

BACKGROUND

Language change across the lifespan

Critical period hypothesis:

Speakers' capacity to acquire or modify language declines in later life

Apparent-time hypothesis:

"Speech patterns are largely fixed by early adulthood" (Wagner 2012:372)

Panel research demonstrates change

- *Lifespan change*: individual language change in the direction of community-wide patterns (e.g. Sankoff & Blondeau 2007)
- *Retrograde movement*: against the community-wide change (e.g. Sankoff & Wagner 2011)

Second dialect acquisition

Individuals pick up linguistic features characteristic of a community to which they have relocated (e.g. Nycz 2013; Sankoff 2004)

Previous research focus on specific life-stages:



Emerging adulthood life-stage

- "Rapid and complex changes in beliefs, behaviours and identity" (Bigham 2012)
- Characterized by geographic mobility, fluidity of social networks
- Precarious economic context: service industry jobs; corresponding instability in wage/benefits; student debt

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

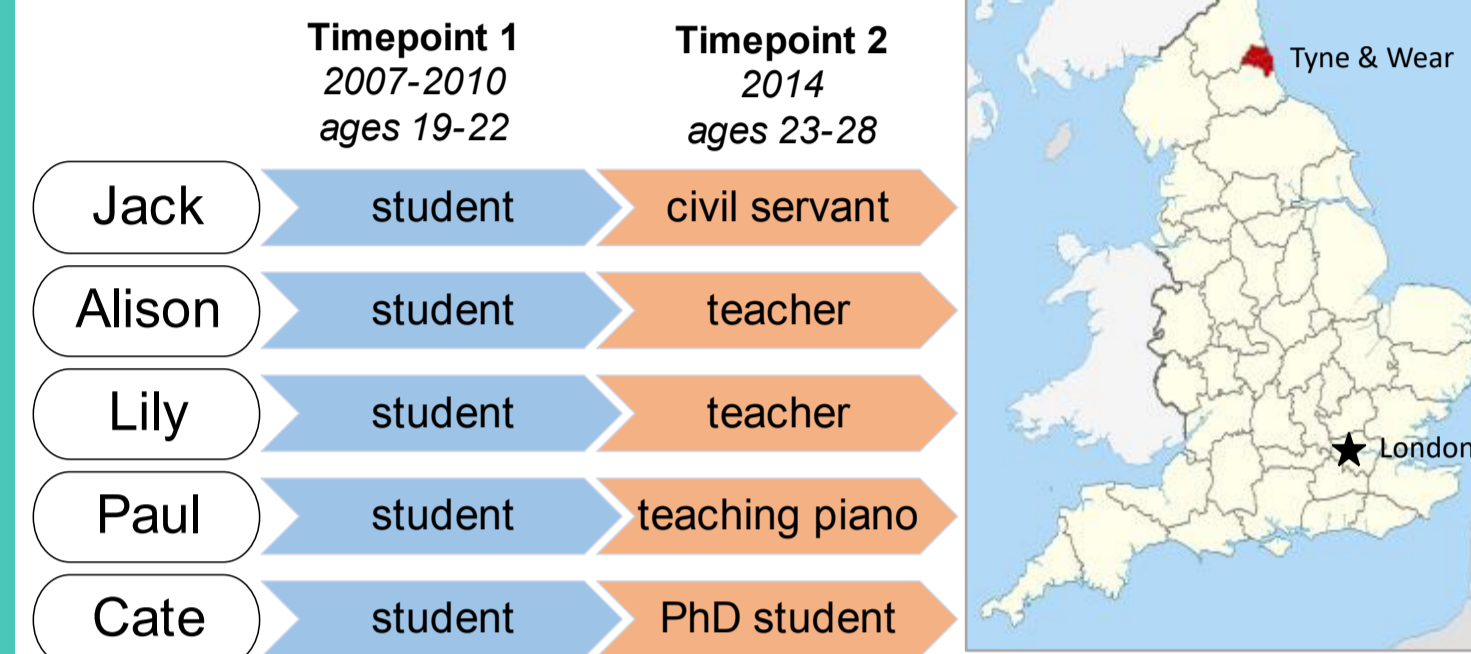
What are the effects of post-university trajectories on linguistic practices?

How might these relate to place-based variation ('sounding local') or pressures from the linguistic marketplace ('sounding standard')?

METHODS

Panel speakers

- 5 speakers from Tyne & Wear, Northern England
- Dyadic sociolinguistic interviews at two timepoints



- History of heavy industry: coal-mining, shipbuilding, steel manufacturing
- Associated with stigmatised Geordie dialect

Linguistic variables & analyses

FACE and GOAT vowel dynamics

- 25 tokens per speaker, N=476
- **F1 and F2 measurements** 25% and 75% into trajectory; calculate Euclidian distance between onset and offset (Hillenbrand *et al.* 1995)
- Mixed-effects models for each vowel for each speaker (fixed effects of timepoint, log duration, preceding manner and place of articulation, following manner and place of articulation; word as random effect)

(ING) realization

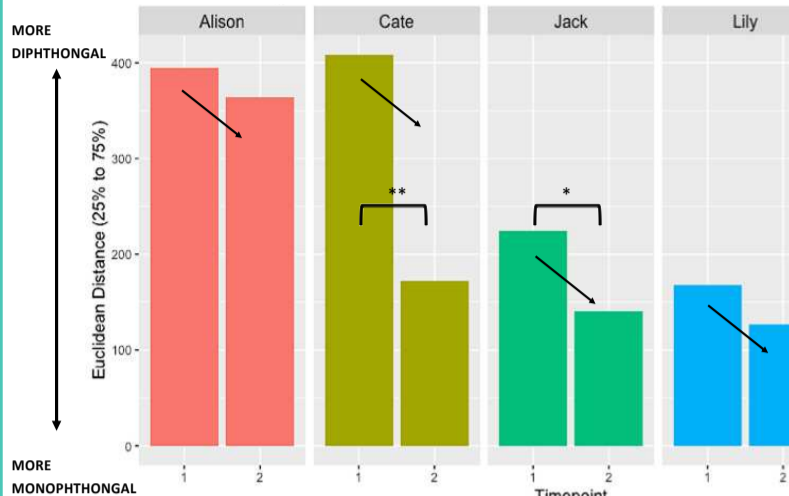
- All tokens for all speakers, N=535
- Auditorily coded: **alveolar [n]** or **velar [ŋ]**
- Binomial logistic regression models for each speaker

Inter-sonorant /t/

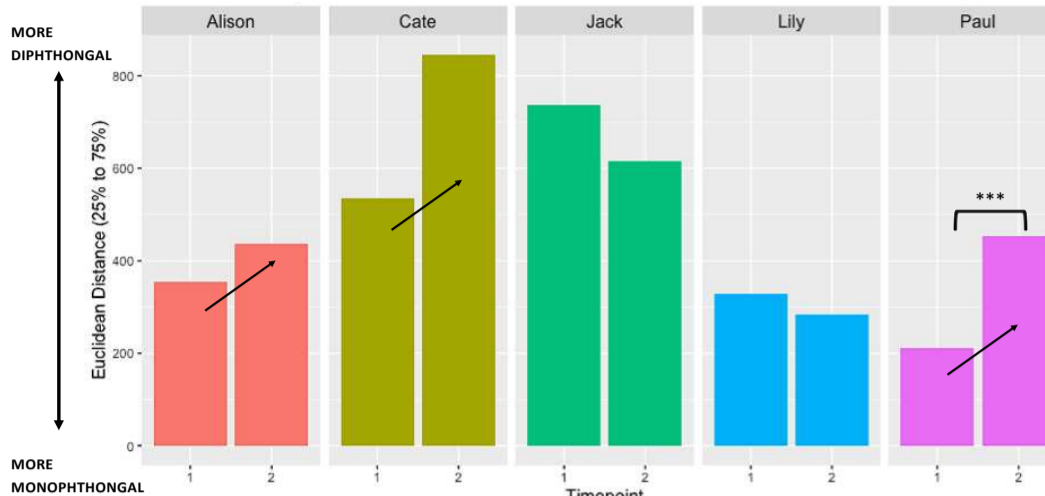
- All tokens for all speakers, N=688
- Auditorily coded using acoustic cues: **glottal stop, glottalized, tapped, voiced/deleted, released**
- Binomial logistic regression models for each speaker, comparing each pair of realizations

RESULTS

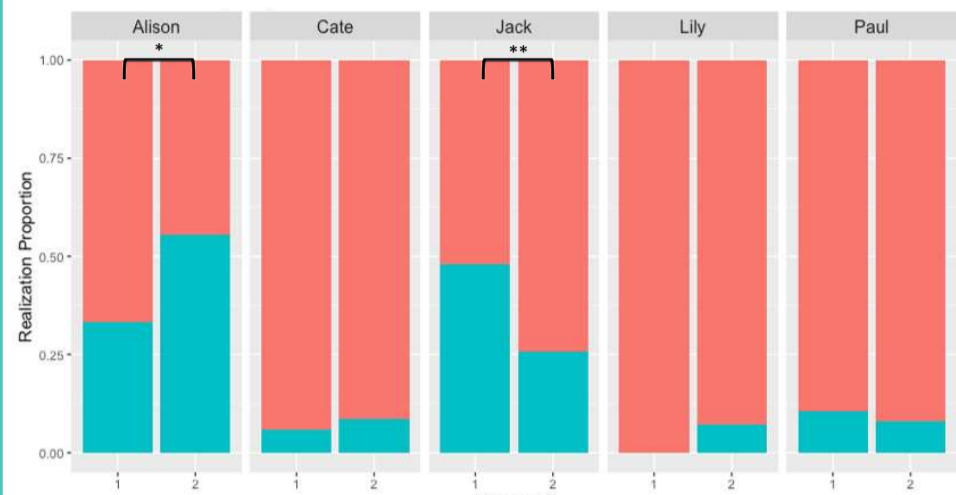
FACE vowel dynamics



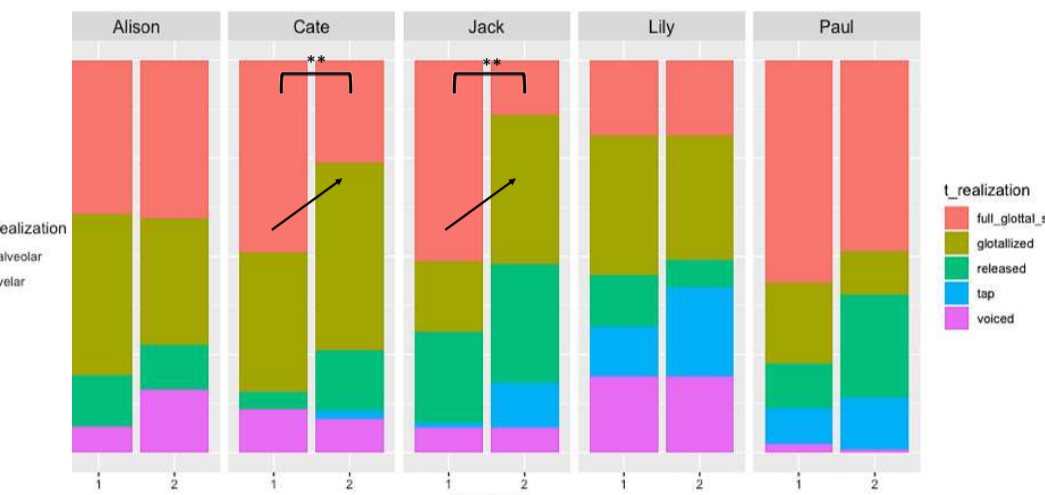
GOAT vowel dynamics



Realization of (ING)



Realization of inter-sonorant /t/



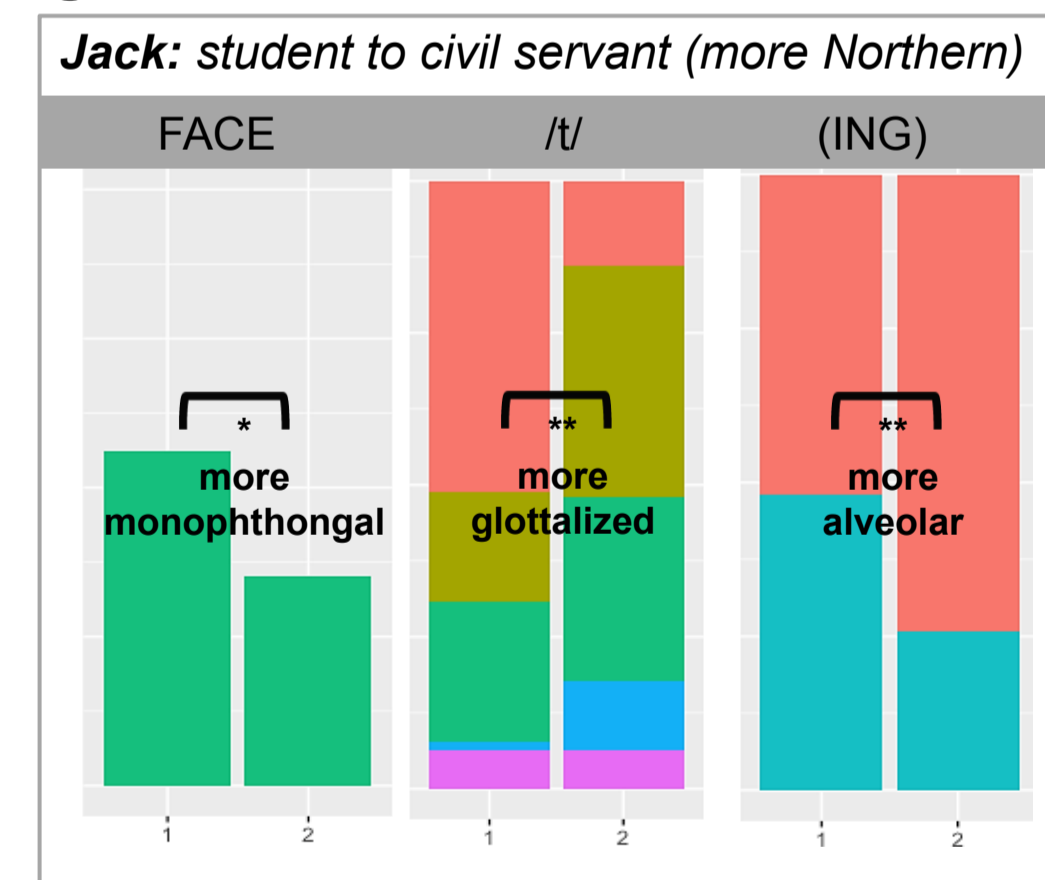
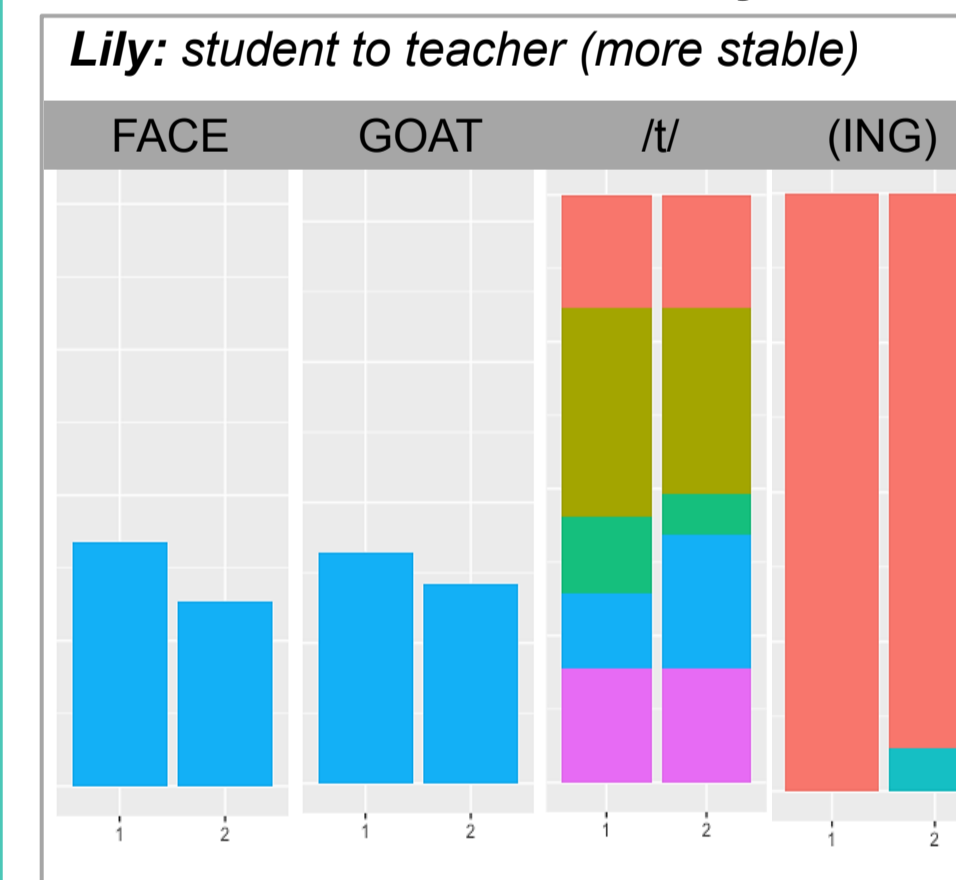
Shared patterns:

- more monophthongal FACE at timepoint 2 (**Jack, Cate, Lily and Alison**)
- more diphthongal GOAT at timepoint 2 (**Paul, Alison and Cate**)
- more glottalized & less glottal stop /t/ at timepoint 2 (**Jack and Cate**)

Varied patterns:

- (ING): **Jack** uses more alveolar and **Alison** more velar at Timepoint 2, others remain relatively stable

Two individuals: stability and change



Lily is the most stable speaker:

- at Timepoint 2, teaching in a school in the neighbourhood of her parents' house, where she still lives
- orientation to home and her stable localized networks might have contributed to her linguistic stability

Jack had significant changes in his use of 3 out of the 4 variables:

- from Sunderland, came to Newcastle to study
- at Timepoint 2, working as a civil servant in Newcastle
- more Northern: reflects his work / daily interactions with Tynesiders

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

All but one speaker exhibits changes across at least one variable, but changes are not generally predictable

Sounding 'standard'

- trend toward more diphthongal GOAT vowel
- three speakers using less glottal stop

Sounding 'Northern'

- trend toward more monophthongal FACE vowel
- high frequency of glottalization

Individuals likely modify their linguistic repertoire across emerging adulthood to orient to changes in work and social life (or relative lack thereof)

More work needed to understand the factors that influence individuals' degree of linguistic malleability across the post-adolescent life-span (Bowie & Yaeger-Dror 2015)

Future work: trend study of Newcastle University students and graduates across same timespan

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