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It's /tʃuzdeɪ/, Innit?: Yod Coalescence in British English

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IT'S /tʃuzdeɪ/, INNIT?: YOD COALESCENCE IN BRITISH ENGLISH

by

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DEDICATION

To my father-in-law, Terry, who has supported and encouraged me to pursue this degree while sharing his love of words with me.

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on British English (BE) has shown that variation in dialects stems from both regional and social differences (Hughes & Trudgill, 1979; Kwon, 2006; Glain, 2012; and others). For instance, if a speaker identifies as middle- to upper-class in the UK, they are more likely to use RP (Received Pronunciation) than a speaker who identifies with a lower-class social status. This, and other variables, accounts for variability among regionally similar but phonologically different British dialects.

This thesis analyzes the use of Yod Coalescence (YC), a phonological phenomenon that focuses on C-/ju/ sequences and their tendencies to drop yod and affricate, in BE dialects. For example, *tune*, which is currently pronounced as /tjun/ or /tun/, would affricate and palatalize with yod to form /tʃun/. Previously, YC has been said to be predicted by speaker group association to RP or Estuary English (EE) (Glain, 2012), but its potential for spread – but not complete adoption – into BE dialects means that other variables must be able to predict its use.

It has been previously established that RP of BE elicits similar upper-class perceptions among listeners (Agha, 2003), while EE is typically used by working-class speakers. However, YC is documented in speakers that are not contained solely to working-class groups, from well-known television. show host, John Oliver, to a Twitter thread of generalized “British people” with orthographic markers of this palatalization, found in “Chewsday” instead of “Tuesday.”

This research analyzes the varying levels of significance of age, speaker group, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and lexical frequency on YC use. While both speaker group and age play a significant role, there is not as great a significance as predicted, showing the potential for spread of this feature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BE ..... British English

EE.....Estuary/Essex English

PL.....Popular London

RP..... Received Pronunciation

YC.....Yod Coalescence

YD..... Yod Dropping

YU..... Yod Use

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Previous research on British English (BE) has shown that variation in dialects stems from both regional and social differences (Hughes & Trudgill, 1979; Kwon, 2006; Glain, 2012; among others). For instance, if a speaker identifies as upper-class in the UK, they are more likely to use RP (Received Pronunciation) than a speaker who identifies with a lower-class social status. This, and other variables, accounts for variability among regionally similar but phonologically different British dialects.

One such variable among Southeastern BE dialects is the variant Yod Coalescence (YC). YC is described as the phenomenon in which "an alveolar plosive plus palatal semivowel becomes a palatoalveolar affricate" (Wells, 1999, 9). For instance, in a word like *tune*, RP /tjun/ affricates to become [tʃun]. This phenomenon occurs in other similar phonological environments, such as *due* from /du/ to [dʒu]. While this sound has been recorded among some BE dialects, it is not indicated as a larger BE phonological trait.

Wells's analysis of the adoption of YC into some dialects does not stand alone as the only mention of BE dialects taking on variants from other dialects. Coggle (1993) also noted a rise in influence from certain dialects in Britain, like Cockney, or Estuary English, on pronunciations in RP. The influence of Estuary dialects on RP is showcased in the 'happy-tensing' of the Queen's English during a longitudinal study conducted by Harrington (2006), which found the Queen's speech to have changed over time in terms

of tensing her high-front unrounded vowel, [ɛ] → [i]. The author proposed that the Queen's shift in pronunciation was partially due to societal changes and incorporation of popular working-class dialect sounds. The present study focuses on YC's predictability of use and whether or not each speaker's dialect group still predicts its use or if its spread indicates a wider array of variables – like age, educational attainment, and so on – as predictors.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

RP, Popular London, & Estuary English

Dialects range across the British Isles, historically dependent on region and social status. This study focuses on RP, Popular London (PL), and Estuary English (EE). These three dialects can be found within the same geographical region, the southeast of England – otherwise known as the "Home Counties" for their vicinity to London – making it easier to examine linguistic features that overlap among all three (see Figure 2.1 below).

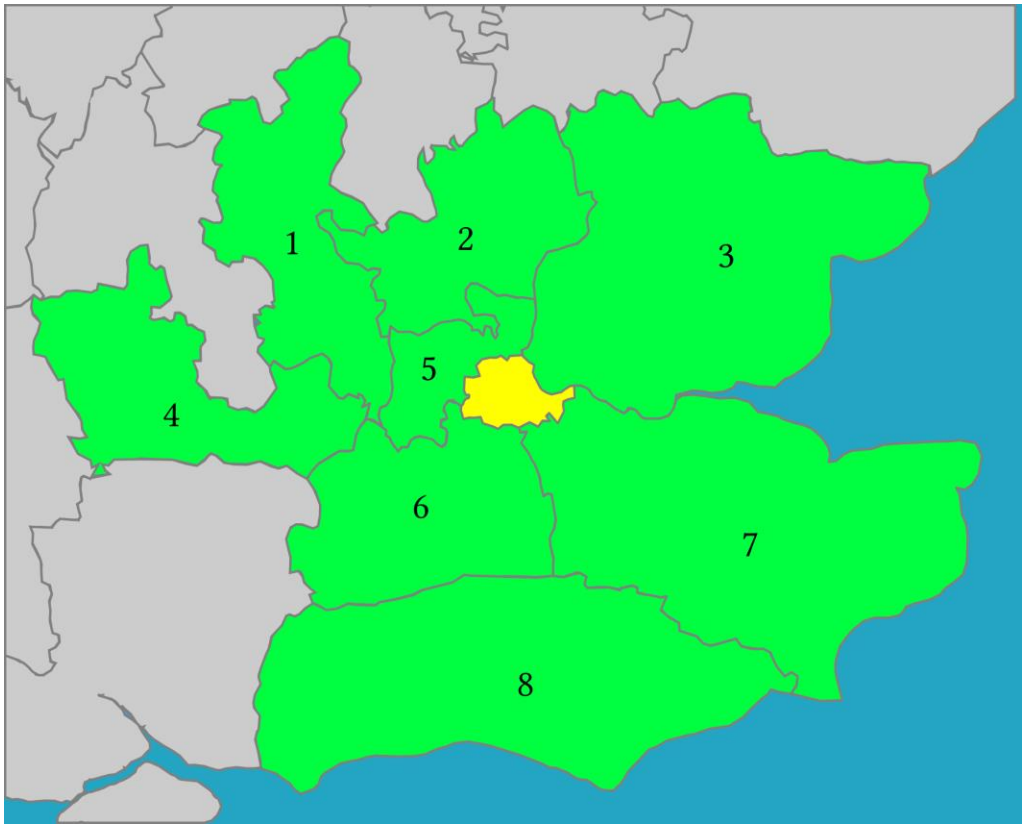


Figure 2.1 Map of Home Counties. The former geographic counties (1889–1965) surrounding London: 1. Buckinghamshire 2. Hertfordshire 3. Essex 4. Berkshire 5. Middlesex (now part of Greater London) 6. Surrey 7. Kent 8. Sussex. (County of London shown in yellow) "Home Counties," 2021.

All three dialects also have historically used both Yod Dropping (YD), in which a historical [j] is dropped – i.e. *tune* [tjun] → [tun] – and YC to varying degrees, as seen in previous research (Kwon, 2006; Glain, 2012; and others).

RP is well-known as the BE dialect of upper-class Britain. Its name alone evokes the idea of a prim and proper dialect, as the "Received" part of RP is meant to be "accepted in the best society," per its 19th century meaning (Hughes & Trudgill, 1979). RP is used by the royal family, families with land, money, and political prominence, and those who are highly educated. Due to RP's prestige status, it is also the dialect most associated with preserving older and more traditional pronunciations and spellings of English. RP is the dialect of Oxbridge – the collective term for Oxford and Cambridge traditional-style university – as well as grammar schools across the UK, and, of course, The Queen. RP is historically the most resistant speaker group to language change among BE dialects. While even RP has historically ceased use of yod in some pronunciations, it has not adopted YC as a feature, seen below in Table 2.1.

If thought of as a continuum, EE, sometimes referred to as Cockney for their vastly shared phonological traits, is profoundly different to RP. Where RP is used by upper-class speakers, EE is used by working-class speakers, who typically made their homes outside of London along the Thames Estuary or Essex, specifically. Where RP is traditional and prescriptivist in its pronunciations, EE exhibits a lot of variation and change. YC is documented in EE by Kwon (2006), as seen below in Table 2.1.

Finally, in the middle of this continuum, is Popular London (PL). PL uses features from both RP and EE. While PL has been documented to be used by working-class

speakers in and around London, it shares more features with RP than EE does. PL is used by various classes of people and originates from the urbanized center of London.

Table 2.1 The realization of /j/ in London's three social dialects

(Adapted from Kwon, 2006)

Environment	RP	Popular London	Estuary English
/[+palatal]_/ /r_/ /[+cons] l_/	/j/ → ∅		
/t, d, n_/	[tj, dj, nj] (YU)	[t, d, n] (YD)	[tʃ, dʒ, n] (YC)
/s, z, θ, l_/	[sj~s, zj~z, θ, lj~l] (YU or YD)	[s, z, θ l] (YD)	[ʃ, ʒ, θ, l] (YC)
elsewhere	/j/ retains		

History of Yod Use & Dropping

Historically, English words with the long /o:/ vowel fell into two categories after the Great Vowel Shift in Middle English: words like *goose, loose,* and *move* shifted vowels from /o:/ to /u:/, while words like *duke, tune,* and *mule*, historically had an /u:/ preceded by a yod that was created by a [ɪu] diphthong, which we know today as [ju] (Wells, 1982). This form of YD is known as Early Yod Dropping and began in the environment shown in Figure 2.2.

/j/ → [ø] / [C_u]

It reads '/j/ becomes ø when it is preceded by a palatal consonant and followed by /u/ but is not part of historical YD.

Figure 2.2 Environment of Yod Dropping. Glain, (2012).

This created homophones between words like *threw-through* and *brewed-brood* (Glain, 2012). This early form of YD provides some insight into present-day trends.

The words that currently use yods or more recently ceased use of them are considered part of the /Cju/ sequence, named to represent the phenomenon of yod usage – much like the pronunciation of vowels by words that use them. This stage is called Later

Yod Dropping (Glain, 2012) and refers to the usage of YD in which words such as *suit* and *dune* are pronounced [sut] and [dun].

Class, Indexicality & Covert Prestige

In language variation studies, variables such as social class, education, age, and gender are examined to determine patterns of language use. In his study of rhotic use in New Yorkers' speech, Labov (1972) found that social class predicted r-lessness in lower class speakers, in comparison to r-use among upper class speakers. Social class was a consistent predictor of the variant each speaker produced, in that lower-class speakers used the marked variant, r-lessness, over the standard variant, r-fulness. This pattern of variant dichotomy emerges in other dialects, including the comparison of RP to other BE dialects. However, Wells (1999) notes that more recent public perception of RP is not as favored as it once was, especially among younger speakers, so alignment with RP's prestige variants may not be as strong in the current upcoming generations of speakers.

Though the UK, historically, places more emphasis on class, modern society may not value this tradition, which, in turn, impacts language use in the UK. Kerswill & Williams's (2000) Dialect Levelling Project proposed two ideas relevant to the current study: 1) in areas of high population movement – areas that have a population where many people move in and out of the area – there may be rapid changes in dialect and accent features, including dialect leveling; and 2) language change is most visible in the comparison of younger speech with older adults' speech. Since the speech examined in this study is in the immediate vicinity of London – a high population movement region – the dialects in the surrounding Home Counties should be more susceptible to changes, like dialect levelling. Kerswill & Williams (2000) note that London is held to be the

origin of many phonological changes in English regional varieties. Additionally, speakers in regions with more social mobility – a growing middle class, high job availability, access to education and technical training– are less likely to have a close social network due to their ability to move physically and socially, also making dialect levelling more probable. If YC's covert prestige enables it to be used more frequently among speakers who socially align with working class populations in and around London, and in opposition to public service broadcasters and royalty, and if more people in England are distancing themselves more from tradition and royalty, YC as a variant may be incorporated into the current dialect levelling of the Home Counties.

Wells (1999) conducted a survey on language in which public perceptions of RP and upper-class speech were anecdotally recorded. According to Wells and his colleagues, younger speakers were not as concerned with upholding RP as a prestige dialect as their elders and perceived RP to be exclusionary. Age once again largely comes into play when looking at Wells's collection of data on YC: the variant was "rejected" by older speakers and "preferred" by younger speakers.

Trudgill (1972) found that women use prestige variants more frequently than men. However, in his study, he argued that men who used working class speech held a more desirable speech variant among other men, working class or not. The Self-Evaluation test that Trudgill used to explore participants' perception of language prestige had 12 lexical items read aloud to informants with two or more pronunciations – i.e. *tune* read as [tju:n] and [tu:n]. Trudgill found that uses of [ju] were indicative of RP, while [u] without a preceding [j] was the more marked or lower-class variant. The two main findings of this study were that: a) participants viewed [ju] as prestigious, and b) participants viewed [u]

as lower class. The third variant, YC use, is not mentioned in the study. YC's status as a variant should be even more marked than its counterparts, in that it appears to be a variant that was unused in the surrounding areas of London until much more recently. Returning to the purpose of Trudgill's study, Trudgill (1972) found that male speakers either subconsciously or privately favored working class non-standard speech forms, which he attributed to signaling in-group solidarity. In terms of gender, it was more likely for working class men to share this perception with middle class men than with working class women. However, younger participants of both genders favored non-standard forms. As such, in keeping with Glain (2012), men should display YC more frequently than women, and younger speakers – both men and women – should use YC more frequently than their older counterparts. While Eckert (2008) notes that, statistically, women lead sound changes more than men, men are more associated with covert prestige variants than women. Though YC use was originally more indicative of working-class men, the generalization that younger speakers are carrying the trend speaks to both Trudgill's and Eckert's findings.

Ochs (1992) discusses how phonological variants within one word can convey different social meaning, like differences within social class, ethnicity of speakers, and the distance between speaker and addressee. However, she notes that "few features of language directly and exclusively index gender." Likewise, Eckert (2008) notes that the indexical field is a "constellation" of related meanings, in which many and variable meanings may be activated in the use of a language variant, and that the variant may not be connected to just one, but many identities. Following Trudgill's findings in the previous study of men's preferences for covert prestige variants and a secondary

preference among younger speakers for the non-standard variant – mirroring Wells (1999) survey – the current study seeks to holistically track the predictors of YC use, beyond gender and age, considering that a combination of factors may be at work.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

Participants

Twelve participants, ranging in age from 24 to 76, were recruited via snowball sampling. Each participant completed a demographics survey that requested information about their self-identified variety of BE group, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, age, and gender. 4 participants identified as speakers of PL and 8 of non-RP Standard British, and all participants have lived in, or are originally from, the Home Counties of England. Participants were not given a definition of each dialect grouping, since the general British public is aware that these speaker groups exist and identify accordingly.

Stimuli

In his study, Glain (2012) assessed differences in pronunciation across pronunciation dictionaries – in his case, Longman's Pronunciation Dictionary, from both 1990 & 2008. This study seeks to use live participants and audio recordings instead of previously collected dictionary data. This allows for the documentation of independent categorical variables in the examination of the predictive models of YC use.

The participants in this study were assigned to complete three tasks to elicit YU, YC, or YD. The participants read a constructed word list, consisting of 38 words, with 18 target words and 20 distractors. The target words all historically use a yod in the [Cju] sequence, with seven coming from Glain's list. Participants were asked to read a word list, pausing after each word.

The reading task asked participants to read a script, giving the participant the opportunity to use slightly less careful speech than a word list (Labov, 1972). The script was modeled after a plausible news story, “How can the festival of Brexit unite Britain?” and seamlessly embedded the same list of target words from the word list task. The target words were not included in any particular order in the reading task other than to make sense with the continuing story line. All means of stress were avoided so that no singular target word would stand out, such as avoiding putting target words in quotes and adding exclamatory punctuation. The target words and their predicted pronunciation can be seen below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Target Word Expected Pronunciation Variation

	Non-YC Pronunciation	YC Pronunciation
reducing	[ɹɪdus], [ɹɪdjus]	[ɹɪd͡ʒus]
assumed	[əsumd], [əsjumd],	[əʃumd]
student	[studɛnt], [stjudɛnt]	[ʃtudɛnt]
dunes	[dunz], [djunz]	[d͡ʒunz]
pursue	[pɹsu], [pɹsju]	[pɹʃu]
consume	[cənsum], [cənsjum]	[cənʃum]
introduced	[ɪntɹədust], [ɪntɹədjust]	[ɪntɹəd͡ʒust]
YouTube	[jutub], [jutjub]	[jutʃub]
Tuesday	[tuzdeɪ], [tjuzdeɪ]	[tʃuzdeɪ]
resume	[ɹɪzum], [ɹɪzjum]	[ɹɪʒum]
produced	[pɹədust], [pɹədjust]	[pɹəd͡ʒust]
presuming	[pɹɪzumɪŋ], [pɹɪzjumɪŋ]	[pɹɪʒumɪŋ]
endures	[ɛndurz], [ɛndjurz]	[ɛnd͡ʒurz]
stupid	[stupɪd], [stjupɪd]	[ʃtupɪd]
tube	[tub], [tjub]	[tʃub]
due	[du], [dju]	[d͡ʒu]
tunes	[tunz], [tjunz]	[tʃunz]
dual	[dul], [djul]	[d͡ʒul]

The free speech task was a sociolinguistic interview about the participant themself. This task was used to elicit the most natural speech, as observed by Labov (1972). The

interview included questions meant to elicit target words from the first two tasks, like "What is your first memory of the London Underground" eliciting "*the Tube*."

Procedure

Each participants' tasks and interviews were recorded on Zoom at 32Hz. The .mp4 audio files were converted to .wav in order to analyze and annotate in Praat. The researcher used a MacBook Pro, while the participants used a variety of laptops, smartphones, and tablets. Participants were asked to complete the tasks and interview from their homes in England. While the researcher is not a speaker of any of the British varieties in this study, the participants either knew the researcher previous to the study or were recommended to participate by someone who knows the researcher. If multiple participants were from one home, they were asked to complete the tasks in a separate room to the other individual(s) in the house. Participants were told they would be recorded and to find the best place in their home for a quiet setting. If using a phone or tablet, participants were asked to turn off notifications, both audio and vibrating, as to not disturb the recording.

The word list and reading task were presented as a written list, each one labelled as *Task 1* and *Task 2*, accordingly. Before beginning the recording, participants were emailed the digital file and prompted by the researcher to read through them aloud. The researcher prompted participants to complete the word list task by reading through the list of target words, pausing between each one. Then, the researcher asked participants to complete the reading task by reading through the mock newspaper article. After completing the two reading tasks, the researcher asked the participants interview questions about themselves and their experiences. Finally, the participants were sent a

link for the demographics survey at the end, which they completed with the researcher present.

Measurements

To determine when YC was used by a speaker and when it was not, the researcher assigned each token the value of YC, YU or YD aided by spectrograms in Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2021).

The pairs of segments with their non-YC and YC versions are depicted below. [s] has a noticeably more intense energy at a higher frequency (average of 5000 Hz and up), whereas [ʃ] has more intense energy at mid- to high-range frequencies (2500-3500 Hz). Both have no voicing band, shown below in Figure 3.1.

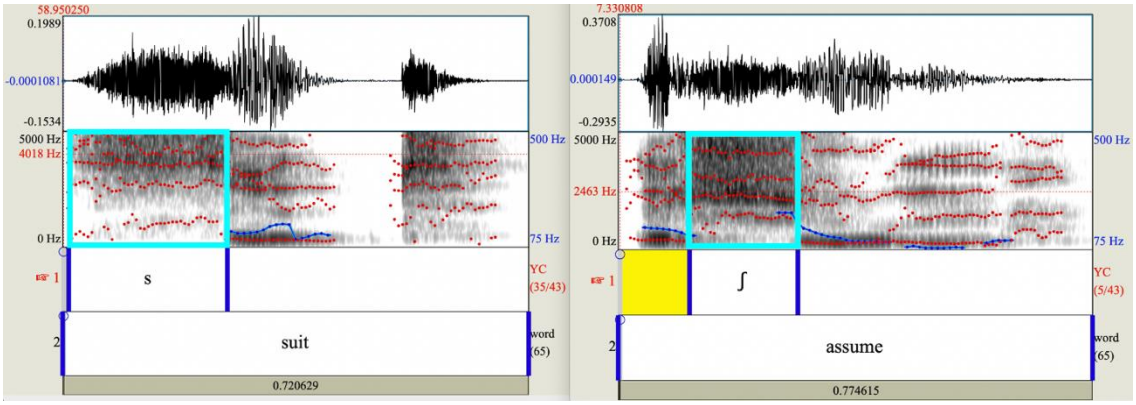


Figure 3.1 [s] and [ʃ] depicted side-by-side.

In Figure 3.2, [t] and [t͡ʃ] are also voiceless pairs, but [t] displays diffuse aspiration after the stop's release, whereas [t͡ʃ] displays a greater intensity ay mid- to high-range frequencies (3000-3500 Hz), influenced by the sibilant nature of [ʃ]. Additionally, [t] (2500-3000Hz) exhibits a shorter duration than [t͡ʃ].

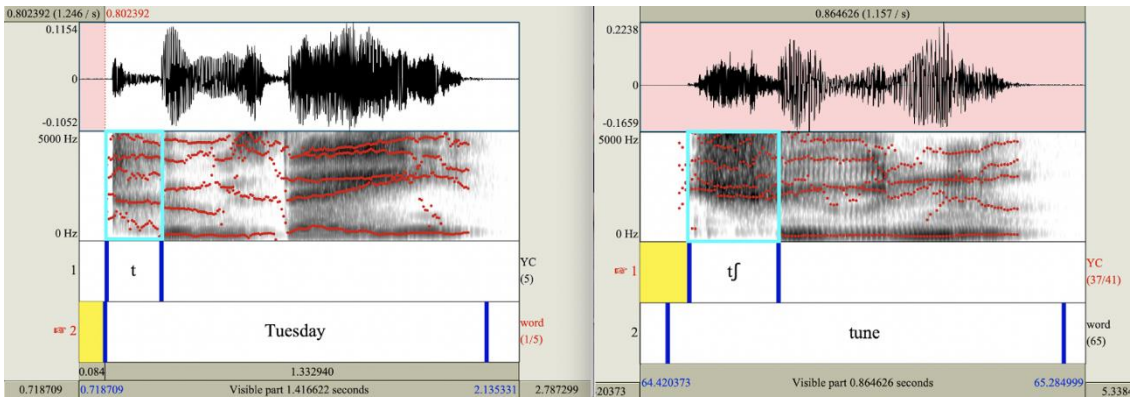


Figure 3.2 [t] and [t͡ʃ] depicted side-by-side.

In Figure 3.3, [z] and [ʒ] are both voiced, so they both display a voicing band at the bottom. However, [z] has more intensity at higher frequencies (3000-4000 Hz) because it is a sibilant, whereas [ʒ] has a more diffuse intensity (1000-2000 Hz) on the spectrogram.

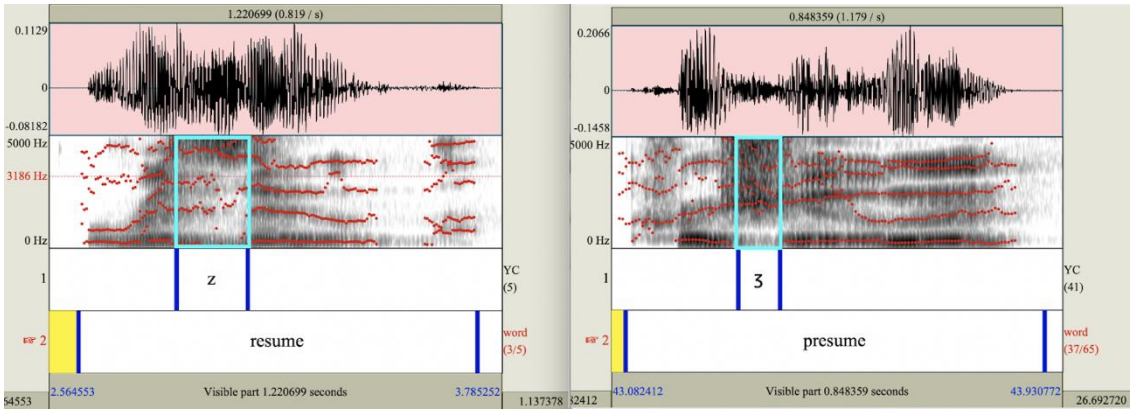


Figure 3.3 [z] and [ʒ] depicted side-by-side.

Finally, in Figure 3.4, [d] and [d͡ʒ] are both voiced, so they both display the voicing bar at the bottom of the spectrogram. [d] is much shorter than [d͡ʒ] because it is a stop (vs. a fricative), and it doesn't exhibit intense energy at a particular frequency range. [d͡ʒ] has more intensity at mid- to high-range frequencies (1500-2000 Hz), like those previously seen in [ʒ]. Because it is an affricate, it also exhibits two different manners of production in a single segment.

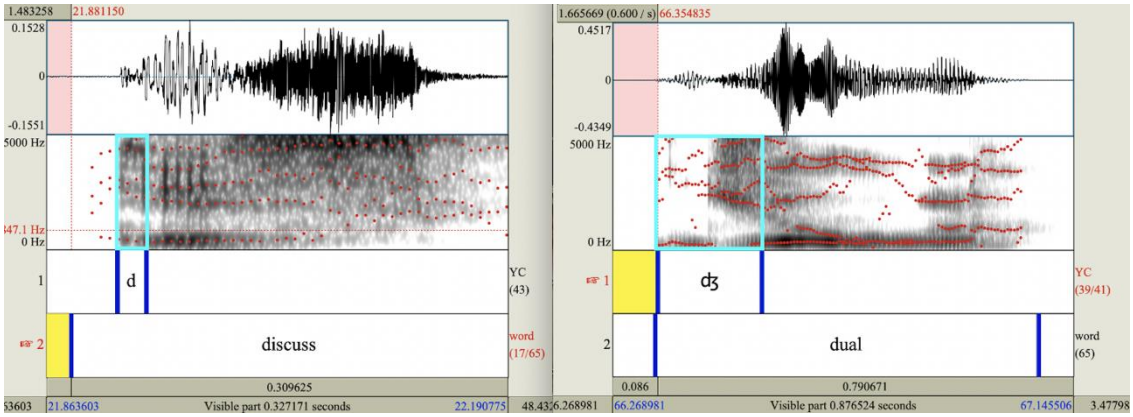


Figure 3.4 [d] and [d͡ʒ] depicted side-by-side.

In order to identify YC visually in each segment, the center of gravity (COG) – the average frequency of the segment – was measured. YC use should have a noticeably different center of gravity (COG) to its non-coalesced counterpart. For stops undergoing YC, the COG should be higher, while for non-coalesced YD variants, COG should be lower. This helps to identify that the sound is, indeed, palatalized, but also to help delineate sounds that are borderline. COG was measured by selecting the segment, outlined above by duration, and taking a spectral slice. Each slice was then queried in Praat for COG measurements. The values were recorded, in Hz, and rounded to the nearest 1000th decimal place.

Duration was measured by looking at the voicing band soundwave, and intensity changes from segment to segment. The boundaries were created by looking at voicing for [d], [z], [dʒ], and [ʒ] and voicelessness for [t], [s], [tʃ], and [ʃ]. If these segments were difficult to delineate, then the boundaries considered formant and soundwave structures, as outlined above in Figure 3.1. For example, [ʃ] is marked by having more diffuse sound at a lower frequency (2500-3500 Hz) than [s], which would exhibit higher intensity at a higher frequency (average of 5000 Hz and up) and little intensity in the central frequency.

Variables

While YC is associated with EE, YU is associated with RP, and YD with PL and other southeastern varieties. Because age has already been established as a predictor of YC use in EE (Glain, 2012), this study includes it in its exploration of other social and lexical factors that may predict its occurrence, such as socioeconomic status, gender, education, occupation, and region. Additionally, since YC has also been reported in non-BBC BE dialects outside of EE, this study will also investigate YC's occurrence and social predictors in all BE varieties. This study will also look at interactions between lexical frequency and YC use. Wells (1999) notes that a YC change may be more "readily accepted" with more familiar words than in more learned ones. The purpose of this study is to determine the predictability of YC use in speakers from Essex and to determine its possibility of spread across all BE dialects and Home Counties.

Statistical Treatment

Measures of YD (=0) and YC (=1) were submitted to a logistic regression with *Age, Socioeconomic Status, Gender, Education, Lexical Frequency, and English variety* as independent variables and *presence/absence of YC* as the dependent variable. Statistical analyses were carried out using *MASS* and *languageR* in R (R Core Team, 2019).

Binary measures of YU (=0) and YC (=1) were also submitted to a logistic regression with *Age, Socioeconomic Status, Gender, Education, Lexical Frequency, and English variety* as independent variables and presence/*absence of YU* as the dependent variables. Statistical analyses were carried out using *MASS* and *languageR* in R for this analysis as well (R Core Team, 2019).

Research Questions

1. Does originating from Essex predict YC use?
2. What variables, including age, predict YC use?
3. Is there spread of YC through the Home Counties?

Hypotheses

1. ***Prediction of YC through living or being from Essex***. Since Glain (2012) and others have suggested that YC is not used by all speakers and depends on dialect, it is predicted that a speaker being from or living in Essex will exhibit the strongest prediction of YC use.

2. ***Other Categorical Predictors of YC***. Since speaker group should not be the only predictor of YC use, this study also seeks to observe other categorical variable predictors of YC. As such, age, lexical frequency, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment are all tested for their strength of prediction of YC as well. The variable outside of speaker group that should most predict YC should *Age*, in particular younger aged speakers, per Glain (2012).

3. ***YC and Home Counties.*** Kerswill and Williams (2000) note that high mobility areas experience more dialect levelling, so, if YC is spreading among younger speakers and becoming a feature of BE generally, then the Home Counties should be more susceptible to incorporating this feature.

Glain (2014) notes that higher frequency words are more likely to elicit YC, so lexical frequency measurements were taken from the Corpora Collection from Leipzig University, focused on an English Web text corpus based in the UK from 2012 with 6,683,819 sentences (Leipzig Corpora Collection, 2012). Words at a higher frequency

should correlate to higher uses of YC among speakers in comparison to lower frequency words.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Number of YC Occurrences in Speaker Location

In this dataset (n=450), there were 245 instances of YD, 191 of YC, and 14 of YU. Of the total dataset, 334 tokens were taken from speakers from Essex, 40 from Hertfordshire, 37 from Hampshire, and 39 from Kent. As such, percentages are used to give a truer depiction of instances of each group's tokens. Table 4.1 presents percentages of Yod groupings based on the speaker's place of origin.

Table 4.1 Instances of Yod Groupings by *Speaker From*

	Essex	Hertfordshire	Hampshire	Kent
YD	215/334 (**64.371%**)	13/40 (**32.500%**)	11/37 (**29.730%**)	6/39 (**15.385%**)
YC	107/334 (**32.036%**)	26/40 (**65.000%**)	25/37 (**67.568%**)	33/39 (**84.615%**)
YU	12/334 (**3.593%**)	1/40 (**2.500%**)	1/37 (**2.703%**)	0/30 (**0%**)

In comparison, Table 4.2 shows Yod groupings based on *Speaker live*. Percentages are used to show a more accurate representation of usage of each Yod grouping.

Table 4.2 Instances of Yod Groupings by *Speaker Live*

	Essex	Greater London	Hampshire	Cambridgeshire	Kent
YD	111/150 (**74.000%**)	51/112 (**45.536%**)	32/75 (**42.667%**)	37/37 (**100%**)	14/76 (**18.421%**)
YC	37/150 (**24.667%**)	57/112 (**50.893%**)	42/75 (**56.000%**)	0/37 (**0%**)	55/76 (**72.368%**)
YU	2/150 (**1.333%**)	4/112 (**3.571%**)	1/75 (**1.333%**)	0/37 (**0%**)	7/76 (**9.211%**)

There are some counties represented in the grouping of where participants are from that are not represented in the grouping of where participants currently live, and vice versa, so a direct comparison cannot be made between each county. However, for those that do have counterparts in both Table 4.1 and Table 4.2, there is not an overwhelming difference in the percentages from Essex and Kent. On the other hand, Hampshire shifts to an almost 50/50 split on YD and YC use in terms of where participants currently live.

Prediction of YC through Independent Variables

Occurrence of Yod Coalescence in Comparison to Yod Dropping

Binary measures of YC (where 0 = the default realization of YD and 1 = the novel variant of YC) were submitted to a stepwise logistic regression with *Age, SES, Gender, Education, Lexical Frequency, and Variety* to determine the best-fit model. A binary model evaluating YD and YC was analyzed first. The stepwise model determined that where speakers live (*Live*) followed by where they are from (*From*) and then their occupation (*Job*) comprised the best-fit model, shown below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Outputs of YD & YC Logistic Regression – Best-Fit Model

	DF	Deviance	AIC
NULL		381.88	403.88
From	2	410.91	428.91
Job	3	475.90	491.90
Live	3	508.19	524.19

Considering the arguments above as the best predictors for the model, a separate logistic regression was run to determine the strength of their YC prediction. As per the best-fit model suggested by the stepwise logistic regression, binary measures of YC (where 0 = the default realization of YD and 1 = the novel variant of YC) were submitted to a

logistic regression with *Live*, *From*, and *Job* as the independent variables. The output of this model is visualized in Table 4.4 below.

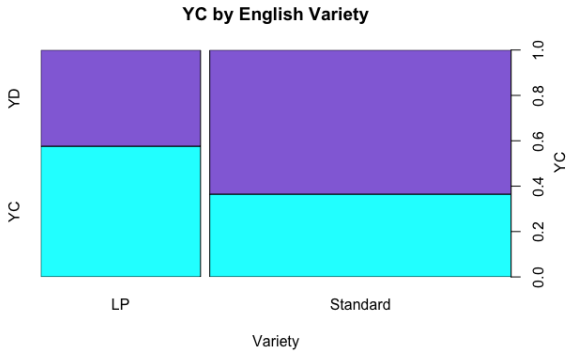
Table 4.4 Outputs of Logistic Regression for YD & YC – Odds Ratios

	Odds Ratios	Std Error	p-value
Intercept	14.259	0.810	0.001 **
Job ~ Technician	0.002	1.427	<0.001 ***
Job ~ Service & Sales	0.029	0.726	<0.001 ***
Job ~ Manager	0.117	0.873	<0.5 *
Job ~ Retired/Homemaker	0.001	1.292	<0.001 ***
From ~ Hertfordshire	20.000	0.694	<0.001 ***
From ~ Hampshire	0.200	1.322	0.223
Live ~ Greater London	0.245	0.703	<0.005 *
Live ~ Hampshire	27.929	1.220	<0.05 **
Live ~ Cambridgeshire	0.000	650.393	0.975
Live ~ Kent	189.750	1.089	<0.001 ***

The strongest effects were between speakers who live in Kent, were from Hertfordshire, or work as technicians, in service and sales, or are retired or homemakers. Speakers who live in Kent were found to be 189.750 times more likely to use YC than those living in Essex (reference group)($p<0.001$), while those living in Hampshire were found to be 27.929 times more likely than residents of Essex to use it ($p<0.05$). Speakers who live in Greater London were 75.5% less likely to use YC than those who live in Essex ($p<0.005$). Speakers who are from Hertfordshire were 20.000 times more like to use YC than speakers from Essex ($p<0.001$). Those who work as technicians, in service and sales, managers, and those who are retired/homemakers were 99.8% ($p<0.001$), 97.1% ($p<0.001$), 88.3% ($p<0.5$), and 99.9% ($p<0.001$) less likely to use YC than those who work as professionals.

No main effects or interactions were found for education, BE variety, gender, task, socioeconomic status, or age in the best-fit model for YC use. LP speakers used more YC than speakers who identified as Standard BE speakers (*Variety*), as seen in

Figure 4.1. Both genders observed in this study used YC and YD at similar rates, as seen in Figure 4.2.



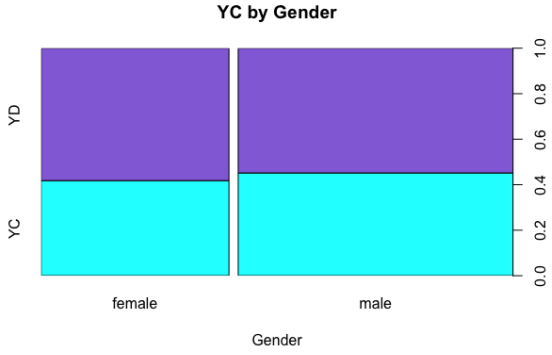
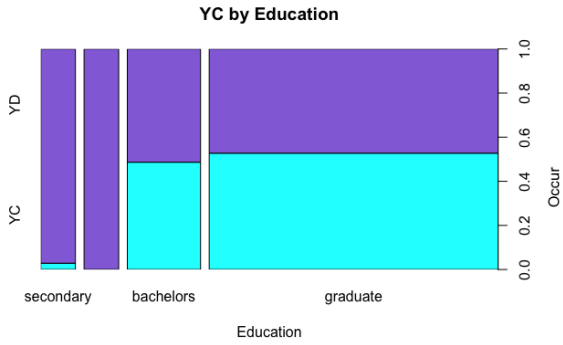


Figure 4.1 YC & YD by English variety **Figure 4.2** YC & YD by Gender

Speakers with Secondary or Associates degrees hardly used or did not use YC at all, while speakers with Bachelors and graduate degrees used YC and YD at similar rates to one another, as seen in Figure 4.3. The frequency of a word's occurrence in the corpus did not show an effect on use of YC over YD, as seen in Figure 4.4. Both boxplots have similar Q1, Q2, and Q3 ranges.



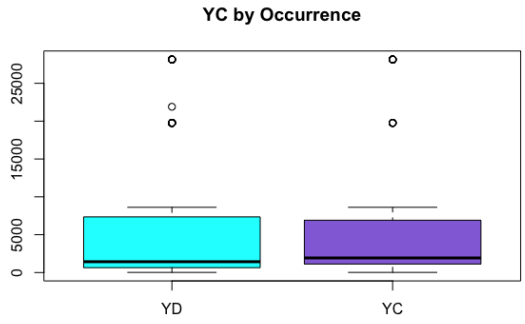


Figure 4.3. YC & YD by Education **Figure 4.4** YC & YD by Occurrence

Occurrence of Yod Use in Comparison to Yod Dropping

Binary measures of YU (where 0 = the default realization of YD and 1 = the novel variant of YU) were submitted to a stepwise logistic regression with *Age*, *SES*, *Gender*,

Education, Lexical Frequency, and Variety to determine the best-fit model. The best-fit model determined that where speakers live (*Live*), followed by lexical frequency (*Lexical Frequency*), age (*Age*), task (*Task*), and education (*Education*) comprised the best-fit model, as shown below in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Outputs of YD & YU Logistic Regression – Best-Fit Model

	DF	Deviance	AIC
NULL		49.343	73.343
Live	3	70.939	88.939
Lexical Frequency	1	67.520	89.520
Age	1	61.044	83.044
Task	2	54.689	74.689
Education	2	54.282	74.282

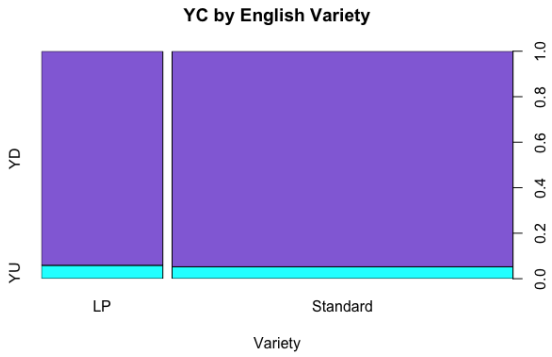
Considering the arguments above as the best predictors for the model, a separate logistic regression was run to determine the strength of their YU prediction. As per the best-fit model suggested by the stepwise logistic regression, binary measures of YU (where 0 = the default realization of YD and 1 = the novel variant of YU) were submitted to a logistic regression with *Live*, *Lexical Frequency*, *Age*, *Task*, and *Education* as the independent variables. The output of this model is visualized in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6. Outputs of Logistic Regression for YD & YU – Odds Ratios

	Odds Ratios	Std. Err.	p-value
Intercept	0.252	1.146	0.228
Live ~ Greater London	306,866,100	4,182	<0.5
Live ~ Hampshire	.000	4,182	0.996
Live ~ Cambridgeshire	6,021,550,000	8,634	0.997
Live ~ Kent	7,232,791,000	4,182	0.996
Lexical Frequency	0.998	0.000	<0.1
Age ~ 30-39	0.000	4,182	0.997
Age ~ 40-49	0.000	7,629	0.996
TaskScript	0.161	0.894	<0.05 *
TaskInterview	0.000	6,104	0.998
Educationassociates	0.000	4,138	0.996
Educationbachelors	0.000	4,182	0.996

Due to the low number of YU tokens, the best-fit model produced many options with high standard error (between 4,138 and 8,634). However, the model did suggest that lexical frequency significantly predicted YU ($p < 0.1$), and tokens of YU were 83.9% less likely to be found in the reading task than in the word list task (reference group)($p<0.5$).

No main effects or interactions were found for BE variety, gender, and socioeconomic status in the best-fit model for YU. English variety did not have an impact on YU; both speakers of LP and the non-RP standard BE hardly used YU, as visualized in Figure 4.5. Female participants used YU slightly more than male participants, but both used it at very low rates, as seen in Figure 4.6.



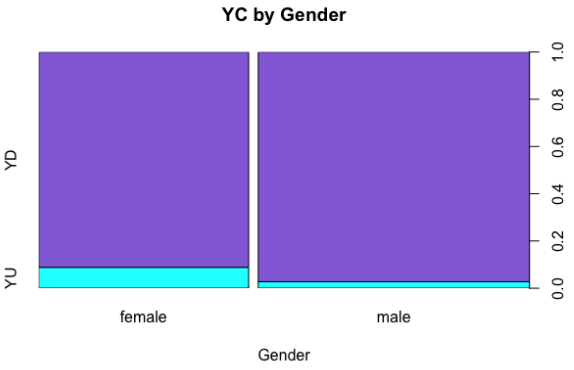


Figure 4.5 YD & YU by English variety **Figure 4.6** YD & YU by Gender

Age as a Predictor of YC & YU

While the best-fit models did not find age to be a significant predictor of YC or YU, there were patterns in the data that are relevant to report, given Glain's (2012) study. Age brackets of 10 years, other than the first grouping of 18-29, were not represented equally in this sample, seen below in Table 4.7. As such, percentages are used here to report Yod groupings. Additionally, there were no participants from age groupings 50-59 and 60-69.

Table 4.7 Instances of Yod Groupings by Age

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79
YD	32/75 (**42.667%**)	93/192 (**48.438%**)	51/112 (**45.536%**)	0 **(0%)**	0 **(0%)**	69/71 (**97.183%**)
YC	42/75 (**56.000%**)	87/192 (**45.313%**)	61/112 (**54.464%**)	0 **(0%)**	0 **(0%)**	1/71 (**1.408%**)
YU	1/75 (**1.333%**)	12/192 (**6.250%**)	0/112 (**0%**)	0 **(0%)**	0 **(0%)**	1/71 (**1.408%**)

In terms of percentage of use, YC use is most common among 18-29-year-olds, but there is a near 50/50 split on YD and YC use among 18-29, 30-39, and 40-49-year-old groupings. YC is nearly non-existent in 70-79-year-olds, with YD use at a rate of 97.183%. Although, the best-fit model did not determine age to be a significant predictor of YC & YU behavior, there is a noticeable lack of YC use among the oldest age grouping (70-79), as seen in Figure 4.7.

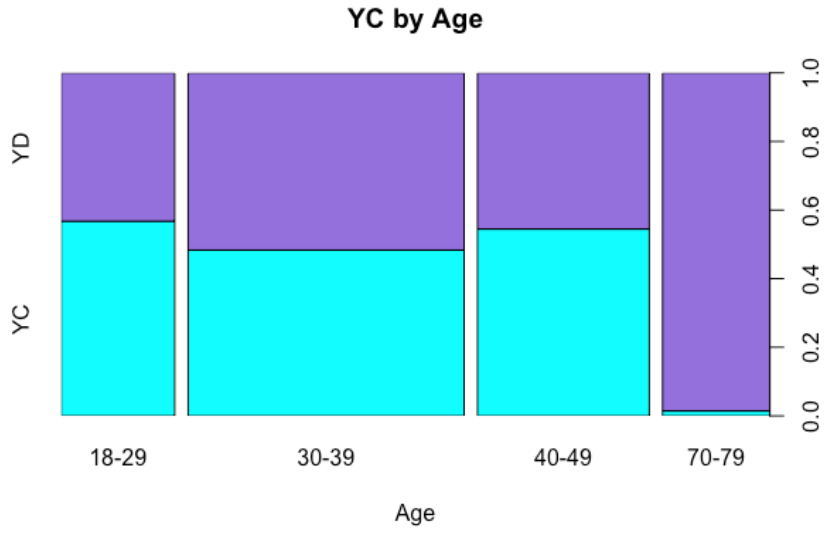


Figure 4.7 YC & YD by Age.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

The main findings of this study showed where speakers are from, live, and work predict YC, while where speakers live, lexical frequency, age, task, and education all predict YU, to varying extents, though skewed by low tokens of YU. Unlike Glain's (2012) study, age did not appear in the best-fit model as a predictor of YC. However, where speakers are from did, which is indicative of the continuation of a geographic location still having some influence over YC use. Lexical frequency and the script task were the strongest predictors of YU. Again, here, it would be expected that YU use would be predicted by older age, per Wells (1999).

While this study originally intended to group speakers based on their self-identified BE variety, participants only chose one of 2 varieties from the list of options (PL & Standard BE), and no participants self-identified as speakers of EE. Due to the common perception of EE speakers as less educated, even participants from Essex with features of EE did not identify with this BE variety. As such, the next closest categorical identifier to BE variety would be where the speaker is from. Speakers from Hertfordshire were the only group with a higher probability of using YC than speakers from Essex. There was only one speaker originally from Hertfordshire, so the data of YC use was based on their singular speech tendencies. Speakers from Hampshire were less likely to use YC than speakers from Essex; again, only one participant was from Hampshire. Speakers from Essex – and who, therefore, are more likely to speak EE and have YC as a variant – were predicted to use YC the more than speakers from Hampshire, but there

was not significant finding for other locations, so speakers from Essex most likely use YC at a similar rate as speakers from Kent. However, location (*From* and *Live*) is still able to predict YC use to some extent based on the best-fit model.

Where speakers currently live also predicts their YC use. Speakers who live in Kent are much more likely to use YC than speakers who live in Essex. After debriefing with the participants, it was observed that one of the Kentish speakers may identify with Chatham speech, which they noted is similar to EE. Speakers who live in Hampshire, who also used YC at a rate higher than those who currently live in Essex, used rates of YC slightly lower than Kent. Speakers who live in Greater London were much less likely to use YC than speakers who live in Essex. This supports Kwon's (2006) distinction of PL as a separate BE variety, which is found most extensively in and around London. However, in terms of Kerswill & Williams's (2000) dialect leveling, since Greater London is a high mobility area, it is surprising that there is not a higher predictive YC rate of use. Speakers who live in Cambridge were found to use YC 100% less than speakers who live in Essex. However, there was only one speaker who currently lives in Cambridge, and they used no YC. Future research should take care to rigorously balance participants within each category.

Since socioeconomic status was the same (middle class) across all participants, the occupation of each participant was categorized using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) from the International Labour Organization. The ISCO is a "basis for the international reporting, comparison and exchange of statistical and administrative data about occupations" (ISCO: International Standard Classification of Occupations, 2010). Occupation predicted YC use most significantly for those who

worked as technicians, managers, in service and sales, and those who were retired or homemakers were less likely to use YC than professionals. There was no significant effect of educational levels on YC use. However, the group of professionals would typically hold higher degrees due to the requirements of their positions. The category for service and sales is expansive, including a range of professions from civil servants to sales associates, so many participants held higher degrees while others did not. Here, education would not be able to predict YC within occupation. Overall, those who hold degrees lower than Bachelors do not use YC much, if at all, while those with Bachelors and graduate degrees use YC and YD fairly evenly. Interestingly, while YC is associated with EE (Kwon, 2006; Glain, 2012; and more), which is historically a working-class variety, professionals with higher degrees and possibly higher salaries than other occupations were more likely to use YC than occupation categories that do not require high degrees and may not yield high salaries. This could be tied to the higher numbers of people across all socioeconomic statuses having access to higher education in comparison to the previous decades. Additionally, since participants knew this study had ties to university research, it is possible that those in occupations that do not require higher degrees or have as high salaries felt compelled to present themselves as speakers of "proper" English – using less YC – to take on a more educated persona.

The best-fit model did not find task to be predictive of YC use, but it did find a main effect between task and YU. YU was less likely to be found in the script task than the word list. Since the word list has the highest attention paid to speech and least natural speech, as found by Labov (1972), it would follow that YU appears more in the word list, since those who care to use the prestigious form of YU would be more able to carefully

use it in the word list than in the script, which they read more freely. Anecdotally, one participant who used YU in the word list and less YU in the script noted that they "spoke proper." They went on to say that, while they do not speak the most properly, they felt they speak more properly than others. It seems this participant was paying more attention to their speech but was unable to uphold their careful speech in the script task, accomplishing the goal of the different tasks within this study.

In terms of age, while an older age grouping does not absolutely predict that YC will not be used, there is a noticeable trend. Future research on the impact of age on YC use would benefit from eliciting an age-balanced sample, as the data in this study did not have speakers in the age groups 50-59 and 60-69. Based on the data from this study and Wells's findings that YC was "rejected by older speakers" and "preferred by younger ones" (1999), YC is prolific in speech among those 49 and younger and has the potential to spread. All age groups at 49 and under used YC, meaning that the variant does not belong to just one generation; however, since older speakers are rejecting it, and have done so for about 20 years or so, as documented by Wells (1999), it may be subject to age grading. Future research could revisit this study and others like it in another 20+ years to reexamine older generations that are not as inclined to use YC at present and to determine if this is a case of age grading, in which speakers no longer engage in certain phonetic practices once they reach a certain age.

Anecdotally, participants typically elaborated on why they chose certain class and English variety distinctions. Many participants commented on how they would like to be considered upper class but marked middle. Considering Great Britain's past feudal system and evolution to their current monarch-parliament governmental structure, class

distinction still seems to have a strong hold on its citizens. One participant noted that they must be middle class – after trying to determine if they hit that benchmark or were lower class – since they were able to purchase hummus from their local Tesco's, which they indicated would mark middle class status but not quite upper-class status. Through food selection, this participant was able to index their socioeconomic status and position themselves as middle class. In this same vein, while many of the participants in the study are from Essex, none of them marked EE as their English variety. EE is still considered less educated and less "proper" speech among many people – some of the participants included – so these participants may have been hesitant to associate themselves with EE. People from Essex and speakers of EE are perceived as having "new money," having been historically poor and coming into new wealth, but not having the refinement of spending this money on socially acceptable objects. However, many of these same participants commented that they did not speak "the Queen's English" – or RP – and opted into the non-RP Standard British variety as they spoke "like everyone else." RP represents tradition and conservative beliefs for many younger speakers, so choosing to distance oneself from RP is also an act of distancing themselves from less progressive beliefs. Even though these participants were using YC and were from Essex, they still do not identify with EE as their BE variety, so it is most likely that they were trying to position themselves in a way that did not associate them with the characteristics of people who speak EE. Interestingly, even though participants were open in discussing their desires to be upper class, they also distanced themselves from the snobbishness associated with speakers of RP. While this study's focus was the observation and recording of YC use, a follow-up study on attitudes towards EE and other BE dialects

would complement the results of this study and explain in more certainty the motivations behind these anecdotal instances.

In addition to age and BE variety, the best-fit model did not find socioeconomic status, gender, and education as predictive variables in the model. Since this study used snowball sampling, participants knew each other and were able to aid in the recruitment of other participants. As such, many of them naturally have similarities, and in this case, the same socioeconomic status. Many participants were friends or family of other participants and currently live or lived near one another at some point. Future research should use random sampling in addition to snowball sampling in order to more evenly balance sample groups. While this study had a variety and equal spread of participant genders and education, neither of these variables were found to be predictors of YC use. If YC use is already well on its way in dialect levelling, as may be the case since location cannot successfully predict YC use, per Kerswill and Williams (2000), the patterns of men leading covert prestige uses and women leading language changes would no longer be in effect. It is expected that gender would predict YC use in terms of the variant's covert prestige, originating from a working-class dialect, if men used YC more than women, per Trudgill's findings that men use the cover prestige variant more than women (1972). Additionally, it would be expected that YC is a language change is more women than men used YC, since women lead language changes. However, both genders used YC at about the same rate, so it is not possible to identify YC's covert prestige or language change status from this sample. Finally, education, while anecdotally connected to Essex speech, does not predict YC use per the best-fit model. Once again, since snowball

sampling was used, and socioeconomic statuses were all middle class among participants, there was also not a vast difference between their educational levels.

The best-fit model found the reading task to predict YU significantly less than the word list task. This would imply that speakers who are paying more attention to their speech, per Labov (1972), are more likely to use the prestige pronunciation. Considering the participants were aware the study was about British speech – even if they were unaware of what the researcher was studying exactly – there may have been some performative speech from participants, where the use of the marked prestige variant signifies a more British persona.

In addition to task as a predictor, the best-fit model also found lexical frequency to predict YU. Higher frequency words are heard and used more often among speakers generally, so higher frequency words are heard more often on television. As such, especially when listening to the news, participants would hear the prestige variant of BE heard on news channels, like BBC, and may be more likely themselves to pronounce these higher frequency words with YU.

YC in Pop Culture

In addition to this study's research, it is important to note that YC's spread can be seen through orthographizing its phonology. For instance, among tweets that discuss "British people," *Tuesday* is orthographized to *chewsday* as seen in the Tweet below in Figure 6 (Grinevičius & Balčiauskas, 2020).

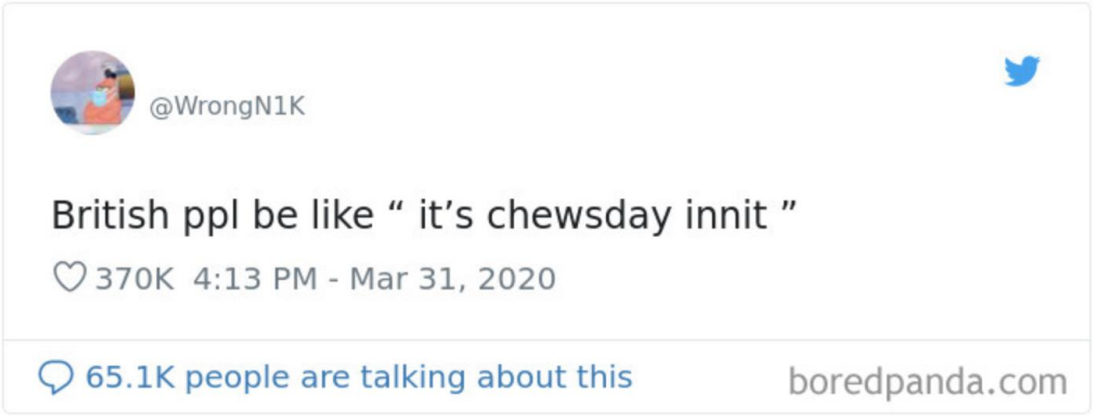


Figure 5.1 Tweet from @WrongN1K.

In order to find this tweet funny, the audience must acknowledge that *Tuesday* and *chewsday* are homophones for BE speakers. Similarly, tweets in this article also orthographize *YouTube* as *youchube* and *Mountain Dew* as *mountain jew* (Grinevičius & Balčiauskas, 2020). All these pairings showcase the widely known use of YC among these speakers. To non-British audience, who would use YD in these instances, the use of YC by British speakers is marked and more obvious to them.

In addition to tweets, the popular videogame YouTube channel, WhatCulture Gaming, released a series that has new content every Tuesday called *Tues Your Own Adventure*. In this series, the presenter, Jules Gill from WhatCulture, allows his audience to choose the next videogame topic covered in the style of choose-your-own-adventure gaming, in which the player chooses from options in a game, as opposed to the game continuing on a predetermined plotline (Gill, 2020). Here, the words *choose* and *Tues* are homophones due to YC for Jules himself, as he presents himself online, and presumably a large part of his audience. In order to understand the play-on-words of *choose* and *Tues*, Jules’s audience must either make or hear the two words as homophones, meaning they are also familiar with or use YC. WhatCulture’s audience is niche, in that only those who

play video games would be interested in watching, but the age group is likely younger as the commentators themselves appear to be in their 30s and 40s. This would parallel this study's finding that YC is more common among younger speakers and from Glain's previous research (2012). Additionally, while this study did not yield statistically significant results in terms of lexical frequency, it is worth nothing that both Twitter and YouTube have highlighted the word *Tuesday* as a key example of YC use.

Another example of YC use from pop culture, is John Oliver, the presenter of *Last Week Tonight*, who is originally from Birmingham in the UK and consistently uses YC during his show. In a recent episode, *Plastics*, Oliver discusses the need to reduce plastic consumption (Oliver, 2021). In this segment, Oliver uses the form [d͡ʒ] instead of [d] in *reducing*. This is just once instance among many of his use of YC. Oliver has a mostly standard BE accent – though he comes from Birmingham, which has a noticeable BE variety of its own – and yet his use of YC is prevalent. The show uses academic citations and prides itself on its research team in compiling facts for each episode. As such, it is fitting within the data that those with Bachelors and graduate degrees use YC more than those with lower degrees. Oliver is currently 43 years old and fits within the age groupings that frequently use YC. Oliver is most likely viewed by his largely American audience as generally British, so it stands to reason that the variety of BE he chooses to use for his show is more in keeping with a general BE variety. As such, it is possible that an ongoing dialect levelling phenomenon that encompasses YC is occurring or that YC is spreading through other BE varieties.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

In this study, where speakers are from, where they live, and their occupations were measured for their ability to predict YC and where speakers live, their age, occupation, education, lexical frequency and task were measured for their ability to predict YU. Results revealed that speakers who live in Kent or were from Hertfordshire were most likely to use YC, and speakers with jobs in the technician, service/sales, and home sectors were slightly less likely to use YC. While age does not predict YC use, speakers under 49 years-old are more likely to use YC than those who are 70 and above. The most prominent limitation of this study was access to participants. With 12 participants, this research cannot definitively measure YC's potential spread or trends among BE varieties. Future research should seek a greater volume of participants from each region of the Home Counties, more variety in socioeconomic status and BE variety. Socioeconomic status should receive more attention as a variable; there may need to be a different method of recording socioeconomic status (i.e. clearer definitions of SES on the demographics survey per salary), or a larger, more balanced, sample may reveal this variable to be more significant in future research.

Future research should also reevaluate public perceptions among BE speakers about YC use or disuse. This study was not able to incorporate a previous look into the attitudes and stance towards the use of YC and the qualities it evokes in hearers' perceptions. Once this analysis is conducted, future research can make a stronger connection between the use or disuse of YC and its connection to its socioindexical values (Foulkes & Docherty, 2006;

Ochs, 1991). Once specific traits can be identified as having a connection with YC use, participants recorded for YC use can also be evaluated for indexing specific traits they associate with YC.

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APPENDIX A: WORD LIST

Reducing
Issue
Assumed
Student
Include
Dunes
Pursue
Continue
Consume
Discuss
Introduced
Stop
YouTube
Educate
Tuesday
Remove
Resume
Improve
Produced
Street
Sue
Presuming
Survive
Endures
Burn
Venture
Stupid
Purchase
Tube
Classroom
Suit
Due
Start
Useful
Tunes
Grocery
Dual
Cure

APPENDIX B: NEWS ARTICLE

How can the Festival of Brexit unite Britain?

Name aside, the gargantuan task remains – how can a festival possibly unite the country while bitterness endures between leavers and remainers? Last Tuesday, organisers put out a call for creative minds to come up with "daring, new and popular" ideas aimed at conjuring instant national harmony. A quick brainstorm around the office produced suggestions such as "reform Oasis?" and "get David Blaine back in his box - that united people," whereas the best I could think of was dual screens playing repeat footage of that time Michael Gove fell over (it's worth looking up on YouTube). Especially in light of COVID-19, it is assumed that, in order to pursue an event such as this, it would take place on t.v. and broadcast widely.

Some find the prospect of a televised festival stupid. "I know everyone wants normal life to resume," says Michael Jones of Braintree, "but a festival on t.v. is not normal." Janet White of Maidstone disagrees - "I think we are due for a fun and careless event in a time of unprecedented hardship. I'm looking forward to it!" Richard Atwood, a student at University of Essex, is ready for some fun. "Last term, I thought about reducing my courseload because of all my online courses, so I really need to just unwind and enjoy live music after a year of social distancing. Best of all, if it's all on telly, I won't even need to bother with rushing to the Tube at the end of the gig!"

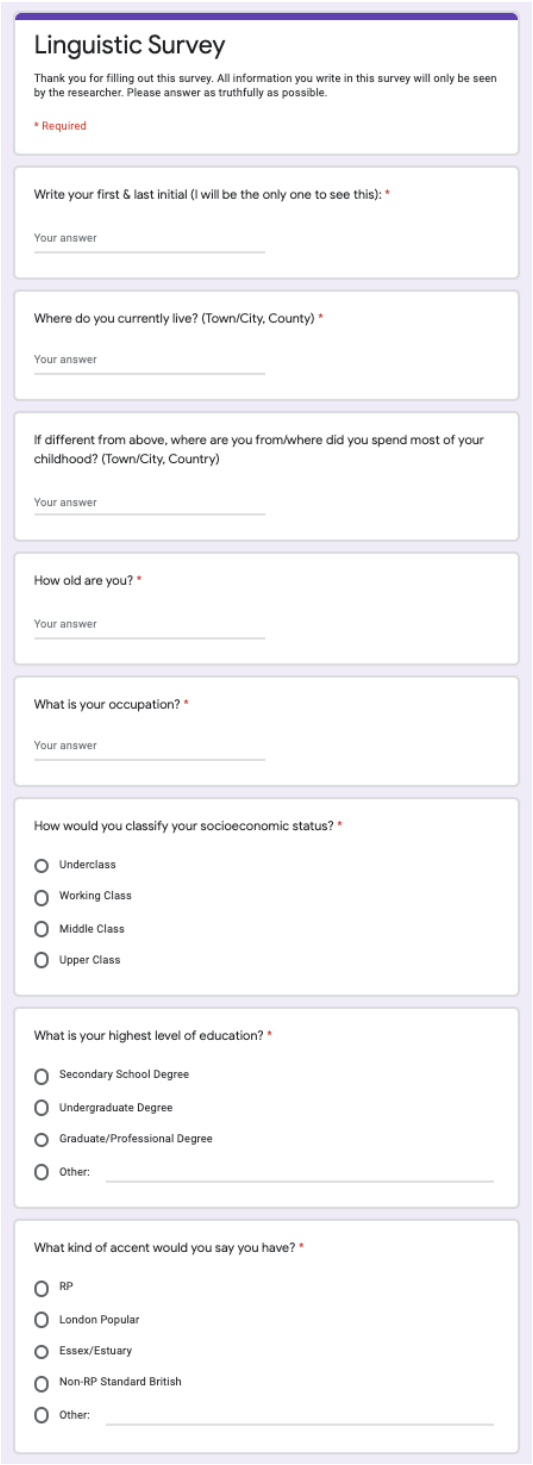
Of course, some other ideas of safe festivals include the ever-popular bubbles. Clear, human-sized bubbles that 1-3 people stand in to properly social distance were recently introduced to music events at various gigs across the globe. Or perhaps, the Brexit festival could take after California beach towns and invite cars to park on sand dunes and enjoy the show. Both methods allow for festival goers to consume alcohol and food as they please while enjoying the event in a safe manner.

So, presuming this event goes ahead, here's to singing along to a few tunes and sitting in front of the t.v while the country is united.

APPENDIX C: SOCIOLINGUISTIC INTERVIEW

1. What is your name?
2. Do you have a nickname?
3. Where do you live?
4. What career are you pursuing/did you pursue?
5. Tell me a brief story about when you met your best friend.
6. Are there any videos or channels online you have enjoyed during quarantine? How did you find them/what streaming service did you use?
7. What is your first memory of the London Underground, if applicable?
8. What do you miss most about being a student? You can pull from primary, secondary, or post-secondary schooling.

APPENDIX D: LINGUISTIC SURVEY



Linguistic Survey

Thank you for filling out this survey. All information you write in this survey will only be seen by the researcher. Please answer as truthfully as possible.

* Required

Write your first & last initial (I will be the only one to see this): *

Your answer

Where do you currently live? (Town/City, County) *

Your answer

If different from above, where are you from/where did you spend most of your childhood? (Town/City, Country)

Your answer

How old are you? *

Your answer

What is your occupation? *

Your answer

How would you classify your socioeconomic status? *

- Underclass
- Working Class
- Middle Class
- Upper Class

What is your highest level of education? *

- Secondary School Degree
- Undergraduate Degree
- Graduate/Professional Degree
- Other:

What kind of accent would you say you have? *

- RP
- London Popular
- Essex/Estuary
- Non-RP Standard British
- Other: