found in the old and middle groups. The variation revealed in the phenomena analysed has provided evidence for the simultaneous existence of the two diametrically opposed processes of linguistic change, that of accent levelling and that of the increased use of a localised feature, illustrating the complexity of the processes of linguistic change. The variable revealing the most variation across age is (t). The process of accent levelling is demonstrated in the marked increase in the use of [ʔ] for (t) amongst young speakers which reflects the dramatic and widespread increase of this variant throughout Britain. As [ʔ] for (t) is used almost categorically amongst young speakers, it has not only levelled out the gender variation as found in the other two stops, but it has also virtually levelled out the other two variants of (t) completely, and has thus become a supra-local norm.

In terms of the increased use of a localised feature, a significant finding in the study is that the combined group of young speakers shows the highest use of the glottalised variants of (p) and (k) of all speakers. This increase, and particularly the sudden *female* use of the glottalised variants of all three stops, is seen as evidence of the convergence of MbE with varieties from further north in Tyneside, Wearside and Durham. Interestingly, in the pilot study of Middlesbrough (Llamas 1998), in which speech of young speakers only was analysed, the much lower use of the glottalised variants by young females compared with young male speakers was taken as evidence for the levelling out of the localised variant by the female speakers. The data presented here, revealing as it does the sudden use of the glottalised variants amongst young females compared with its virtual rejection by older females, not only represents the value of apparent time studies and of using age as a variable, but also suggests that the glottalised variants are not recessive as thought.

Sociolinguistically, analysis of the data has been two-fold. On one level we have considered how individuals realise their sociolinguistic identity within the speech community through their choice of variants, demonstrated in the marked gender differences found particularly between the older and middle age groups, and the differences found between the young speakers and the older groups. On another level, by linking the linguistic variation with social changes in the identity of the urban centre in question, we have examined how the individuals collectively realise the linguistic identity of the speech community to which they belong, and how

changes in the perceived identity of the speech community can be reflected in the speech of its inhabitants, as revealed by the sudden or increased use of a North Eastern feature by speakers for whom the label 'Yorkshire' now has no relevance.

By examining the fluid nature of regional identity construction and by considering the symbolic function of the linguistic forms under consideration within a language ideology framework we have questioned what use of a localised form indexes. By examining attitudinal information, a tension is revealed between the hypothesised identification with Tyneside suggested by the increased use of glottalisation amongst young speakers and the overtly negative and hostile attitudes towards Newcastle and the Geordie accent. Moreover, evidence for use of the strategy of localism in self-identity and a growing confidence in the status of Middlesbrough amongst young speakers has been presented. We can infer, then, that the increased use of glottalisation indexes a Middlesbrough identity and not a conscious identification with Newcastle, indicating that the motivation for linguistic change in progress is every bit as complex and germane to sociolinguistic enquiry as the linguistic changes themselves.

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Appendix

Distribution of variants of (p) by age and gender

	Total	[p]		[ʔ͡p]		[ʔ]	
		n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
OM	117	13	11.1	104	88.9	0	0
MM	103	28	27.2	74	71.8	1	1
Y2M	120	9	7.5	110	91.7	1	0.8
Y1M	114	25	21.9	87	76.3	2	1.8
OF	108	98	90.8	5	4.6	5	4.6
MF	113	104	92	7	6.2	2	1.8
Y2F	112	88	78.6	13	11.6	11	9.8
Y1F	112	45	40.2	54	48.2	13	11.6

Distribution of variants of (t) by age and gender

	Total	[t]		[ʔ͡t]		[ʔ]	
		n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
OM	120	15	12.5	91	75.8	14	11.7
MM	120	30	25	33	27.5	57	47.5
Y2M	120	2	1.7	3	2.5	115	95.8
Y1M	120	7	5.8	17	14.2	96	80
OF	115	84	73	0	0	31	27
MF	112	71	63.4	2	1.8	39	34.8
Y2F	120	8	6.7	6	5	106	88.3
Y1F	120	5	4.2	6	5	109	90.8

Distribution of variants of (k) by age and gender

	total	[k]		[ʔ͡k]		[ʔ]	
		n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
OM	101	40	39.6	56	55.4	5	5
MM	107	72	67.3	34	31.8	1	0.9
Y2M	120	42	35	67	55.8	11	9.2
Y1M	107	65	60.8	36	33.6	6	5.6
OF	110	95	86.4	0	0	15	13.6
MF	117	96	82.1	1	0.8	20	17.1
Y2F	77	73	94.8	2	2.6	2	2.6
Y1F	94	81	86.2	7	7.4	6	6.4