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FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA

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GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES

Trabajo de Fin de Grado

Ethnic Identity and Linguistic Variation in Boston English

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Abstract

Basándose en el estudio "Ethnolects and the City: Ethnic Orientation and Linguistic Variation in Toronto English", dirigido por Michol F. Hoffman y James A. Walker en Toronto, Ontario (2010), el presente ensayo examina el rol de la identidad étnica en el condicionamiento de la variación lingüística. Nuestra investigación parte de la hipótesis que la identidad étnica no es un aspecto central de la personalidad de las personas categorizadas como "étnicas", y aboga por un enfoque objetivo y subjetivo para el análisis de los diferentes "grados de identidad étnica". La investigación está basada en el contexto multicultural de Boston, Massachusetts. Centrado en las comunidades italianas y jamaicanas afincadas en la ciudad, nuestro examen de dos variables sociolingüísticas (R-Dropping y la sustitución de /θ, ð/ por /t, d/) demuestra que el condicionamiento lingüístico no permanece constante entre y/o dentro de los grupos étnicos, ya que éste está sujeto a factores de generación, afiliación y/o pertenencia al grupo, y género, entre otros.

Based on the study "Ethnolects and the City: Ethnic Orientation and Linguistic Variation in Toronto English", conducted by Michol F. Hoffman and James A. Walker in Toronto, Ontario (2010), the current paper examines the role of ethnic identity in conditioning linguistic variation. Our investigation is based on the hypothesis that ethnic identity is not a central aspect of the personality of people categorized as "ethnic", and advocates for an objective and subjective approach in order to analyze the different "degrees of ethnicity". Our research is grounded on the multicultural context of Boston, Massachusetts. Focused on the Italian and Jamaican communities established in the city, our examination of two sociolinguistic variables (R-dropping and the replacement of /θ, ð/ for /t, d/) demonstrates that linguistic conditioning does not remain constant across and/or within ethnic groups, as it is subject to factors like generation, group belonging and/or affiliation, and gender, among others.

I. Keywords / Palabras clave

Ethnic identity / Identidad étnica

Linguistic variation / Variación lingüística

R-Dropping / R-Dropping

Replacement of dental fricatives /θ, ð/ by alveolar stops /t, d/ // Sustitución de las fricativas dentales /θ, ð/ por las paradas alveolares /t, d/.

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I. Introduction

The role of ethnicity in linguistic variation has been a central interest in the field of sociolinguistics. Research has confirmed the performance of ethnic borders as an active aspect in preserving distinguished linguistic schemes, and the reception of various groups of prospective variants at different scales (Horvath 99). Investigation has also remarked the interaction of ethnicity with other social factors, such as education and socioeconomic level (Milroy), gender (Mendiza-Denton), area (Silva-Corvalan), and age (Cutler). Nonetheless, the academic perspectives from which ethnic classification in studies of language diversification and variation have been approached are not necessarily appropriate. Variationist methodology has presented ethnicity in determined variants in which it is introduced as predictable according to cultural and fixed variables. Consequently, ethnic groups have been assumed to exist as real, predefined categories (Isajiw 9). Ethnicity has been considered an acquired characteristic transmitted from one's parents (Labov, *Language Variation and Change* 245-6) and has merely referred to the speaker's ethnic background. Despite the fact an objective approach in variationist sociolinguistics is understandable, such approaches have failed to accomplish the expectations related to coherent social and cultural theory.

The implicit assumption of the objective approach is that ethnicity is shared equally by all member of the ethnic group. However, ethnicity is not always a central aspect of the identities of people categorized as "ethnic", as ethnic groups are neither static nor uniform: they change over time, members of the group may have different ethnic identities, and identities may shift in the same individual according to the social situation (Fought 20).

The previous considerations undermine the importance of taking into account subjective approaches to ethnicity. For such purpose, ethnic identity must be casted within the conceptual system of the individual or group under study (De Vos 45). There are two main

points derivable from that. First, the particular ready-made icons of particular ethnic identities. Second, the shared qualities or values within ethnic groups; including language, religion, race, origin, culture, and goals. It is therefore objective to declare that we should not speak of ethnicity, but of degrees of ethnicity. This study will analyze the role of ethnicity in conditioning linguistic variation and will combine subjective and objective approaches to the ethnic categorization of speakers in Boston, Massachusetts. In the following paragraphs, we present the multiethnic context of Boston as the area of study of the current research.

Boston is considered to be one of the most multicultural cities in the United States, an assertion corroborated by analyzing the 2013 census (United States Census Bureau, BRA Research Division Analysis). With 26.5% of the residents born outside the United States, Boston ranks 6th among the 25 largest cities in the United States in proportion of the population that is foreign-born. Additionally, 53% of residents address an ethnic origin different to British, Irish, or North American.¹ Ethnic diversity is indeed correlated with linguistic diversity, as 35.8% claim a mother tongue spoken at home different to English. More than 55 languages coexist in the metropolitan area of Boston, which presents a solid urban population (644,710 inhabitants in 2013) and where English is the *lingua franca*.

Equally important are historical patterns of settlement in Boston. Like other East Coast cities such as New York or Philadelphia, Boston was transformed from an appreciably little and economically unproductive town in 1780 to a seaport and sophisticated center with a large and fluid population in 1800 (Snow 53). The exportation of products gave the town a great economic mobility and Boston became one of the world's wealthiest international trading ports. In 1822 Boston obtained the status of a city and by the mid-nineteenth century it

¹ Residents who address an ethnic origin different to British, Irish, or North American belong to the following ethnic categories, which are specified in the census: Chinese, Italian, German, Polish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Arabic.

was contemplated as one of the greatest manufacturing areas in the American territory, what enabled the proliferation of manufactories and plants. The city received a large influx of immigrants who arrived in the early nineteenth century, and by 1855 it had already a greater proportion of foreign-born residents than both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the nation as a whole (Rogers 37). With regard to the following decades, while it is true that in the first half of the twentieth century the metropolitan area increased its foreign-born population as a consequence of the First World War, The Great Depression, and the Second World War, it was not after 1970 that such proportion grew dramatically. In 1980 close to 70% of Boston was white, while today, only half the city is white. Consequently, the last two Census in 2010 and 2013 reports present Boston as a “majority-minority” city (U.S. Census Bureau, BRA Research Division Analysis).

In spite of this increasing diversity, language contact in Boston has been mitigated by the spatial distribution of racial and ethnic groups. The widespread tendency for certain groups to settle in particular neighborhoods has led to the moderation of language contact within the area. Along these lines, neighborhoods like North End and East Boston, Jamaica Plain, Chinatown, and North Quincy, have respectively become the home to Italians, Jamaicans, Asians, and Hispanics (Daniels 73), but not without consequences. The voluntary separation of ethnic groups is vaticinated will alter the constitution of the Boston regional accent and, subsequently, the Standard American English (SAE).

It is in that context that we see the emergence of ethnolects, which refer to the English of ethnic immigrant groups from non-English speaking locales. Linguistically, “the ethnolect is marked by substrate influence from the L1, a result of the transition from bilingualism to English monolingualism” (Becker 50). Yet the conceptualization of the ethnolect as uniform, both linguistically and socioculturally, is further problematic in perpetuating a “rigid

boundary distinction between that which is ethnic and that which is not ethnic” (Becker 57). In view of that fact, it is increasingly common a broader application of the term ethnolect to describe linguistic differences that are believed to reflect ethnic group affiliation, generation, or native-speaker status (Becker 58). This new interpretation of ethnolects is the result of the consideration that people of non-English speaking backgrounds and different cultural and linguistic groups are identified as victims of racism through lack of tolerance of cultural diversity and the inappropriateness of service delivery (Moyer 103). The pressure from the larger population to assimilate linguistically, coupled with the decline of minority-language use after the second or third generation, indicates that any effects of ethnolects on Standard American English (SAE) may be minimal and are not likely to endure.

To address this lacuna, this study is engaged in a project to assess the ethnolinguistic landscape in Boston. The goal of it is to analyze ethnic identity (EI) as subject to group affiliation, generation, and native-speaker status, as well as its influence in conditioning linguistic variation. For such purpose, this investigation will categorize groups in terms of ethnicity and will identify linguistic features associated with the English varieties of Jamaicans and Italians. Finally, it will examine the influence of such features over the Boston Regional Accent, and consequently, over Standard American English (SAE).

II. Methodology

The current research follows the study “Ethnolects and the City: Ethnic Orientation and Linguistic Variation in Toronto English”, conducted by Michol F. Hoffman and James A. Walker in Toronto, Ontario (2010). Their research has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada and the Faculty of Arts at York University. In their study, Hoffman and Walker question traditional social categories and examine the role of ethnic identity in linguistic variation.

Taking as a guideline the study aforementioned, our research begins by focusing on two ethnic groups which present a robust ethnic representation in the city. Italians and Jamaicans are as ethnic origin among the largest numbers of Bostonians, and report strong sense of ethnic group belonging and affiliation (DeMarco 34). The languages associated to these groups are relevant to the study of language transfer. Despite the fact that Italian is an Indo-European language, it presents different phonological qualities to English, such as a preference for consonant-vowel syllables and fewer vowel phonemes (Biondi 17). Likewise, the language situation in Jamaica is perceived as consisting of two different varieties. One is the Jamaican Patois and the other Jamaican English. The Jamaican Patois is an English-African Creole which differs from Jamaican English in its pronunciation and vocabulary, as the former displays similarities to the pidgin and creole languages of West Africa (Devonish and Harry 450). As the social level nowadays, the educated minority able to function in both varieties tends to use the former in private, informal, and mainly oral interaction; and the latter in public, formal, and written discourse. This study focuses exclusively on first generation Jamaican informants and their second/third generation descendants, the previous being uneducated near monolinguals whose Jamaican Creole involves a smaller degree of English interference. Thus, both Italian and Jamaican Patois provide points in contrast with English that lead themselves to language transfer and potential manifestation of ethnolects.

To the investigation of these hypotheses, the study gathered 24 informants, who were stratified according to their ethnic origin, gender, and generation (see table 1).² The informants live in Boston and were located in the neighborhoods of East Boston and North End in the case of Italians, and Jamaica Plain in the case of Jamaicans. All first-generation

² This study will consider informants' gender rather than sex. The Oxford English Dictionary defines gender as "the state of being male or female as expressed by social or cultural distinctions and differences, rather than biological ones; the collective attributes or traits associated with a particular sex, or determined as a result of one's sex."

informants, who range in age from 60 to 75, arrived in the East Coast (mostly to New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts) between the 1960s and the 1980s, and have spent at least thirty years in Boston. With regard to first-generation Italian informants, most of them arrived in Boston in the 1950s and are native to Southern Italy, specially Sicily, Campania, and Calabria. First-generation Jamaican informants, for their part, arrived in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century, in the 1960s and 1970s³⁴. Additionally, second and third-generation informants range in age from 18 to 50, and were born in Boston.

Table 1

Stratification of informants of Boston English corpus by gender, generation and ethnic origin

Generation	Italian		Jamaican	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
First	3	2	3	3
Second/Third	4	3	3	3
Total:	7	5	6	6
Total By Ethnic Origin	12		12	
Grand Total	24			

In order to prove the hypothesis that ethnic settlements lead to ethnolects, we also recruited 10 informants who were natural Irish and British-descendant Americans, Boston's founder-population ethnicities (Rogers 41). For these informants we established the

³ Informants were gathered with the assistance of the Sociology Department and the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs of the University of Massachusetts Boston, which provided us with the necessary tools of study and a potential contact reference list. We thank Internship Coordinator Alison L. Moll, Office Manager Genevieve Morse, and Administrative Assistant Catherine Shaw from the Sociology department. We also thank Department Research Administrator Ann Lennon and Research Compliance Specialist Kimberlee Roselando from Office of Research & Sponsored Programs.

⁴ We specially thank all the people from Boston for sharing their time, opinions, stories, and anecdotes with us.

requirement that their ancestry be exclusively North American, British or Irish and that at least the informants and their parents were born and raised in Boston.⁵

In collecting the linguistic data of their respective groups, it is the primary purpose of this study to access the informants' vernacular. In order to do that, the study followed the method applied by Hoffman and Walker, where the classification distinguished between in-group and out-group statuses (Clyne et al. 148). This is, the vernacular features may not be used in contexts where the speaker and the interlocutor are unknown to each other and do not share the same ethnicity. For that motive, the interviews were conducted with the help of two assistants who are members of the respective relevant communities.⁶

This multigenerational study enables the establishment of a reference for the transmission of salient qualities of the respective minority languages. Although the pattern of language transmission is inherent to ideological and social conditions, it could be claimed that it remains pervasive (Labov, *The Atlas of North American English Phonetics, Phonology, and Sound Change: a Multimedia Reference Tool* 75). Thus, among immigrant language minorities the distinctive pattern is that the first generation acquires some English yet remains firmest in the native tongue; the second generation usually becomes bilingual with an improved literacy skill in English due to the fact that English is the language of instruction; and the third generation shows a propensity to become English speaking with limited or no competence in the language of their grandparents (Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa 588). The study also realizes a comparison between these speakers and speakers of North American origin so as to identify the differences between both groups resultant from language transfer.

⁵ The stratification of these informants also considered that the informants be members of the middle class.

⁶ We thank our fieldworkers and assistants at the University of Massachusetts Boston Andrae Cameron and Jeslyn Medoff.

As indicated above, the study categorized the informants according to their hereditary lineage (*Italian, Jamaican*) and their community status in agreement with the area where they were raised. However, the inherent subjectivity of ethnicity relates to externally defined measures and also to ethnic identity. This study is the fruit of the interpretation of informants' responses to the Ethnic Identity (EI) survey, which addresses five categories of ethnic identity and determines interviewee's perceived degree of ethnic orientation (see Appendix).

III. Results

Given that the purpose of our research is to assess the connection between informants' EI and their linguistic patterns of speech, a divergence between the informants with a higher sense of EI and the informants with a lower sense of EI is expected. The quantification of EI was carried out by the assignation of one score between 1 and 3 to each informant's response to each of the questions in the Ethnic Identity (EI) survey.⁷ The mean (M) EI score for each informant was estimated by computing an average of their own responses (see table 2).

Table 2

Median ethnic identity scores of speakers in Boston English corpus, with number of speakers in each corpus

	Ethnic Origin			
	Italian		Jamaican	
Generation	M	N	M	N
First Generation	1.85	5	2.32	6
Second/Third Generation	1.39	7	2.12	6
High EI	1.77	3	2.22	5
Low EI	1.21	4	1.09	1

⁷ Following the example of Hoffman and Walker, for scalability, answers which could not be interpreted into one of these categories were computed as 0.

Despite the fact that the enclave status was first established according to the neighborhood or area in which the informants grew, the mean EI scores enabled the division of speakers by ethnic identity from a quantitative approach. A number of statistical analysis (Roberts et al. 308) proved the fulfillment of the best estimating constancy by means of division between second/third generation speakers with EI index scores of 1.50 or superior and those with scores below 1.49. Therefore, the classification designates the former group as “high EI” and the latter as “low EI”, as shown in table 2. Despite the fact that the low EI and the high EI Italians are almost equal in numbers (N=3 and N=4), the low EI Jamaicans are in the minority (N=1) if compared to the high EI Jamaicans (N=5). The scores for the second/third generation Jamaicans are overall considerably more prominent than those of the second/third generation Italians, given that they are 24.33% higher. The difference in EI scores between high EI and low EI speakers is greater for the Jamaicans than for the Italians.

The responses to the 29 questions of the EI questionnaire are not independent of each other, and do not contribute proportionately to the median of EI index. The present investigation performs exploratory factor analysis to determine the shorter number of factors which underlay the responses obtained. Principal Component Analysis reduced the 29 responses to six factors. The first factor included questions related to the informant’s ethnic self-identification, the second factor analyzed questions related to the informant’s language and language preference, the third factor concerned cultural heritage, the fourth factor referred to the informant’s ancestry, the fifth focused on Italian and Jamaican cultures respectively, and the sixth referred to perceived discrimination.

In the following sections, the study will analyze the effects of these divisions among informants by examining the linguistic and social status of two linguistic variables. To maximize comparability, the focal point of the study is in linguistic variables which are

distinct of the Boston accent and occur in the two ethnic groups indicated above: R-dropping and the replacement of dental fricatives /θ, ð/ by alveolar stops /t, d/.

A. R-dropping⁸

British English dialects were rhotic from Anglo-Saxon times until the 17th century, when /r/ began to moderate. Variable (R) in New England came about via migration from England at that time (Crystal 467). In the present, (R) constitutes a great contrast between Western New England (WNE) and Eastern New England (ENE), with WNE and ENE generating consonantal post-vocalic /r/'s and /r/ vocalization, respectively, without exception (Irwin and Nagy 135). Along these lines, the first linguistic feature to be examined is R-dropping (R), which is a stable process in which /r/ is vocalized in a syllable coda. Such variable is exceptionally labeled to satisfy our study, given that its linguistic and social situation is pertinent to second language acquirement and ethnic identity. The linguistic conditioning of (R) and the rate of it relates to both phonological and morphological factors (Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* 67).

From the 34 conversations with the informants (12 Italians, 12 Jamaicans, 10 British/Irish Americans), we obtained tokens of (R) in words with post-vocalic /r/. For the dependent variable, a paired selection between presence or absence of contracted [r] was made. All the recordings were classified in accordance with agents which inclined to alter the generation of /r/. Independent variables include prior vowel, consequent segment, morphological environment of /r/, emphasis, word variety, lexical incidence, and word duration. As a result of the variation in the pronunciation of pre-rhotic vowels, we grouped the three variables as preceding vowel, following segment, and stress (Irwin and Nagy 139)⁹, as shown in table 3.

⁸ This study will refer to R-dropping as the sociolinguistic variable (R).

⁹ Like Irwin and Nagy, this study also compares tokens of words such as stormy or warmth, which may be pronounced with either a low [a] (START) or mid [o] (NORTH) vowel in the Boston dialect.

Also, each token was regulated according to the informant's gender, generation, ethnic group, and EI status.

Table 3

Classification of prior vowel with consequent segment

/r/ Speaking in Boston			
Phonetic description	IPA	Wells Lexical Set	Reading example
Schwar in closed syllable	/ɚ/C	NURSE	purse
Schwar in open syllable	/ə/	FUR	turf
Stressed vowel in open/ closed syllable:			
High front	/i/	NEAR	dear
Mid front	/e/	SQUARE	where
Low central	/a/	START	part
Low/Mid back	/o/ // /a/	NORTH	worth
High back	/u/	CURE	mature
Unstressed schwar	/ə/	LETTER	better

Figure 1 shows the overall rates of /r/ vocalization for each social group, with a classification of speakers by ethnic group, generation, and high/low EI (for second/third generation Italian and Jamaican).

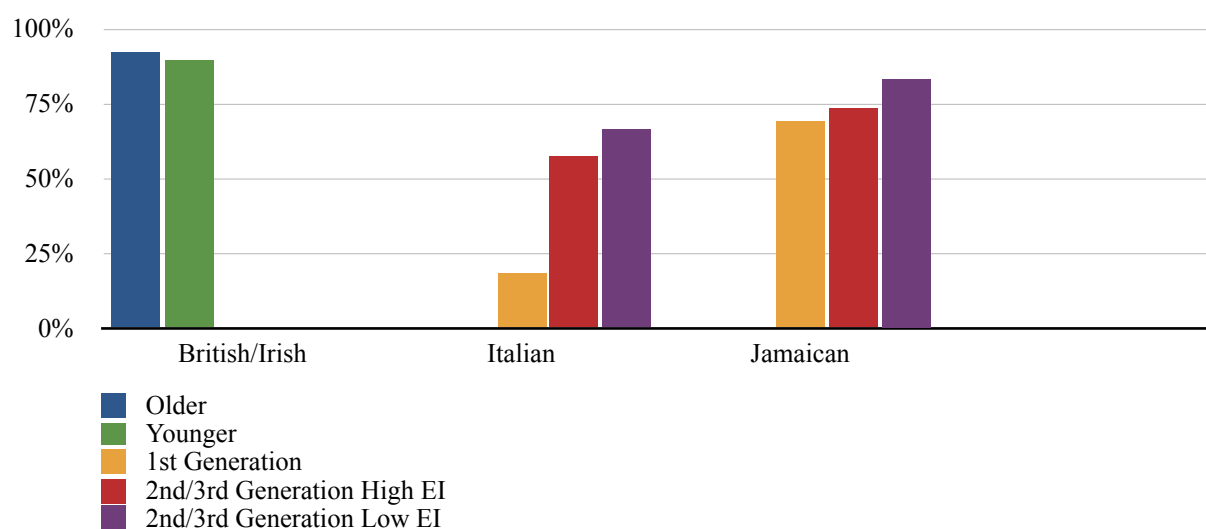


Fig. 1. Rate of R-dropping in Boston English, by ethnic group, generation, and ethnic identity status.

The difference in /r/ vocalization between British/Irish and Jamaicans is not vast. Nonetheless, such parallelism is the result of the fact that /r/ is “categorically absent before following consonants in Jamaican Creole, and is only sometimes present word-finally under certain conditions” (Rosenfelder 62). Italian informants show the greatest difference with respect to the British/Irish and Jamaican informants. This difference is confirmed in a multi-diverse interpretation of social and linguistic factors which contribute to R-dropping (see table 4); Italian informants show a slight disinclination to /r/ deletion (yet first generation informants more highly) and British/Irish and Jamaican informants present an inclination to it.

Table 4

Social factors contributing to R-dropping in Boston English

Generation, Ethnicity, and Ethnic Identity	Input	%
British/Irish, older	.92	92
British/Irish, younger	.89	89
Jamaican, 1st Gen.	.69	69
Jamaican, 2nd/3rd Gen. High EI	.73	73
Jamaican, 2nd/3rd Gen. Low EI	.83	83
Italian, 1st Gen.	.18	18
Italian, 2nd/3rd Gen. High EI	.57	57
Italian, 2nd/3rd Gen. Low EI	.66	66
	<i>Range:</i>	74
Gender		
Masculine	.55	55
Femenine	.52	52
	<i>Range:</i>	3

Accordingly, although speakers may be inconstant in the overall degree of use, the linguistic conditioning of R-dropping remains extensively uniform in among second/third generation speakers regardless of EI. It must be noted that Jamaican descendants are more

persistent in this variable, as a consequence of the absence of /r/ before consonants in Jamaican Creole and its limited presence to word final positions (see table 5).

Table 5

Linguistic conditioning of R-dropping in Boston English, by ethnic group, generation, and EI status

	British/Irish		Italian			Jamaican		
	Old	Young	1st Gen.	2nd/3rd Gen. High EI	2nd/3rd Gen. Low EI	1st Gen.	2nd/3rd Gen. High EI	2nd/3rd Gen. Low EI
Category, Following Feagin (1990)								
Stressed Schwar + C	.75	.68	.56	.63	.64	.70	.68	.76
Stressed Schwar	.66	.59	.46	.46	.52	.58	.66	.65
High Back Round	.47	.42	.21	.30	.36	.60	.54	.56
Low Central	.38	.33	.20	.25	.29	.49	.44	.48
High Front Tense	.35	.32	.43	.51	.59	.35	.48	.47
Mid Front	.50	.39	.25	.33	.33	.40	.41	.49
Mid Back Round	.43	.34	.32	.41	.45	.57	.51	.64
Unstressed Mid-Central	.35	.27	.19	.34	.36	.34	.21	.31
<i>Range</i>	40	41	37	38	35	36	47	45
Morpheme position								
word-final	.79	.68	.54	.59	.52	.78	.82	.75
word-internal	.66	.65	.53	.61	.57	.69	.73	.68
<i>Range</i>	13	3	1	2	5	9	9	7
Word type								
Functional	.53	.41	.72	.69	.62	.57	.51	.45
Lexical	.27	.38	.79	.73	.66	.30	.33	.38
<i>Range</i>	26	3	7	4	4	27	18	7
Syllables								
1	.41	.65	.77	.71	.73	.66	.45	.55
2	.33	.35	.56	.63	.59	.54	.53	.51
+3	.32	.39	.55	.69	.48	.21	.29	.35
<i>Range</i>	9	26	22	8	25	45	24	20

Therefore, as far as this stable linguistic variable is concerned, speakers vary in the overall rate of use, as the linguistic conditioning of the variation remains largely inconstant across second/third-generations speakers and is conditioned by EI status.

B. Replacement of dental fricatives /θ, ð/ by alveolar stops /t, d/

The second variable we consider is the substitution of dental fricatives /θ, ð/ by alveolar stops /t, d/. The substitution for alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ appears in East New England (ENE). These include both substitutions of spirantize variants for alveolar stops as well as alveolar stops substituting for interdental fricatives. Nonetheless, the study will focus on the latter, given that the frequent use of alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ in Boston appears to be a more robust dialect phenomenon (Nagy and Roberts 278). Although considered to be a traditional phenomenon most common to older male speakers, these forms are found in speakers of all ages in the Boston area (Allen and Linn 212). These findings demonstrate that dialect obsolescence does not necessarily mean a shift toward “Standard English.” Allen and Linn also add that female speakers, and specially young females who identify themselves as members of the American community in Boston, seem to be leading a resurgence of the frequent use of alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ in place of interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ (214).

First-generation Italian informants showed evidence of participation in this phenomenon. They replaced the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ for the dental alveolars /t/ and /d/. Nonetheless, it seems fair to utter with conviction that this tendency can be reasonably associated with language transfer, given that Italians do not have the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. For equivalence, we also obtained the tokens of British/Irish American speakers and took from each interview 30 tokens of the alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ in replacement of the fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. Each token was coded as substitute or non-substitute of dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. We also classified for the speakers’ gender, ethnic origin, and EI status. Each factor group was subject to an individual analysis using GoldVarb X (Sankoff, Tagliamonte, and Stiff). The complete rates for the /θ/ and /ð/ replacement by ethnic group and EI status are shown in figure 2.

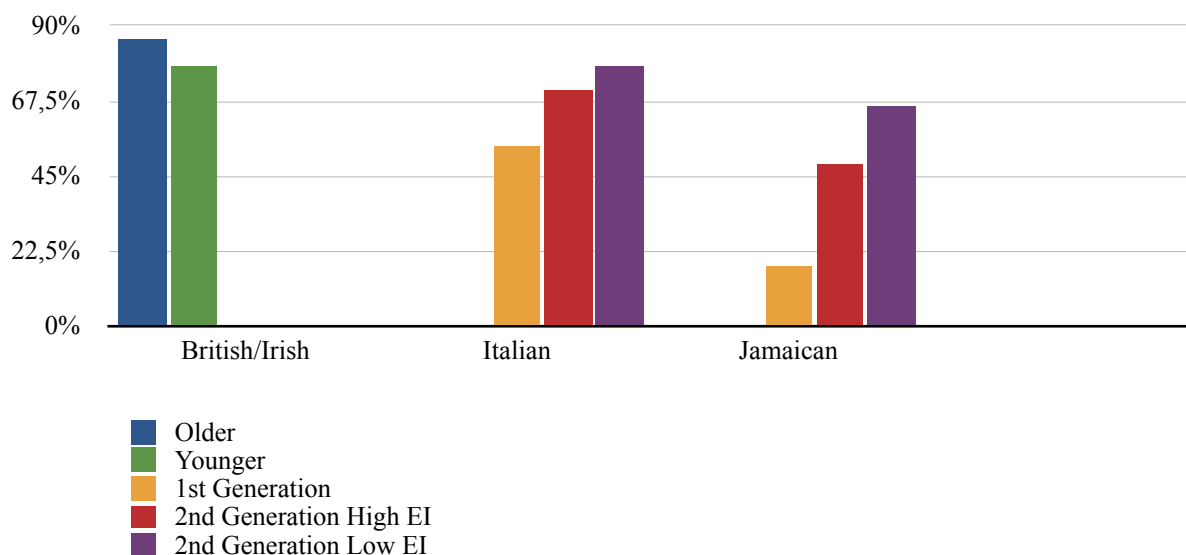


Fig. 2. Rate of /t/ and /d/ among young speakers, by ethnic group and enclave status.

Thus, the British/Irish and Italian informants show higher rates of participation for both variables, whereas the the high EI Jamaican participants show very low rates. Table 6 shows the linguistic environment of these phenomena in each ethnic group. The effects which favor the alveolar stop /t/ are relatively uniform across all the groups, and so are the effects which contributing to the use of the alveolar stop /d/.

Table 6

Contribution of morpheme position to the replacement of dental fricatives /θ, ð/ by alveolar stops /t, d/

/t/					
Morpheme position	British/Irish	Italian		Jamaican	
		Low EI	High EI	Low EI	High EI
Word-initial	.84	.79	.68	.64	.59
Word-internal	.57	.59	.41	.39	.33
Word-final	.69	.58	.51	.55	.44

/d/					
Morpheme position	British/Irish	Italian		Jamaican	
		Low EI	High EI	Low EI	High EI
Word-initial	.77	.78	.66	.58	.55
Word-internal	.63	.71	.66	.63	.59
Word-final	.72	.65	.74	.65	.54

Table 7 exposes the findings of two multivariate examinations of social agents which play a part in the alternation of /θ, ð/ by /t, d/. Despite the fact that the speaker's gender does not affect the overall results, it is interesting to draw our attention to the fact that the patterns for /t/ and /d/ are to some extent dissimilar. British/Irish American informants incline toward this phonetic phenomenon, followed by the high and low EI Italians. Jamaican informants, on the other hand, disfavor such substitution. In the case of Italians, it is the Low EI group of them who most opt for /t, d/.

Table 7

Social factors contributing to the replacement of /θ, ð/ by /t, d/ in younger Boston speakers, by ethnicity, and EI status

Ethnicity	EI Status	(t)	(d)
British/Irish		.85	.88
Italian	Low EI	.77	.75
	High EI	.68	.68
Jamaican	Low EI	.54	.49
	High EI	.31	.27
	<i>Range</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>61</i>
Speaker Gender			
Women		.87	.80
Men		.75	.63
	<i>Range</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>17</i>

As shown in table 7, correlation with social categories establishes that this linguistic feature serves as a marker of social identity. Along these lines, the association of EI status and the overall rates of participation in the replacement of /θ, ð/ for /t, d/ suggest to us that there is a pattern of stratification which favors a shared linguistic system in the case of British/Irish American and Italian, and disfavors it in the case of high EI Jamaican informants, who use overall rates of use to construct and express their own ethnic identity.

IV. Conclusion

Following the investigation conducted by Michol F. Hoffman and James A. Walker in Toronto, Ontario (2010), this paper has examined the role of ethnic identity in conditioning linguistic variation. The basis for discussion in this study was that individual divergences among members of ethnic groups had to be addressed in order to understand the ethnolinguistic setting of Boston, an English-dominant city which presents ethnic and linguistic diversity.

The results of the research manifest a variety of attitudes in terms of identification with specific ethnicities, as exposed by the differences in the mean EI index scores between Italian and Jamaican informants. Jamaican speakers present higher group affiliation than Italian speakers, a pattern which endures across the second and third generations. The interpretation of this result is subject to the contrasting timelines of establishment in Boston between both groups: Italian immigrations began in the mid-twentieth century, after the end of the Second World War, whereas Jamaican immigrations took place mostly in the 1960s and 1970s. Resultantly, Italians could be considered the more integrated group within the Bostonian community.

It is expected substrate transfer will not persist after the first generation, as younger generations might pattern principally like the larger population in terms of linguistic conditioning (Hoffman and Walker 58). Nevertheless, our linguistic investigation provides sufficient data to demonstrate that substrate transfer might persist among the speakers who present a high ethnic affiliation to their group. Linguistically, ethnic groups show remarkable differences in terms of their participation in linguistic phenomena such as R-dropping and the replacement of dental fricatives /θ, ð/ by alveolar stops /t, d/. The inequality between Italians and Jamaicans is manifested in the linguistic conditioning of the latter, which points to

membership in their own linguistic system (Jamaican Patois). Thus, it seems fair to determine that linguistic conditioning is chiefly equatable across Italians and with the British/Irish American group, and simultaneously differs from the first generation, arguing for a partaken, native-speaker linguistic system where younger Italian speakers are comparable to British/Irish American speakers in terms of participation in the processes analyzed. With reference to Jamaicans, aspects of their linguistic behavior are traced to endure among the second/third generations in Boston, given that their language, culture, and religion are implicated in marking their high sense of ethnic identity (Patrick 101). Continuing investigation in other communities in Boston (Chinese, Italian, German, Polish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Hispanic, Arabic) will landscape this hypothesis.

To conclude, the results obtained insinuate that ethnolinguistic variation in multilingual, multiethnic societies like Boston can be shaped by the active construction and expression of ethnic identity. We speculate that the attitudinal analysis evidences that strong group affiliation, specific social distinctions, and linguistic features can be the most salient governing process among ethnic groups and, as such, can lead them to overall rates of use to create and manifest their ethnic identity.

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Appendix: Ethnic Identity Survey

I. Ethnic Identification

- C. Do you consider yourself Italian / Jamaican, American, Italian-American / Jamaican-American?
- D. Do you live surrounded by Italian / Jamaican people in your neighborhood?
- E. Are the people you work with of Italian / Jamaican origin?
- F. Did you go to a school with a considerable number of Italian / Jamaican immigrants or immigrant descendants?

II. Language & Language Preference

- A. Do you speak Italian / Jamaican Creole?
- B. How would you evaluate your command of Italian / Jamaican Creole?
- C. Where did you learn Italian / Jamaican creole?
- D. Do you prefer to speak Italian / Jamaican creole to English? If yes, how often?
- E. Do you prefer to read Italian / Jamaican newspapers?
- F. Do you speak Italian / Jamaican Creole in the household? I you speak Italian / Jamaican Creole as well as English, which of them do you speak more often?
- G. What language do you speak with your friends?
- H. Which language do you feel closer to?
- I. Do you speak with your parents/ grandparents in Italian / Jamaican Creole?
- J. If the answer for I was Yes, would you like to transmit Italian / Jamaican Creole to your children?

III. Cultural Heritage

- A. Were you born in the US? If not, where?
- B. If you were born in Italy / Jamaica, how old were you when you came to Boston?

C. If you were born in the United States, have you ever been to Italy / Jamaica?

IV. Parents

A. Do your parents/grandparents think of themselves as Italian / Jamaican, American, or Italian-American / Jamaican-American?

B. What language did they speak with you as a child? And what language do they speak with you in the present?

C. Are they fluent English speakers?

D. When did your parents / grandparents arrive in the United States?

V. Italian / Jamaican Culture

A. Should Italian / Jamaican descendants learn about their ancestor's culture?

B. Do you prefer to live in a ethnic-enclave neighborhood like North End and East Boston (*Italians*) or Jamaica Plain (*Jamaicans*)?

C. Should Italians / Jamaicans only marry other Italians / Jamaicans?

D. Do you belong to any specific religion? If any, what religion? Do you go to church service with other Italians / Jamaicans?

VI. Discrimination

A. Have you ever experienced any problem or discrimination in the work environment?

B. Have you ever experienced any problem or discrimination in when renting / buying a property?

C. Have ever experienced racial discrimination in Boston? If yes, where and when?

D. Do you considered the North American society is prejudiced against your community and perceives you and those belonging to it as inferior?