

## 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

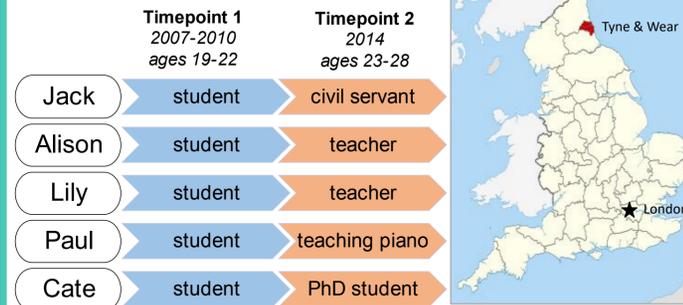
What are the effects of post-university trajectories on linguistic practices?

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

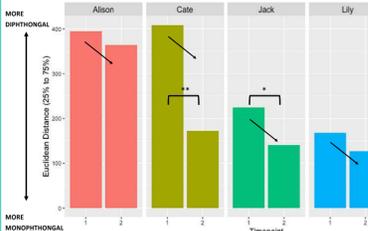
- All tokens for all speakers, N=535
- Auditorily coded: **alveolar [n]** or **velar [ŋ]**
- Binomial logistic regression models for each speaker

#### Inter-sonorant /t/

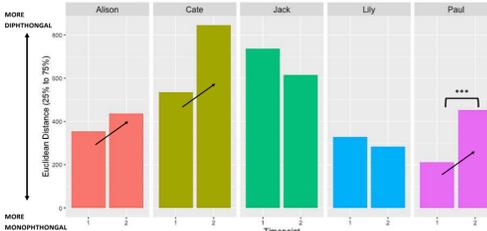
- All tokens for all speakers, N=688
- Auditorily coded using acoustic cues: **glottal stop, glottalized, tapped, voiced/deleted, released**
- Binomial logistic regression models for each speaker, comparing each pair of realizations

## RESULTS

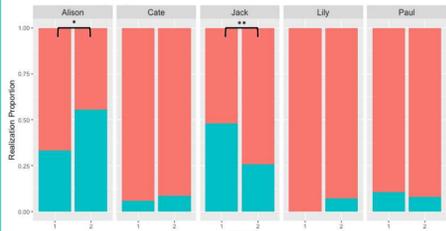
### FACE vowel dynamics



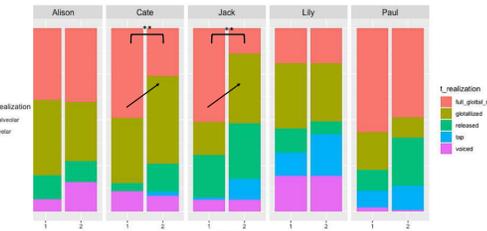
### GOAT vowel dynamics



### Realization of (ING)



### Realization of inter-sonorant /t/



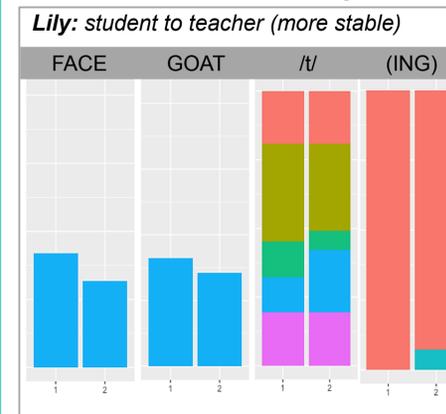
### Shared patterns:

- 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:

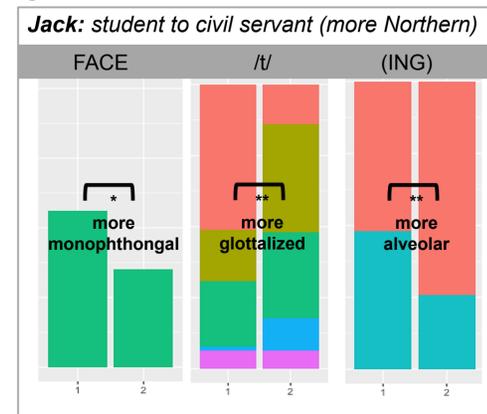
- (ING): **Jack** uses more alveolar and **Alison** more velar at Timepoint 2, others remain relatively stable

### 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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