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The Evolution of Cockney:
Features and Influences on Estuary English

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to understand the major influences of Cockney on the speech of Young Brits from the South East of England, by studying the evolution of the dialect during the last century. The paper offers an overview of the main features in the three branches of the dialect, phonetics, grammar, and lexis. To do this, a corpus was selected to illustrate the description of Cockney provided by academics and see in this way the evolution the dialect has undergone. The study is mainly descriptive, contrasting different time periods of the speech form. A view of the features of this traditional sociolect of London will clarify the influences it has had on the British people and their form of speech. This dissertation suggests that the new form of speech in South Eastern England is not merely a variation of Cockney, but rather a completely different dialect, though heavily influenced by the former. This is due to the fact that the variation of this dialect has been small and in many instances, differs even more from RP (Received Pronunciation) than it approaches it. This implies that Estuary English grammar and lexis should be studied more deeply to assess its dialect status.

Resumen

Este trabajo de fin de grado trata de entender las mayores influencias que del Cockney en el habla de los jóvenes británicos del sureste de Inglaterra, mediante el estudio de su evolución en el último siglo. El ensayo pone en perspectiva las características más importantes de los tres aspectos del dialecto: fonética, gramática y léxico. Para esto, se ha seleccionado un corpus que ilustrase la descripción que los académicos dan sobre el Cockney, y, de esta manera, poder ver la evolución que el dialecto ha podido tener. Este estudio es principalmente descriptivo, y contrasta los diferentes periodos temporales de esta variedad lingüística. Al revisar el sociolecto tradicional de Londres, las influencias que este ha tenido en los británicos se pueden apreciar claramente. El trabajo sugiere que esta nueva variación lingüística del sureste de Inglaterra no es simplemente una variación del Cockney, sino que se trata de un dialecto completamente diferente, aunque esté muy influido por este. Esto se debe a que ha tenido muy poca variación y en muchos casos tal variación lo ha distanciado incluso más del acento RP (pronunciación recibida) en vez de acercarlo. Esto implica que la gramática y el léxico del inglés estuario debería estudiarse más a fondo para demostrar su estatus de dialecto.

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1) Introduction

Studies in Historical Linguistics deal with the analysis of early texts for the understanding of the present state of a form of speech in relation to its past. Following this approach, this essay aims to give a description of the London working-class dialect, Cockney, through the last century and a half in order to obtain a broader picture of how it has evolved and influenced Estuary English (EE) across England.

The word 'Cockney' was originally used to designate the speech of London, and specifically that of the working class living in London from the 1890s onward; yet records of a geographical variety for London started to be attested in the 17th c. The word comes from the Middle English (ME) expression *Cokene-ey* "cock's egg", meaning 'spoiled child' or 'milksop' in the late 14th c and by the 16th c it meant 'town dweller', and more particularly, London resident.

The present dissertation considers Cockney in the broadest sense of the term: The dialect of London's working classes, rather than the strictly from the East End area. The working class was, by the turn of the century, no longer bound to the East End, and Cockney people had moved to the new industrial areas south of the Thames, taking their dialect with them. Their dialect can also be considered Cockney.

The aim of this dissertation is to provide a descriptive analysis of the evolution of Cockney in the last century, according to academics. Juxtaposed

with this, examples taken from a corpus representing different stages of Cockney will illustrate the phonetic, grammatical and lexical features through time in order to see the possible evolution of this sociolect and its influence on the dominant dialect of London today.

2) Literature review

In the last century, not many academics have researched the forms of London speech in detail. The most important author in the early 20[th]c is William Matthews, who extensively researched London manuscripts from the 17[th]c. onwards. In his book, *Cockney Past and Present* (1938) he analyzed how the dialect of London had changed through the centuries. After this publication, the interest of academics on the Cockney dialect decreased considerably, focusing mainly on their representation in literature. This trend changed when the popularity of the dialect increased, and researchers such as John Wells studied London dialects in his book *Accents of English* (1982). In order to fill this gap on the analysis of the dialect I have turned to different representations of Cockney, both in text and audiovisual forms, as explained in the Method and Corpus section.

Since the 1990s academics have studied a new form of speech in London that can be presented in a continuum between Cockney and Received

Pronunciation. This popular London speech was coined as Estuary English by David Rosewarne in 1984. Estuary English has since spread throughout the South East of England, and some major cities in the west and central England. This new speech shares with Cockney the use of some sounds and allophonic distributions, and the adoption of some of the most typical Cockney expressions. Moreover, it shares with RP the association with standard grammar and social acceptance (Wells, 1998; Crystal, 1999). This mid-point between the two ends of the spectrum allows its users to conform to the social norms of the middle class. It also provides a street sound that is more welcomed by the lower classes than the "posh" Received Pronunciation (RP).

The term Estuary English (EE henceforth) and its speech forms are relatively new, but the process is five hundred years old. The speech of the lower classes of London is spreading geographically, around the country; even socially, across class-boundaries. The trend is more clearly noticeable due to easier mobility and the erosion of the class system in Britain, as Wells (1998) points out.

Despite the extensive research on the origins of EE, experts do not seem to fully determine where it comes from and what its features are. The first question that needs to be answered is whether EE is an accent or a dialect. As said above, EE is sometimes placed as an accent in a phonological continuum between Cockney and RP. On the other side of the argument, Crystal (1999)

argues that EE has a distinctive grammar, which makes EE a dialect, even though its grammar can also be placed in a Cockney-EE-Full Standard continuum.

3) Corpus and Method

The corpus used to illustrate all the characteristics mentioned throughout the text have been taken from different sources: films and books, and some interviews. In order to comment on the earliest forms of the dialect, some pieces of the exhaustive corpus listed in Matthews (1938) were used, given that the availability of other texts of the time is limited. The corpus I gathered for this paper was composed mainly of films and books, but for two interviews. Apart from these, the texts selected had a feature in common: the inclusion of one or more characters from London, and the depiction of their form of speech in one way or another. As for the books, they were chosen on the grounds that they represent the dialect through the characters, in their use of grammar and lexis. Their pronunciation is reflected by means of a non-standard spelling. Moreover, each text aims to represent a decade in the last century in order to see any possible evolution of any feature through the years. To represent the newer Estuary English dialect, two interviews of the famous chef Jaimie Oliver were selected. Ordered by publication date, the texts are:

- *The Hooligan Nights* (1899): The stories in the life of a young Londoner, Alf, who lived, and made a living, among thieves. Told, according to the

introduction, first by Alf in some written confession and collected by the author, Clarence Rook. The text makes use of non-standard spelling to represent Alf's voice.

- *Pygmalion* (1913): The famous play by Bernard Shaw in which a phonetics expert, Mr. Higgins, takes in a girl from the gutter of London, Liza Doolittle; in order to turn her into a respectable lady. Few characters use a non-standard dialect in the play, especially as the story develops mainly after Liza has mastered the standard pronunciation.

- *Cathy Come Home* (1966): A BBC television play by Jeremy Sandford and directed by Ken Coach. The play is the story of Cathy, a rural girl, who moves to London, where she meets and soon marries Reg, a Londoner Lorry driver. We follow them during their descent into poverty after they both lose their jobs. The story is accompanied with recordings in a documentary style by people with strong London accent, presumably narrating their own real experiences.

- *Up the Junction* (1968): A film directed by Peter Collinson about a wealthy girl, Polly, who gives up her upper-class life to live and work in a factory in London where she makes friends with two girls from the factory. At the same time, she starts a romantic relationship with Pete, a working-class boy. The difference in Polly's manner of speech makes her stand out among the working-class and everyone notices that she is rich as everyone else has a London accent.

- *The Long Good Friday* (1980): This film is the story of a gangster from London, Harold, who tries to do business with some Americans while dealing with IRA attacks against his organization. Harold shows a London accent whenever he becomes agitated, as happens to some of his associates

- *The Glory and the Shame* (1997): This novel by Harry Bowling develops in after war London, as the inhabitants of a neighborhood unveil a secret kept during the war. The women in the younger generation use standard speech while the men and the elders use a working-class London dialect represented with non-standard writing.

- *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998): The film written and directed by Guy Ritchie follows some young small-time criminals getting into a huge debt with a long-time criminal. All of them come from a fictitious underprivileged part of London. Most of the characters use a Cockney dialect.

- Jamie Oliver interviews: The renowned chef from Essex was taken as an example of a celebrity with EE. To illustrate this dialect, two interviews were used. One dates from the early 2000s. It was held in a music show that invited him due to his new popularity. The other dates from 2015. It took place in the Jimmy Kimmel Show to promote his cooking book.

To check the different features of the dialect, the program AntConc, released by Laurence Antony, was used for the written formats. Even though a quantitative research was not intended, it was helpful to localize examples of the different features and to choose choosing the most interesting or useful quotations. As for the audiovisual corpus, the parts of actors showing the dialect being analyzed were transcribed and localized in time. As the texts are fictional representation, they might not portray with accuracy the dialect of the time. Nevertheless, it shows the actors and authors' view of Cockney, and the difficulties they have to overcome to imitate it with exactness, but still being understood by the general public. As Shaw wrote as a note in the text of the play *Pygmalion* (1913)

"Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her [Liza] dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London."

4) Historical Background of Cockney

As the standard grew in London by the Late Middle English period, the difference of speech between the upper and lower classes grew as well. Throughout history, there have been several attempts to portray the speech of London's working class. Some of Shakespeare's characters can be identified as Cockney, not as much for the pronunciation given to them, but for their

divergence of social norms and outbursts. These include Mistress Quickly in *Henry IV*, the gravediggers in *Hamlet*, or the mechanics in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. During the 16th and 17th centuries, drama focused basically on the portrayal of Cockney through the disruption of social norms, and the reduction of some unstressed vowels. The best representation of the vulgar speech in London at the time is the diary of Henry Machyn (1550-63), and some London parish records: *The churchwardens' accounts of their parishes*. The accounts of some churches, such as St. Bartholomew or St. Peter Westcheap pervade the whole 16th and 17th centuries (Matthews 1938).

While academics in these centuries dealt with the creation of a standard spelling and grammar, during the 18thc they found a new interest in vulgar varieties. At the same time, writers started to portray the speech of the working class in their literary production, varying their spelling to represent the divergent pronunciation that had been common in the two previous centuries. This representation appears in Fielding's Cockney hero *Jonathan Wild* (1743), or in a letter from Clarinda in Smollett's novel *Roderick Random* (1748). At the onset of the 19thc, the literary Cockney settled with characteristics, such as switching *v* for *w* and reversely, as well as the disregard for /h/ in initial position and its erroneous addition, known as hypercorrection. Dickens masterfully used this type of Cockney in his lower-class characters, such as Sam Weller. Yet in the 1880-90s a different portrayal of Cockney commenced, both by academic critics

and literary artists. They began to use their personal experience and contact with the lower classes rather than old impressions taken from old farces and mocking hall songs. This is noted by Tuer and Shaw, who regard Dickens's representation as a literary tradition rather than a faithful portrayal. Matthews (1938) argued that his contemporary Cockney sounds had already settled centuries before Dickens, based on the spellings left by the church wardens and other written productions.

By the turn of the 20th century, the people referred to as Cockney were those who lived at earshot of Mary-le-Bow church's bells. That is the South East of London, north of the river Thames. The East End has traditionally accommodated large groups of immigrants, from countryside people in the 19thc to Indians, Caribbean people and other minority groups who brought in a great number of words; particularly Jews, as in the 1950s there was a large number of words from Yiddish origin. Nonetheless, the great majority of people were white working class people, mainly dockworkers. However, the greatest increase in immigration has taken place in the last 15 years. Since the 2000s over 70,000 migrants have settled in the East End (Curtis, 2016). This unprecedented introduction of people in the New Ham Borough has changed the socioeconomic status of the area, and increased the trend of old Cockney residents to move to the outskirts of the city. A trend that started during the reconstruction of London after WWII as the East End was heavily damaged.

This population movement along with the socioeconomic evolution of London from an industrial city to a touristic and 3rd sector employment has directly influenced young Cockneys to change their dialect towards standard, henceforth contributing to the dilution of Cockney speech.

5) Phonetics

In terms of pronunciation, Cockney has not changed significantly in the last century and a half. Cockney as a form of speech was settled by the 1880s. It is characterized by a vocalic shift affecting the diphthongs and some allophonic realization for the underlying RP phonemes.

5) a. Glottalling

One of the most characteristic and recognizable sounds in Cockney is the glottal stop. It is produced by obstructing the airflow in the glottis and is represented as /ʔ/ in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). It is common to many varieties of English, especially when accompanying or replacing /t/ in pre-consonantal and pre-pausal environments. The glottal stop appears in Cockney in a wide variety of environments.

Matthews (1938) already refers to the glottal stop replacing /t/ and /k/ in inter vocalic contexts, along with a growing tendency for it replacing /p/ as well.

He provides evidence as early as the 17[th]c from the Churchwardens' records, where glottalling appearing as missing "t" in the writing.

"*woostreet* [Wood Street] 1677, *Statues* [statutes] 1658 *ffleestreete* [Fleet Street] 1624, *lighfoots* [lightfoots] 1635."

Wells (1982) explains, coinciding with Matthews, that the glottal stop can also be an allophone of /p, t, k/ in final position of a word. Beaken (1971), studying schoolchildren in the East End, found these three phonemes 'almost invariably glottalized' in final position. This could lead to the neutralization of oppositions such as *whip*, *wit*, *wick* into [wɪʔ]. Nonetheless, the realization of glottal stop as /t/ far surpasses those of /p/ and /k/, both in internal and word final position. As the stratum or social position of the speaker becomes higher, the realization of /p/ and /k/ as [ʔ] becomes more and more unusual, being /t/ the only phonetic environment in which it appears. Due to this social behaviour, the only environment for the glottal stop that has found its place in Estuary English is T-glottalling, especially in pre-pausal and intervocalic environments. There is a lack of representation of T-Glottalling in the literary corpus used in the present paper, despite being deemed one of the most important by academics. A possibility would be an apostrophe replacing the <t>, yet this tends to imply the loss of a sound, and the glottal stop is of a different nature.

In the movie *Cathy Come Home* (1966) the glottal stops appear sporadically, but more commonly in the mouth of the male protagonist and in frequently used sentences:

"[she] sticks 'er 'and through this window and get 'old of this **li'le** [..] oh yes **qui'e** old" (0:01:27)

Notice in the following quotation from *Up the Junction* (1968) how she consistently drops the /t/ sound in coda position when it is end-word, but keeps it when it is in mid-word coda position.

"Then he showed me this <u>letter</u> he had from a girl in the <u>ATS</u>. Said 'i was **jus'** pliying (playing) **abou'**. **Bu'** if they do **i'** before marriage they'll do **i'** <u>after</u>". (*Up the Junction*, 1968: 0:09:26)

The same trend continues in *The Long Good Friday* (1980), yet increasingly common for /t/ in mid-word position.

"I've **go'** a **li''le bi'** of business I want to drop you all by, can we talk in the ovver bar" (1:01:25)

In *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998) the characters do not make use of strong glottal stops, they rather use an accompanying glottal sound [tʔ]. Yet in some instances the full stop variation appears.

"just pull **i' ou'** it's in the **bo'om**" (0:38:05)

As for EE, this sound can be heard constantly when listening to Jamie Oliver's interviews, although he does not use the sound consistently.

"**Defini'ely ma'e**. Because if you're any good, you play from the **hear'** or you cook from the **hear'**. **Defini'ely**" (Oliver, 2000: 0:33)

Especially in later interviews, as his accent leans more towards standard:

"How can you talk <u>about</u> improving the foods in schoows when you <u>can't</u> even **ge'** the **wa'er righ'**?" (Oliver, 2015: 5:55)

5) b. TH fronting

Another consonantal characteristic of Cockney is the fronting of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ into labio-dental fricatives [f] and [v] respectively, also referred to as TH-Fronting. It occurs readily in all environments for the voiceless, but the voiced counterpart is reluctant to become fronted when in initial position. Instead, it is readily produced as a dental plosive [d̪] in its 'roughest' form or a dental fricative in more 'posh' variations. The same distinction is made by later academics. According to Wells (1982) this distribution underlies two different phonemes with the same realization in most cases; although every adult Londoner uses the dental fricative sporadically. To support this, he includes data from Beaken (1971) 'he found that by the age of nine children were able to alternate [f] and [θ], [v] and [ð] in

the appropriate stylistic way for underlying /θ, ð/, without using hypercorrect dentals for underlying /f, v/'. According to Britain (2005) this trend is on the rise on the different koineization processes in the cities where Cockneys took residence.

Early examples in literary Cockney taken from Matthews (1938: 68) include Albert Chevalier in his sketch *The God and the Stars*

"Lizer **finks** I'm stuck on Nell Perry, but as I sez, I admires 'er as a hartist[.]".

The feature is also present in the diary-book from our corpus, *The Hooligan Nights* (1899):

"an' the lab'rer got one of my **teef** to give notice, but I got one back on 'is jore, an' there was the lab'rer comin' at me **wiv** 'is tongue 'anging right out of 'is **mouf**"

This eye representation of the sound in literary Cockney continues throughout the 20th century, as can be seen extensively in *Glory and the Shame* (1997):

"'I shouldn't **fink** so, **though** yer never know **wiv** 'im,' Joe replied."

The sound is also popular to represent the working class in the films analyzed.

"– Wha' you doing tomorrow?

– Having a **baf**.

– Is it your **birfday**, then?

– Cheeky Bugger" (*Up the Junction*, 1968: 0:24:59)

"Now, tell me something **worfwhile**", "I need some time to **fink**" "Oh, **anovver fing**. 'arry's got a lot of talking to do this afternoon" (*The Long Good Friday*, 1980: 1:13:06, 1:13:50, 0:17:20)

TH-fronting is constantly used to depict the London dialect in *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrel* (1998):

"He's a fucking **fief**", "**Smify**. To batter poor **Smify** to deaf **wiv** it. […] Don't worry I'll **fink** of **somefin**", "Not my **fing, fanks**" (0:6:58, 0:31:40, 0:40:10)

Oliver uses the TH-Fronting sparingly, yet it appears for words like *thing*, or *wiv*.

"Weo, being a jammer myself I'm pre''y eclectic, really. To be honest most of the band here, I've go' aw their albums… **everyfing** from, like, you know […]", "I've been in the band for 12 years with these **free** (three). Two! Lovely peopo" (Oliver, 2000: 1:08, 1:52)

"I've sweated off this for 10 minutes **wiv** a good ow' shake of Worcestershire sauce and rosemary" (Oliver, 2015: 2:00)

This feature is controversial in EE, some attribute it only to the speakers closest to Cockney in the continuum. Yet Britain (2005) also presents a study by Trudgill (1988) that emphasizes how readily the younger speakers took this allophonic variation. This shows that even if TH-Fronting is not part of EE at

the present time, the trend implies that it will soon be, as a high percentage of the younger speakers are acquiring this allophone.

5) c. London's Vowel Shift

Cockney is also represented by a change in the vowel sounds, most specifically the long vowels and a few short vowels. This shift is almost as important as the Great Vowel Shift, as it involves nearly as many sounds. In this section, only the most common fraction of this shift is explained. In 1882 the Reverend A. J. D. D'Orsey wrote to the School Board for London (Matthews, 1938: 63-64)

"Such words as paper, shape, train, are pronounced *piper*, *shipe*, *trine*, –the very first letter of the alphabet being thus wrongly taught. Cab is *keb*, bank is *benk*, strand is *strend*; light is almost *loyt*; the short I is made ee, e.g "second *edeeshon*"; no is *now*; mountain is *meowntain*; stupid is *stoopid* and many more"

This description is highly accurate and coincides with what academics had analyzed before the 1980s. Estuary English uses the following London shift, or a variant between this and RP, as each speaker might adjust them slightly.

- The long A vowel /eɪ/ as in *great* had by the late 19[th]c opened the point of articulation of the first element to [aɪ] coinciding with long I in RP *grite*. Wells (1982) places this vowel for Popular London as [ʌɪ] the first element being now more central. This change can be seen in the following examples of the corpus:

"The women used to scrub the **pivements** (pavements) every morning to keep them clean." "Me sister **kime** (came) to see me last week from Yardley" (*Cathy Come Home*, 1966: 0:20:07, 0:20:15)

These two quotations are part of the recording inserted in the television play, and therefore show the vowel shift more clearly.

"– Wanna go for a ride?

– Oh, you **sife** (safe)?

– Only when I'm driving" (*Up the Junction*, 1968: 24:28)

"Well get them off their arses and **mike** (make) them start again, right? Go on, what are you **witing** (wating) for?", "I want **nimes** (names) and addresses, right" (*The Long Good Friday*, 1980: 0:47:59, 0:53:10)

- The long I /aɪ/ could not follow the RP evolution in Cockney as the space was occupied by the long A, and to prevent creating homophones its first point of articulation retracted instead of fronting. 1750 [əɪ]>1850[ɒɪ] instead of RP 1750 [əɪ]>1850[aɪ]. In 1913, Shaw represented this sound as D'Orsey had:

This feature is less prominent in the selected corpus with only a few examples with a clear [o] as the starting point.

"THE FLOWER GIRL [picking up her scattered flowers and replacing them in the basket] There's menners f'yer! Te-oo banches o **voylets** trod into the mad."

(*Pygmalion*, 1913)

"'ere, we're going to see his **boyke** [bike]. 'is what? 'is **boyke**." (*Up the Junction*, 1968: 0:24:15)

Wells (1982) proposed a more open first point of articulation and the second is raised [ɑi] for popular London. This can be seen as a transition to softer version of the vowel. For instance, the word *driving* in the dialog from the long A section.

- Apart from the diphthong shift, there is a shift in the pure vowel sound of long E /i:/. This long vowel becomes a central diphthong in Cockney [i:]>[əi]. The earliest representation of this sound appears in Shaw's description of the Cockney alphabet he had heard while passing a London elementary school 'I, Ber-ee, Ser-ee, Der-ee, Er-ee [...]' (Jones, 2005). The tendency in popular London is to take the Cockney variation towards RP. In this case, the Cockney [əi] the first element becomes more closed, bringing it nearer to the long monophthong [ɪi].

"Righ'. Let's sort the buyers form the spyers, the **needy** from the **greedy**, and those who trust me from the ones who don't" (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrel*, 1998: 0:00:32)

Notice in this example the Glottalling of *right*, which is deliver quickly, as opposed to *sort*, *trust*, and *don't*.

5) d. L-Vocalization

Another marked characteristic of Cockney is L-vocalization. Through this process the lateral consonant /l/ when [ɫ] is reduced to a vowel, normally into [w-u-ʊ-o]. This process is not uncommon in English. Vocalization of the l-sound appeared in the Early Modern English period when /l/ was after a vowel and followed by a /k/. According to Johnson (2007) L-vocalization is an expected process when the dialect has a long standing clear-dark L distinction. The London dialect has traditionally used dark L before a consonant or before a pause. Johnson also states that dental/alveolar consonants as well as fronted closed vowels tend to have preserving effects. Yet Cockney L-vocalization has not been hindered by these effects. Early examples can be found in a text by Egan (1772-1849) "The vendors of milk, for instance, seldom call the article they carry for sale, as it is generally sounded *mieu* or *mieu below*, though some have recently adopted the practice of crying *mieu above*." (Matthews, 1938).

During the 1970s in popular London speech L-vocalization was generally stigmatized and used primarily by the working class. Bowyer (1973) found the use of vocoid allophones of /l/ usually in the broadest London accent (closer to Cockney), occasionally in the mid-group, and absent in the most RP-like group. Furthermore, "In his broader groups Bowyer also encountered occasional instances of clear [l] in the vocalizing environment; he correctly interprets these as 'hyper-reaction against the use of vocoid allophones'" (Wells, 1982) In the

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following examples from the corpus, two transcriptions were chosen to represent the slight difference in the vocalization by the different speakers:

"who's the new **girw**?" (*Up the Junction*, 1968: 0:10:40)

"then you'll understand why Harold couldn't make it. It's **aw** under **controw**" (*The Long Good Friday*, 1980: 1:03:15)

"He's got a couple of dirty **li''o** [little] fingers in a couple dirty **li''o** pies" (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, 1998: 0:04:40)

Nowadays, L-vocalization is spreading among all social groups even including some RP speakers. Britain (2005) analyses the results in the fens. He concludes that the spreading pattern is hierarchical, from big cities to small cities, to towns, to the countryside. In other words, London dialect is a gate for the koineization of different dialects influencing each other to give way to EE.

As can be already seen in the quotations from Oliver's interviews above, he uses L-vocalization systematically: *Weo* (well), *aw* (all), a good *ow'* (old) shake, *schoows* (schools).

"Yeah, lo's of boy and **girw** bands that are in the chance all the time. **Peopo** go to their gigs and have DAT tapes and pretend to sing to. That upsets me." (Oliver, 2000: 1:28)

6) Features of Grammar

As a general rule grammar in a language and its dialects tends to be more reluctant to change than vocabulary or phonetics. Cockney has preserved several grammatical forms that were already in use in Middle English and were considered vulgar in standard, and were therefore relegated to non-standard use. Matthews's (1938) comparisons of the different sources —church reports, personal letters, literary works— led him to conclude that Cockney grammar in his days had a long-standing history since the 1700s and had varied little during that time. Since then some of the features have changed along the years, but the most influencing forms persist today in Cockney. The main difference between Estuary English and Cockney is that EE favors standard grammar and disregards most of the structures presented below, with the exception of the question tag, which is used by standard grammar users. Albeit, they do not use it as frequently as the lower classes.

6) a. Present tense -s ending

The use of the third person singular -s in the present tense came to southern English in the early 17[th]c. Cockney, through analogy, started using the desinence of the third person singular to all forms. Likewise, the use of "is" and "was" as the verb of a plural subject are due to analogy with the singular forms. As schooling augmented, the use of this form became less prominent, yet, "you

was" continued to be widely used. The following examples from our corpus illustrate the point. This feature is absent in most of the texts as it is receding due to greater schooling.

"'It was when me an' Maggots **was** workin' togevver,' said young Alf, and bofe of us **was** on the hank for a new pair of boots. Down on our uppers we **was**, wiv no error;" (*The Hooligan Nights*, 1899)

'You didn't encourage anyone wiv the way you **was** mouthin' off.' (*Glory and the Shame*)

"Me and Colins **was** very close. I've known him since we **was** at school." (*The Long Good Friday*, 1980: 0:31:10)

6) b. Double Negatives & Double comparatives and superlatives

Double negatives, comparatives, and superlatives are common in non-standard English. The double negative is formed by a negative form of a verb and an adverb of negation. This feature can be found in the earliest and latest texts of our corpus:

"Still there **wasn't nuffink** broken, nor yet in the second round neiver" (*The Hooligan Nights* 1899)

"Eightpence **ain't no** object to me, Charlie." (*Pygmalion*, 1913)

"I **ain't** had **no** insurance on the lorry" (*Cathy Come Home*, 1966: 0:11:22)

'Anyway off she went an' I **ain't** seen **nuffink** of 'er since. Mind you, I did 'ear that she'd got 'erself 'iked up wiv a bookie. An' it's odds on 'e's 'ad enough of 'er by now.' (*The Glory and the Shame,* 1997)

Worth noting in this quotation the constant /h/ dropping marked in the written form by the apostrophes.

"It's impossible no one knows noffing[..] and I **don't** want **no** punters, this is personal" (*The Long Good Friday*, 1980: 0:53:30)

Turning our attention to the TH-Fronting that is constantly appearing in the quotations, it is interesting to remark that the characters from the texts are highly reluctant to front the voiced dental fricative.

The double comparatives and superlatives are the result of the combination of the ending –er/-est and the periphrastic construction. These structures, popular in Middle and Early Modern English, were discarded as redundant in the 18[th]c by most scholars wanting to create a standard; but they are still in use in a great number of dialects across the UK. In Cockney, they are common, yet not found in the corpus.

6) c. Perfect forms as preterites

Another feature already mentioned by Matthews (1938) is the use of perfect forms as preterites. This is especially common with the verbs *do* and *see*; *done* (did) and *seen* (saw).

"But it's my belief they **done** the old woman in" (*Pygmalion*, 1913)

This quotation was selected as it can also be seen as an example of the complex vocabulary used by Cockneys and explained below. The phrasal verb *to do somebody in* means to murder someone. Once the sentence was hardly understood, since it has become general vocabulary.

"Takin' care o' the 'orse," I told 'er. "Well, you can go an' sleep wiv the 'orse fer all I care," she ses. That **done** it. I ses to 'er, "Alice, I'd get more lovin' from that ole mare than the one I got at 'ome."' (*Glory and the Shame*)

      6) d. *Ain't*

One of the most widely used non-standard forms is *ain't*. This contraction is used in Cockney, as the negative contraction of *have* and *be* in present indicative. It is commonly used by Cockneys and the closest to Cockney speakers of EE. Even though EE tends to adhere to standard grammar, *ain't* is admitted in certain situations. In our corpus, this particle was extremely common, appearing in all the texts that featured Cockney characters.

"THE FLOWER GIRL [still nursing her sense of injury] **Ain't** no call to meddle with me, he **ain't**.

THE BYSTANDER [to her] Of course he **ain't**. Don't you stand it from him. [To the note taker] See here: what call have you to know about people what never offered to meddle with you? Where's your warrant?" (*Pygmalion*, 1913)

'Look, luv, this **ain't** the first joanner me an' the lads 'ave shifted,' Wally assured her. (*The Glory and the Shame*, 1997)

As seen above, in the section on double negative:

"I **ain't** had no insurance on the lorry" (*Cathy Come Home*, 1966: 0:11:22)

"you **ain't** as uncultured as I thought you was" (*Up the Junction*, 1968: 0:20:54)

"no ones 'eard nofing? That just **ain't** natural" (*The Long Good Friday*, 1980: 0:46:30)

"What's that, a pound for every year they've been around? I know they're antiques, but I **ain't** paying antique prices." (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, 1998: 0:47:30)

6) e. Tag questions

Tag questions are a common feature of Cockney speech, but they are also commonly used across the UK. The key difference is that Cockneys are particularly prolific in their use, being a constant in their speech. Due to the fast delivery, they are normally transcribed as *innit?* for 'isn't it'. For the audiovisual

transcriptions, this convention had been followed, despite not being followed by the written texts from the corpus.

"'It's aw right, **isn't it?**' said young Alf." (*The Hooligan Nights*, 1899)

In *Pygmalion* (1913) Liza continues using the tag question constantly even after she has changed her accent and most of her grammar:

"LIZA: But of course you are: you are never ill. So glad to see you again, Colonel Pickering. [He rises hastily; and they shake hands]. Quite chilly this morning, **isn't it?**"

"LIZA: It's not because you paid for my dresses. I know you are generous to everybody with money. But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, **isn't it?**"

"it's rotten **innit?**" "I dunno, a bit late now we got i', **innit?**" (*Cathy Come Home*, 1966: 0:05:18, 0:08:38)

"Stroke of luck though, **innit**?", "Maybe it's time you asked the unusual, **innit?**", "the music's loud here, **innit?**" (*The Long Good Friday*, 1980: 0:33:10, 0:46:48, 1:01:20)

"It's nice here, **isn't it?**" "It's funny how things happen, **isn't it?**" (*The Glory and the Shame*, 1997)

"It's good here, **innit?**", "high-powered jobs, **innit?**", "Bit dramatic, **innit?**" (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, 1998: 0:08:52, 0:13:25, 0:18:55)

Crystal (1995) mentions some of these grammatical features as part of the EE dialect, such as tag questions, and generalization of the 3rd person singular. He also mentions other grammatical features that might have more to do with American influence than with Cockney, like the omission of the adverbial ending –ly. This adds to the argument that EE is a separate dialect from Cockney.

7) Lexical Features

Cockney has always been characterized by its intricate lexical forms, that make it difficult for any unpracticed listener to understand the thick dialect of the East End. These forms of slang, mainly rhyming slang, back-slang and other creative forms, have been considered as thieves' codes. Since the mid 19thc these forms of slang started to sprout in London. Some fell out of use, but new were constantly created during the years.

"By its very nature, the slang of the Cockney subculture is particularly difficult for outsiders to understand due to the rapid changes it undergoes even over a short period of time." (Fowler, 1984).

Yet some became so popular that found their way into standard English, although normally in a mocking tone. Through the Cockney-EE-Standard continuum most of the slang words are lost as soon as the speaker deviates from Cockney, and only those that have crossed the full spectrum are used by the strict Estuary Speaker. already noted in Matthews (1938: 106), "Although standard English does not want all the Cockney words, even people of good education will constantly use them in speaking colloquially"

Due to the fleeting nature of slang, it is extremely difficult to track the terms used throughout the years by Cockneys. In the second half of the 19[th]c several slang dictionaries were published, such as *The Vulgar Tongue* (1857) by Ducangue Anglicus, or J.C. Hotten's *Dictionary of Modern Slang, Cant and Vulgar Words* (1859). These dictionaries dealt mainly with words about drinks, rogues, and women. Few of the words mentioned were still in use by the turn of the century. On the other hand, Robert Barltrop & Jim Wolveridge, in their book *The Muvver Tongue* (1980), give a personal description of the words and phrases used by their parents and grandparents.

7) a. Terms of Address

Barltrop and Wolveridge point that one of the most characteristic uses of vocabulary, apart from rhyming slang, which will be dealt with below, is the use of terms of address and their rules. "The basic words that any child is

taught to use are 'lady' and 'gentleman'" (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980). *Lady* is any woman that the speaker does not know or has no reason to disrespect. While *woman* can be taken as an insult, for either the speaker thinks that she has not earned the title of *lady*, or the speaker knows the person and she disqualifies for the title. The distinction between *man* and *gentleman* does not have the same negative connotation. Among ladies that know each other they would usually refer to each other as *girls*, regardless of their age. Among males of equal footing of authority, they would talk of *mates*, *chums*, *cocks*, *guv'nor*, *chief*, *fellow* or *bloke,* among many. These terms have survived during the years and are used by Estuary English speakers, especially 'mate', 'fellow' 'bloke' and 'guv'nor'. In the corpus, a clear transition from the form of address represented in each text as the most common can be clearly seen. At the turn of the century it was *guv'nor*, being replaced by *bloke* during mid-century, and then by *fella* by the end of the millennial. There follow some attestations from our corpus:

"After you, **guv'nor**," I replies. "They'd cripple me fore I'd walked a dozen yards." (*The Hooligan Nights*, 1899)

"They were going along in these hearses to an "unusual supper party" and the **bloke** who was goin' ahead of 'em, the chandelier falls down on him, you see?" (*Cathy Come Home*, 1966: 0:01:12)

"'Bernie's a nice **fella**, an' 'e's respectful. Which is more than I could say fer present company.'" (*The Glory and the Shame*, 1997)

"Four young **fellas** who got in deeper than they could handle" (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, 1998: 0:40:37)

In contrast, Oliver, especially in his younger years opt for *ma'e* (mate)

"Defini'ely **ma'e**", "That's no' true, **ma'e**. Remember it forever", "Apart from tha' I've go''a clean **ma'e**", "Goh-bennett, **ma'e**, you go' me there. You're really challenging me, eh?" (Oliver, 2000: 0:33, 0:57, 0:47, 2:37)

7) b. Rhyming Slang

Rhyming slang has been one of the most studied aspects of the East End dialect. This slang is formed by rhyming a desired word with a group of words, including proper names. Most commonly this rhyme tends to be shortened by omitting the rhyming word. *To take a butcher's hook,* as in to take a look, becomes *to take a butcher's.* This leaves the unwary listener confused and without any clue to decipher the code, which gives the impression that rhyming slang is a thieves' slang used to distract unwanted listeners.

This might have been the origin of some of the lexis coming from rhyming slang and back slang. Even some words come directly from cant, the secret language of thieves. However, the people who still use this old cant terms hardly consider them as such. Some have even gained enough respectability to be used by RP speakers.

These rhymes do not fully substitute the word, in all environments, despite this long-standing impression of academics.

"The false impression was a matter of proportion. Certainly, Cockneys said 'Take a butcher's' for 'look'— they still do" (Barltrop & Wolveridge 1980)

"– Bacon, see what we've go'.

– Let's have a **butcher's**, eh?" (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, 1998: 1:07:00)

Matthews (1938) lists a great number of slang terms from previous centuries, noting that only a few were still used at the time of publishing, of these even less were still used by the end of the 20thc. Yet despite their short-term lives, some have achieved a longevity by becoming general knowledge in standard English even though few use them outside the East End, or as a reference to Cockney. Some of these expressions are: *Mince pies* for eyes or the shortening *minces* (Partridge, 1989), *skyrocket* for pocket, *round me houses* for trousers, *cows and kisses* for missus, *apples and pears* meaning stairs, *loaf/crust (of bread)* for head (Partridge, 1989), as in 'use your loaf'.

"[…] and certainly not when you've got Liberia's defici' in your **skyrocke'**" (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, 1998: 0:04:20)

8)   Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this analysis was to give a description of the main features of Cockney through the last century and a half, in order to compare the evolution of the dialect according to academics. After analysing the corpus material, I have tried to show the evolution the dialect has undergone in the three branches that conform a dialect. In phonetics, there is a progressive change in the frequency and environments where some of the sounds appear. Glottalling becomes more and more frequent in mid-word position in the Cockney dialect. The same trend can be seen in EE. In Cockney, TH-Fronting is very consistently used in all the decades contrasted on this paper, whereas EE is much more fickle and individual-speaker dependent. As has already been commented, the tendency in younger EE speakers is towards homogeneity of TH-Fronting use for most environments. The London Vowel Shift was very scarce in our corpus. This can be attributed to actors and authors relegating it as a background feature, as it is more likely to create confusion among the audience. The last feature shared by both dialects is L-vocalization; this feature is frequent during all periods and in both dialects.

Grammar was most difficult to define as only small studies focused on this aspect of the dialect, however the different studies coincided on the main features. These were the same as the ones mentioned by early studies, in other words, grammatical evolution has been scarce in the dialect. Yet due to the

nature of EE, grammar has had no major influence on it apart from tag questions. The lexical forms mentioned as the most common at the turn of the century differ from those of the 50s, 70s, and the turn of the millennial. A good example of this in the corpus is the forms of address: *guv'nor*, *bloke*, *fella*, and *mate*. The last term in the list can be considered the main form of address among EE speakers. To obtain more detailed data, a survey among people from different generations could be carried out. Only the forms that crossed the dialectal boundaries have survived with enough frequency of use to be regarded as common by slang dictionaries and academics.

The corpus has tried to show the transition from a rougher working class dialect to a softer version of a new dialect that is getting established in the South East of England in the form of Estuary English. The small evolution of Cockney and its influence on EE can be understood through the corpus, despite being formed by representations of the dialect rather than actual recordings. This serves to confirm previous research and to give a new perspective on the current debate surrounding the presently expanding EE.

Further research could involve the recollection of recorded conversations between two or more Cockney participants, including, for instance, radio recordings, and for later forms, voice messages. Owing to the time and resources available, such a corpus goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The research shows that Cockney is not merely being replaced by Estuary English, but it is rather a source of influence to this new dialect, as Cockney continues to survive in London's working class and differs from EE in its grammar and lexical forms.

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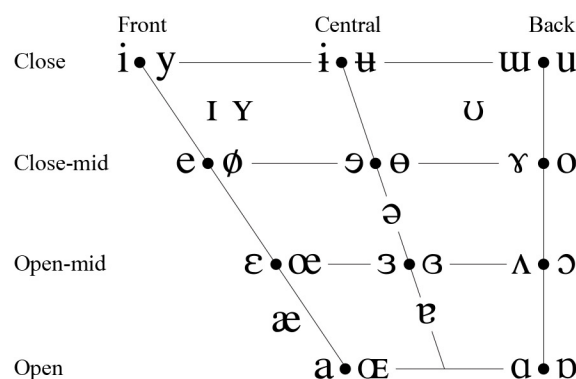
CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
ʘ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	' Examples:
ǀ Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	p' Bilabial
ǃ (Post)alveolar	ʄ Palatal	t' Dental/alveolar
ǂ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	k' Velar
ǁ Alveolar lateral	ʛ Uvular	s' Alveolar fricative

OTHER SYMBOLS

ʍ Voiceless labial-velar fricative

w Voiced labial-velar approximant

ɥ Voiced labial-palatal approximant

ʜ Voiceless epiglottal fricative

ʢ Voiced epiglottal fricative

ʡ Epiglottal plosive

ɕ ʑ Alveolo-palatal fricatives

ɺ Voiced alveolar lateral flap

ɧ Simultaneous ʃ and x

Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.   t͡s k͡p

VOWELS

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i • y	ɨ • ʉ	ɯ • u
	ɪ ʏ		ʊ
Close-mid	e • ø	ɘ • ɵ	ɤ • o
		ə	
Open-mid	ɛ • œ	ɜ • ɞ	ʌ • ɔ
	æ	ɐ	
Open	a • ɶ		ɑ • ɒ

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

ˈ	Primary stress
ˌ	Secondary stress
ː	Long
ˑ	Half-long
̆	Extra-short
ǀ	Minor (foot) group
‖	Major (intonation) group
.	Syllable break
‿	Linking (absence of a break)

ˌfoʊnəˈtɪʃən

eː   eˑ   ĕ   ɹi.ækt

DIACRITICS Some diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. ŋ̊

̥	Voiceless	n̥ d̥	̤ Breathy voiced	b̤ a̤	̪ Dental	t̪ d̪
̬	Voiced	s̬ t̬	̰ Creaky voiced	b̰ a̰	̺ Apical	t̺ d̺
ʰ	Aspirated	tʰ dʰ	̼ Linguolabial	t̼ d̼	̻ Laminal	t̻ d̻
̹	More rounded	ɔ̹	ʷ Labialized	tʷ dʷ	̃ Nasalized	ẽ
̜	Less rounded	ɔ̜	ʲ Palatalized	tʲ dʲ	ⁿ Nasal release	dⁿ
̟	Advanced	u̟	ˠ Velarized	tˠ dˠ	ˡ Lateral release	dˡ
̠	Retracted	e̠	ˤ Pharyngealized	tˤ dˤ	̚ No audible release	d̚
̈	Centralized	ë	̃ Velarized or pharyngealized	ɫ		
̽	Mid-centralized	e̽	̝ Raised	e̝ (ɹ̝ = voiced alveolar fricative)		
̩	Syllabic	n̩	̞ Lowered	e̞ (β̞ = voiced bilabial approximant)		
̯	Non-syllabic	e̯	̘ Advanced Tongue Root	e̘		
˞	Rhoticity	ɚ a˞	̙ Retracted Tongue Root	e̙		

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

LEVEL			CONTOUR		
ő	or ˥	Extra high	ě	or ˩˥	Rising
é	˦	High	ê	˥˩	Falling
ē	˧	Mid	e᷄	˦˥	High rising
è	˨	Low	e᷆	˩˨	Low rising
ȅ	˩	Extra low	e᷈	˧˦˧	Rising-falling
↓	Downstep		↗	Global rise	
↑	Upstep		↘	Global fall	