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Loss of Rhoticity in South-West England

Utrata rotyzujących wariantów wymowy w Anglii Południowo-Zachodniej

Rozprawa doktorska napisana
na Wydziale Anglistyki
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Ja, niżej podpisany/a

Kamil Malarski

przedkładam rozprawę doktorską

pt. *Loss of Rhoticity in South-West England* („Utrata rotyzujących wariantów wymowy w Anglii Południowo-Zachodniej")

na Uniwersytecie im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu
i oświadczam,
że napisałem/am ją samodzielnie.

Oznacza to, że przy pisaniu pracy, poza niezbędnymi konsultacjami, nie korzystałem/am z pomocy innych osób, a w szczególności nie zlecałem/am opracowania rozprawy lub jej istotnych części innym osobom, ani nie odpisywałem/am tej rozprawy lub jej istotnych części od innych osób.

Jednocześnie przyjmuję do wiadomości, że gdyby powyższe oświadczenie okazało się nieprawdziwe, decyzja o wydaniu mi dyplomu zostanie cofnięta.

Poznań, 2 lipca 2021 — Kamil Malarski

(miejscowość, data) — (czytelny podpis)

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List of abbreviations and symbols

SED	*Survey of English Dialects*
LMC	lower-middle class
MMC	middle-middle class
UMC	upper-middle class
word	(rhotic pronunciation; the words in bold denote the presence of /r/.)
word	(non-rhotic pronunciation; the words underlined denote the absence of /r/.)

List of speakers

M01	Tim
M02	Duncan
M03	Seth
M04	James
M05	Rogan
M06	David
M07	Tom
M08	Benji
M09	Barth
M10	Alexander
M11	Levy
M12	Adam
M13	Syd
M14	Josh
M15	Nick
M16	Mark
M18	Miles
M19	Michael
M20	Landon
M22	Bob
M23	Phillip
M24	Eugene
M25	Brady

F01	Kathryn
F02	Lizzie
F03	Alex
F04	Debbie
F05	Jennifer
F06	Megan
F07	Naomi
F08	Sarah
F09	Deborah
F10	Marion
F11	Lauren
F12	Paula
F13	Astrid
F14	Meredith
F15	Maggie
F16	Victoria
F17	Stacy
F18	Tess
F19	Donna
F20	Heather
F21	Caroline
F22	Lucy
F23	Jane

Introduction

The following dissertation describes the current adaptation of rhoticity in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, as researched in 316 informants. It comprises two datasets which are rapid anonymous surveys and sociolinguistic interviews, both part of the linguistic field-work performed in the researched region.

The English South-West has traditionally been described as a rhotic region. Due to the lack of the up-to-date research, it remained unknown what the mechanisms behind the pronunciation of the non-prevocalic /r/ might be, both linguistic and social. The majority of phonetics and phonology handbooks, the atlases covering the varieties of English and similar sources still mostly treat the counties of Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset as parts of a larger region where the /r/ phoneme is pronounced word-finally (e.g. in the word *car*) and pre-consonantally (e.g. in the word *dorm*). Considering how rapidly the rhotic region has been shrinking in England in the past decades (Orton and Wakelin 1967, Trudgill 1999), it seemed that the sources informing about rhoticity as a majority feature in South-West England might not be fully adequate. This problem seemed even more interesting in the light of the publications pointing to the recent drastic loss of rhoticity in young speakers in Dorset and Cornwall (Piercy 2012, Dudman 2000). Piercy shows a very regular and categorical shift in which speakers from towns like Dorchester and Wareham who are at least fifty always feature some rhoticity in their pronunciation, while speakers who are below fifty years of age do not feature any rhotic pronunciations. These findings strongly inspired the current work. In order to research the variable more holistically, I have chosen to analyse the accents spoken in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset to see if the disappearance of rhotic variants extends to the West of Dorset.

The dissertation is divided into seven short chapters. The first one expands on the general Introduction, sets the scene for the theoretical concepts which will be discussed later and introduces the research questions. The second chapter compresses the information found in other sources about the accents spoken in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. To show how the accentual features and the description methods have changed over the years, it offers cross-sectional descriptions through sources from different periods, with the hope that the second chapter can be treated as a solid reference for accents spoken in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset in general. One on the first things which will be noted by

the reader will be an unusual variety of different pronunciation variants spoken within each county, also prompting to the fact that the isoglosses do not really align with the administrative divisions in the region. The speech communities must be, therefore, organised around different social groupings, which could have been conducive to the retention of rhoticity in the area for such a long time. It will be argued, following Trudgill (2011, 2015), that smaller speech communities with tight social interactions are much more conducive to preserving conservative language features, and only once they transform into more socially mobile and open communities, they start adopting the innovative features in the language.

The third chapter discusses the distribution of rhotic and non-rhotic accents in the English-speaking world. This meta-analysis shows that, although very frequently used as a feature against which the accents of English are classified, it rarely is the case that a variety of English would be fully rhotic or fully non-rhotic. There are few fully rhotic speakers in Ireland and Scotland, while in the accents commonly thought of as non-rhotic, like Australian, New Zealand and South African, not only is rhoticity found in some speakers as representing a conservative feature, but there are new variably rhotic variants spreading at the same time in the youngest groups of speakers. This leads to the research questions of what linguistic and social factors constitute this large variability. The last sections of this chapter are devoted to analysing the models for the language change and spreading of the accentual features within the theories of dialect contact.

The first part of the linguistic fieldwork is described in Chapter 4. This study replicates the methodology of William Labov who studied the stratification of rhoticity in his department store study performed in the 1960s in New York (Labov 1966). By analogy, I make use of rapid anonymous surveys to estimate the current rhoticity rates in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. I have selected one city in each county, i.e. Truro, Exeter and Bournemouth, respectively, for which I select three supermarkets which are stratified socio-economically with the assumption that they will attract different clientele. The supermarkets representing the lower-end shops were Lidl (in Exeter) and Aldi (in Truro and Bournemouth), all located in less affluent neighbourhoods. Second, the mid-range supermarkets were represented by Tesco (Truro), Morrisons (Exeter) and ASDA (Bournemouth). Considering their locations, size and offer, I classified them as attracting the customers of the broadest socio-economic profile. Third, the higher-end supermarket in each town was Marks & Spencer. Usually, these shops were much less crowded and offered

more gourmet grocery products than the other supermarkets included in the study. The methodology was then the following. Around four o'clock in the afternoon, I visited a given supermarket and while casually shopping for food I was asking for the time, pretending that my phone was out of battery. This technique was used to elicit the word FOUR in the customers who responded. The first thirty qualifying responses in each supermarket were then noted down impressionistically, together with the perceived age and gender of the respondent. This gave a total of 270 responses, 90 per country. Thus, 39% of the responses in Truro were rhotic, 22% in Exeter and 19% in Bournemouth. The stratification of rhoticity turned out to be remarkably regular. As hypothesized, the most rhotic pronunciations were found in the lower-end supermarkets in poorer neighbourhoods, the intermediate values were found for the middle-range supermarkets, while the least rhoticity was found in the higher-end supermarkets. Also, the oldest speakers featured the most rhoticity, while the young featured the least; middle-aged respondents featured intermediate values.

Another dataset comprised 46 speakers recorded during sociolinguistic interviews performed in all three researched counties. The speakers were divided into two socioeconomic groups (working vs. middle) and represented different age groups (age was treated as a continuum variable). The results point to a few social and linguistic factors which favour the presence of the non-prevocalic /r/ sounds. The strongest predictors are the speech style, the vowel context, the word frequency and the age of the speaker. The results presented mostly agree with similar studies researching rhoticity. Perhaps the most unexpected result is the fact that in more careful speech the interviewees used more rhotic pronunciations than while they spoke more casually.

The discussion chapter offers several sections covering some theoretical concepts which were not exhaustibly discussed until that point into the dissertation. It also cites a few narratives taken from the interviews which help understand the dialect boundaries in southwestern England, the interviewees' perceptions on the accents spoken in the region, their self-identification of the speakers of these accents and their perception of the region. Additional analyses show whether these perceptions correlate with the rhoticity rates in the researched group. The discussion is then followed by the conclusions chapter. The first section there briefly restates the information and findings which were relevant throughout the dissertation. It answers the research questions presented in section 1.2, points to the limitations of the methods which were used here to assess the actual

distribution of rhoticity in South-West England, and then tries to predict the scenarios for future sociolinguistic studies on the region.

The data reported confirms the initial hypothesis about the rhoticity loss in South-West England. It is argued here that Cornwall, Dorset and Devon should rather be referred to as variably rhotic regions rather than rhotic. *Rhotic* would suggest that the majority of speakers are still rhotic, while in fact rhoticity is already the minority feature. The rate with which rhoticity is disappearing may, however, be more difficult to establish than initially thought. It is true that we are observing the change in progress and the age of the speakers play a major role in this shift, yet because of the complex mechanisms behind the loss of rhoticity and the adoption of non-rhoticity, remembering that rhoticity persists also in young speakers in certain linguistic contexts, it may take more than one or two generations to see the linguistic South-West as a non-rhotic region.

Hopefully, this sociolinguistic work, with all its admitted limitations, offers a vital contribution to the existing sources on the accents spoken in South-West England, sespecially in the light of the scarcity of references not only describing rhoticity but other accentual and dialectal features of the area.

The language of the dissertation is not overly formal. It will often use the first-person structures, among other things. This is to ensure that the reader is not overwhelmed with too many complicated syntactical structures, and that the message I am trying to communicate is clear.

Chapter 1: Scope of this work

1.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the basic concepts behind the described research project. First of all, it introduces rhoticity as a sociolinguistic variable and explains the inspirations behind this work. It presents the aims of the project, with a thorough description of the research questions. It also shows how this study is theoretically grounded in the models of modern sociolinguistics. Finally, it will also try to tentatively assess the impact that the results might have on the current state of knowledge on English English accents.

This part of the dissertation will signpost the most important problems that it tries to resolve. Because many issues discussed here need a rather lengthy explanation, the whole first chapter will be devoted to explaining them. Also, most of the concepts introduced in this chapter will be expanded later. For instance, each of the researched regions will be discussed at more length in Chapter 2; the synchronic variation of rhotic and non-rhotic accents will be presented in Chapter 3; the methods of sampling and recording techniques will be elaborated on in Chapters 4 and 5 etc. Thus, the sections of Chapter 1 will only signal to the reader what they might expect of the whole work.

1.2. Research questions

The core research question of this work is whether and to what extent rhoticity is still prevalent in the varieties of English spoken in the southwestern parts of England, i.e. in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. Traditionally this has been a rhotic area, but in the light of Piercy's (2012) findings in Dorset, it might turn out that the data available is to a large extent outdated by now. Piercy suggests a complete loss of rhotic variants of pronunciations in Dorset. Therefore, I will try to see whether these findings extend over Cornwall, Devon and Dorset as a larger accentual region. Specifically, the research questions are:

(1) What are the differences in the pronunciation of the non-prevocalic /r/ between the researched groups? Are there differences between rhoticity rates across women and men, people representing different socio-economic status and speakers of different age?
(2) How fast is the projected process of rhoticity loss in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset?
(3) Are the social factors responsible for the loss of rhoticity in the South of England the same that drive the process of gaining rhoticity by traditionally non-rhotic speakers in the United States? (cf. Piercy 2012, Feagin 1990)
(4) What is the current prestige status of rhoticity?
(5) Does the phonetic and linguistic context influence the loss or retention of /r/?

1.3. Variable

Rhoticity denotes the pronunciation of the /r/ phoneme in word-final and preconsonantal positions. The term has been in use only for a few decades and it has most probably been coined by a phonetician John Wells who used it for the first time when referring to his smaller-scale fieldwork in Southampton (Wells 2010). He was investigating whether or not people on the streets would respond to his question with (rhotic pronunciation) or without (non-rhotic pronunciation) the /r/ sound in the word-final positions (e.g. in the word GINGER). The most prominent study on rhoticity, however, was done by William Labov in the 1960s (Labov [1966]. His novel techniques of the linguistic analysis gave rise to modern variationist sociolinguistics, and many of his methodologies and concepts have been used until today. Labov used advanced social profiling of his interviewees. Among other things, he gathered information about their income, religion or ethnicity, to be later able to compare how different social and cultural groups living in New York pronounce the non-prevocalic /r/. Another methodology he used to investigate rhoticity in New York was through his department store study. Labov chose three department stores, ranging from lower-end to higher-end, where he decided to ask the employees a question about the department located on the fourth floor to elicit their responses FOURTH FLOOR. He then noted down the responses. It turned out that the rhoticity rates found in each of them aligned with the profile of the stores, i.e. in the lower-end department store there were few rhotic pronunciations, while many more in the higher-end department

store. The employees in the middle-range store displayed intermediate rhoticity rates as a group. The results were as hypothesized by Labov because the traditional New York accents are non-rhotic. Differing from the General American pronunciation, which is rhotic, non-rhotic accents from New York were less prestigious. It seemed then natural that more rhoticity was found in the higher-end store than in the lower-end one. These results still resonate and hugely inspire sociolinguists until today. The following work, for example, apart from investigating the same variable, will also draw from these methodologies. The results of rapid anonymous surveys in supermarkets, based on the department store study in New York, are described in Chapter 4, while sociolinguistic interviews are described in Chapter 5.

Studies on rhoticity as a sociolinguistic variable have constituted an important part of sociolinguistic research over the years. Since Labov's New York study (1966), it has proven a fruitful material for many other influential studies like Feagin (1990) and Nagy and Irwin (2010) in the American context; in the British context, rhoticity has been studied, for example, in Glasgow (Macafee 1983, Stuart-Smith 2007), Edinburgh (Romaine 1978), Dublin (Hickey 2004), and in rhotic accents in England. In the North of England it has been researched by Barras (2010) in Lancanshire and by Asprey (2007) in the West Midlands; in the south of England, by Blaxter et al. (2019) and Piercy (2012) to which many references will be made throughout this dissertation. Although most of these studies describe the process opposite to the one described by Labov and others in the US (the sound change towards rhoticity), it has been argued that the forces driving either the loss or acquisition of rhoticity would be the same in England as they are across the ocean. Namely, both the speakers who are non-rhotic in the US, as well as those who are rhotic in England, are in the minority. This means that their variants of pronunciation are viewed as substandard in some conversational contexts. As a result, some groups of non-rhotic speakers in the US and rhotic speakers in England would avoid pronunciations that are stigmatised in order to sound more like the majority of the population. This would be especially true about people who aim at advancing their status in society, e.g. university students. Essentially, in both contexts it would be a process changing from producing less prestigious to more prestigious accentual features. However, it is yet not clear exactly what prestige status rhoticity has presently in the south of England, as is shown by studies in other regions. For example, in Glasgow or Dublin studies have shown that it is in the working class where rhoticity regresses most rapidly (Lawson et al. 2008, Hickey 2004).

Through the studies mentioned above, it has been shown multiple times that rhoticity is clearly stratified sociolinguistically. Its use varies with age, social class and speech style. In Piercy (2012), the use of non-prevocalic /r/ rises with age, whereas in Labov (1966) it decreases with age. In Glasgow, different social classes would display different rhoticity rates, with the working class losing it in the first place (Stuart-Smith 2003). In New York, the working class was the slowest to adopt rhotic pronunciation, as compared to the middle and the upper class (Labov 1966). No matter in which direction the tendencies grow, the grading is usually very regular and quantifiable.

1.4. Region and Population

The counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset have been chosen for analysis for the following reasons. First, Dorset was an obvious starting point, considering Piercy's (2012) findings on the use of non-prevocalic /r/ in the area. The first intention was for me to supplement her findings with results coming from a larger, possibly more socially diversified sample. The county of Dorset has also been used as a referential eastern boundary for the rhotic dialects in southwestern England. Second, Devon is a large county bordering Dorset to the east and Cornwall to the west. This is also where I started the field research. Finally, the most westerly county in England, Cornwall, seemed an especially interesting place for finding informants, because of the reasons described below.

All three counties have been a part of the historic, geographical and linguistic south-west of England, and all lie within the traditional rhotic region in the south of England. This rhotic region has included other counties or areas, e.g. Hampshire, Wiltshire and Gloucester, but the project focuses only on three of them, so that they are carefully investigated. However, the study even in its present form should provide a representative insight into the sociolinguistic variation of the pronunciation of non-prevocalic /r/ in the region.

Cornwall, Devon and Dorset constitute an area which is expected to be very interesting for a sociolinguistic study. Predominantly, it is underresearched, leaving room for many new dialectal studies. It also differs considerably from many other accentual regions in England in the structure of the society living there. Firstly, these regions are not very densely populated, especially the northern parts of Cornwall and Devon. The

most densely populated are the cities of Plymouth, Torquay, Exeter, Weymouth and Bournemouth (all having more than 50,000 inhabitants), which all are in Devon and Dorset. In turn, Cornwall's largest conurbations are towns of up to about 20,000 inhabitants, i.e. Newquay, Truro, Penzance and St. Austell.

In Chapter 2, it will be seen that Cornwall and northern Devon are not very widely inhabited by people born abroad. A similar situation is found in the rest of the researched region. This draws a completely different picture about the population living in southwestern England than in many other parts of England. Many sociolinguistic studies recently focus on language phenomena that are explained by the prevalent multilingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural relationships in the groups studied (see e.g. Cheshire et al. 2011). This cannot be said about Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. It seems that the societies living there are more traditional communities with fewer contacts with other cultures and languages. Thus, language contact phenomena will have smaller impact on the predicted changes in rhotic variants of pronunciation. Moreover, ethnicity will also not be taken as a variable throughout this dissertation.

There is, however, some migration towards these three areas from within the country. All of these places are traditionally famous tourist destinations for British tourists. There is a regular influx of British tourists spending the summer holidays there, stay over the weekends in their summer houses, or move there once they are retired.

1.5. Theoretical model

This work is grounded in models of sociolinguistics as understood among others by Labov ([1966] 2006), Trudgill (1974, 1986), Mesthrie (2010, 2012), Baranowski (2013) and many others within variationist sociolinguistics. It also adapts to the practices of linguistic fieldwork as described e.g. in Bowern (2008), which encompass thorough planning, careful recruitment processes, the use of fieldwork equipment and ethical practices in gathering and processing of the data, among other things. It will try to explain how social structure is mirrored in language behaviour (pronunciation of non-prevocalic /r/) in southwestern England. The problem, however, and the answer to it very much depends on the line of interpretation one adopts. The sections below intend to explain the

theoretical model used and to tell the reader what kind of interpretations they might expect from this work.

Angermeyer (2015) is a good starting point for a review of different approaches to sociolinguistics represented by different handbooks of sociolinguistics published in recent years. One of their main divisions is along the lines of their interpretation of the direction people analyse the interplay between language and society. Some scholars tend to focus more on language structure to try to answer questions about the society; others would rather investigate society first to formulate hypotheses about the given community's language behaviours. In other words, some handbooks describe sociolinguistics from the point of view of a language variable (e.g. phonological), while others from the point of view of a community variable (e.g. region, sex, age group).

This debate is by no means new. In the preface to the first edition of his 1966 study, Labov explains that he took a novel approach to sociolinguistics and understood it differently than many other researchers in the field at that time ([1966] 2006: viii). He was clear that he was interested in the material gathered in social interactions purely to understand language mechanisms that they mirror; he was much less interested in what language output can tell us about the structure of the society.

It is difficult to place this dissertation categorically on one or the other end of this dispute, but my interests are definitely closest to Labov's. The dissertation first fairly thoroughly describes the societies whose language behaviour it observes. Then the observations (data collected in the field) lead to formulating certain assumptions about the tendencies in which the language will develop in southwestern England.

By all means, the following work subscribes to the views that language contact and dialect contact constitute a major influence in language change phenomena. It seems an inescapable assumption especially in this context. On one end, there is a Cornwall dialect which is geographically very isolated. On the other, Dorset, which neighbours four different counties (two of them belonging to the traditionally non-rhotic region) and is located closer to London. These factors taken together are expected to contribute to greater dialect mixing in Dorset than in Cornwall. If the differences between the counties are gradual (i.e. there will be the least rhoticity in Dorset in the east and the most rhoticity in Cornwall to the west), dialect mixing will be one of the explanations for this phenomenon. There is indeed a substantial portion of literature emphasizing that neighbouring dialects tend to borrow features from one another, which often results in the levelling of

their distinctive features (Britain and Trudgill 2005, Trudgill 2004). In Chapter 3, a hypothesis that dialect levelling can be an explanation for the loss of rhoticity in the South-West will be discussed in more details.

Another long-standing debate among sociolinguists has been to what extent the media influences how people speak, and it seems relevant to the discussion about rhoticity in the South-West. One view suggests that the media input cannot be as influential as everyday interactions between speakers in shaping their accents or dialects. Thus, some linguists are sceptical about the impact of these influences (Eckert 2003, Trudgill 2014). There is, however, a great deal of credible argumentation saying that the media is in fact responsible for the diffusion of some language features. Sayers (2014) compresses data from various sources analysing the *be like* form, once associated mostly with California speech, which now is spread to virtually every corner of the English-speaking world (2014: 193–195). Although the role of mass media is difficult to be denied in this case, the question remains whether the media can indeed shape the ways people communicate in prolonged periods of time, or bring about serious structural changes in language (like rhoticity or non-rhoticity). Although Stuart-Smith et al. (2007) seem to boast evidence that the changes in the Glasgow accent are due to London-influenced media sources, and these include L-vocalisation or T-glottaling, I still would assert here, along the lines of some sociolinguists, that face-to-face interactions are indispensable for a major phonological change to take place and hold. The changes of the *be like* form mentioned above involve a very small part of the grammar to be different and might not be passed on to the next generation. Phonological changes arguably need more time to be popularised in a given group of speakers. It seems less frequent for a language user to adopt a pronunciation feature seasonally or temporarily, e.g. because it is fashionable. It seems even less likely to be so in the case of rhoticity.

It is interesting to see how the potential media influences on language change stand largely in opposition to the views on dialect contact summarized in this work. Namely, if the loss of rhoticity is indeed gradual (more intensified in Dorset, and less intensified in Cornwall), this advocates the dialect contact explanation; if rhoticity is lost at the same pace in all regions described, this promotes more the argument of media influences in language change (excluding, naturally, other factors that must come into play, or the consensus that both influences are equally powerful). The question remains what

these other factors are. This research will contribute to this debate, showing some evidence for what these factors may be.

Many historical sociolinguists and language typologists agree that languages are predisposed to changes in certain directions. For example, English, because of its rich vowel inventory, seems to be especially prone to vowel shifting (Labov 1994, Kaźmierski 2015). Variationist sociolinguists support such statements, but some of them tend to believe that language-external (e.g. socioeconomic) factors are more powerful in inhibiting or promoting language changes than language-internal factors. This leads us back to the discussion about dialect contact and the media influences in sound change.

Finally, I very much adapt to the newer, narrower notion of *sociophonetics*. The field of sociolinguistics itself has grown so vastly over the last few decades that some subfields like gender studies or forensic linguistics have become vast separate areas of study. In this context, sociophonetics studies specifically the variation of pronunciation under different social conditions. The term has been widely used for some time, and this work fits within the scope of modern sociophonetic research.

1.6. Predictions

The natural assumption is that rhoticity in southwestern parts of England is losing on popularity and is doing so quite rapidly. This claim is based on the history of rhoticity in England which shows that the rhotic region has been shrinking relatively in a very fast pace (Orton and Wakelin 1967, Trudgill 1999). How much rhoticity I will find in my data, however, heavily relies on sampling methods and design. If this work relied on data coming only from, for instance, university students, the rhoticity rates found would be either marginal or non-existent, at least in the light of an assumption that rhoticity caries less prestige than non-rhoticity. The typical understanding of the sociolinguistic method is that prestigious variants of pronunciation are more popular amongst speakers coming from the upper-middle class and the upper class. Conversely, less prestigious variants, or the vernacular, are usually more persistent in groups of speakers representing the working class or the lower-middle class. Similar patterns have been shown in many classic works researching American and British accents (Labov 1966, Trudgill 1974). In order to avoid

skewing of the data towards either end, the data presented below is balanced and inclusive in terms of speakers coming from both the working and the middle class.

Apart from the expected differences in rhoticity rates to be displayed by speakers representing different socio-economic classes, rhoticity is expected to be distributed differently along two other frequently studied variables in sociolinguistics which are age and gender. It has been shown before that in some language communities women may tend to lead certain language changes by displaying more innovative variants in their pronunciation (Labov 1994). If non-rhoticity is interpreted as an innovative feature of pronunciation in South-West England, it may be likely that women will display fewer rhotic variants than men.[1] Moreover, whenever in a certain accent a change in progress is discussed (e.g. a shift from one pronunciation standard to a different one), the differences are realised in differences in pronunciation between various age groups. Therefore, young speakers are expected to feature lower rhoticity rates in their pronunciation than middle-aged and older speakers.

Apart from the social factors which may predict the absence or presence of rhoticity in speakers' language behaviours, linguistic constraints are expected to also play a role. Chapter 5 will give a more extensive summary of the linguistic factors favouring and disfavouring rhoticity, however, the vowel context may prove to be one of the strongest factors (cf. Piercy 2012, Blaxter et al. 2019).

Finally, it is predicted that there will be significant differences between the researched areas for a number of reasons. First of all, Dorset is the most easterly located county, and it seems safe to assume that more rhotic pronunciations will be found in Cornwall than in Dorset. Speakers from Devon are expected to display rhoticity rates intermediate between those found in Cornwall and Dorset. This assumption is based on the fact that Cornwall is more secluded geographically than Devon and Dorset. This will account for less dialect contact between speakers from Cornwall and other parts of the country. Moreover, Cornwall is even more sparsely populated than the other two counties. Trudgill (2011) shows that such communities are usually characterised by tighter in-group social interactions, and conservative language features may persist in such speaker groups for longer periods of time.

[1] It will be shown later that all participants who took part in the interviews (Chapter 5) identified themselves as either female or male speakers but non-binary gender groups were not discriminated against at any stage of designing this study.

Chapter 2: South-West as dialect region

2.1. Introduction

The second chapter discusses the geographical, social and the linguistic structure of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. It will be shown to what extent this area can be classified as one unified dialectal region, and where there are differences between the counties or smaller geographical and administrative units. To a large extent, the aim is to compress the material already available in other sources. At times, this material may seem detailed in terms of extra-linguistic information, but one of the assumptions is to show how socio-economic and geographical factors have shaped the evolution of the discussed dialects. To present the continuity of the works on the region, the discussed sources will come from different periods. The description will not be limited to rhoticity. It will include other linguistic features of South West England to provide the full overview of the dialects spoken there. In a broader perspective, however, all the descriptions lead to answering the question about the present nature of rhoticity in the South-West, which can be accounted for also by looking at how rapidly other phonological categories change.

2.2. Geography

South West England entangles a stretch of land extending from the most southerly and westerly points in Cornwall to the parts of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in the East. It is in the form of a peninsula, which is bordered with the Celtic Sea, the Welsh Channel and the Bristol Channel. Such a formation has resulted in the relative geographical isolation of the South-West, especially of the counties located in the West which are Cornwall and Devon. Very often, South West England is synonymous with the *West Country*, also in the linguistic context (Wells 1982, Collins and Mees 2013: 164; 165; 168, Simons and Fennig 2018).

Cornwall, Devon and Dorset are largely rural, with no large urban conurbations. Notably, there are only a few cities which have got populations of more than 100 000 people, and these are Plymouth, Exeter, Poole and Bournemouth. In Devon, larger towns

are in Torquay, Paignton and Exmouth in the south and Barnstaple in the north. In Dorset, these are Weymouth in the south and Yeovil in the north of the county. The largest towns in Cornwall amount to c. 20 000 inhabitants. These are Truro, St. Austell, Penzance, Newquay and Falmouth. Slightly smaller are Redruth and Bodmin. Apart from these towns, vast areas of land in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset are rural, with many farms and adjacent countryside villages.

The lack of reliable transport infrastructure has contributed to the seclusion of the South West over the years. Although steam-powered railway machines were being developed in Cornwall and Wales at the end of the 18th and in the early 19th century (Cornwall Heritage Trust 2015), the train transportation between Cornwall and the rest of the country remained relatively inhibited for a long time. The railroad was built in stages by different owners and companies (Cornwall Heritage Trust 2015). The direct connections between Penzance and London opened in the 20th century, some 75 years later than the first passenger service between Manchester and Liverpool in 1830s (Thomas 1980). The train service in the South West, especially in Cornwall, remains of relatively lower standard until today and the railroad is still being developed. This has been noticed by the authorities, which resulted in a multimillion programme for rail development in Cornwall announced in 2014 by the Conservative government (Department for Transport 2014). In late February and early March in 2018, when many regions in the United Kingdom were severely damaged by cold weather conditions, another multimillion plan for the support of the rail in the South-West was announced, this time with the hope that it would become resilient to extreme-weather damage in the future (Department for Transport 2018).

The lack of sufficient railroad connections between the South-West and the rest of the country is not compensated with reliable road or air transportation options. Firstly, the only motorway that runs through the region is M5 which reaches Exeter from the Northeast from Bristol. Apart from that, there are trunk roads, mainly A35 in Dorset, A38 in Devon and A30 in Devon and Cornwall. Many parts operate nowadays as dual carriageways. Secondly, the airport infrastructure is also underdeveloped. Cornwall has got only one small airport in Newquay, while in Devon airports are in Plymouth and Exeter. Finally, an airport is located in Bournemouth. The largest of these is the Exeter airport, but none of them plays a significant role in the UK air traffic.

2.3. Dialect boundaries

Some sources have treated the South-West as a dialect region functioning on its own (Orton and Wakelin 1967, Upton and Widdowson 2006, Collins and Mees 2013), but the linguistic descriptions below will clearly show that the area is not uniform in many respects. In fact, Cornwall, Devon and Dorset either fall into two (Trudgill 1999: 234), three (Wells 1982: 335–336) or even four (Ellis 1887, Fischer 1976) smaller dialectal regions, with Dorset apart in all interpretations. The divisions into smaller dialect areas within the Southwest often coincide with geographical formations (e.g. are divided by hills etc.) (Fischer 1976, Wakelin 1986). For example, the division between Ellis' (1887) dialect areas 10 and 11 runs along the river Exe. Fischer's (1976) areas are similar to those provided much earlier by Ellis (1887).

2.4. Social structure

The South West England is inhabited by more than five million people, a population constituting a large dialectal group. It follows from the National Census that this group is also dissimilar with populations living in many other regions in England and Scotland (Office for National Statistics 2011). For example, the region is characterised with the lowest crime rate in England, the longest life expectancy, highest population median age and the largest proportions of people declaring no religion. In fact, the figures approximate those obtained for Wales much more than any other English region.

The high median age of the population living in the South-West can be explained by a few factors. Firstly, for a long time now there has been a considerable migration towards the South-West from other parts of the country. The new residents are often settled middle-aged professionals or pensioners looking for a secluded place with mild climate. On the other hand, the region does not attract many young people. For instance, there are only a few universities located in the South-West. Out of 107 institutions in England, and 132 in the United Kingdom, only 4 are in the region described (8 in total in the whole South-West). They are located in Falmouth, Exeter, Plymouth and Bournemouth. The University of Plymouth and the University of Exeter are the largest institutions (both with more than 20,000 students), and the latter has recently been attracting

many students from and outside the UK because of its expansion, a high position in rankings and the admission to the Russell Group elite universities. Finally, young professionals tend to move to larger urban areas because they usually offer better job prospects.

Another noticeable fact about the society in southwestern England is its relative homogeneity. The region has got few people born abroad. This very fact, combined with the low population density, provides a picture of a region far different from multicultural and multilingual London, but also from many other places in the urban North or the West Midlands. This must translate into different language behaviours by speakers in the South-West.

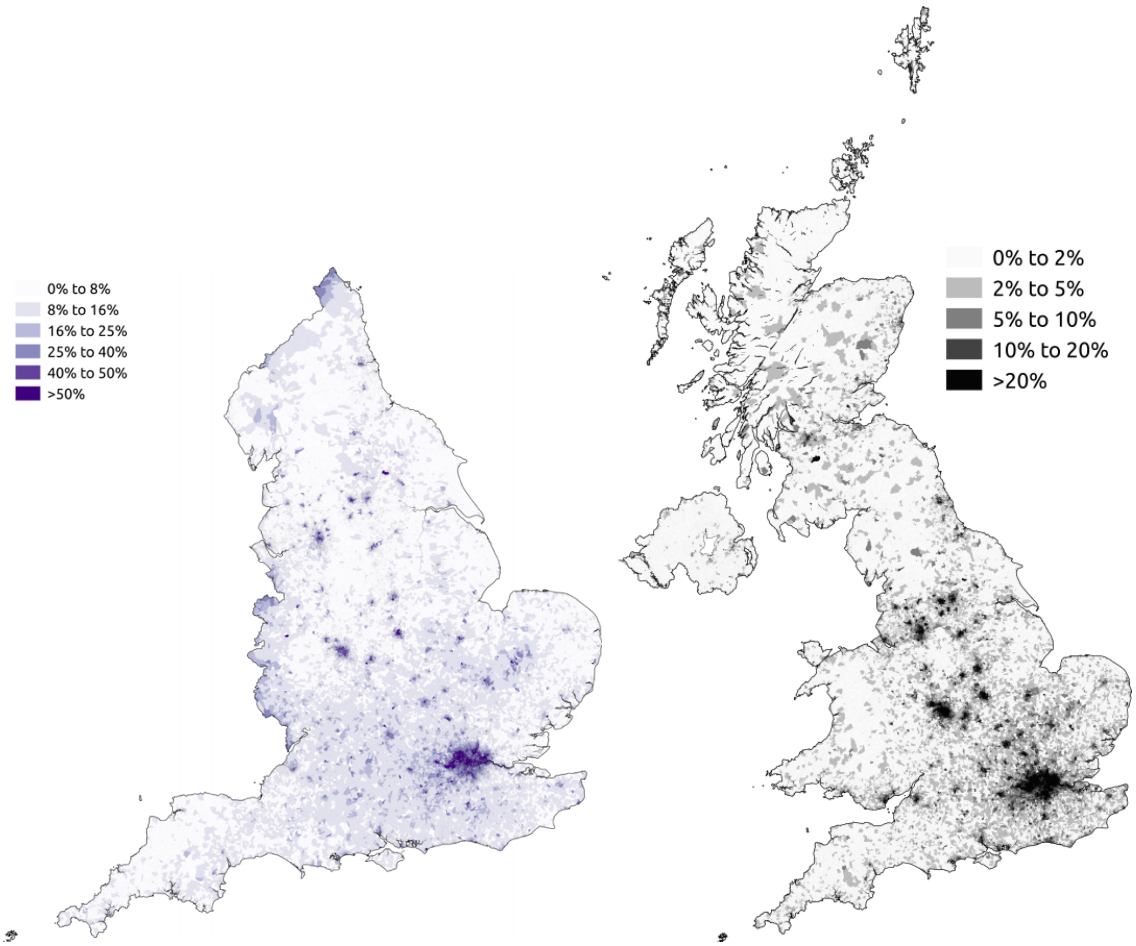

Fig. 1. People born abroad (left) and the density of population (right) by region in England according to the National Census (Office for National Statistics 2011).

2.5. Economy

The South-West provides 8% of the UK's economic output, proportionally to the number of people living in the South-West (Office for National Statistics 2011). The 2017 data published by the National Institute for Fiscal Studies (Cribb et al. 2017) shows that the average income in South West England is around the national average, although it was much below some forty years ago. The unemployment rate was at 6% in the second quarter of 2013, which is slightly higher than the national average.

The South-West has often been associated with traditional trade and large proportions of people working in professions like farming, fishing and tourism. Other important industries include mining (tin, clay, copper, slate and granite) in Cornwall, paper making and light engineering in Exeter, ship building, engineering, chemicals and clothing in Plymouth (Wakelin 1986: 3–4).

2.6. History of research

There have been relatively few publications on accents and dialects spoken in South West England so far. The most remarkable thing is that there are still inconsistencies in the descriptions of some linguistic categories in the South-West, e.g. whether there exists the TRAP-BATH vowel split.

As for many other dialects of English in England, the *Survey of English Dialects* (*SED*) (Orton 1962, Orton and Wakelin 1967) was one of the first sources on southwestern dialects. The material of the *SED* is vast and includes many phonological and lexical categories. Now stored on the British Library Sounds project's website, the recordings offer a glance at how the accents in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset sounded a few decades ago. The *SED* data spans 7 locations in Cornwall, 11 in Devon and 5 in Dorset; the counties were numbered 36, 37 and 38, respectively, and were studied by the same fieldworker (Orton 1962). With all its downsides and recent criticism, the *SED* still offers a lot of useful material and gives a gist at what the oldest speakers in the South-West may still sound like today. However, it is less useful if one wants to look at how the language varies across different societal contexts.

The *Linguistic Atlas of England* (Orton et al. 1978) offers similar data to *SED* but is presented on a set of maps. It offers a comprehensive study of phonological and lexical categories for all regions of England. It will be cited below in Table 1.

Some other dialect atlases and handbooks have also included southwestern varieties in their description (Altendorf and Watt 2008, Hughes et al. 2012), very often treating the South-West as one large dialect area (Collins and Mees 2013), sometimes taking the Bristol dialect and accent as representative of the whole (Wells 1982).

A work that holistically touches upon the linguistics of South West England is Wakelin (1986). Although some data may be outdated today, there has been no similar work which gathered that much information on the entire region. At the same time, Wakelin did some fieldwork himself, in the form of tape recordings and texts written in dialect by his informants. The material covers counties in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Bristol and Avon, and West Hampshire.

Wells (1982) who gives exhaustive accounts for many accents of English English does not provide a lengthy description. He does provide the whole vowel set for Bristol, which is however not synonymous with the rest of the region. Wells mentions rhoticity as a feature of southwestern dialects but gives little explanation about how the feature could be distributed. He supposes, however, that there is no or variable rhoticity in Bournemouth (1982: 341), and that there should be more rhoticity in Exeter than in Plymouth. My work will not quantitatively verify his second claim, however, my informants from Devon said that this should definitely be the opposite because of the middle-class status of Exeter as opposed to more working-class oriented Plymouth.

Three important works on the loss of rhoticity in the South-West are Sullivan (1992), Dudman (2000) and Piercy (2012). All three provide evidence for receding rhoticity in the three counties being discussed, in Devon, Cornwall and Dorset, respectively. First, Sullivan (1992) gives insight into non-rhotic pronunciations in Exeter which is one of my main localities. Her informants are Exeter schoolchildren. There are almost no rhotic variants in her sample. The speakers (n=20) are 10-12 years old. Second, Piercy (2012) provides data pointing to the categorical lack of rhoticity in Dorset speakers who are below 50 years of age. All speakers in her sample who are above this age are at least partially rhotic. Finally, Dudman (2000) for years has been the only reference material about the pronunciation of contemporary Cornwall accents. She reports on receding rhoticity in speakers coming from St. Ives.

2.7. Perception and identity

The West Country accent, or accents, have commonly been associated with "the farmer's talk" and a not very well-educated speaking style. The exaggerated accents from the area have sometimes been featured in TV commercials (e.g. advertising Cornwall and Devon local dairy products). In an accent evaluation survey by Coupland and Bishop (2007), *West Country* indeed scored low for prestige, but better on attractiveness scales. Notably, both scores were much higher than those for Bristol. Another interesting fact is that male respondents evaluated the West Country dialect better in these two criteria than female respondents, while the tendencies were reversed for all other 33 accents in the study (Coupland and Bishop 2007: 80–82).

It seems from my interviews that there is a very strong sense of regional identity among people living in Cornwall and Devon. Dorset may be a little different in this respect. Namely, when I talked to people in Bournemouth, some said that they did not feel that Bournemouth and the neighbouring area were parts of the South-west at all. This is understandable considering that Bournemouth belonged to Hampshire until 1974 when it became part of Dorset. A much stronger sense for regional belonging, however, is still persistent in rural Dorset.

2.8. Accentual features

2.8.1. Rhoticity

Rhoticity is a single linguistic feature that unifies southwestern accents. At the same time, it is probably the most sociolinguistically marked feature of the West Country speech. The subsequent dialect atlases and phonology handbooks have consistently treated the whole region as fully rhotic (Orton and Wakelin 1967, Wakelin 1986, Upton and Widdowson 2006, Trudgill 1999, Collins and Mees 2013, Cruttenden 2014) and although they sometimes vary in terms of how far away northeast the rhotic area reaches, all the regions discussed lie within this rhotic area. However, by comparing different data sets, it seems safe to argue that there is less rhoticity in southwestern England today than there

used to be a few decades ago because of the pace with which the rhotic region has been shrinking. Naturally, there were authors who noticed this before (Trudgill 1999, Sullivan 1990), but the process must have progressed since then. The newest data suggests that the loss of rhoticity in South West England is indeed very advanced (Piercy 2012).

Fig. 2. Rhoticity distribution in the British Isles (Collins and Mees 2013: 166).

2.8.2. Other consonantal features

2.8.2.1. Glottalization

There is a certain inconsistency about the degrees to which glottalization takes place in South West accents. Some reports say that all /p/, /t/, /k/ are prone to glottalization, even in word-medial positions (Wells 1982: 343–344, Wakelin 1986: 29), while others claim that glottalization does not take place word-medially (Collins and Mees 2013: 167); in fact, the latter would be a feature distinguishing the southwestern from the southeastern dialects.

2.8.2.2. Voicing of fricatives

This is another characteristic feature of the South West accents. Notably, the very name of Exeter has traditionally been pronounced as /egzɪtə/, which can be heard in the material collected for this project in the speech of MALE 1 speaker. The general boundary for the word-initial voicing of /f/ as in *finger* is presented in Map 3. It can be seen that the feature is rampant throughout the whole South West, although it did not spread to the two southernmost tips in Cornwall, therefore, the feature should be found in Redruth and Falmouth but not in St. Ives, Penzance and Coverack. In the former towns, the initial fricative in *finger* will be voiceless.

Other conditions for voicing, apart from /f/, include initial /s/, /θ/ and /ʃ/ (Wakelin 1986: 29). Wakelin also reports word-median and word-final voicing for /f/, /s/, /θ/ and /ʃ/, e.g. in *before* or *mouth* (1986: 29). /θ/ generally is replaced with /ð/, but sometimes gets voiced to /d/, especially before /r/ (Wakelin 1986: 29, Upton and Widdowson 2006: 36). The word-initial voicing of fricatives is mostly spread in Devon, Northeast Cornwall, Dorset and West Somerset (Wakelin 1986: 29). The voicing of /θ/ to /d/ as in *three* (Map 3) is distributed geographically similarly but the feature is less common than the voicing to /v/, /z/, /ð/ and /ʒ/, while its different distribution in southern Cornwall can possibly be attributed to the Old Dutch influence (Wakelin 1986: 29).

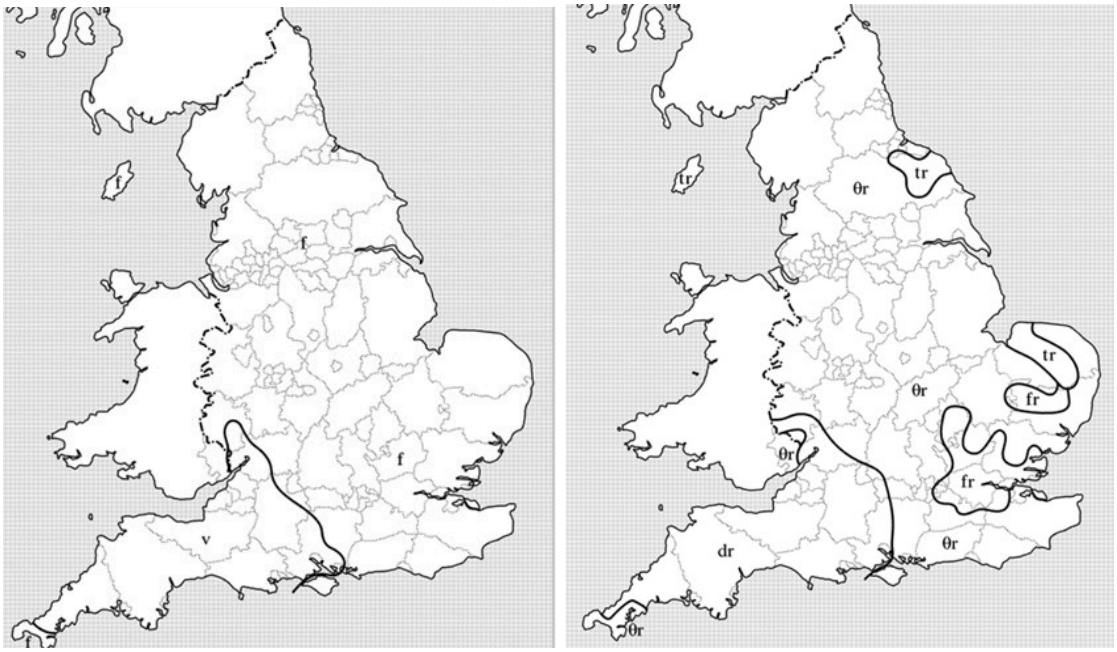

Fig. 3. Voicing of the initial /f/ and /θ/ in South West England (Upton and Widdowson 2006: 36).

2.8.2.3. /w/ deletion

The isogloss for the loss of /w/ word-initially covers a similar region that the isogloss for rhoticity does, covering the whole Southwest region (Wakelin 1986: 32). Orton et al. (1978), reporting the data for WOMAN notices no variation across smaller dialectal regions. However, Upton and Widdowson (2006: 34–35) report the loss of /w/ in *wool* only in East and South Devon. Cornwall, Dorset and West Devon retain the sound. They also emphasize that there is strong lexical incidence.

2.8.2.4. /h/ dropping

But for a small area in North Devon, all three counties are an h-dropping area (Upton and Widdowson 2006: 40). In the *SED* material, all speakers drop their initial *h* (Orton and Wakelin 1967: 505-506; 565; 683-684).

2.8.3. Vowels

Table 1 below presents an overview of the vowels spoken in the South-West. The most striking thing is the remarkable variation of virtually all vowel categories. Variation is found not only across the counties, but also within the counties, which suggests that the South-West could in fact be divided into many smaller dialectal regions. The information in the table compresses information from three sources, published in different periods of time, in order to present the possible changes in pronunciation over time.

Another noticeable fact is strong lexical incidence for many vowel categories. Even short vowels display considerable variation, e.g. STRUT varies between /ʌ/, /ɔː/, /a/, /oː/ and /uː/. Also, the three main sources presented in the table below often do not agree. For instance, Wakelin (1986) and Upton and Widdowson (2006) do not report /ʌ/ for LOT but Orton et al. (1978) did find such a variant. Other similar situations may be indicative of the loss of some vowel categories provided that Orton et al. (1978) report older data than the two remaining sources.

Not only short vowels, but also diphthongs are prone to a lot of variation in the South-West. On one hand, we find pronunciations similar to Northern monophthongised categories (e.g. /aː/ for PRICE), but we also find a diphthong shift similar to the London-Birmingham diphthong shift (Wells 1982: 364). Such shifted variants, e.g. /ɔi/ for PRICE, are found throughout the West Country, but most commonly in Dorset.

It is interesting to see that some vowels developed differently in the South-West than in the rest of the country. For example, the vowel in PUT is often realised as /ʌ/. This process can possibly be explained as an overgeneralization or hypercorrection, but the vowel shift in this case must have progressed further than in the case of the standard /ʊ/ quality. A similar vowel development can be found for the vowel in the lexical set DEAF. Instead of the standard quality in /ɛ/ or /e/, the vowel is realised in the South-West as a high front vowel, as if it developed in the same way as the vowel in MEAT. Also, the diphthong realisations suggest that the Great Vowel Shift has developed differently in southwestern dialects than it has in southeastern dialects in England. In the South-West, we find both monophthongal qualities, e.g. for vowels GOAT and PRICE, but also qualities that have progressed further than the GVS, e.g. /ɔi/ in the PRICE vowel.

The r-colouring of vowels is mostly not marked below. This is not because a complete loss of rhoticity is assumed at this point, but due to the inconsistencies in the sources provided. Also, Orton et al. (1978) mark rhoticity for vowels very often but their data cannot be treated as representative in this respect, as they also mark rhoticity for vowels spoken in South East England where rhoticity was lost some time ago (cf. Orton et al. 1978: Ph169).

Finally, whenever information is missing from the table, it is assumed that the standard pronunciation is prevalent in the researched region.

Table 1. Vowels spoken in the South-West.

Vowel	**Source**		
	Orton et al. (1978)	Wakelin (1986)	Upton and Widdowson (2006)
KIT	/ɪ/	/ɪ/; /ɛ/ in parts of Cornwall and Devon in older speakers	
DRESS	/ɛ/, /ɪ/; before /l/, also /a/, /ʌ/ and /ə/;	/ɛ/, /ɛɪ/, /ai/, /ɔi/	
TRAP	/a/; /æ/ in southernmost tip in Cornwall below		/a/

	Falmouth; for MAN also /æ/ in South Cornwall, East Devon and West Dorset; /aː/ in Dorset		
BATH	/eː/ in East Cornwall and parts of West Devon; /æː/ in South Cornwall; /aː/ in North Cornwall, rest of Devon and in Dorset	/aː/, sometimes /a/ in Cornwall, Northwest Devon	/eː/ in East Cornwall and parts of West Devon; /aː/ in rest of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset
AUNT	/æ/, /a/, /aː/		/a/ in Cornwall and Northwest Devon, /aː/ in rest of Devon and Dorset
LOT	/ɒ/ in South Cornwall; /ʌ/ in North Cornwall and Devon; /ɔː/ and /ɒ/ for Dorset		generally, /ɒ/ but /ɔː/ reported for the CROSS subset
STRUT	/ʌ/; /ɔː/ for some areas in Northwestern Dorset; /a/, /oː/ /uː/	mostly /ʌ/, but also /u/	/ʌ/, /ɔː/, /i/
FOOT	/u/, /ɤ/	/ʊ/ in West Cornwall; /ɤ/ and /ü/ in East Cornwall and Devon; /ʌ/ in Dorset; /ʌ/ in subset of PUT	/u/; /ʌ/ in subset of PUT
BURY	/ɛ/ in Cornwall and West Devon; /ʌ/ in rest of Devon and Dorset		/ɛ/ in Cornwall and West Devon; /ʌ/ in rest of Devon and Dorset
NURSE		/ɜː/, /ɜˇ/, /aː/	
FLEECE	/iː/, /ɛɪ/, /ɛi/, /eː/, /iə/, /jɛ/	/iː/; /eː/; /ɛɪ/; /ɪə/ and /eə/, but rarely	/iː/; /i/ in coastal South East Devon, including Exeter; in subset MEAT, /ɛɪ/ in Cornwall and most Devon
FACE	/ei/, /ɛi/, /ɛ/, /ɛː/, /eː/, /ai/, /æ/		
THOUGHT	/oː/, /ɔː/, /aː/	/ɔː/, /aː/	
GOAT	/oː/ /ɔː/ /uː/ /uːə/		
GOOSE	/uː/, /iuː/, /ɤː/	/uː/ and /ɪʊ/ in West Cornwall; [ü] and [ʏ] in East Cornwall and Devon; sometimes /ʊ/	
PRICE	/ai/, /æi/, /ɔi/, /əi/, /æː/, /aː/	/æi/~/ʌi/~/ai/, /æː, /aː/	/aɪ/, /aː/, /ɑː/, /ɔɪ/, /əɪ/, /ɔɪ/
CHOICE	/ɔi/, /ɔiə/, /wɔi/, /ʌi/		
MOUTH	/æ/, /au/, /æɤ/, /œɤ/, /æu/, /əu/	/ɛʊ/, /œɤ/ /əʊ/	
NEAR	/iə/, /jə/	/iə/, /jər/	
SQUARE	/ɛə/, /ɛ/	/ɛə/, /iər/, /ər/, /aɪər/	
START	/aː/, /æː/, /ɑː/ in South Devon	/aː/, sometimes /a/	

NORTH	/uəˑ /, /ɔ:əˑ /, /o:əˑ/	/ɔ:/, /u:/ or /ər/, /ur/ if rhotic
HAPPY		
COMMA		/ə/, /əˑ/

2.8.3.1. KIT

KIT is mostly /ɪ/, with marginal variation to /ɛ/ in Cornwall and Devon (Wakelin 1986: 21). In Dorset, other possible realisations are /ʌ/ and /ə/ (see Orton et al. 1978).

2.8.3.2. DRESS

This short vowel has got several possible realisations in the South-West. It is often pronounced as /ɛ/ but can also be raised to /ɪ/, or /i/, /i:/ (Wakelin 1986: 21, Orton et al. 1978: Ph88, Ph89). Moreover, older speakers tend to diphthongise the vowel before /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /g/, which results in /ɛɪ/, /ai/ and /ɔi/ (Wakelin 1986: 21). Before /l/, possible variation includes /a/, /ʌ/ and /ə/ (Orton et al. 1978). BURY is /ɛ/ in Cornwall and West Devon; /ʌ/ in rest of Devon and Dorset (Orton et al. 1978; Upton and Widdowson 2006: 14–15). DEAF is /i:/ and /i/ (Orton et al. 1978: Ph89). Finally, other possible variants include /ɛi/ in North East Cornwall and /e:/ in East Devon (Orton et al. 1978).

2.8.3.3. TRAP

The lowering of TRAP to /a/ has taken place early in southwestern accents, which is a feature that is more and more spread out throughout England (Cruttenden 2014). The higher variant in /æ/ has only been reported for the southernmost tip in Cornwall below Falmouth (Orton et al. 1978), which can be attributed to the Cornish language influences (Wakelin 1986: 23). For some words, Orton et al. (1978) also provide /a:/. Otherwise, it is /a/ throughout the South-West (Wakelin 1986, Piercy 2011).

2.8.3.4. BATH

The exact mechanisms of the distribution of this vowel in the South-West are not known. Some already maintain that the BATH-TRAP split does exist in the region (Wakelin 1986), while some older sources provide the opposite data (Kurath and Lowman 1970). Collins and Mees (2013: 2016) simply provide a question mark on their dialectal map, suggesting that the variable has not yet been studied in depth, as Wells (1982) and Hughes et al. (2012) do.

For HALF, /aː/ is reported for all counties, as well as /æː/, while for LAST /aː/ and /eː/ are reported (Wakelin 1986: 15–16). For AUNT, Orton et al. (1987: Ph174) provide /æ/ for the southwestern tip in Cornwall, /a/ for the rest of Cornwall and West Devon, and /aː/ for the rest of Devon and for Dorset. Upton and Widdowson (2006: 17) report the same two variants /a/ and /aː/, but do not provide /æ/ for Cornwall.

An in-depth study into the qualities of BATH was performed in Dorset by Piercy (2011). Piercy concludes that the process of splitting BATH from TRAP is under way. In her data, 35 out of all 40 speakers studied had the phonemic distinction in some form or another. She assumes that the process of splitting the two vowels can usually be divided into five different stages, where the first stage is about backing the START vowel (which is still rhotic).

The difficulty in analysing the vowel in the region seems then to be a result of larger lexical variation than in most other accents of English English, comprising both vowel qualities and quantities. There is also variation between different regions and clearly, the process of splitting BATH from TRAP is now taking place. Interestingly, it seems that the process of splitting the two vowels correlates in many speakers with the rhoticity loss (Wakelin 1986: 26, Piercy 2011).

2.8.3.5. LOT

This vowel is realised as /ɒ/ throughout the South-West but can also be /ʌ/ in North Cornwall and Devon, or /ɔː/ in Dorset; for the CROSS subset, the vowel is mostly /ɔː/ (Orton et al. 1978, Upton and Widdowson 2006).

2.8.3.6. STRUT

STRUT is another short vowel displaying a lot of variation. Again, strong lexical incidence has been reported. For example, SUCK is /u/ in South West Cornwall; /ʌ/ for East Cornwall and South West Devon, East Devon and Dorset; /ʏ/ for North East Cornwall and Devon, while /ʏː/ for North Devon (Orton et al. 1978: Ph158). Also, /u/ can be found throughout the South-West in words like DUCKS, DUST, SLUSH and GUMS (Wakelin 1986: 23). For SUN, it is /i/ in East Cornwall and South Devon (but not in the area in and around Exeter) (Upton and Widdowson 2006: 19–21).

2.8.3.7. FOOT

To begin with, Orton et al. (1978: Ph143) report /u/ for Cornwall and Dorset and /ʏ/ for Devon and East Cornwall. Wakelin (1986: 25) provides the standard /ʊ/, along with /ü/ and /ʏ/ for West Cornwall, East Cornwall and Devon; he also reports longer and diphthongal variants in /uː/ /üː/ /ʏː/ throughout the region and /ɪʊ/ in central Cornwall. Finally, the hypercorrect form /ʌ/ is heard in the subset of PUT (possibly including also BUSH, BUSHEL, BUTCHER, PUDDING, PUSH, PUSS, WOMAN and WOOD) (Wakelin 1986: 20-22).

2.8.3.8. NURSE

The vowel is realised as /ɜː/ but in some words, due to the Middle-English grapheme change from <-er> to <-ar> in some words the form /aː/ persists, especially in South Devon and central Cornwall in words like LEARN and FERN (Wakelin 1986: 27). As other studies on rhoticity show (Gibson 2005, Barras 2010, Piercy 2012), the vowel NURSE favours the retention of /r/, therefore, the rhotic variants /ɜ˞ / may still be fairly frequent, even in speakers that are mostly non-rhotic.

2.8.3.9. FLEECE

For the underlying graphemic representation <-ee-> (as in SHEEP), the vowel is realised as /i:/, or /i/ in coastal South East Devon, including Exeter (Upton and Widdowson 2006: 25). For <-ea-> (as in MEAT), however, it is dipthongised to /ɛɪ/ in Cornwall and most of Devon; in East Devon and Dorset, it remains /i:/ (Upton and Widdowson 2006: 26-27). A different development takes place in Dorset where FLEECE can be realised as /e:/ in words like CREAM, DEAL, EAT and SPEAK (Wakelin 1986: 25). Marginal pronunciations include diphthongs in /ɪə/ and /eə/ (Wakelin 1986: 25). Orton et al. (1978) also provide all the above allophones.

2.8.3.10. FACE

Different realisations have been reported for the FACE vowel, including standard diphthong qualities in /ei/ and /ɛi/, as well as shifted qualities in /ai/ (Orton et al. 1978: Ph159-Ph163). Moreover, monophthongal qualities are frequent (Wakelin 1986: 27). A lot of lexical variation is reported for the vowel. EIGHT is pronounced as /ɛɪ/ in Cornwall and Devon, and /ai/ in Dorset, parts of North East Cornwall, West and East Devon (Orton et al. 1978). For the word STRAIGHT, the vowel is realised as /e:/ in Southeast Cornwall, /ɛɪ/ in East Cornwall and West Devon, /ai/ in Northeast Cornwall, /ei/ in East Devon, /ai/ in North Devon and Dorset (Orton et al. 1978). For DRAIN, the vowel is /ei/ Devon and Cornwall, but /ai/ for Dorset (Orton et al. 1978: Ph69a–Ph69b). A very similar isogloss runs for the vowel in words DAISY, FAINT and RAIN (Orton et al. 1978: Ph159–Ph161). For MAKE, diphthongal realisations in /e:/ (Cornwall, South Devon and Dorset), /ɛ/ (East Devon) and /ɛ:/ (Cornwall and Devon) have been reported (Orton et al. 1978: Ph69a–Ph69b). For TAKE, Orton et al. (1978: Ph70a–Ph70b) report /e:/ for Cornwall, /e:/ and /ɛ/ for South Devon, /e:/ for Dorset, as well /ɛ:/ for North East Cornwall and North Devon, and /ɛi/ for a small part of Dorset neighbouring Somerset. The vowel in WAISTCOAT can be /ɛi/ in all counties, but also /e:/ in parts of West and Central Devon, /ɛ/ in all counties, and /æ/ in parts of Dorset (Orton et al. 1978: Ph71a–Ph71b).

2.8.3.11. SQUARE

In general, the vowel is /eə/ or /ɛə/ but sometimes /ɛ/ in Dorset, e.g. for PEAR (Orton et al. 1978: Ph84). For CHAIR, the expected /ɛə˞/ has been reported, alongside with /iə˞/ (in South Cornwall and South Devon), and /eiə˞ / in Dorset (Orton et al. Ph169).

2.8.3.12. GOAT

The more standard diphthongal variants are recorded only before /l/, e.g. in COLD in East Cornwall (Orton et al. 1978: Ph132a) and FOAL in West Cornwall, giving /ɔu/ (Orton et al. 1978: 135a). It is interesting to see, in turn, that the diphthongal standard realisation in /ou/ is reported more often for neighbouring Somerset (Orton et al. 1978: 189a–190a). Variants in /ə/ and /ə˞ / are also common in the researched counties, e.g. in the last vowel in WINDOWS, MEADOW and YELLOW (Orton et al. 1978: Ph205–207, Upton and Widdowson 2006: 29). For GROW, /ɔː/ has been reported for Cornwall and Devon, and /oː/ for Dorset (Orton et al. 1978: Ph192). A similar isogloss runs for SNOW, with an exception of /oː/ variants found in North East Cornwall and West Devon (Orton et al. 1978: Ph190a).

2.8.3.13. NEAR

The distribution of this vowel is standard in most contexts and not much variation has been reported. In both HEAR and NEAR, the dominant variant is /jə/, while the South West part of Cornwall display /iə/ pronunciations (Orton et al. 1978: Ph101–Ph102). According to Wakelin (1986: 28), this context of this vowel should favour the retention of /r/.

2.8.3.14. PRICE

The PRICE vowel in the South-West exhibits standard diphthongal qualities like /ai/ in Cornwall and East Devon (Orton et al. 1978: Ph103-Ph105), shifted diphthongal variants similar to those found in London like /ɔi/ which are found in Dorset (Orton et al. 1978:

Ph103-Ph105), as well as monophthongal qualities in /aː/ and /æː/ found in Cornwall and Devon (Orton et al. 1978: 102-106). Wakelin (1986: 27-28), in fact, says that it is very difficult to analyse the diphthong because of the unclear quality of its starting point which varies a lot between different phonetic contexts and localities. Upton and Widdowson (2006) also report a large amount of variation for this vowel and for FIND provide /aɪ/ for West Cornwall and East Devon by the Somerset and Dorset border, /aː/ for most areas in Devon, /ɑː/ in East Cornwall and parts of West Devon, /ɔɪ/ for North West Dorset, and /əɪ/ for central and East Dorset; for FIVE, they provide /ɔɪ/ North Cornwall, /ai/ for South Cornwall, /ɑː/ for East Cornwall, /aː/ for Devon (Upton and Widdowson 2006: 21–25).

2.8.3.15. CHOICE

CHOICE displays variation from /ɔi/ reported in all regions in the word VOICE to /ʌi/ found in all regions for the word OIL (Orton et al. 1978: Ph185a). Other variants reported are /ɔiə/ in parts of Dorset, /wɔi/ in East Cornwall and South West Devon e.g. in the word boiling (Orton et al. 1978: 186a). Wakelin (1986: 28) assumes /ai/ forms to be occurring, as well.

2.8.3.16. MOUTH

It is interesting to see that the neighbouring Somerset displays mostly the standard realisation in /aʊ/ (Orton et al. 1978: Ph194), while a lot of variation is found in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. In Cornwall, the vowel is often realised as /æɤ/ (e.g. in PLOUGH, HOUSE); for these words, /œɤ/ is reported for South Devon (Orton et al. 1978: Ph147, Ph149). Another variant recorded for Cornwall is /ai/ for the word DROUGHT (Orton et al. 1978: Ph153). For Dorset, variants in /au/, /æu/ and /əu/ have been reported (Orton et al. 1978: Ph 150 - Ph 154). Wakelin (1986: 28) reports /ɛu/ for West Cornwall.

2.8.3.17. THOUGHT

The most of Cornwall displays standard realisations in /ɔː/, as South West part of Devon (Orton et al. 1978: Ph 194). Additionally, in Devon and Dorset /aː/ has been reported for words such as DAUGHTER and BOUGHT (Orton et al. 1978: Ph194, Wakelin 1986: 26). For Dorset, again, /ɔː/ has been reported (Orton et al. 1978: Ph194). It is also assumed that the whole South-West may display /aː/ or /a/ in words like ALL or TALK, often followed by /r/ (Wakelin 1986: 26). For words like FOUR, FLOOR and DOOR, r-colouring can still be common. FOUR is realised as /ɔˠ / or /ɔːəˠ / in South West Cornwall, as /ɔʊəˠ / in East Cornwall and Devon, and as /aʊəˠ/ in North Devon and Dorset (Orton et al. 1978: Ph193). FLOOR is mostly /ʊəɬ, but small areas in East Devon and West Dorset display pronunciation in /ɔːəˠ/ (Orton et al. 1978: Ph145). DOOR is /ʊəˠ/ in most regions but in West Dorset and a small part of East Devon it is pronounced /ɔːəˠ / (Orton et al. 1978: Ph146). Finally, for this vowel Wakelin (1986: 27) also reports /eː/ for "Cornwall and elsewhere".

2.8.4. Other dialectal features

The table below shows presents mostly lexical variation occurring in the discussed dialects. It is indicative of a few things. First, as with phonological features, it shows that there is variation within and between the counties. When it comes to lexical categories, Dorset seems to be more unified as a dialect region than Cornwall and Devon. The examples are in no way exhaustive. For more, see *SED*.

Table 2. Selected lexical and grammatical variation in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset (Upton and Widdowson 2006: 49-110)

Feature	**Type**			
		Cornwall	Devon	Dorset
You	grammatical	*thee*	*thee*; *you* (parts in the south)	*thee*
we are	grammatical	*we are* (south) *we be* (north)	*us be*	*we be*
she	lexical	*she* *er* (east)	*er*	*she*

people	lexical	*people* (south) *folks* (south)	*folks* *folk* (east)	*folk*
molars	lexical	*grinders (south)* *jawteeth (centre)* *backteeth (north)*	*jawteeth (south, centre)* *jackteeth (north-west)* *grinders (east, north)*	*jawteeth*
active	lexical	*active* *restless (western tip)* *lively (coastal south)*	*active*	*active* *spury (south)*
silly	lexical	*daft*	*daft*	*daft*
only	lexical	*only* *nought but (east)*	*nought but* *only (northeast)*	*only*
hungry	lexical	*thirl*	*thirl (northwest)* *leery*	*leery*
infec-tious	lexical	*catching*	*catching* *catchy (central, parts of coastal north)*	*catching*
autumn	lexical	*fall (south)* *autumn (north)*	*autumn* *fall (southern tip)*	*autumn (west)* *fall*
curse	lexical	*cuss*	*cuss*	*cuss*

2.9. Dialect contact phenomena

It is evident that the English South-West has been a secluded region of the country for a long time. Its geography resulted in the lack of substantial migration from abroad and from within the country, which gave rise to traditional language communities that did not interact with other language or dialect groups as much as communities living in urban areas or areas closer to London. This has changed relatively recently with the improved road and railway transport. Although other factors could have also contributed to the rise of non-rhotic variants of pronunciation in the South-West (e.g. role of media, language-internal factors), it is believed here that language contact phenomena are the most telling explanation.

According to Trudgill (2011, 2015), tightly knit communities favour the retention of "dispensable" linguistic categories. In such dense communities, complex language features survive longest. I understand that dense communities do not necessarily mean densely populated communities in this context. In fact, it is often the opposite. Such a theory would also be perfectly applicable to the linguistic landscape of the South-West. The speakers I have contacted usually lived in small, sometimes very closed communities with strong and dense social networks, but also little interaction with other communities. The rural speakers I have interviewed in Dorset usually knew each other very well, spent a lot of time together, and would even go on holiday together. Such a community comprised a few neighbouring villages. It also seemed, unsurprisingly, that the further away from London, the denser the communities were. If this does correlate with rhoticity rates for each county will be seen in later chapters. Finally, adopting Trudgill's theory would assert that rhoticity is a complex language feature. Although Trudgill mostly talks about morphological categories in this context, it will be argued that the shift from a rhotic to a non-rhotic pronunciation could be interpreted as a lenition process.

Chapter 3: Rhoticity synchronically

3.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the synchronic classification of accents into rhotic and non-rhotic and shows how this classification is important for this work. It points to significant studies of this sociolinguistic variable in the course of the last several decades. The list of accents discussed below will not be exhaustive, however. Mentioned are only those which seemed necessary for the typological comparison of the accents of English around the world and when this typology reveals something important about the spread of rhoticity.

The following sections will provide an insight into how the social perception of rhoticity has changed with time and how it differs from one social interaction to another. When non-rhotic variants started emerging in the South-East of England, they were first looked down upon as careless substandards (Lev 2015: 264). Today, the sociolinguistic situation in England is entirely different. Rhotic variants of pronunciation are commonly associated with the farmers' speech in South-West England, a prejudice I have heard a number of times in my interviews. The picture, however, is much more complex. Namely, it is not the /r/ sound itself which evokes negative connotations in England, but the fact that it is a minority feature connected with a specific group of speakers. In other places, like in the United States, it is non-rhoticity that may be looked down upon in some social situations, thought of as a substandard or a minority feature (Lev 2015). Another scenario is also possible. This would be a situation similar to the current status of rhoticity in Scotland where along the traditional rhotic pronunciations new non-rhotic variants are spreading and neither form seems to be dramatically downgraded compared to the other.

3.2. Rhoticity as a sociolinguistic variable

The term *rhoticity* was most probably coined by John Wells in 1968 on the occasion of his performing a small-scale fieldwork in Southampton, as he himself explains (Wells 2010). Wells says that his inspiration was Labov and his New York study. Essentially, the word *rhoticity* is not mentioned even once in Labov (1966). Labov often

referred to non-rhotic tokens as r-less, while to rhotic tokens as r-full. This convention is still upheld in many studies.

Rhoticity is one of the strongest indicatives of the West Country accents (Wakelin 1986), which was mentioned by several of my informants during the interviews. This shows that the lay users of language can often discriminate the feature and attribute it to the given region which in turn is also associated with many social, essentially non-linguistic, characteristics. Conversely, such a strong association is attributed to non-rhotic accents in the United States.

Rhoticity is a salient phonetic feature and has therefore been an important variable in many dialect and accent classifications of the English language. In a large number of studies cited below, it will be shown that rhoticity is a proxy of local relative prestige and the socioeconomic background that is associated with it. Most importantly, rhoticity (or non-rhoticity) has signalled one's socioeconomic class (Labov 1966, Myhill 1988). Myhill (1988) showed how pronouncing post-vocalic /r/ works as an index of integration into the African American community.

In the light of the loss of rhoticity in accents like Scottish, it is interesting to see that the discussion about this variable now also oscillates around the levels of rhoticity (Barras 2010, Dickson and Hall-Lew 2017). Namely, as will be shown below, some accents are no longer classified as either fully rhotic or non-rhotic, but are discussed as variably rhotic, less rhotic, more rhotic, marginally rhotic, weakly rhotic etc. It seems that such a viewpoint was rarely presented in the past.

3.3. England

Today, the majority of English accents spoken in England are non-rhotic. The history of rhoticity loss in England implies that the accents that were rhotic or partially rhotic will soon become non-rhotic. It is difficult to assume the rate with which all accents in England will dispose of the non-prevocalic /r/ in all contexts and styles, yet comparing the data from the 1950s (*SED,* Orton and Dieh 1962) with the data from the 1990s (Trudgill 1999) it can be reflected that the change has been happening at a very rapid pace. Which from the last 70 years suggests that the pace of the phonological change is very fast (not necessarily before that because the changes started in the 18th century). The

result of this change is that rhoticity in England is now considered a "relic" feature of pronunciation (Chambers and Trudgill 1998).

One of the most apparent problems with assessing the rates of rhoticity loss is the lack of holistic data. The last sizeable nationwide survey of the English dialects was the *Survey of English Dialects* (*SED*) (Orton and Dieh 1962). In their data, Orton and Dieh found rhoticity in the South, the West, the very North of the county, as well as in a considerably large region north of Liverpool. In the West Midlands, Birmingham was a demarcation point; the regions to the south-west of Birmingham were rhotic, and to the north-east non-rhotic. As noticed above, the rhotic region has shrunk enormously in only about four decades. The isogloss for rhoticity was no longer adjacent to Liverpool and Birmingham; in the very North, the dialects also became non-rhotic. Simply, rhoticity in England became limited to parts of Lancashire and the South-West.

Today, the studies on rhoticity in England are rather scattered and studies limited to one locality do not feature many participants, making generalisations rather difficult. An exception to this, however, is the data coming from the recent *English Dialects App* (*EDA*) (Leemann et al. 2018), a mobile application surveying the dialects of the users. Like the *SED*, the resulting data spans the whole region of England. Also, a promising number of as many as 3,500 respondents have recorded their voices over the app. Among other phonological, grammatical and lexical features, the app included rhoticity as a variable by investigating the pronunciation of the word *arm*.

Table 3. Regions exhibiting rhoticity according to the *English Dialects App* (Leemann et al. 2018).

Region	**Rhoticity rates**
Cornwall	28.71 % – 40.00 %
Devon	22.12 % – 36.00 %
Dorset	12.39 % – 31.09 %
Somerset	09.22% – 37.86 %
Wiltshire	08.49 % – 29.00 %
Gloucestershire	08.26 % – 34.65 %
Lancashire	04.95 % – 37.12 %

3.3.1. Cornwall

Until very recently, there was no up-to-date research reporting on rhoticity in Cornwall. The general understanding has been that this is still a largely rhotic region with little or very little variation in the production of non-prevocalic /r/ (e.g. Wells 1982). However, Dudman (2000) investigated rhoticity in St. Ives and noticed a shift towards non-rhotic variants among younger speakers. In the following work, several speakers were recorded in sociolinguistic interviews in which some rhotic pronunciations were recorded. The trend among younger speakers seems also to be towards non-rhoticity. In the rapid anonymous surveys conveyed in Truro, as part of this work, however, the rates for rhoticity are still rather high for all socio-economic groups (see Chapter 4).

3.3.2. Devon

Traditional reports list Devon as rhotic (Kingdon 1939, Orton et al. 1978, Wells 1982, Wakelin 1986, Upton and Widdowson 2006), like the rest of the South-West. However, already in the data provided by Wakelin (1978) one of the Exeter speakers tended to drop word-final /r/s (as cited in Sullivan 1992: 17). Sullivan showed that indeed the process of rhoticity loss in Exeter is ongoing. She interviewed 20 schoolchildren (aged 12–14) coming from middle-class families and attending mixed-sex schools. She found very few rhotic pronunciations indeed. Namely, only 4% of the word-final tokens were rhotic, while this number was a little higher for the preconsonantal tokens, i.e. 13%. There was little differentiation between the two speech styles investigated (reading and conversation) in the word-final /r/ occurrences but the tendency in the preconsonantal ones was that they produced more /r/s in the speaking task. Finally, no significant differentiation for children coming from the rural against urban background was found. Wells (1982: 341) argued that there should be more rhoticity in Exeter than in Plymouth because of the more mixed populations in the latter. However, many of my informants and linguists working in Exeter indicated that they experienced the situation as being the reverse, purely because of the much more middle-class status of Exeter.

3.3.3. Dorset

The main reference for the modern adaptation of rhoticity in Dorset is Piercy (2012). In her study, she found there was a very dramatic shift to non-rhoticity in young speakers. Her data shed a new light on how fast the process of rhoticity loss could be in the South-West. According to most models of phonological changes of this kind, it took at least three generations for a change to be complete (Feagin 1990, Labov 1992). It seems however thatn in some contexts of rhoticity loss in Dorset, the change can happen already over two generations. Also, it had been assumed that Dorset belonged to the rhotic South-West. In Piercy's sample, however, all speakers below fifty years of age were non-rhotic. In all speakers above fifty years of age, in turn, there was at least some rhoticity reported (it varied between 20% and more than 90%). Thus, there were no categorically rhotic speakers. The average rate of rhoticity was the highest for the group who were above sixty years of age, i.e. at almost 70%. The informants for Piercy study came from mid-southern Dorset which included towns in Dorchester and Wareham. Considering the data from Piercy (2012) and from the *English Dialects App* (Leemann et al. 2018), which provides between 12% and 31% depending on the part of the county, it must be concluded that the shift from rhotic to non-rhotic variants is very advanced, in fact almost complete in East Dorset. It is hypothesised here that there is a little more rhoticity in small regions to the west of the county, neighbouring Devon and Somerset, but in general much less rhoticity is expected to be found in Dorset than in Devon or Cornwall.

3.3.4. Somerset

One interesting fact that differentiates the modern Bristol accent from that of, e.g. Dorset, Devon and Cornwall is that it is still represented by fully rhotic speakers (Blaxter et al. 2019). This has not been recently found elsewhere in the traditionally rhotic parts of England like Lancashire, or elsewhere in the South-West. This may be indicative of a more persistent status of rhoticity in Bristol, and that its loss will be slower than in other parts of southwestern England. In total, the rates for rhoticity in Somerset vary between 9 and 38% (Leemann et al. 2018).

3.3.5. Hampshire

According to the *English Dialects App*, the county is almost entirely non-rhotic (Leemann et al. 2018) but the loss of rhoticity must have the shift from rhoticity must have taken place very rapidly, as in other parts of the South-West. Still in the 1960s, considerable rates of rhoticity were found in Portsmouth and Southampton (Wells 1968). In a rapid anonymous survey, Wells obtained results from 19 respondents in Portsmouth and 11 in Southampton. They were based on the presence of /r/ in words *vanilla*, *banana* and *ginger*. Out of all Portsmouth respondents, five were rhotic, thirteen were non-rhotic and one was hyperrhotic; in Southampton, two speakers were rhotic, eight were non-rhotic and one was non-rhotic. Wells cites a reference suggesting that the hyperrhotic pronunciation (instead of a word-final schwa) was quite widespread at that time in Southampton. Undoubtedly, there are a few problems with such a methodology (some of them will also apply to the supermarket survey reported later in this work), but even if it is impossible to talk with certainty about the definite rates of rhoticity at that time in two largest cities in Hampshire, these pronunciations were undoubtedly there. They were lost before they were lost in, say, Bristol or Cornwall, which could be explained among other things by the close proximity to the London speech communities.

3.3.6. Lancashire

Parts of Lancashire have remained the last island of rhoticity in England for the last few decades outside the South-West (Wells 1982, Trudgill 1999, Barras 2010, Barras 2015, Collins and Mees 2013: 174). Surrounded by the economically and culturally influential urban regions of Liverpool and Greater Manchester the rhotic region in Lancashire has been consistently shrinking (Barras 2015: 278). Barras (2010) researched the areas north of Manchester (i.e. Prestwich, Bury, Ramsbottom, Rossendale, Accrington) and reveals interesting patterns. Firstly, the closer to Manchester, the faster the process of rhoticity loss is. This is clearly visible especially in the group of older speakers and shows both that the linguistic patterns are borrowed from the socio-economically stronger urban area, and that distant rural areas are resistant to change for a longer period of time. The shift to non-rhoticity is virtually complete in Prestwich and Bury which are the closest to

Manchester. Rossendale and Accrington, which are the furthest away, remain rhotic to a large degree. In Ramsbottom, a transitional area, there are speakers who have almost no rhotic variants, as well as speakers who are variably rhotic. However, in the younger group of speakers rhoticity is distributed a little differently. Namely, there is no gradual tendency but in Prestwich, Bury and Ramsbottom young speakers are non-rhotic. A rather surprising effect is found in Rossendale where in elicitation and sentences tasks younger speakers are more rhotic than the older speakers, while young speakers in Rossendale remain much more rhotic than the young speakers in Accrington which is the location furthest away from Manchester. Barras' results are largely compatible with a previous study on rhoticity in Lancashire conveyed by Vivian (2000). Vivian, in turn, investigated the feature in Accrington, Burnley and Blackburn finding a slight trend towards non-rhoticity, emphasising however the still relatively stable rhoticity rates in Accrington and Blackburn, also among young speakers. Additionally, the data uploaded to the *English Dialects App* (Leemann et al. 2018) shows that the variably rhotic region in Lancashire is mostly limited to the triangle between Blackburn, Preston and Bolton. Within this area, rhoticity rates oscillate around 50% meaning every one in two app users pronounces /r/ in the word *arm*. Wells (1982: 368) points to the area north of Preston as rhotic, too, but his data may now be outdated.

3.4. Elsewhere in the British Isles

Non-rhoticity has spread from the South East England only to some locations. What is interesting, predominantly non-rhotic English accents outside England and Wales are nowadays found only in varieties in the southern hemisphere, i.e. in South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia. The innovation did not spread out to the less distant regions within the British Isles. As will be shown below, therefore, Scottish English and Irish English have displayed rhoticity to a large degree. This, however, does not mean that new standards cannot emerge in Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Indeed, this is what has been observed in Scotland for some time now where more and more non-rhotic pronunciations have emerged.

3.4.1. Scottish English

Scottish English has always been treated as an example of a rhotic variety of English, yet recent data shows that an interesting variation of this feature is taking place in Scotland, and indeed the trend is towards derhoticisation in many contexts (Stuart-Smith 2007, Stuart-Smith et al. 2014, Lawson et al. 2014, Llamas et al. 2016). In fact, the shift from rhotic to non-rhotic variants has been underway for a few decades now (Romaine 1978, Reid 1978, Stuart-Smith et al. 2014). There still are almost categorically rhotic speakers and categorically rhotic varieties in Scotland like in Eyemouth near the Scottish-English border (Llamas et al. 2016), yet some tend to be much less rhotic. Apart from that, the process of rhoticity loss in Scotland varies between different contexts, be it regional, phonostylistic and social.

The realisations of /r/ in Glasgow have received considerable attention. As in other urban areas in Scotland, derhoticisation has been reported there (Stuart-Smith 2007, Stuart-Smith 2014, Dickson and Hall-Lew 2017). The phenomenon of r-lessness or weak rhoticity (i.e. presence of a pharyngealized off-glide in the place of an /r/) is most common among the speakers coming from the lower socioeconomic classes in Glasgow (Dickson and Hall-Lew 2017: 230).

Another accent that has been well-described in this context is Edinburgh. As in many other places in Scotland nowadays, the use of rhoticity in the second Scottish city is variable, among other things it is dependent on the social class and gender of the speaker. In their article, Dickson and Hall-Lew (2017) find the least rhoticity among speakers of the traditional middle class, but also working-class men display both derhoticization and the deletion of /r/. Apart from this, Edinburgh English, just like many other varieties spoken in Scotland, has got the abundance of phonetic realisations of /r/. In their article, Dickson and Hall-Lew (2017) divide the realisations of the non-prevocalic /r/ sound to “non-rhotic”, “derhotic”, “alveolar”, “retroflex”, “schwar”, “tap”, “trill”. What is interesting is that all realisations are present in all six gender–socioeconomic groups, only in different proportions. Another aspect worth mentioning about the study is the novel way in which Dickson and Hell-Lew grouped their participants. Apart from the traditional treatment of the middle class, they suggested a new group of speakers, the New Middle Class, which would differ in their social characteristics and indeed differed in how the pronunciation of /r/ is distributed in them. The fact that rhoticity in Scotland is

strongly correlated with the socioeconomic status of a speaker has also been shown elsewhere (Lawson et al. 2014, Stuart-Smith 2014).

Rhoticity loss in Scotland is also dependent on the age of the speaker, but the effect of age is weaker than that of class and gender. Since the trends in Scotland are towards derhoticisation, younger groups of speakers displayed less rhoticity than the older speakers (Speitel & Johnston 1983; Schützler 2010). The effect , however, is often minimized because the shift to non-rhoticity is in fact complete in accents like Carlisle where less than 20% of non-prevocalic /r/ variants are pronounced, which results in that no real difference between the old and the young speakers is observed (Watt et al. 2010). On the other end of the spectrum, in places in Scotland like Eyemouth where rhoticity is stable the difference is not observable, too; here both age groups still pronounce more than 80% of the rhotic variants (Watt et al. 2010).

The different phonetic realisations of rhotics are also stratified by social class. Lawson et al. (2011) investigated /r/ word-finally and their results show that the working-class speakers tended to produce the sound using the tip or front of the tongue, while middle-class speakers mostly used bunched realisations.

The changes to the status of /r/ in Scottish English may superficially seem similar to the changes that are happening in southwestern parts of England. The recency of the phenomenon and their social outreach may both suggest it is a similar process. However, one aspect is very different. Namely, Piercy (2012) shows that the shift from rhotic to non-rhotic pronunciation in the English South-West has been triggered by the middle-class speakers. In turn, in Scotland these are the working classes where non-rhotic variants started occurring first. Interestingly, the pronunciation patterns did not spread to the middle-class throughout but instead, in some cases rhoticity consolidated among middle-class speakers (Lawson et al. 2011, Stuart-Smith 2014). From what has been observed so far in southwestern England, however, it seems that the change has already been initiated in the middle classes while rhotic variants may persevere in the working class for a little longer.

3.4.2. Irish English

Irish English is largely rhotic with the exception of some working-class Dublin accents which are non-rhotic or variably rhotic (Hickey 2004: 77–79; Corrigan et al. 2012: 17). Otherwise, rhoticity in Ireland seems stable and there are no signs of non-rhoticity gaining popularity among wider groups of speakers (Corrigan et al. 2012: 17). An important change, however, is in the realisations of /r/. The recent trend is the adoption of the retroflex /r/ in postvocalic positions at the expense of the older postalveolar continuants (Hickey 2004: 77–79).

3.4.3. Welsh English

Most varieties of Welsh English remain non-rhotic, however, there are dialects between Mid Wales and the south where rhoticity is found (Coupland and Thomas 1990, Wells 1970, Wells 1982). This includes towns in Breconshire, Radnorshire, Newport, Newtown (Coupland and Thomas 1990) and regions in Dyfed, the Gower peninsula, Gwent and Powys (Wells 1982: 378), among others. It has been suggested that the rhotic regions in Wales bear similarities with the features of the West Country English varieties (Coupland and Thomas 1990: 7), because the other distinctive features of such dialects is also the absence of the TRAP – BATH split. Finally, rhoticity is a feature that is transferred by many speakers from the Welsh language on to their Welsh English phonological inventory, especially when Welsh is their first language (Wells 1970: 250, Penhallurick 2008). It must be noted that most sources on rhoticity in Wales are in fact outdated and new research is needed for the exact description of rhoticity variation in Wales.

3.5. Outside the British Isles

It is interesting to observe that the current adoption of rhoticity in different varieties of English around the world depends on the trends of migration in the past. Thus, if the migration from the British Isles came from the regions where rhotic variants were predominant, the dialects spoken there are rhotic; or non-rhotic, if the migrants were from

England or Wales. This generalisation is applicable to many contexts, yet there are certain exceptions. For example, Brunei English, although having been more influenced by British English as spoken in England, has developed rhoticity. Below the short descriptions will guide the reader through the development of rhoticity in English spoken around the world.

In this section, first will be described L1 varieties of English such as New Zealand, Australian, or South African; then varieties such as Singapore English, or Brunei English which function as second languages, very often in post-colonial communities where the majority of the populations speak them fluently and interchangeably with their local native tongues.

3.5.1. New York

The eastern coastal areas in the United States were the regions where different groups of settlers brought their English language varieties with them. The conflicting status of rhoticity there (i.e. because some settlers came from the rhotic speaking Ireland or Scotland, while others from the already non-rhotic speaking South-East England) is also clearly mirror imaged in the history of rhoticity development in New York City. Interestingly, in the 19th century non-rhoticity bore more prestige than rhoticity there (Labov 1964). With time, however, because of the pressure of other early American English varieties from outside the New York and the New England territories which were rhotic, rhoticity has gained the prestige status (Labov 1964: 170–171), and the trend continues until today.

Rhoticity was one of the variables identified as indicative of the New York accent and studied by Labov in his seminal work in the 1960s (Labov [1966] 2006). Labov noticed, tracking the change in progress, that rhoticity was on the decline. However, the rate of this change has been rather slow and New Yorkers still make use of non-rhoticity (Becker 2009, Becker 2014). Labov (2006) relied on a large number of participants and sampled rhoticity in two data sets, in sociolinguistic interviews and in rapid anonymous surveys. The former of these comprised 122 informants, while the former as many as 264 informants. Labov indexed many socio-economic variables like sex, gender, ethnicity, religion etc. He built his network with the help of the Youth Mobility Program that had been carried out in New York prior to the Labov surveys. Thus, his research was socially

very well-informed. In both datasets he showed that rhoticity is an index of social prestige in the city. The higher up on a social scale the speakers were, the more rhoticity they featured in their speech. One striking result, however, was the fact that in the department store survey the upper middle-class speakers had more rhoticity in their speech than the upper-class speakers.

In both datasets, rhoticity proved to be prone to stylistic variation. In the sociolinguistic interviews, rhoticity rates for a single speaker were higher in the reading and minimal pairs tasks than in the conversational part (Labov 2006). Thus, more careful speech promoted more formal (close to the standard) language behaviours, while more spontaneous speech styles triggered language behaviours that were closer to the vernacular. In the department store surveys the situation was the following. Labov asked each person the same question twice, acting as if he had not heard the answer first. Both questions elicited the answer FOURTH FLOOR, but when repeating the answer, the informants spoke in a more careful manner. This marked speech style resulted in higher rhoticity rates.

Labov's department store surveys proved remarkably replicable. The study design was replicated later in at least two studies which were Fowler (1986) and Mather (2012). The results were largely similar, with the overall rhoticity rates slightly dropping with each study. The differences between the socio-economic groups were also kept.

Another piece of research based on a similar concept was Eberhardt and Downs (2013). This time, in one store the workers were naturally using non-prevocalic /r/ at different rates when talking to different consumers. The clients with the highest budgets declared heard more /r/ word-finally than those with smaller budgets for a wedding dress. The speech of five variably non-rhotic shop assistants was analysed. The overall rhoticity rates (49%) were similar to those reported for Saks in Mathier (2012). Considering a very similar status of Kleinfeld and Saks, such surveying convention once again replicated the results found in previous studies. Once again, rhoticity was shown to be an index of a higher socio-economic status.

Overall, the New York City accents have never become fully rhotic. The shift to rhoticity is not complete, nor is it close to being completed in the nearest decade or two. The change is in progress, yet is progressing at a relatively low pace. Moreover, not all ethnic groups participate in the change towards rhoticity (Becker 2014).

3.5.2. The rest of the United States

Other accents in the United States which are variably non-rhotic mostly belong to the New England region. As with the accents spoken in the English South-West, the more geographically remote the region is (i.e. lies more to the east and closer to the Atlantic), the more rhoticity is generally found there. As with the accents spoken in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, it seems that the further away from the rhotic epicentre, especially of the culturally and economically strong regions like the Midwest, the slower the process of shifting to rhoticity is. The isogloss for non-rhoticity has been more less fixed and has run in the North through the middle of the state of Vermont, parallel with the border with New Hampshire; thus Maine, Rhode Island and New Hampshire have been mostly non-rhotic, while the western parts of Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut have remained largely rhotic (Kurath and McDavid 1961, Stanford et al. 2014). As with the rhotic dialects in England, non-rhoticity is perceivable by many speakers. For example, the Boston accents have been widely recognised for their r-dropping feature. Boston is still variably non-rhotic, as are the adjacent New Hampshire towns; however, there is more non-rhoticity in Boston than there is in New Hampshire, as well as there is more variable rhoticity in Boston (Nagy and Irwin 2010). Nagy and Irwin made use of several language-internal and language-external variables and the presence of non-prevocalic /r/ was dependent on the preceding vowel, age and ethnicity. Younger speakers displayed higher rhoticity rates than older speakers; less educated speakers were more non-rhotic, too. New Hampshire and Vermont were also investigated by Villard (2009) who found similar variability of /r/ in postvocalic positions. In both locations, the rates for r-dropping were much higher for older speakers. Villard also found a correlation between the rates for r-dropping and the sense of local identity (people seeing the local area more negatively were more rhotic). Apart from the language-external factors that are conducive to the variation of rhoticity there, the phonetic context is also found to be relevant, for instance in word-final r-dropping in Providence, Rhode Island (Kaźmierski and Urbanek 2019).

Non-rhoticity is also found in the South. The general patterns for /r/ variation there seem to be very consistent with the patterns found in New England. In New Orleans, which was found to be 39% rhotic, younger speakers similarly tend to be much more rhotic than the older speakers; better-educated speakers, too, are more rhotic, which

signals that rhoticity serves as a marker for prestige as elsewhere in the country (Casey 2013).

The synchronic variation in the United States discussed above is regional. For example, there is less rhoticity in Boston than in California. Although in these two states both non-rhotic and rhotic speakers will be found, the number of non-rhotic speakers in California will be lower. In the regions where non-rhoticity is found, its usage depends on the socio-economic variables. However, rhoticity varies also along the ethnic divide. Namely, African American English exhibits a lot of non-rhoticity across the United States, also in regions which are predominantly rhotic (Rickford 1999). In other words, rhoticity rates will be higher for African American English speakers (AAE) than for European American English (EAE) speakers in a given region. Apart from that, AAE accents also naturally borrow accent features from EAE (Mallinson and Wolfram 2002, Baranowski 2013, Browne and Stanford 2018) and the newest data shows that the trend among young AAE speakers is also to shift towards rhoticity (Strand et al. 2010, Browne and Stanford 2018).

3.5.3. Canadian English

Canadian English, like American English, is largely rhotic, but some non-rhotic varieties have been found in Nova Scotia (Emenau 1975), parts of New Brunswick (Bailey 1982) and Newfoundland (Wells 1982: 500, Kirwin 2001: 447).

3.5.4. Australian English

English was transferred to the Australian continent with settlers coming from England in the 19th century. Importantly, in the 19th century, the phonological innovation which was the shift to non-rhoticity was already complete in the South East of England. Thus, Australian English has also formed as largely non-rhotic (Wells 1982: 592). However, interesting data has emerged relatively recently showing clearly that a part of Australian English was in fact rhotic, at least to varying degrees (Trudgill and Gordon 2006). Sutton (1989) was possibly the first to report the presence of rhotic pronunciations but did it for

a much smaller population. He reported this feature for speakers of Aboriginal descent in the Adelaide area. Although the speakers researched did not pronounce /r/ word-finally, they did preserve the /r/ phoneme pre-consonantally, in words like *church*, *Perth* or *early*. Trudgill and Gordon, in turn, analysed library recordings and found traces of rhoticity in six male speakers born in the late 19th century. However, the speakers displayed very little rhoticity and, therefore, the importance of the results should not be overstated. In my understanding, one of these speakers could have been said to be variably rhotic (at 20%), while others in fact displayed only some rhoticity (between 1% and 8%). It could have been that outside the recorded interview situation they produced even fewer rhotic variants or even none. On the other hand, the traces of rhoticity in Australian English on the verge of the 19th century should not be very surprising, too, because apart from South East England there were still few non-rhotic areas in England (Trudgill and Gordon 2006: 242, Ellis 1889). Trudgill and Gordon found no rhoticity in the recordings of female Australian speakers from that period noticing that the innovation in the form of switching to zero rhoticity was possibly triggered by the female speakers. Lonergan and Cox (2010) are less enthusiastic about the findings by Trudgill and Gordon. Having analysed a portion of the same recordings, they found even less rhoticity than was found in the original study.

3.5.5. New Zealand English

New Zealand English, often compared to Australian English because of its phonological features (Wells 1982: 592, Bauer 1994: 392–393) has also displayed rhoticity in its development from the 19th century onwards, perhaps with the difference that a little more rhoticity survives in New Zealand now, although in limited geographical and sociolinguistic contexts. Rhoticity has been reported for the 19th-century New Zealand English dialects in several sources (Gordon et al. 2004, Sudbury and Hay 2002, Przewozny and Viollain 2016) and was found throughout the South Island, including in Christchurch and Nelson but not in the North Island (Bauer 1994: 392). It also seems that /r/ first started to be lost word-finally but the evidence is not entirely clear (Bauer 1994: 392). Between the late 19th century and now there has been an almost categorical phonological shift to non-rhoticity and as a result most New Zealand English varieties today are non-rhotic (Bauer

et al. 2007). However, rhoticity is still found in Otago and Southland in the South Island but has been steadily receding (Bartlett 1992, Wells 1982, Gordon et al. 2004: 175, Przewozny and Viollain 2016). The fact of its occurrence there could be in fact vital for this work. Namely, Otago and Southland are the two most southerly regions of New Zealand, distant from the most influential socio-cultural centres of the country, i.e. Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch. This geographical seclusion most likely has contributed to the retention of what for over a century now has been a receding feature in New Zealand. The situation bears similarities to the status of rhoticity in southwestern counties in England. The areas in both countries are mostly rural, with strong regional identity expressed by their inhabitants. Interestingly, a large portion of the British immigration to New Zealand indeed came from Cornwall (Bauer 1994: 386). Moreover, the southern accents in New Zealand or southwestern accents in England are usually easily identifiable throughout the two countries, precisely because of the presence of /r/. This effect is perhaps even stronger in New Zealand where there is less accentual variety.

There also is a portion of evidence suggesting that rhotic pronunciations in New Zealand may not only be the remnants of the old conservative pronunciations from before the shift to non-rhoticity, but that rhoticity might in fact be a re-emerging feature, too. First, non-prevocalic /r/ is still pronounced in New Zealand hip-hop songs before the NURSE vowel (Gibson 2005). While Gibson considers the possible influence of the American hip hop speech in this case, the most obvious explanation in fact is the phonetic context. It has been observed that /r/ is retained after the vowel NURSE in many other accents shifting from rhoticity to non-rhoticity, e.g. in Wiltshire, Berkshire, Somerset, Devon, Dorset, Black Country and Lancashire (Sullivan 1992, Piercy 2012, Asprey 2007, Barras 2010). Also, there is evidence for a non-regional feature connected with Maori and Pasifika-influenced speech. Starks and Reffell (2005) investigated rhoticity in forty young bilinguals of Maori and Pasifika descent. Rhoticity in their sample was found in exactly 83 word tokens, however, this amounted to less than 4% of the whole dataset. Again, the vicinity of certain vowels promoted rhoticity, especially NURSE and COMMA. Indeed, the influence of the Pasifika bilingual speakers have been suggested for the reportedly spreading rhoticity in the central part of the North Island. Finally, Marsden (2017) reports on the variably rhotic accents spoken by young people in small towns in the North Island. The social and geographical context for their occurrence clearly suggests that these rhotic variants are a re-emerging, or an innovative, feature.

3.5.6. South African English

South African English, which developed in the 19th century (Bekker 2012), is now largely non-rhotic (Wells 1982). However, as with New Zealand and Australian English it exhibits an interesting but sometimes overlooked variation in rhoticity. Conservative (or cultivated) South African English is non-rhotic, as it bears many similarities to the traditional RP (Wells 1982, Lass 2002, Bekker 2012: 141–142). This traditional dialect, however, is hardly spoken anymore among younger speakers of South African English (Lass 2002, Bekker 2012). In this light, two new South African varieties have emerged. The variety which has now become the new standard (or general) South African English is non-rhotic, but the second variety, i.e. broad South African English which is similar to L2 Afrikaans English, displays some rhoticity (Lass 2002: 373, Bekker 2012: 142). Perhaps the most recent study on rhoticity in White South African English is du Plessis and Bekker (2013). These two, however, only reflect White South African English but the lects in South Africa are very much connected with different ethnic groups (Coetzee-van Rooy and van Rooy 2005). In turn, Black South African English displays more and more rhoticity, and the change seems to be taking place quite rapidly and despite the fact that most African Englishes are non-rhotic (notably, with the exception of Sudan and Somalia) (Bobda 2001: 277–278). Hartmann and Zerbian (2010) report rhoticity in both men and women in South Africa and suggest that the trend for adopting rhoticity is especially led by black affluent women. In general, the evidence varies between the possible transfer of the feature from other language groups (e.g. Afrikaans) to the retention of the feature since the 19th century onwards.

3.5.7. Singapore English

The variety has traditionally been described as non-rhotic, but there is evidence that there is now a gradual shift to rhotic variants in Singapore English; additionally, it seems that rhoticity is spreading as a prestige variant (Tan and Gupta 1992, Sharbawi and Deterding 2010, Ying-Ying 2012). The cited sources, however, only give a fragmented portion of information about what really might be happening in Singapore English. For example, Sharbawi and Deterding report 8% of rhoticity in Singapore English. Considering the fact

that they researched the r-tokens in a rather formal setting in read speech, it seems natural that few rhotic tokens appeared in the data. This can happen even in non-rhotic speakers in cited speech.

3.5.8. Brunei English

Brunei English is related to Singapore English in terms of some of its phonological features, yet not in the case of rhoticity. Sharbawi and Deterding (2010) provide data for much higher rhoticity rates in Brunei English which come as surprising. As opposed to mostly so far non-rhotic Singapore English, it is about 50% rhotic (Sharbawi and Deterding 2010). Such results go against the general belief that the forms of colonial and post-colonial Englishes always depend on the forms transported over to the new lands by the colonizers from the British Isles. It seems then that other factors must come into play in the case of Brunei English. Interestingly, the model of English endorsed in schools in Brunei is General British English, a non-rhotic variety (Sharbawi and Deterding 2010: 123). One potential explanation could be the influence of the American media, yet Sharbawi and Deterding themselves doubt this fact alone would account for the occurence of rhoticity in Brunei English, especially considering the fact that the speakers featured in the study did not display other popular features of American English like GA qualities of vowels BATH and LOT, or the intervocalic t-voicing (2010: 133). The more plausible one is the influence of the participants' L1. All Brunei speakers in the study spoke Brunei Malay as their first language. Importantly, Brunei Malay is the rhotic variety of Malay, as opposed to Standard Malay where non-prevocalic /r/ tokens are usually not pronounced (Teoh 1996, Clynes 2001, Sharbawi and Deterding 2010). This in fact explains the difference in rhoticity rates between Singapore English and Brunei English speakers.

3.6. Perceptions

The relative sociolinguistic salience, or markedness, of a linguistic feature is connected with how fast the listeners identify the feature and to what extent they share common perceptions about it (e.g. Llamas et al. 2016). Also, notably, the nature of the

interpretation of the extra-linguistic markedness is that a language feature can be associated differently in different contexts or have "different sociolinguistic correlates" (Kretzschmar Jr. and Tamasi 2003: 378). The relativity of salience is the key concept when we talk about rhoticity. Naturally, the perceptions of it will be different in different social surroundings. For example, it will not be very marked sociolinguistically in the setting where most speakers are rhotic, but it will be much more marked in the societies in which most speakers are non-rhotic. Naturally the latter situation applies to the discussion on rhoticity in southwestern England.

The presence of the word-final /r/ mostly is perceptible by lay users of the language (Llamas et al. 2016). Once it has been identified, the listener will then associate certain characteristics with it, which sometimes will have serious social implications. For example, non-rhotic speakers were victims of xenophboic ideologies aimed at new migrants inhabiting the eastern coast in the twentieth-century United States; since the previous wave of migration pronounced all the /r/s, rhoticity possessed the prestige status and the result was social degradation of the new population, which often happened through the instant identification of non-rhoticity (Lev 2015: 486). Such strong differentiation has not been directly observed in the British context, but undoubtedly it often is an index of belonging to different dialect groups. Surprisingly, however, there are dialect contact situations in the United Kingdom where rhoticity does not serve as a proxy for a different region, nationality etc. For example, in English and Scottish towns on the Scottish-English border it is not instantly interpreted as a Scottish feature (Llamas et al. 2016). In other words, it is not a very salient feature there, even though the comparison involved the perceptions of English and Scottish accents, i.e. non-rhotic vs. rhotic. This may be due to the fact that the variety of realisations in the British Isles is much greater than it was in the twentieth-century United States. Moreover, predominantly non-rhotic in the British Isles are only England and Wales. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland are predominantly rhotic and although London arguably still is the most influential place socio-culturally (and linguistically as an outcome) in the British Isles, the rhotic speakers are not the smaller minority in this broader perspective.

Another characteristic that contributes to a phonological feature as being salient is whether it is currently undergoing change (Trudgill 1982, Llamas et al. 2016). This criterion seems perfectly applicable to the status of rhoticity in many varieties of English around the world, and especially suitable to the situation in the English South-West or

England as a whole. Holistically, it seems that the process of shift from rhoticity to non-rhoticity has been very slow. It originated in the South-East of England in the 18th century and is still not complete for many dialects of English in England. In this context, it seems especially surprising how fast the speakers in Dorset are shifting to non-rhoticity (Piercy 2012).

It also seems that rhoticity is fairly uniformly identifiable with the South-West in England, yet the reactions towards the accents in the South-West are rather mixed. On the one hand, it has been associated with the rural farming communities in the region. Notably, working-class accents are often perceived as less attractive and less prestigious than middle-class accents. On the other hand, the general South-West (or West Country) accents are viewed as fairly "attractive"; at the same time, the Bristol accent is viewed as unattractive and non-prestigious (Coupland and Bishop 2007). The relative perceived attractiveness of the West Country dialect(s) can be linked to the general romantic and idyllic view of the whole region that many people have. It could well be that rhoticity has been retained in the South-West for so long among other things because rhoticity possesses more overt prestige there than it may at first seem.

For both Scottish English and Irish English the overall picture may be more complex because there are not only many realisations of non-prevocalic /r/, but also there are conflicting variants of /r/ gaining prestige. For example, it seems that in Glasgow or Edinburgh the dominant rhotic variants are not much less or much more prestigious than the non-rhotic variants which have been spreading for some time now.

So far, it has been stated that the relative prestige of a rhotic dialect is dependent upon the linguistic situation of the larger region where this dialect is spoken, i.e. whether rhoticity is a minority or majority feature. This translates to what popularly in sociolinguistics is termed as covert and overt prestige. Covert prestige is the widely understood consensus that a given language feature or dialect is respectable, while overt prestige is shared in the inside group among their loyal speakers who happen to be loyal to their native dialect, even if it is not highly regarded outside of the group (Meyerhoff 2006: 37–38).

The salience of a linguistic feature, as discussed above, depends mostly on subjective or subconscious reception of it (through its instant identification or the identification of a language variety it is associated with). However, another aspect that may be well linked to how a given variant is perceived is its potential for causing misunderstanding.

Labov (2010) shows that misunderstandings are fairly frequent, especially in dialect contact situations and especially when change in progress is involved. It also entails sound change much more often than any other part of the linguistic structure. Rhoticity potentially is conducive to miscommunication. It happens when a rhotic speaker misunderstands a word or a phrase spoken by a non-rhotic speaker, or vice versa. The examples are pairs of words such as *yawn* and *yarn*, *call* and *Carl*, or *pawn* and *porn* (Labov 2010: 44–45). In non-rhotic accents most often they are homophones or near homophones. In situations where rhoticity has got more covert prestige than non-rhoticity like in New York, variably rhotic and non-rhotic speakers would often tend to pronounce the /r/s in minimal pairs task in an effort to differentiate such similar-sounding pairs of words (Labov 1966). In sociolinguistic interviews in the South-West of England I also used the minimal pairs task and asked my informants to read them. However, the situation here is naturally reversed as the sound change is towards non-rhoticity; the expected outcome then is that they will produce fewer rhotic variants than in the interview (rhotic and variably rhotic speakers), or will not start producing them in the minimal-pairs task (non-rhotic speakers). The possible misunderstandings of such minimal pairs brought about by the absence of /r/ are very much connected with the remark written by Trudgill (1986, as cited in Llamas et al 2016: 2) who says that the more prestigious variant is normally represented in the spelling; hence the stigma attached to h-dropping, for example. This is somewhat conflicting, however, as this would in fact mean more prestige for rhotic variants, also in South-West England.

3.7. Describing sociolinguistic diversity

The theoretical assumption behind this work is that language exists only as shared within or between groups of people. Another assumption is that language constantly evolves on its different levels, whether this is the morphological structure, lexical or phonological. As language is shared by people living in a society, it must then also share its ever-changing form, i.e. variation will also occur as a social phenomenon and will be taken up by whole groups of speakers more or less at the same time. It has been shown that certain groups can lead language change, e.g. women usually lead innovations from below (Labov 1994), but nevertheless these drives will always function as opposed to someone's

individual language behaviour. Idiolects and their characteristics are rarely tested nowadays because the patterns that could be potentially found would not be relevant for the larger picture, i.e. even if there are individual features in the grammar, language still only operates between individuals as a social phenomenon. Therefore, in many contexts they have been disregarded, as representing merely the "statistical noise" and as irrelevant (Blaxter et al. 2019: 92; see also Guy 1980, Labov 2014).

What the descriptions above imply about the spread of rhoticity in English around the world is indeed quite remarkable. Especially, they show that there is much more variation in rhoticity than normally assumed in traditional descriptions. We have seen, for example, that there still is some rhoticity in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, both as a re-emergent and a conservative feature. Accordingly, the generally assumed distinction between rhotic and non-rhotic accents in too many situations simply does not hold. It turns out, contrary to the popular view, that in general there are relatively many fewer speakers categorically rhotic or non-rhotic and, therefore, rhoticity is not the best distinguishing feature for the dialects of English around the world.

All the studies on rhoticity above also show that rhoticity is a very reliable feature of the language to be tested in sociolinguistics. More often than not, it is differentiated by age, gender, style and other criteria popularly described in various sociophonetic research. Therefore, similar patterns to those outlined above are expected to be found in the data collected here.

3.8. Models for spreading and change

The descriptions in this chapter show that many varieties were or have been in the process of shifting from rhoticity to non-rhoticity, or the other way round. Some of these shifts also seem to take place at a fast rate. The question remains what triggers them and if there are many causes, which of them is the most powerful.

In these descriptions, I often point to the language-external factors conducive to language change, e.g. by showing how young speakers from the same area differ in their use of rhoticity from older speakers. However, in fact we can talk broadly about three main different sources of linguistic change. These are language-internal factors (Labov 1994), social factors (Labov 2001), as well as cognitive and cultural factors (Labov 2010).

Blaxter et al. (2019) take up the taxonomy of Tamminga et al. (2016) to test different grammar-internal and grammar-external effects on rhoticity in Bristol. This taxonomy is very similar to the one proposed by Labov (1994, 2001, 2010), but Tamminga et al. add "physical" to cognitive factors, too.

Out of all these factors, perhaps the most imminent and clearly belonging to the language-external factors, is dialect contact. Thus, once a linguistic change has been adopted by a group of speakers (usually representing one locality or region), it can spread to other groups of speakers. In language contact situations a favourable context is when this group of speakers is influential, or "constitute an important segment of the speech community" (Sankoff 2004: 643). The synchronic variation of rhoticity in the accents of English around the world suggests that if we were to adopt one theory behind why non-rhoticity spreads from area to area or from accent to accent, this would be diffusion (see Britain 2004), i.e. transmission of linguistic features from one place to another.[2] Barras (2010) shows that in Lancashire non-rhoticity was gradually being transmitted as an innovative feature from one locality to another; thus, more and more groups of speakers have been speaking with non-rhotic accents. The epicentre and the source of linguistic innovation was Manchester, while rural locations were influenced as the last. Similarly, it seems that the spread of non-rhoticity in Exeter happens according to the diffusion model (Sullivan 1992). Trudgill and Gordon (2006: 243) identify diffusion as a mechanism for the existence of non-rhoticity on the eastern coast of the United States but are less sure about whether diffusion can explain the fact of the existence of rhotic varieties in Australia. Diffusion, however, would explain the existence of rhoticity in the Southland region in New Zealand. The area is the most isolated region in New Zealand, secluded from the most influential culturally and economically urban centres in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch. Moreover, it is a rural region without major towns and it has been shown that linguistic innovations spread to such locations at a slower pace. In fact, it bears a lot of similarities with the English South-West. Both of them are the regions where non-rhoticity has not yet been successfully "diffused".

The diffusion of linguistic features is impossible without spatial mobility. People become mobile for many reasons, e.g. "as a result of migration, labor indentation,

[2] The word "transmission", however, can be a little misleading. In this context it is used to denote a process in which linguistic features are passed on from parents to their children, i.e. from one generation to another (Labov 2007). Diffusion means the extension of linguistic innovations from one adolescent group to another.

colonization, suburbanization, gentrification, New Town formation, land reclamation" (Britain 2004: 616). This does not have to involve the actual resettlement. Nowadays, many people travel to work long distances, or have two places of residence. These also make dialect contact much more likely than in the past. Britain comments on the possible outcomes of dialect contact in the following way, "where an innovation comes into contact with a traditional local form, therefore, a number of potential outcomes emerge: adoption of the innovation; the emergence of interdialect forms between the local form and the innovation; the rejection of the innovation, including the use of hyperdialectisms" (Britain 2004: 618).

The wave model describes in a more exact manner how diffusion can work. According to this theory, a linguistic innovation originates in one place and from there it spreads to other localities, becoming a sustained feature in the closest dialects first, then spreading on to the more remote ones (Britain 2004). This theory holds very well to the loss of rhoticity in England, e.g. in Lancashire (see above). There remains a question, however, why non-rhoticity has not spread equally around all English territories and why it develops differently in the South-West and in Lancashire. If a phonological feature which is rhoticity originated in the South-East of England, it should have spread faster to, say, Devon, that to the very North of the country (where there is no rhoticity) or to Lancashire (where there is less rhoticity than in the South-West) because the feature was to be transported through smaller geographical distance, i.e. fewer dialect boundaries. However, the theory would still hold if we reinterpreted it slightly. Namely, comparing Lancashire with the South-West it should be noted that for the neighbouring dialects, Manchester has been the source of innovation and the new accent features spread from there. Non-rhoticity was adopted there and resonated further away. The situation was different in the case of the English South-West. The largest and perhaps most influential urban accent has always been Bristol where rhoticity is still relatively stable until today. Therefore, the source from which non-rhoticity has been spreading to dialects in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset was still London, while Bristol could have worked as an inhibitor for the change. This is why diffusion cannot be explained only in terms of geographical distance.

Therefore, the gravity model may explain better why there are still differences in the rates of rhoticity between different regions in England, although non-rhoticity has been spreading since the 18th century in a relatively small geographical area. It was

already mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2 that the density of the population in South-West England must have played a huge role in the way the dialects have been forming there. This is because the density of the population is closely connected with the density of the ties within a speech community. This brings the reader back to the discussion started already in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (see also Milroy 2004: 563). The gravity model of the linguistic diffusion considers population density as an important factor in dialect contact (Britain 2004: 623–626). According to it, affected by change are first densely populated urban areas; from there they spread on to middle-sized populations (towns, areas, regions) (Britain 2004: 624). Finally, the new linguistic form reaches distant rural areas. Although the theory is not without its limitations, it applies to the spread of rhoticity in southwestern England best and fits well within the purposes of this work.

The ever-recurring theme in sociolinguistics is the role of the media as a force influencing language change. On the one hand, it seems that such an explanation stands in opposition to the language contact explanation, if language contact is interpreted as here, i.e. as the real-life exchange of speech acts. On the other hand, it may be interpreted as a factor strengthening diffusion (Stuart-Smith et al. 2013), exactly in the language contact sense, except that the speech act happens one way and the face-to-face interaction is missing. These two, however, are in fact of the key importance in dialect accommodation and dialect diffusion (Trudgill 1986). Therefore, Trudgill was sceptical about the potential role of the TV and radio as a medium for transmitting linguistic innovation. Indeed, Stuart-Smith et al. (2013) have convincing evidence that the Scottish speakers who watched *Eastenders* were adopting l-vocalization and th-fronting (an essentially London feature), but this was one of a few factors. Trudgill does say that what people watch on TV and listen to on the radio can work as a strengthening factor, but not as a deciding factor. Bekker (2012) doubts that neo-rhoticity found in South Africa would have much to do with the influence of the American culture, especially that the main source of influence on young people would come from the African American culture, and AAE is non-rhotic. In the same way should be discarded the hypotheses that the traces of rhoticity found in New Zealand hip hop music can have their source in the borrowings from American English (Gibson 2005). It seems, accordingly, that the impact of the media, understood especially as the TV and the radio, may be indeed rather small in the case of rhoticity. The timing of the present changes is also very telling. It has been in the last decades that some rapid changes in rhoticity have been noticed (Piercy 2012; Feagin

1990). These dates, however, do not entirely coincide with the peak of popularity for either traditional TV shows or radio programmes. Instead, today most young people have in fact stopped watching TV at the expense of streaming services such as Netflix. The radio had lost popularity long before this happened. The new sources of entertainment (podcasts, streaming services etc.) are now also much less localizable, and so are the accents of the actors and presenters. Nowadays, there are fewer trained journalists and actors, as well. The most viewed YouTubers and podcast presenters, for instance, are usually self-trained enthusiasts who care much less about the well-spokenness than radio presenters did in the past (and hence adhere much less to the standard speech norms prevailing in the area where they come from; essentially, their programmes are aimed at a wide-world audience, not only at people coming from the area where they come from).

The rate of the transmission of (non-)rhoticity is also crucial. Although some linguistic features can be passed down and retained quickly, even within a half of a generation (Labov 1964: 175), it has been shown that usually it takes longer for a group of speakers to switch from a rhotic variety to a non-rhotic (or vice versa). For example, Feagin (1990) showed that the almost complete change from non-rhoticity to rhoticity can happen within three generations. Piercy (2012) shows that in her speakers from Dorset the change from rhotic to non-rhotic pronunciation practically was completed within a difference of one generation. The question then remains about how quick this process really is, especially considering the fact that the speakers whom Piercy interpreted as rhotic were not completely rhotic, but rather highly rhotic and variably rhotic. The same pattern in fact repeats across most other studies on rhoticity. When calculated in detail, it turns out that the speakers exemplified as rhotic and non-rhotic are usually either variably rhotic or variably non-rhotic, which shows that we are indeed dealing with the change in progress in many dialects, but the process may have been initiated much earlier than we think. For example, if we looked at a larger picture, it would turn out that the process of diffusion of non-rhoticity from London to the rest of England had been in fact a very slow process, initiated already in the eighteenth century, until it accelerated significantly in the twentieth century and, probably, even more in the twenty-first century. The results of Labov in New York (1966) may have suggested that by the second decade of the twenty-first century, New York would be largely rhotic. As Becker (2009, 2014) shows, many New York accents are far from becoming fully rhotic in the upcoming years.

In this section, mostly language external factors have been reviewed. It is believed that they are the most powerful in triggering the sound change which is about the shift to non-rhoticity among the groups of speakers who were previously rhotic. The language-internal factors will be discussed in the following chapter.

Finally, the synchronic variation of rhoticity around the world shows that language-internal factors must have played a much smaller role in shifts where rhoticity was involved. More precisely, there seems to be no internal predisposition of the English language structure to be inherently conducive either to shifts to rhoticity or non-rhoticity. Conversely, very similar mechanisms are responsible for the shift to rhoticity in the United States and to non-rhoticity in England. These are essentially social forces which shape this variation.

Chapter 4: The supermarket surveys

4.1. Introduction

The following chapter describes the results of the supermarket surveys which were performed in order to verify the rates of word-final /r/ in three southwestern counties, i.e. Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. The results confirmed the hypothesis about the social stratification of the variable and its receding trend. Three graphics summarising the method and the results are also to be found in Appendices A–C. The chapter opens with the description of the method, and then discusses the results. The discussion part closes the chapter.

4.2. Background

The results described below were obtained through rapid anonymous surveys performed in southwestern England. Such surveys were famously pioneered by Labov in his New York department stores study (1966), described on a number of occasions in this work. Labov, over the course of two days, obtained more than two hundred responses and noted down rhotic and non-rhotic pronunciations uttered by his informants. He included both word-final and preconsonantal /r/ phonemes and elicited two speech styles (by pretending he did not hear the answer and asking the same question again). All his hypotheses were confirmed. The highest rhoticity rates were found in the most prestigious department store, and the lowest in the least prestigious department store. These observations were mirroring the less prestigious status of r-dropping pronunciations in New York in the 1960s and signalled the change in progress towards more rhotic pronunciations. It is expected that the results for the following supermarket surveys will be reversed, i.e. the change in progress is towards non-rhoticity and that non-rhoticity bears more prestige index.

Although applauded for being socially realistic, the methodology taken up by Labov was not replicated that many times. The almost exact replications were done by Fowler (1986) and Mather (2012) who both recreated the original study by asking the

same questions in New York City department stores. Their results were stunningly accurate and, as expected, they reflected the growing number of r-full pronunciations in the city, compared to the original data from the 1960s. Another study worth mentioning is Ellis et al. (2006) which surveyed /r/ vocalization in Philadelphia. The methodology they adopted was based on asking the passers-by about the street name. The elicited words were MARKET and GIRARD, both featuring the pre-consonantal /r/ in rhotic accents. The method involved intentional asking about the street, at the same time confusing its name. The two questions were "(1) How do I get to Market Avenue? (2) Where is Girard Street?" while, in fact, the names were *Market Street* and *Girard Avenue* (Ellis et al. 2006: 58). Such questions often triggered a response in which the interviewee repeated the name of the street, this time saying it correctly. A similar study carried out on the streets in Philadelphia had been done before by Labov (1984) who then was eliciting the pronunciation of (str). Another example of a street survey is Michnowicz (2006) who investigated the allophonic variation in word-final nasals in Yucatan Spanish eliciting the word COLÓN.

The second method which has been frequently used to elicit certain phonological forms were questions about time. For example, Baranowski (2006) asked people for time around five o'clock to investigate the adaptation of the monophthongisation of /ay/ sin South Carolina. Clopton (2005, as cited in Labov [1966] 2006: 57) did a similar study in Spanish to compare the differing realisations of fricatives /θ/ and /s/ in Barcelona Spanish. A similar method to those two was adopted in this study, namely, around four o'clock I was asking for time customers in different supermarkets. The elicited word was FOUR, pronounced with or without the word-final /r/ phoneme.

It seems that similar techniques are used less and less to gather sociolinguistic data. There are a few reasons for this. First, this method allows an interviewer to instantly access natural language behaviours, however, at the cost of demographic data. Apart from the subjective categorising the informants into different age and gender groups, or sometimes a few more categories, it is impossible to gather more information about the speakers' social, economic, linguistic or cultural background. Moreover, it seems that in certain contexts research ethical issues associated with rapid anonymous surveys have arisen over the years. By definition, such studies are done without the informants' knowledge about any type of a survey being performed. It seems justifiable when we know that the research design is not intrusive in a slightest way, yet it seems that over the years the

surreptitious recording of informants for linguistic purposes do not have many proponents.

4.3. Method

To assess the possible rates of rhoticity word-finally in the three counties, rapid anonymous surveys were performed in supermarkets in one city in each county. These were Truro in Cornwall, Exeter in Devon and Bournemouth in Dorset. Then three supermarkets in each of them were visited multiple times. Around 4 pm, the customers were asked by me about time, so that the word FOUR was elicited. It turned out that the best time for the surveys was circa between 15:45 and 16:15. Usually, the subjects were then producing sentences like FIFTEEN TO FOUR, or FIFTEEN PAST FOUR. All the preconsonantal and prevocalic instances were rejected, e.g. FOUR FIFTEEN, or FOUR O'CLOCK and only the phrase-final /r/s were included. In each supermarket, the first thirty qualified responses were noted down, as either rhotic or non-rhotic. This provided the total of 270 responses, 90 per city. Additionally, people's age and gender were noted down.

The method was borrowed from Labov (1966) and adapted to the needs of this study. The main difference was in the choice of the informants. In his department store survey, Labov decided to only ask the staff members in each department store and there seemed to be good logic behind this method. He meticulously described the differences between the employees working in each department store, arguing that their manners, uniforms and their speech styles differed significantly between the stores categorising them into different socio-economic groups. In the context of my study, however, it seemed more reasonable to in fact elicit the answers from the customers in each supermarket. I realised that the employees in each supermarket would differ between themselves much less in this respect than the customers. Different supermarkets try to cater for different tastes and budgets, attracting different customers, while the supermarket staff mostly represent a more similar socioeconomic status.

The second modification was that while Labov elicited both the preconsonantal and word-final /r/ in his study, in this study only the pronunciation of the word-final /r/ is described. It should not, however, flaw the results for the actual rhoticity rates in the three regions. For example, Ellis et al. (2006) successfully intercepted only the results for the

preconsonantal /r/s in Philadelphia, still managing to realistically draw a picture of whether there is a difference in how different social groups realise the /r/ sound (i.e. vocalize it or not).

The third modification is that I was not gathering samples of two linguistic styles, i.e. normal and emphatic. Each informant was asked the question only once.

4.4. Localities

The cities selected serve as administrative centres or county towns for each region. Truro is much smaller than Exeter and Bournemouth, but it is the only city in Cornwall. The supermarkets which I visited were carefully selected to vary socio-economically and geographically, i.e. so that their customers differed socio-economically. The cheaper supermarkets in poorer neighbourhoods were expected to attract more customers coming from the working class, or the lower middle class, while more expensive supermarkets in wealthier neighbourhoods were supposed to attract more customers coming from the middle-middle and the upper-middle class.

In Truro, the three following supermarkets were selected. The lowest on the prestige scale was an Aldi in Highertown, situated next to the A390 motorway, which seemed to attract mainly local clientele. The next supermarket, middle on the prestige scale, was a Tesco close to the city centre and the main roundabout in the city. This was on Newham Road in the direction to Newham. Finally, a Marks & Spencer on the Lemon Quay, the main pedestrian area with many shops and restaurants, was selected.

In Exeter, treated as lowest in prestige was a Lidl supermarket located in Wonford. This is a residential area in the southern part of the city. Although Exeter seems very middle-class and does not seem to have distinctively lower-income neighbourhoods, the locals recommended this area as one of the lowest on the prestige and socio-economics scale. The mid-range shop in Exeter was Morrisons. The supermarket was located in Stoke Hill, in a residential area not far away from the University of Exeter main campus. It seemed that it attracted a rather broad clientele, including people living in the area, as well as students from the nearby campus. The top-range grocery store selected was a Marks & Spencer located in High Street. This was in the main pedestrian area in the centre of Exeter, where many restaurants, cafes and shops are located. It seems that despite the

smaller size of the Marks & Spencer supermarkets, the store was often much less crowded than the other two supermarkets visited in Exeter. This was probably due to the higher price tags for most products found in the store.

Bournemouth, in turn, seems to be a city much more stratified socio-economically. There are some poorer areas with many migrant communities like Boscombe, Kinson, West Howe, East Howe, some of them enjoying a rather bad reputation. On the other end of the spectrum, however, there are boroughs like Talbot Woods or Westbourne which attract higher-income residents. Therefore, I decided to choose one supermarket in Boscombe, and one supermarket in Westbourne; the intermediate on the scale was an ASDA supermarket located near the Bournemouth central train station. The station is in fact far away from the actual city centre, and much closer to residential areas. It seemed that it attracted similar customers to those visiting the Tesco in Truro and the Morrisons in Exeter.

It was stated above that the supermarkets were stratified socio-economically. It may seem at first that the most popular supermarkets in the United Kingdom do not vary much between themselves in most respects, however, when I compared the prices in each it turned out that they differ significantly. As a result, the supermarkets were divided into three categories I needed for my study. Lidl and Aldi seemed to be the cheapest (and were often located in poorer neighbourhoods, as described above), ASDA, Tesco and Morrisons were categorised as the mid-range supermarkets, attracting the broadest group of customers, and were often much bigger than Lidl, Aldi and Marks & Spencer. Finally, the Marks & Spencer was chosen as the most expensive supermarket, attracting the most affluent groups. Not only more expensive supermarkets had higher prices on the same products when compared to Aldi and Lidl, but also the range of products was much broader in each of them; they often offered gourmet or premium products in many categories. For example, the Marks & Spencer, although always smaller in size than the mid-range supermarkets, had a large selection of wines, bakery products and pastries. In Table 1, the prices for the most basic products available in all supermarkets are summarised. These are the prices current for the time of the interviews. I noted them down when visiting the stores so they could have very slightly differed from the online prices.

X1	Aldi	Lidl	ASDA	Morrisons	Tesco	Marks & Spencer
pasta penne (500g) cheapest	£0.29	£0.30	£0.45	£0.61	£0.50	£0.55
pasta penne (500g) most expensive	£0.65	£0.45	£1.50	£1.70	£1.89	£2.00
milk (2 pints)	£0.65	£0.79	£0.79	£0.79	£0.75	£0.89
yorkshire tea (80 tbgs / 250g)	NA	NA	£2.99	£2.76	£2.99	£3.00
yorkshire tea (120 tbgs / 375g)	£2.29	£2.29	NA	NA	NA	NA
toast bread (700g – 800g) cheapest	£0.35	£0.36	£0.75	£0.53	£0.40	£1.14
instant coffee (100g) cheapest	£1.35	£1.79	£1.99	£0.78	£0.79	£3.00
instant coffee (200g) cheapest	£1.49	£1.49	£1.69	£2.00	£2.00	£5.00

Fig. 4. Prices of basic grocery products noted down at the time of performing the surveys.

4.5. Informants

Apart from the presence or absence of the word-final /r/, I was noting down the age and gender of my respondents. I have kept the traditional differentiation into young, middle-aged and older age groups, with a margin of 5 years. The evaluation was subjective.

The elimination process was also present. People were not prejudiced against on racial grounds (it happened, however, that only Anglo respondents answered the surveys; see Sections 1.4 and 2.3 for the description of the South-West England population), but if their accent sounded in any way non-native or not from the region described, the answer was later dismissed. For example, one female respondent in Westbourne sounded distinctively Scottish, so her response was not taken into consideration. It often happened, too, that I was either able to overhear their conversation with someone else, or our short conversation lasted longer

Table 4. Number of respondents according to age and gender.

	Young (18–30)	**Middle-aged (35–50)**	**Old (55+)**
Female	26	43	73
Male	18	44	66

4.6. Hypotheses

It is hypothesised that rhoticity will be found in every county, possibly also in every supermarket. What follows from the analyses of development of rhoticity in the world's Englishes is that it would be a very doubtful scenario if no rhoticity was found in South West England, provided the field methodology will be carefully administered. More specifically, the hypotheses could be phrased as follows:

(1) There will be more rhoticity in older speakers than in younger speakers. The middle-aged speakers will display intermediate rhoticity rates.

(2) There will be more rhoticity in the lower-middle class than in the upper-middle class. The middle-middle class speakers will display intermediate rhoticity rates.

(3) There will be more rhoticity in Cornwall than in Devon and Dorset. Dorset will display the least rhoticity. Devon will display intermediate rhoticity rates.

4.7. Results

The results were as expected. The least rhoticity was found in Bournemouth, Dorset and the most rhoticity in Truro, Cornwall. Exeter in Devon displayed intermediate rates for this variable. This shows that the further west, the more rhoticity there is in the region. On average, Bournemouth is 19% rhotic. Only two responses out of thirty in the Marks & Spencer in Westbourne were rhotic (c. 7%), seven responses were rhotic in ASDA (c. 23%) and eight responses in Aldi (27%). In Exeter, the numbers were similar. In Lidl eight speakers displayed sentence-final /r/ phoneme (27%) and seven speakers in Morrisons. However, when compared to Bournemouth, there were more rhotic pronunciations found in the top-range supermarket, i.e. five responses were verified as rhotic, which amounts to c. 17% of rhoticity. Finally, Cornwall by far displays the highest rates for the presence of word-final /r/s. In the low-range supermarket as many as every second response was noted down as rhotic. Moreover, there was no stratification found between the mid-range and the top-range supermarkets. In both, every third (c. 33%) response was rhotic. This may show that in general rhoticity is a weaker clue for class differentiation in Cornwall than in the two other locations.

The results in general confirm all the hypotheses. The most rhoticity is found in Truro and the least in Bournemouth. There is also less rhoticity in the upper-middle class speakers than in the middle-middle class speakers, and the lower-middle class speakers. On average, Bournemouth is 19% rhotic, Exeter is 22% rhotic, and Truro is 39% rhotic. Remarkably, these numbers agree with the rhoticity results for Dorset, Devon and Cornwall in Leemann et al. (2018) who gathered their responses through their dedicated dialect survey mobile app (see also Chapter 3). This may confirm the validity of the methodology adopted in my supermarket surveys.

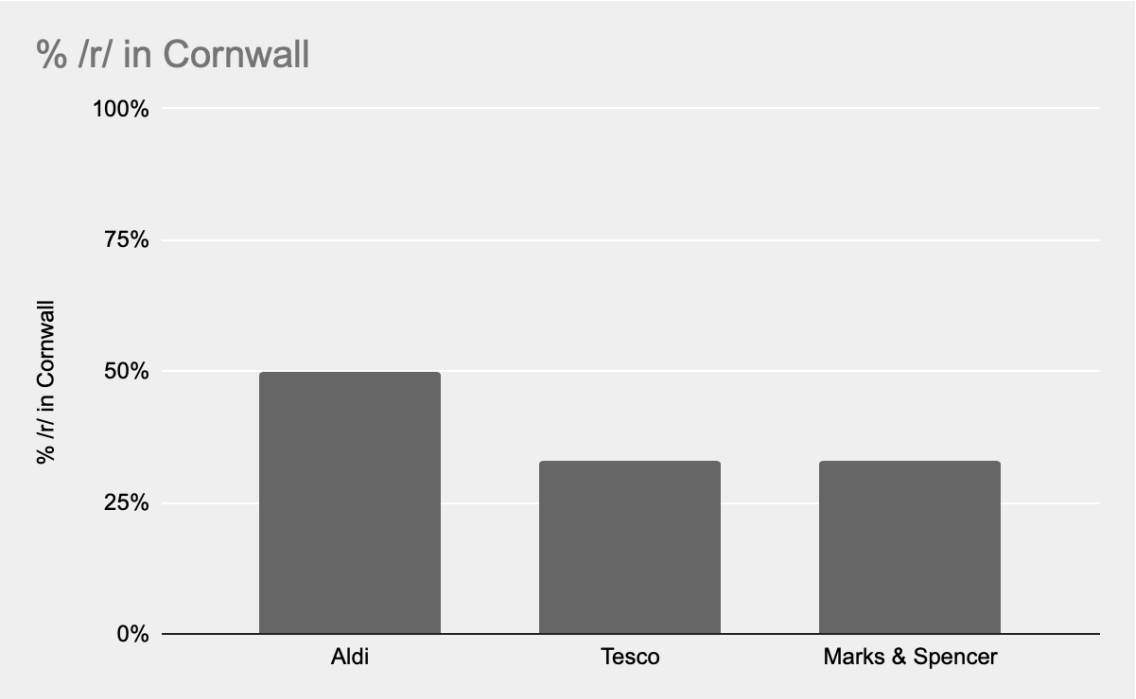

Fig. 5. Rhoticity rates found in three supermarkets in Truro.

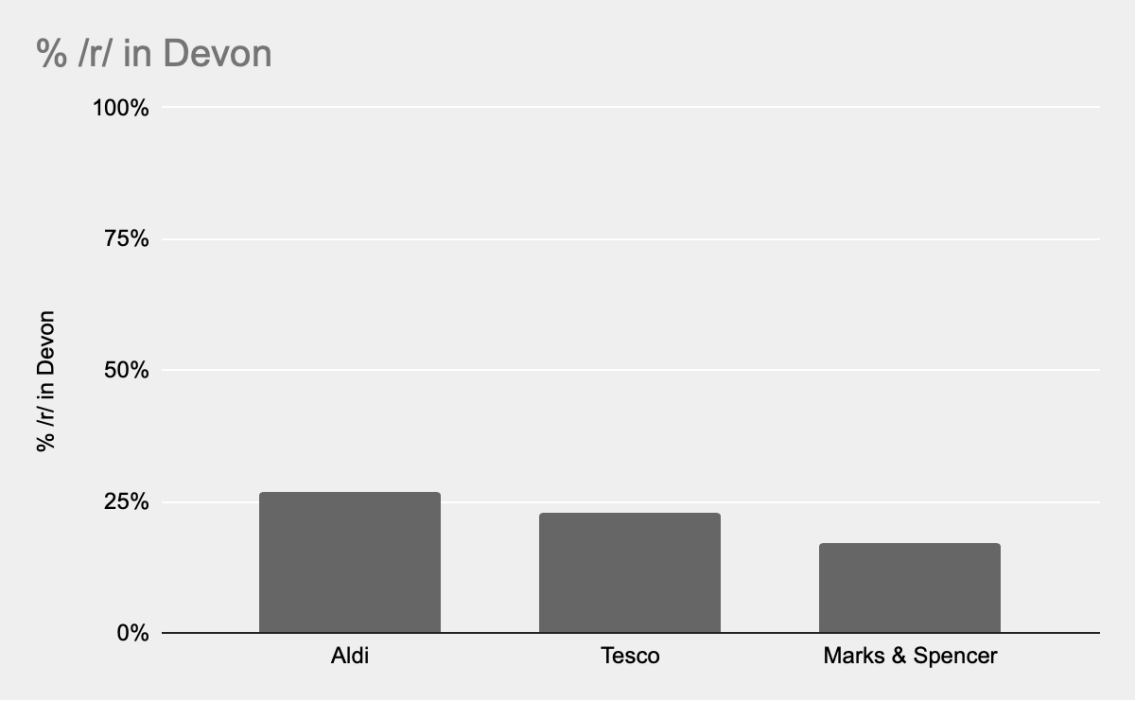

Fig. 6. Rhoticity rates found in three supermarkets in Exeter.

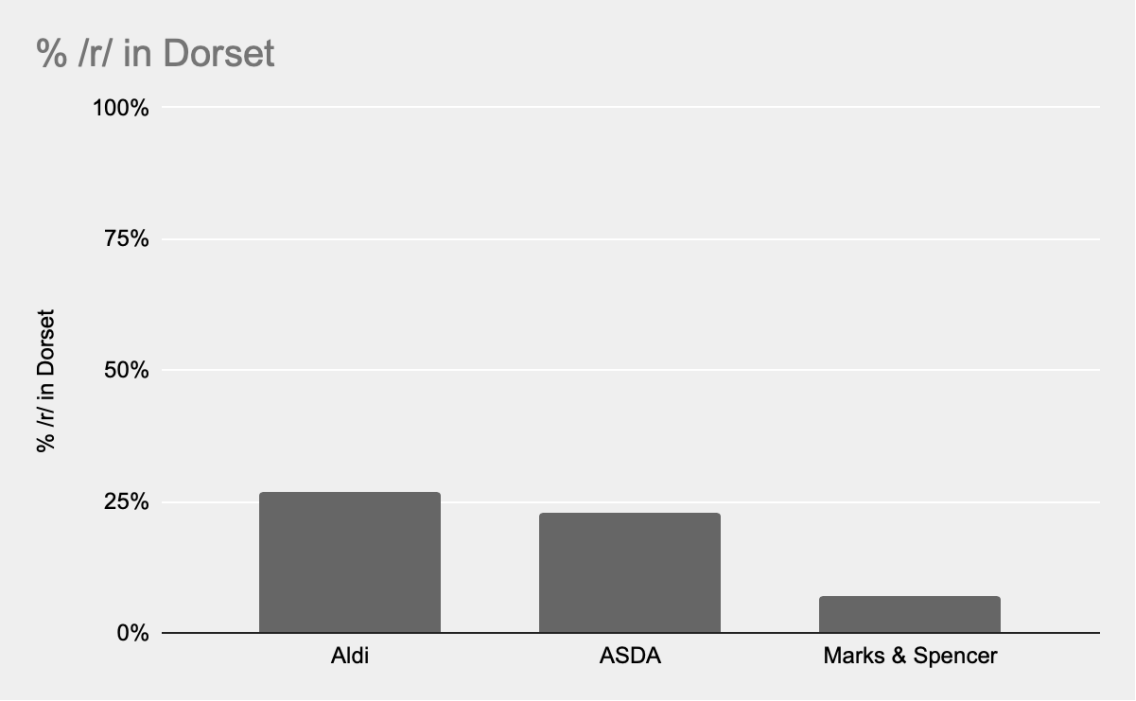

Fig. 7. Rhoticity rates found in three supermarkets in Bournemouth.

4.7.1. Results for class and age

The results for class and age are also as predicted, and the distribution pattern is regular (see Figure 1). There is very little rhoticity in young speakers of all classes, more rhoticity in the middle-aged group, and the most in the oldest generation of speakers. There is the least variability in rhoticity rates among the upper-middle class speakers (*sd* for age groups = 5.8., 6.4, 12.3) where in all three groups there is little rhoticity. Accordingly, this socioeconomic group may be the first where the shift towards non-rhoticity will be complete.

Rhoticity rates grow exponentially with respect to both age and class. The older the speaker group, the more rhoticity in the pronunciation of this group can be expected. The most regular pattern of distribution of rhoticity rates is found in the middle class. When it comes to different age groups, the least rhoticity is found in the youngest group of speakers. The intermediate rates for rhoticity are found in the middle-aged group of speakers, however, in the lower-middle and the middle-middle classes this group exhibit much more rhoticity than the speakers from the same age group in the upper-middle class. Most rhoticity is found, as expected, in the oldest group of speakers.

Table 5. Rhoticity rates for three socio-economic classes.

Age group	**Lower-middle**	**Middle-middle**	**Upper-middle**
55+	**47.6 %** (20/42)	**34.1%** (15 / 44)	**26.4%** (14/53)
35–50	**25.7 %** (9/35)	**25.0%** (7/28)	**8.3%** (2/24)
18–30	**15.4 %** (2/13)	**11.1%** (2/18)	**7.7%** (1/13)
	29.6% **= LMC average**	**23.4%** **= MMC average**	**14.1%** **= UMC average**

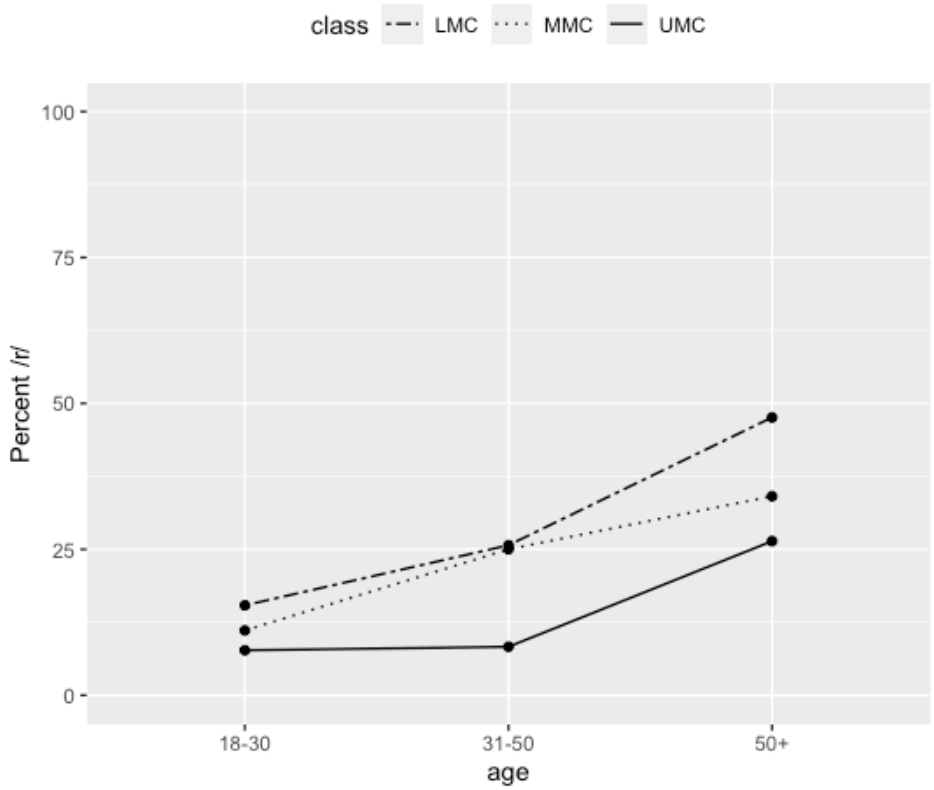

Fig. 8. Rhoticity rates across class and age calculated together for all three regions.
(LMC = lower-middle class; MMC = middle-middle class; UMC = upper-middle class)

4.7.2. Results for gender

There are no significant differences between the two gender groups (M = 32%, F = 22%). A chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between gender and rhoticity, X^2 (2, N = 270) = 3.6, p = .05842. The hypothetical difference between men (N = 128) and women (N = 142) in terms of the pronunciation of the word-final /r/ could have meant that the innovative feature (non-rhoticity) is led by one gender group. However, it seems that, based on this data, there is no considerable difference between how men and women pronounce the word-final /r/. It is also possible that the shift towards non-rhotic variants could have been led by one gender group in the past, when the innovation was being adopted at an earlier stage, and now the differences are levelled out across the two groups. In the light of this data, however, this only is a hypothetical scenario.

4.8. Discussion

What undeniably follows from analysing the results is that all hypotheses stated before have been confirmed. The regularity of the changes in progress is remarkable. It seems that with the high enough number of observations there are fewer irregularities observable in the language behaviour of groups of speakers. The results show that the shift towards non-rhoticity in southwestern English regions is present, yet in fact may be progressing slower than expected. Although the youngest group of speakers does not display word-final /r/s, rhoticity seems a stable minority feature among middle-aged and older speakers. It means that rhoticity still is a feature of the dialects spoken in South-West England. This, in turn, is translatable to real-life situations. Namely, in everyday social interactions, like visiting a supermarket, rhoticity will be heard. In some situations, it will be a very common feature of people's speech. For example, in some places in Truro it will be heard in every second speaker, while in other places it might be heard in every third speaker. When walking around the most affluent neighbourhoods in Bournemouth rhotic pronunciations might also be heard, but they will be heard in every tenth speaker, or even less often.

Rhoticity presence varies between the researched regions. The closer to the South-East and London, the epicentre of non-rhoticity and the place from which it originated as an innovative pronunciation feature, the less rhotic the dialects are. The proximity with the culturally most influential place in the country is clearly of great importance. From the very practical point of view, it is much easier for someone living in Bournemouth to travel to London than for someone living in Truro. The short-distance migration and travel is then more accessible. This has direct implications for dialect contact. If non-rhoticity is interpreted as a majority and prestigious accent feature of English English, it becomes apparent that most young middle-class speakers will want to adopt this pronunciation feature to their language behaviour repertoire at some point. This also inevitably means that the innovation will be transported to the South-West to most language behaviour situations. So far, there are contexts in which rhoticity will very likely be heard (for example, a supermarket in Cornwall around 4 pm), but also situations in which it most probably will not be heard (for example, a discussion group at a university in Devon, even if all the students would originally be native to the South-West).

Cornwall may exhibit higher rhoticity rates for other reasons, too. First, out of the three counties the society structure there seems most different from London and the neighbouring region. Cornwall to a large extent still is a rural place, with low population density and perhaps very tight social networks. When visiting St. Mawes, Tintagel or other Cornish towns, it is noticeable how closely-knit the local communities are. People know each other well, they exchange longer conversations on the streets, they spend time together. For example, a shop assistant in St. Mawes knew most of his local customers, they talked about their next meetings etc. The situation is very similar in small parts of Dorset and Devon. Many locals living in Dewlish, Melcombe Bingham and the adjacent villages knew each other well. Despite their age differences, they spent their birthdays together and even went on holidays together. The main difference, however, between Cornwall and Devon and Dorset is that there are no large towns in Cornwall. The largest ones have only about twenty thousand inhabitants. Larger urban centres in the South-West like Plymouth, Exeter and Bournemouth may have more cultural and linguistic impact on the region than I initially suspected. Moreover, people living in Cornwall seem to have a very strong sense of regional identity. Some of them will not be willing to shift to pronunciations they hear in London. They are proud of their accents and rhoticity is one of the most easily recognizable features, also to the lay language users. Finally, the relative economic poverty of the region may play a role, too, because it is directly translatable to fewer travel opportunities, which in turn disqualifies dialect contact.

One main aspect that differed in this study from the rhoticity surveys in New York was the time needed to obtain the right number of responses. Labov (1966 [2006]: 40) said that he managed to elicit all the responses needed in two days whereas I needed a few weeks to complete the surveys. Labov spent two whole two days on his interviews but I had a very short time window each day. It turned out that the best time usually was between 3:45pm and 4:00pm because it usually triggered the response “fifteen to four”, “twelve to four” etc. The times past 4pm often triggered responses similar to “four eighteen” and all r-linking contexts were excluded from the results. Another complication was that many people in fact showed me the time on their phones without actually reading the time to me. I also tried to be especially sensitive and when I suspected that my question would be offensive or oppressive to very shy or busy people, I avoided such contacts. As mentioned above, I also rejected responses by those speakers whom I thought could

have been not local to the communities, i.e. they exhibited features of different regional accents, or sounded non-natively when they were speaking in English.

The time of the interviews posed some problems, too. Admittedly, 4pm is too early for many people. Most regular workers finish their job at five or later. This, however, surprisingly could have encouraged other groups of supermarket customers to do their shopping at that time if they wanted to avoid the rush hour crowds. These groups potentially were students, retired people, people doing other jobs than full-time office jobs, or houseparents. Thus, none of the age groups seemed underrepresented in the sample. Moreover, in all Marks & Spencer supermarkets, in the Tesco in Truro and the ASDA in Bournemouth, I deliberately avoided visits on weekends as Truro, Exeter and Bournemouth attract a lot of tourists, especially in spring when I was performing my interviews.

The decision about choosing the said supermarkets in each city was not an easy task. The Lidl and Aldi supermarkets in South-West England were often located in residential areas, often of relatively lower prestige than richer neighbourhoods. It attracted the locals living in the vicinity, as well as people looking for a bargain. The Lidl in Exeter was the first of the lower-end supermarkets I visited. Although Exeter is a relatively well-off city, it was located at Wonford, a slightly poorer neighbourhood. The decision about choosing the Aldi supermarket in Boscombe, Bournemouth, was a more obvious decision. It was described by many informants as an inhospitable and lower-income neighbourhood. Finally, an Aldi in Truro also seemed of much less prestige than other of the two supermarkets visited in the city. Especially, it seemed that each shop reflects the dynamics of the city. Wonford and the Lidl supermarket there seemed the right choice considering the relatively more middle-class character of Exeter, while in bigger Bournemouth there was more class variability, more migrants, and the neighbourhoods were more stratified.

The middle-range supermarkets, which were Morrisons in Exeter, ASDA in Bournemouth and Tesco in Truro, differed from Aldi and Lidl in many respects. First of all, they were much bigger. These were large food stores, with their own large adjacent parking lots. They attracted more diversified groups of customers like students, retired people, or parents with children. The prices of the food items I selected for comparison were similar, but the range of products was very broad. These stores usually offered many products of one sort like types of pasta, bread, milk products etc. The cheapest breads or pasta types were very affordable, but many more expensive brands were easy to find, too.

The supermarkets treated as representing the upper-middle class were Marks & Spencers. Arguably, the more natural choice for the most upscale supermarket in the British context would have been Waitrose. However, the Waitrose on the outskirts of Truro, located by the A390 road, was not recommended to me by my informants. They said that it attracted a too diverse crowd for my purposes, and that the better choice was a Marks & Spencer located in the centre of Truro. Moreover, the only Waitrose in Bournemouth also did not seem to represent a higher-end supermarket. This is why I decided to interview people at Marks & Spencer in all three cities surveyed. All three stores seemed similar in terms of clientele, products offered and the aesthetics. Two of them were located in the city centre (Truro, Exeter), and one was located in an affluent neighbourhood (Westbourne in Bournemouth). In the case of the stores in Truro and Exeter it also meant that people were buying their groceries there by choice. It often was not the nearest supermarket they could go to.

Treating different shops or supermarkets as a proxy of peoples' social, cultural or financial status is also problematic in its own right, and perhaps much more today in South-West England than in 1960s' New York. In fact, many stereotypes about buying cheaper products, especially food items, do no longer hold. People with larger budgets are not ashamed of buying cheaper products, which can be of comparable quality to the more expensive ones. For instance, as one rather affluent interviewee from Exeter has told in their interview, they sometimes do their shopping in Waitrose, but always sometimes in the same Lidl shop where I did my rapid surveys. Furthermore, it also seems that shop brands do not always reflect one's social or financial status due to people's physical mobility and class mobility in the United Kingdom and around the world.

4.9. Limitations

This study places itself as intermediate in terms of naturality or spontaneity of its subjects' language behaviour. It is not entirely the observation of people's natural language behaviour because their responses were elicited by me, an outside observer. It is, however, much less structured than any sociolinguistic interview can be. Apart from a lot of attention and appreciation for Labov's (1966) department store study, it has also received criticism, mainly for its obvious lack of control over subjects. Similar concerns apply here.

Namely, it seems very difficult to observe the use of language in highly mobile societies living today in England (probably not much more or much less mobile than people living in New York in the 1960s). For such a study, there is no possibility of verifying people's exact age, place of birth, or their exact socio-economic status. As a result, these factors are taken for granted, while the elimination process is purely subjective. However, the replications for Labov's study (Fowler 1986, Mather 2009) obtained astonishingly similar results, showing that his method was reliable and replicable. The same applies to the supermarket surveys described here, i.e., it shows that similar methods in sociolinguistics can still be used today. This, finally, suggests two things; first, that the social forces behind variability of rhoticity still operate today and are translatable to the current development of English, but also that the traditional sociolinguistic research design can be as useful, as long as the researcher is faithful to the original method.

Chapter 5: The sociolinguistic interviews

5.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the results of the sociolinguistic interviews performed among 46 speakers, all native to the South-West and representing two different socioeconomic classes, different age groups, and both sexes. The results clearly show variation according to age, class and gender, as well as speech style and the vowel context. The chapter will open with brief background information on the sociolinguistic methods used in the field. It will also report on the findings of other studies on rhoticity which are important for the study design. The subsequent sections will describe the methodology used in the study, and then the results will be presented. The chapter closes with a brief discussion of the findings, which will also be continued in the following chapter.

5.2. Background

The sociolinguistic interview is one medium for eliciting linguistic data in the field. It has been used in dialectology at least since the 1960s, e.g. in the famous *Survey of the English Dialects* (Orton and Dieth 1962). The *SED* data spans a considerable number of speakers and indexes a large number of dialectal features. The data, however, overrelies on the speech samples coming from the older rural male speakers (i.e. NORMs). This approach to linguistic fieldwork has changed substantially. Nowadays, the researchers try to account for as many social variables as it is possible, e.g. their age, education or profession. It has been found that along these changing contexts, the language behaviour also changes. One of the first studies using advanced notation of such variables was Labov (1966). This has given rise to studies where multimodal cultural and social profiles of speakers are included into statistical calculations, e.g. in studies on multiethnic London Englishes (Cheshire et al. 2011). Thus, the general method for interviewing speakers has come a long way from the first fieldworkers who were trying to record mostly the NORM speakers, to a method which is much more inclusive and accounts for many more social characteristics of a speaker.

As a result, fieldwork methods are used fairly often in sociolinguistics, e.g. in researching pronunciation features like vowels (Baranowski 2017), but it also has a long and rich tradition in documenting minority or endangered languages (see Bowern 2008, Hornsby 2015). The recent fieldwork which has produced important data for studies on rhoticity are e.g. Blaxter et al. (2019) which reports the latest characteristics of the adaptation of rhoticity in Bristol, Werner (2019) which examines rhoticity in Devon, Piercy (2012) which reports loss of rhoticity in Dorset. Other studies on rhoticity loss in South-West England include Dudman (2000) reporting on Cornwall, Sullivan (1992) reporting on Exeter, Hollitzer (2013) reporting on Berkshire, Wiltshire and Somerset.

Thanks to larger-scale studies (e.g. Leemann et al. 2018), we can estimate with a dose of probability the rhoticity rates for each region. However, we have much smaller insight into the variability of rhoticity across and within smaller speech communities. This problem is central to our understanding of the exact nature of the shift to non-rhoticity in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. The mere averaged numbers of the rhoticity levels for these regions oscillate between 12% and 40% in Leemann et al. However, it is expected that the majority of the speakers are in fact either non-rhotic or highly rhotic. Because of the sample size, the 46 speakers featured in this part of the study will be treated as one speech community representing the English South-West. Blaxter et al. (2019) emphasize that in the groups of speakers where rhoticity variation is measured, there usually exists a high variability within this group, and that the exact social characteristics of different speakers are also difficult to capture. The analyses below will aim at explaining these characteristics, as well as at comparing the results coming from this sample to other studies on rhoticity.

Apart from the social constraints, also described in length in Chapter 3, many recent studies on rhoticity have managed to index the detailed language-internal factors which are conducive to the loss or retention of rhoticity. Some of the phonetic-linguistic factors are reported across different studies with remarkable consistency. Some of these findings are:

- the role of the vowel preceding the /r/ token. The vowel especially conducive to the retention of rhoticity (or r-colouring) is the vowel NURSE (Gibson 2005, Asprey 2007, Piercy 2012, Blaxter et al. 2019). This means that mostly non-rhotic speakers may retain the r-coloured pronunciations in the vicinity of these vowels, e.g. speakers in

New Zealand (Gibson 2005), Lancashire (Barras 2010), Black Country (Asprey 2007), Dorset (Piercy 2012), Bristol (Blaxter et al. 2019). Other vowels conducive to r-colouring are e.g. NEAR (Piercy 2012, Nagy and Irwin 2010) and CURE (Piercy 2012, Dudman 2000). The vowel contexts less conducive to rhoticity or disfavouring rhoticity are LETTER / COMMA (Sullivan 1992, Barras 2010) or NORTH / FORCE (Sullivan 1992, Piercy 2012). For some vowels, the reported effects are mixed;

- the word-final vs. preconsontal position of /r/. The effect of the word-final position on the retention of rhoticity has been found e.g. in Devon (Sullivan 1992), Dorset (Piercy 2012) and Lancashire (Vivian 2000);
- the role of word frequency. With higher-frequency words, there is a higher chance for the pronunciation to be rhotic, e.g. in New Zealand (Sudbury and Hay 2002) and Dorset (Piercy 2012);
- the fact of /r/ being in a stress vs. non-stress position. The stressed-vowel position usually favours rhoticity, e.g. in Lancashire (Vivian 2000, Barras 2010) and Dorset (2012);
- the role of the word class. In some studies (e.g. Irwin and Nagy 2007) function words had a disfavouring effect on rhoticity.[3]

5.3. Recruitment methods

I started recruiting the subjects for my interviews through various channels. The first one was the university network. Together with my mentor, we have used the internal university communication channels like emails and weekly newsletters to invite to my interviews the students and staff members born and bred in Cornwall, Devon or Dorset. I have also printed and hanged the posters inviting to take part in my study. I have managed to recruit several informants through this method. These were a few undergraduate students, and a few PhD students, as well as a few non-teaching staff members. I have kept in mind that through such a method of recruitment I would mostly gather data from speakers belonging to the middle or the upper-middle class, and that little or no rhoticity may be found in their speech. Additionally, I have managed to recruit two female participants who clearly were outside of the context of either working or

[3] For a more comprehensive report on the linguistic effects on rhoticity, see Blaxter et al. (2019).

studying at university, and hence did not represent the upper middle class. One of them was a member of the university campus cleaning services team (Caroline), and the other (Marion) was a co-owner of the electronics repair shop which was located on the main campus.

The second method relied on contacting people who were related to or acquainted with my interviewees coming from the first group.[4] For example, my first informant later invited her boyfriend who was doing a PhD in physics at the university. More importantly, however, most of the informants belonging to this group did come from outside of the university context. This was, for instance, the female informant F23 (Jane) who was a good friend of the male informant M03 (Seth). Naomi contacted me with her mother who was living in a small village in rural Dorset and had many connections in the neighbouring villages and towns. She offered help and managed to appoint a few interviews for me. Visiting Melcombe Bingham, Dewlish and the surrounding rural area, I managed to record Lauren, Astrid, Meredith, Adam and Nick. Also, my academic mentor helped me to recruit a few more people from the area. In Martinstown, Dorset, I managed to meet and record informants Paula, Syd and Josh.

Another method, perhaps the most traditional one, was the conservative door-to-door type of recruitment. I was walking around Exeter, Bournemouth and Truro and I was visiting shops, workshops, smaller businesses, charity shops etc. In Exeter, I managed to recruit several informants this way, e.g. a watchmaker (Michael), a cobbler (Bob), charity shops workers (Heather, Stacy, Lucy), a repair service owner (Tess). It seems then that this technique was the best for recruiting people from various socio-cultural backgrounds.

The fourth channel for communicating with potential informants was through the social networking site called Couchsurfing. Couchsurfing has functioned for many years as a platform for travellers who look for places where they could stay overnight while being abroad. This is also how I recruited informants for my previous fieldwork in Birmingham (Malarski 2012). Apart from offering to host travellers overnight, or looking for a place to stay, there is also a possibility for people to meet for a drink. This is another popular functionality of the service. Very often, people residing in a given city can offer helpful tips, show the city to the visitors etc. The general reputation of the platform is

[4] Very often, people contacted me even though they did not qualify for the requirements of my study (e.g. they were not born or bred in the South-West). They offered help in the form of providing contact details of their family or friends who would qualify.

very good, possibly because of the thorough process of the verification of new users. It also has got a very strong community. In many cities around the world, including in Exeter, there are Couchsurfing groups who regularly meet and exchange opinions. Through this technique, I have managed to recruit and interview several participants (Barth, Alexander, Mark, Landon, Maggie, and Victoria).

5.4. Contextual styles

As outlined above, one of the ways for minimizing the Observer's Paradox is to build an environment for the interview which would be as relaxed and as furthest away from a formal structured interview as possible. Such surroundings often elicit personal and emotional monologues. Labov ([1966] 2006: 58–80) in length describes how emotional responses favour the production of vernacular language features during sociolinguistic interviews. In the case of variably non-rhotic accents spoken in New York, these resulted in many more non-rhotic pronunciations in his subjects. In the case of speakers from South-West England, who are variably rhotic, this conversational style should effect in more rhotic pronunciation in their speech.

Such personal narratives are often elicited by very personal or even intimate questions, for example when interviewees are asked whether they ever had been close to death or victims of any accidents; sometimes these topics are the only ones in the interview which indeed trigger casual or spontaneous speech, especially when an interviewee is reserved, shy or not talkative when responding to questions about hobbies, family etc. (Labov 2006: 70–71). Other conversational contexts which lead to emotional and personal narratives occur when subjects are asked about their childhood, ghost stories etc. (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 66).

Interestingly, since Labov (1966) the practice of eliciting different contextual styles has not been practised a lot. Blaxter et al. (2019), while reporting on the findings of a large portion of previous studies on rhoticity, have found that the style variable has been included in just a few of them, e.g. in Labov (1966) and Dudman (2000). Interestingly, Dudman has found that casual speech favours rhoticity. In order to find out whether the speech style has effect on the use of rhoticity, I have divided each of my

interviews into five parts (conversation, dialogue, passage reading, wordlist, minimal pairs task). The last four ones have been added to the logistic regression analysis model.

5.5. Participants

This chapter relies on the data coming from 46 speakers born and bred in South-West England. In total, 48 speakers were recorded. However, one male participant displayed a slight speech impediment which directly affected the pronunciation of his prevocalic and non-prevocalic /r/ sounds, while the other moved to Bournemouth only at the age of 7. Before, he had lived in Luton. I have decided that the first few years into one's life are too crucial for the development of his or her speech behaviours.

The participants came from all social backgrounds. These were university students, as well as shop assistants, business owners and physical workers. The participants had to be 18 in order to be interviewed. The youngest speaker was 21, while the oldest speaker was 72 (M ag= 34.6 years). The analysed data come from 23 female and 23 male speakers. This time, I divided them into only two class categories which are working and middle. They were offered no remuneration for their participation.

In the post-interview questionnaires I asked interviewees to fill in, the questions were very detailed. I hoped they would provide me with as close demographic data as possible. However, it was often difficult to decide which county a given speaker represented. There is huge migration between the counties. Sometimes, a person lives in one county and works in another. Sometimes, they live in the countryside and work or study in a city. Finally, the categories which were taken into the statistical equation were gender, age, county of origin and class. All of the participants are anonymous in the study but were assigned random names (see pages 13-14). They were assigned numbers M1-M25 (for the male speakers) and F1-F23 (for the female speakers).

5.6. Equipment and data processing

The equipment standards used in sociolinguistic field research constantly change and it is not easy to choose a device setup which would provide both the relative

unobtrusiveness for the interviewees and the reliable sound recording capabilities at the same time. Even the semi-professional and professional portable digital recorders are robust and in the eyes of interviewees they will look like large and heavy machines. Apart from linguistics, anthropology and the related fields, such portable recorders are used in the film and music industry, as well as by some field journalists. This makes them rather niche pieces of equipment, sometimes even not that widely available. The best ones are also expensive but their relatively high price will still not assure the best quality of the built-in microphones and, therefore, sociolinguists very often rely on external microphones to work with the audio recorders (Bowern 2008, Podesva and Zsiga 2013, Stanley 2018).

The choices of the recorders which can be used in sociolinguistic research varies a lot. Although different linguists (depending on their expertise and type of research) recommend different devices, none of them is adapted for the purposes of linguistic research per se. There are high-end devices like Zoom H6n which offer multiple options for recording, even in 6 channels at the same time but their dimensions and relative obtrusiveness do not make them easily portable for the context of field recordings, especially in public places like cafes. Still, for many sociolinguists they still are the most reliable option for recording voice signal at a good quality. For example, for many years a Marantz PMD660 recorder was perhaps the most commonly chosen recorder in sociophonetic studies (see Thomas 2011, Podesva and Zsiga 2013). A few years later, slightly sleeker-looking and more modern recorders came to be available on the market. These include the Sony PCM-M10 recorder (Turton and Baranowski 2020), Zoom H5 and Zoom H1 recorders, Tascam DR-22WL and Tascam DR-05 recorders (Stanley 2018), among others. The recorder I have used in the study was the Roland R-26. Most often, it is compared to the Zoom H6 recorder; both are high-end and multi-track portable recorders.

The microphones options are perhaps even wider. As with choosing a recorder, a good microphone setup requires a lot of research and testing. For the purpose of many sociolinguistic interviews, a lavalier microphones is used (Stanley 2020, Turton and Baranowski 2020). Stanley used an entry-level lavalier microphone (JK MIC-J 044) which proved reliable for his vowel analysis of the accents in the Pacific Northwest. Baranowski (2017) and Turton and Baranowski (2020) used the AudioTechnica ATR3350 lavalier microphone when studying the Manchester vowel system. Other microphone setups may include the headset microphones like the Beyerdynamic Opus 55

which was used for recording speech for the needs of analyzing the intonational contours in Liverpool English speakers (Nance et al. 2020). For more stable interview settings table microphones can also be used, for example Manning et al. (2020) used a Shure omnidirectional microphone.

Detailed acoustic studies show that the choice of a microphone has indeed a significant impact on capturing the physical attributes of sound, e.g. peak prominence or the harmonic-to-noise ratio (van der Woerd et al. 2020). However, with rapid advancements in microphone capabilities, even smartphone microphones can be today used for recording the sound which is of the quality sufficient for acoustic analyses. This was already noticed for older iPhone models (De Decker and Nycz 2011), as well as for the latest generations (van der Woerd et al 2020). It turns out that for many contexts the lower-quality recordings captured with iPhones, when compared to expensive higher-end microphones, will not lead to the distortions in the signal that would be statistically significant or which would affect the acoustic analysis (De Decker and Nycz 2011, van der Woerd et al. 2020). This may lead to the rise in popularity of the use of smartphones in sociolinguistic studies as they undoubtedly offer much less obtrusiveness in interviews (which potentially leads to the minimization of the Observer's paradox, which then potentially leads to more spontaneous narratives and better access to the vernacular). This may be more available especially with the use of the microphones attachable to iPhones and Android phones recently developed by companies like Zoom™. Although they have not yet been tested well for the needs of linguistic studies, to the best of my knowledge, they may prove to be a reliable solution for speech recordings.

The setup I used throughout my interviews was as follows. I have used a Roland R-26 portable recorder, along with the external microphone connected via the XLR audio jack (but for two interviews in Dorset where I interviewed the informants in pairs; see the interviews for M11, M23, F3 and F14). My microphone of choice was Rode™ Lavalier microphone. The microphone has been on the market for a long time and still is treated as a high-end option for journalists. It offers the frequency range at 60Hz – 18kHz (which may n.b. be not sufficient for a very detailed acoustic analysis of some vowels; see Bowern 2008: 21, Stanley 2018). It offered sensitivity at -33.5dB. It is to be remembered that most lavalier microphones are omnidirectional microphones. Unlike bidirectional or unidirectional microphones, they capture the sound from all angles and might result in capturing relatively a lot of background voices. However, they are still recommended

even for the acoustic analysis of vowels. Bowern (2008: 21–22) says that they cut off enough of background noise for this purpose. I recorded most interviews at 48 000 Hz frequency (apart from a few interviews which were recorded at 96 000 Hz) and in the 24-bit depth resolution. This offered a very good sound quality, however, given that many locations for my interviews were crowded and noisy places I could not compromise the recording quality, in order to be later able to properly analyse the data.

Once every interview was taken, I noted down the metadata for each (the quality of the recordings, the level of the background noise, frequency of the recordings, notes on the participant, the exact location etc.). The high quality of the recordings also meant that a single interview took a lot of memory space. After the interview was over, I copied the files onto a backup external hard drive and once more to the cloud drive. The interviews are made available for research purposes to the wider public (see Appendix C).

5.7. Procedure

Most interviews were scheduled for 45–60 minutes. Before I started the recording, I tried to get acquainted with the person who agreed to be interviewed and recorded. This informal conversation lasted usually for about a few minutes.[5] Then I would inform the interviewee about formal and legal constraints of the interview. I thoroughly explained that all the interviews, questionnaires, as well as the output data will be anonymised, and that the anonymised interviews may be in the future used for research purposes, also by other researchers. Then the participants signed the consent form (see Appendix E). After this, I asked them to attach the lavalier microphone to their collar (or other convenient piece of clothing). I informed them that the procedure consisted of a spontaneous conversation and a few texts to read. The questions in the interview part were largely improvised.[6] The interview part usually lasted for about 30–45 minutes, with only a few exceptions (e.g. interviews with F17, M22). The second part of the session was the

[5] With quite a few participants, especially when they were about my age, the conversation was very spontaneous, we exchanged jokes, opinions on various topics, discussed politics, some people asked me about the Polish culture etc. I usually have not taken notes about the pronunciation of /r/ from before and after the recording session. However, in such a context the female F07 participant produced a few rhotic pronunciations (e.g. in PORK). It is then true that the real everyday casual speech is clearly not the same as the spontaneous (or semi-spontaneous) speech during a sociolinguistic interview (see also Labov 2006: 64-75).

[6] I had also a cheatsheet with me, in case I forgot what to say, got stressed out etc. See Appendix F.

reading passage (see Appendix A). Then the interviewees read the wordlist (see Appendix A) and the minimal pairs list (see Appendix A). While reading the minimal pairs, they were asked to say whether they felt the two words sounded different, the same, or similar to their ears, and then to explain what they meant to them or use them in a sentence. After this, the participants filled in the personal questionnaire (see Appendix D).

5.8. Material

From the conversation part of the interview, I analysed as many tokens of the non-prevocalic /r/ as were featured in the six minutes of each interview.[7] The first of the reading tasks was a dialogue which I performed together with my participants. The next one was the reading passage in the form of the popular fable, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* (adapted for the needs of a rhoticity study as per Sharbawi and Deterding 2010). The reading passage included 23 instances of the non-prevocalic /r/; 13 word-final and 10 preconsonantal /r/. The wordlist featured 47 potential instances of the non-prevocalic /r/; 22 word-final and 25 preconsonantal /r/. Finally, in the minimal pairs task, there were 21 potential non-prevocalic /r/ sounds featured; 10 of word-final and 11 preconsonantal instances. The whole material is included in Appendix A.

Table 6. Words containing /r/ featured in the wordlist.

Bar bar bard bard bared bared barn barn Barney Barney bear bear beard beard beer beer better better bird bird bitter bitter board board bore bore bored bored Charles Charles embroider embroider far far hammer hammer morning morning oyster oyster sharp sharp start start water water = **46 words with /r/**

[7] i.e. between minute 01:01 and minute 06:01. I did not include the analysis of the first one minute of the interview, as per standard procedure in sociolinguistics; this is due to the fact that it usually takes one or two minutes for an interviewee to accommodate to the interview situation. When the participants were interviewed in pairs (three interviews), twelve minutes of the interviews were included.

5.9. Statistical model

In order to test which factors are favouring and which are disfavouring rhoticity, a mixed-effects logistic regression model has been designed. The outcome variable was rhoticity (its presence or absence). The explanatory variables can be divided into two categories, the social (language-external) and linguistic-phonetic (language-internal). The social categories which have been computed as the explaining variables were age, gender, class, mother's profession, father's profession and county. The linguistic categories were the position of /r/ (word-final vs. preconsonantal), the presence in the stressed vs. unstressed syllable, word frequency (obtained from the British National Corpus (2007)), word class (lexical vs. function) and speech style (task). Additionally, individual speakers and words were included as random effects into the model.

5.10. Results

The table below shows rhoticity rates for all 46 speakers interviewed in this study. A few observations can be drawn instantly. First, there is a lot of variability between the speakers. There are quite a lot of male and female speakers who are non-rhotic, many of them are young. There is also a group of speakers who are highly rhotic. Notably, none of the speakers in the study was fully rhotic in the spontaneous speech part of the interview. There were, however, several speakers who were fully rhotic in one or more reading or discrimination tasks. Clearly, the fourth of all the speakers are non-rhotic. Another large group are those who are between 1% and 10% rhotic. This alone shows that rhoticity is a receding feature in the South-West. On the whole, out of 4554 observations (99 per speaker), 1293 observations were rhotic. This equals to 28.4% of rhoticity in my sample.

Table 7. Rhoticity rates for all speakers.

Speaker	**age**	**gender**	**avg_total**	**casual%**	**dialogue%**	**passage%**	**wordlist%**	**pairs%**
M01	64	M	**94%**	84	100	96	94	95
M02	22	M	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
M03	38	M	**4%**	0	0	0	12.8	4.8
M04	58	M	**17%**	84	0	0	0	0

M05	27	M	**2%**	8	0	0	0	0
M06	23	M	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
M07	54	M	**16%**	19	0	22	9	29
M08	25	M	**5%**	0	0	4	0	19
M09	39	M	**1%**	0	0	0	2	5
M10	35	M	**1%**	0	0	0	0	5
M11	3	M	**3%**	0	0	0	4	10
M12	68	M	**98%**	88	100	100	100	100
M13	68–78	M	**89%**	78	67	96	100	100
M14	32–41	M	**3%**	0	0	4	4	5
M15	72	M	**85%**	80	56	96	98	95
M16	23	M	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
M18	68	M	**6%**	0	11	17	4	0
M19	67	M	**97%**	91	100	100	96	100
M20	20	M	**41%**	48	11	26	51	67
M22	53	M	**47%**	72	0	4	64	95
M23	26	M	**0%**	0	0	0	2	0
M24	44	M	**82%**	65	78	78	100	90
M25	19	M	**1%**	0	0	0	4	0
F01	44	F	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
F02	21	F	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
F03	33	F	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
F04	23	F	**1%**	0	0	0	0	5
F05	27	F	**7%**	0	0	0	0	33
F06	22	F	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
F07	22	F	**7%**	0	0	0	13	24
F08	23	F	**3%**	0	0	0	2	14
F09	76	F	**3%**	0	0	4	2	10
F10	47	F	**19%**	0	0	22	19	52
F11	66	F	**82%**	77	67	65	100	100
F12	26	F	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0
F13	72	F	**14%**	11	0	0	0	57
F14	70	F	**95%**	91	89	96	98	100
F15	27	F	**1%**	0	0	4	0	0
F16	35	F	**2%**	0	11	0	0	0

F17	51	F	**18%**	18	22	17	11	24
F18	61	F	**42%**	48	22	43	40	57
F19	52	F	**0%**	0	0	0	2	0
F20	63	F	**45%**	8	22	39	66	90
F21	75	F	**86%**	61	89	87	98	95
F22	40	F	**8%**	5	0	9	13	14
F23	41	F	**0%**	0	0	0	0	0

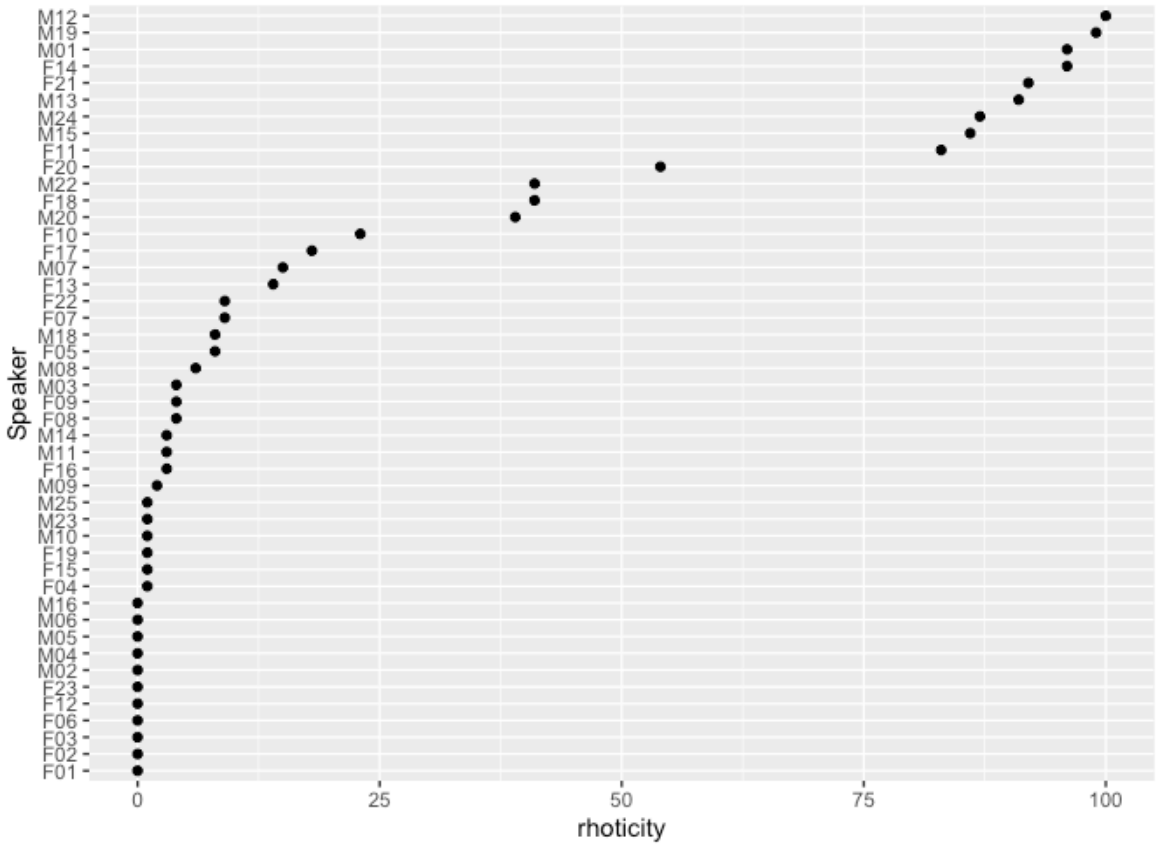

Fig. 9. Rhoticity rates for all speakers, ordered by average rhoticity rates.

The variability within the group can be understood as a change in progress. Figure 10 shows how strongly rhoticity rates are correlated with the age of the informants ($r2$ = .65, rs = .63, $p < .05$). Clearly, there is a lot more rhoticity in older speakers than there is in younger speakers. Moreover, there is much less inter-speaker variation in informants below forty years of age. There is marginal rhoticity found in some of them but mostly displayed in the reading tasks. People above fifty years of age, however, tend to display

higher rhoticity rates. Interestingly, the data coming from Dorset (Piercy 2012), which was discussed in this work extensively showed rhoticity loss in informants who were below fifty years of age. Finally, highly rhotic speakers tend to be sixty years of age and older. There are eight speakers in this age group who displayed rhoticity rates at 75% and more.

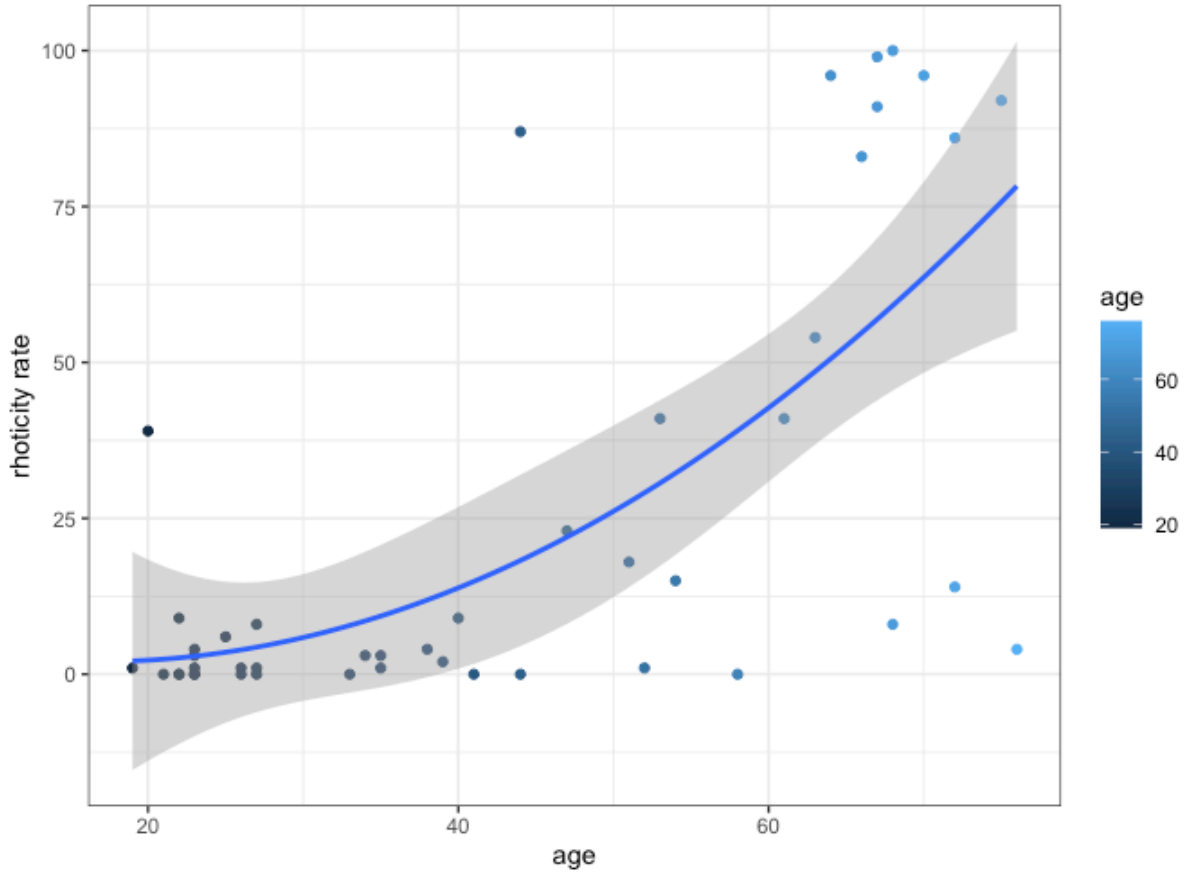

Fig. 10. Rhoticity rates plotted against age of speakers.

The table below (Table 9) presents what other factors are favouring and disfavouring rhoticity based on the sample of the recorded 46 speakers and 4554 total observations. The logistic regression model shows that the predictors favouring rhoticity are higher age, the word-final position of /r/ (against the preconsonantal position) and the context of the NURSE vowel. The factors favouring non-rhoticity are higher word frequency and the unstressed syllable position.

Table 8. Results of the mixed-effects logistic regression model showing the factors favouring and disfavouring rhoticity. The significance codes are: *** (for *p* below 0.001), ** (below 0.01), * (below 0.05), . (below 0.1)

Variable	Estimate	Standard error	z value	p value
(Intercept)	-8.44666	1.81953	-4.642	3.45e-06 ***
positionword-final	0.73597	0.16762	4.391	1.13e-05 ***
contextCURE	-0.95506	0.74739	-1.278	0.20130
contextNEAR	0.48241	0.37795	1.276	0.20181
contextNORTH/FORCE	0.49568	0.32342	1.533	0.12536
contextNURSE	2.46595	0.36050	6.840	7.90e-12 ***
contextSQUARE	0.10631	0.35059	0.303	0.76172
contextSTART	0.26056	0.31197	0.835	0.40360
word.classlexical	0.48343	0.24873	1.944	0.05195 .
log(frequency + 1)	-0.16865	0.03214	-5.247	1.55e-07 ***
stressunstressed	-0.87795	0.28726	-3.056	0.00224 **
taskpairs	2.76803	0.44836	6.174	6.67e-10 ***
taskpassage	1.24018	0.41460	2.991	0.00278 **
taskwordlist	1.90624	0.44012	4.331	1.48e-05 ***
genderM	1.49791	0.85678	1.748	0.08041 .
age	0.12769	0.03071	4.158	3.20e-05 ***
classworking	2.93749	1.54758	1.898	0.05768 .
prof_motherworking	-1.49954	1.59076	-0.943	0.34586
prof_fatherworking	0.52707	0.89187	0.591	0.55453
countyDevon	-0.75419	1.30501	-0.578	0.56332
countyDorset	-0.07740	1.32433	-0.058	0.95340

Figure 11 presents the estimates for the presence of rhoticity, plotted as based on the computed regression model. The estimates leaning left relative to 0 show the predictor variables which tend to disfavour rhoticity; the ones leaning right are those predictor variables which tend to favour rhoticity.

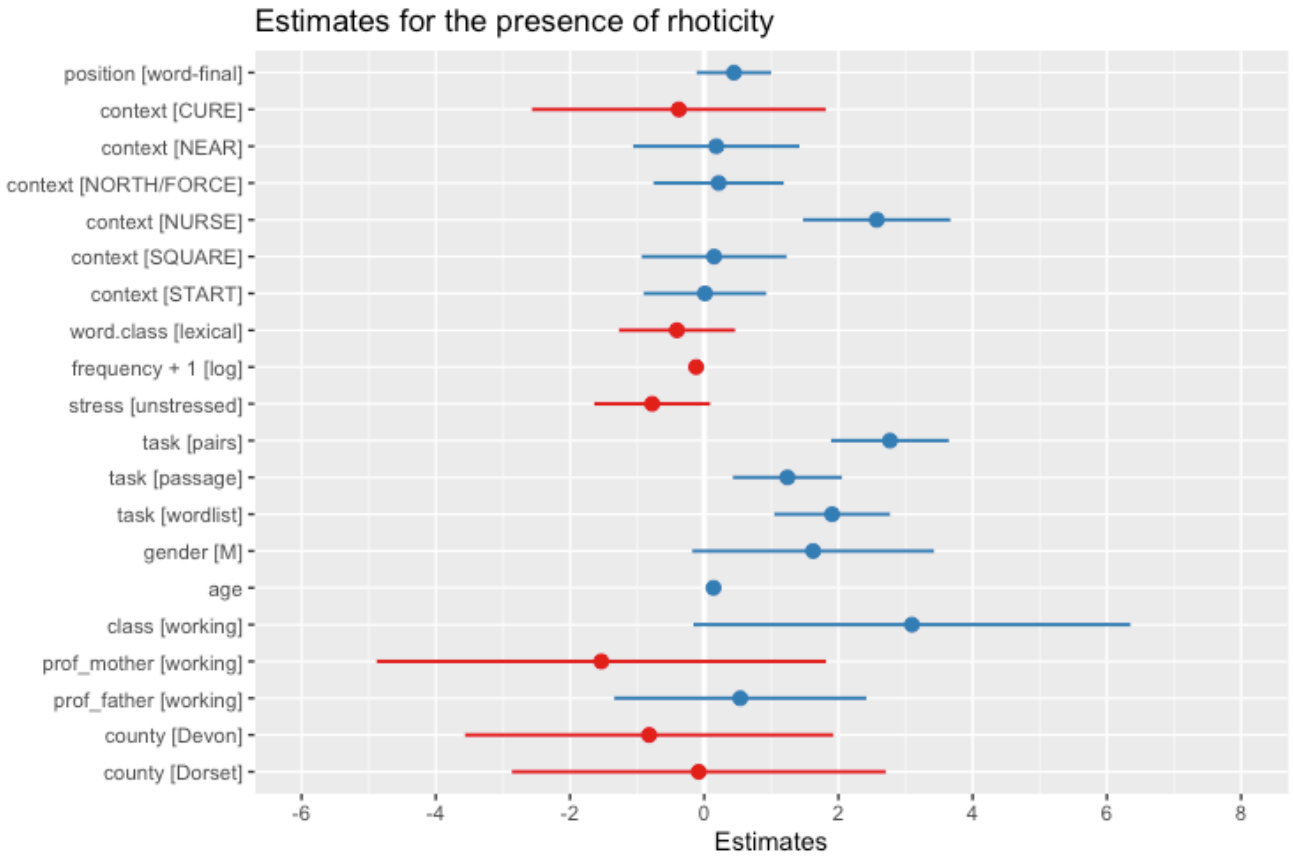

Fig. 11. Estimates for factors favouring and disfavouring rhoticity.

5.11. Gender and class

These two variables were returned as not significant, although as Figure 10 shows the averaged estimates for the working class and male gender are relatively high above 0. This is due to variability which one can notice by looking on the plotted values. The wide horizontal line for the working class estimates shows that, depending on the speaker and other co-existing variables, the working class may strongly favour rhoticity but that there were also speakers for whom this effect was non-existent. A similar effect, but smaller, one can notice for the male gender. The male speakers in this sample indeed tend to feature more rhotic pronunciations than women but when the variable co-interacts with other predictors the correlation is rather weak. For marginal effects like the ones we find here for gender and class, especially in complicated regression models, plotting marginal effects, or predictions, may help visualize and understand the differences. In Figure 12, it

can be seen that the working class factor promotes the presence of rhoticity when compared to the middle class factor. In Figure 13, it can be seen males tend to feature marginally more rhoticity than women.

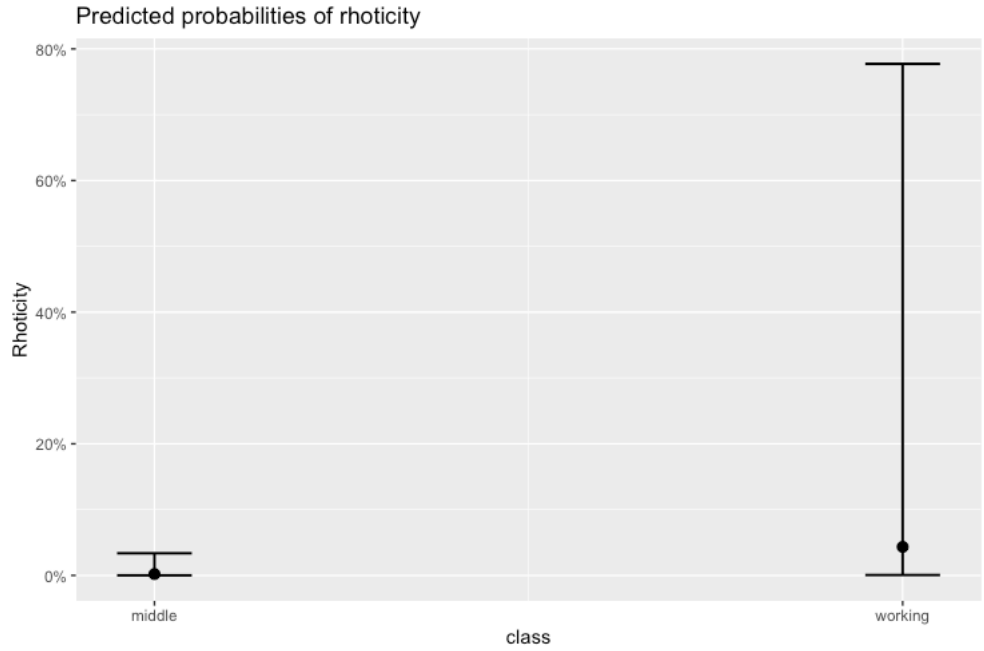

Fig. 12. Predicted probabilities for the presence of rhoticity (working class vs. middle class).

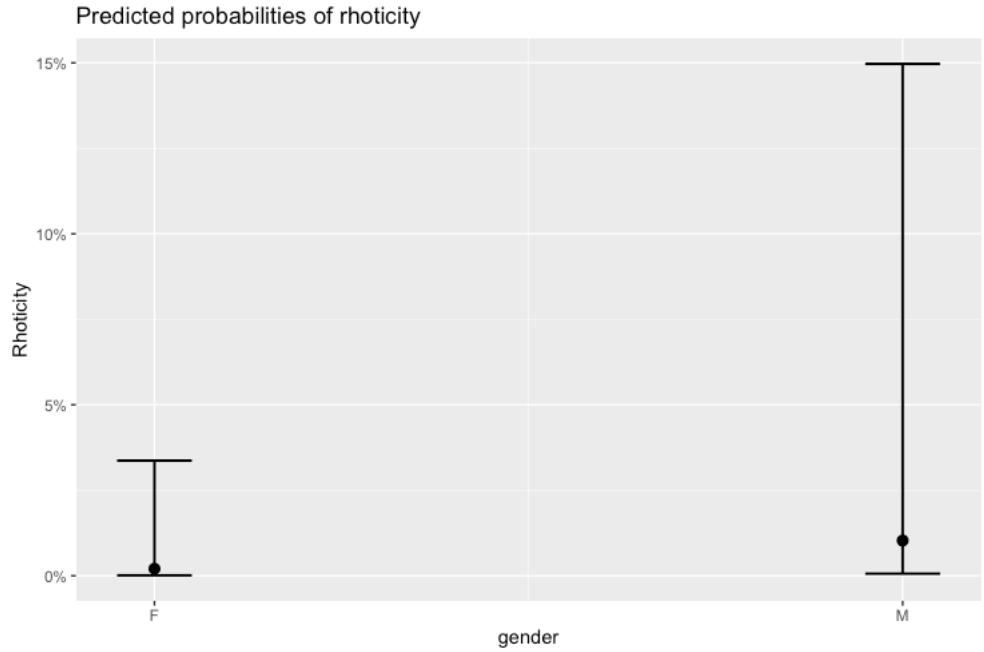

Fig. 13. Predicted probabilities for the presence of rhoticity (gender differences).

5.12. Differences between the regions

The differences between the discussed regions should be treated as negligible at this point. Although the differences were suggested in the previous chapter, with Cornwall speakers displaying more rhoticity, no real difference was found in this part of the study. Plotting the marginal effects also does not really help understand the exact differences between the researched regions (see below). The problem lies in the sample size in which the number of speakers coming from each county is not well-balanced and not high enough.

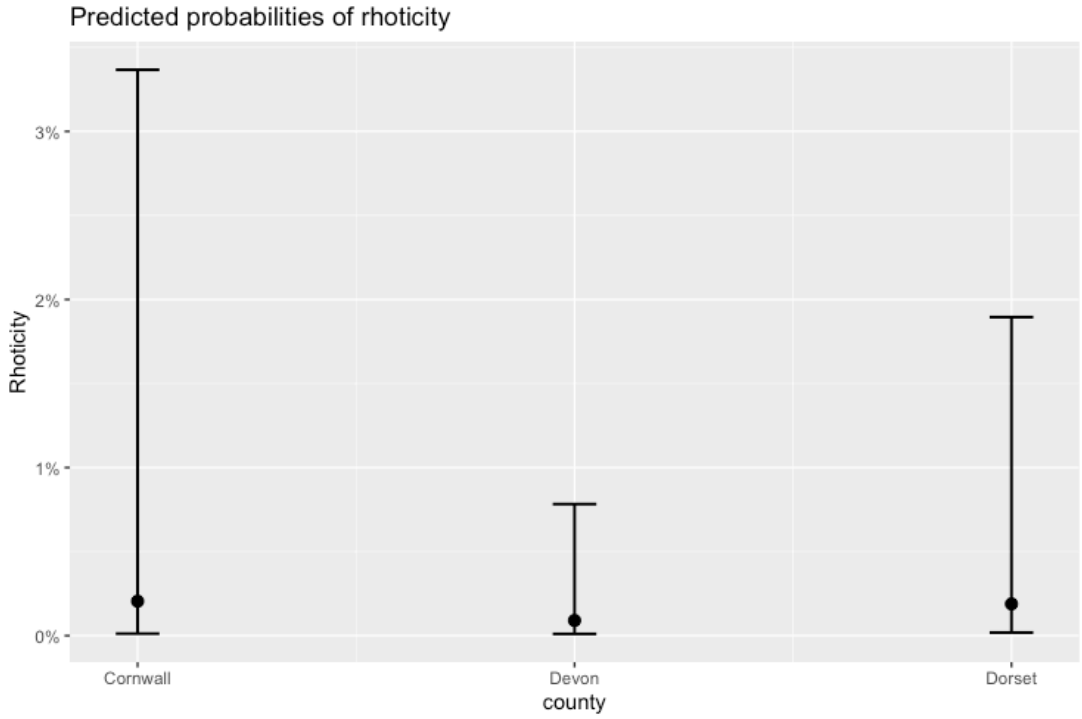

Fig. 14. Predicted probabilities for the presence of rhoticity (Cornwall vs. Devon vs. Dorset).

5.13. Vowel context

As already seen in Figure 11, the context of the vowel NURSE is a strong predictor for the presence of rhoticity. Other vowels have a weak effect.

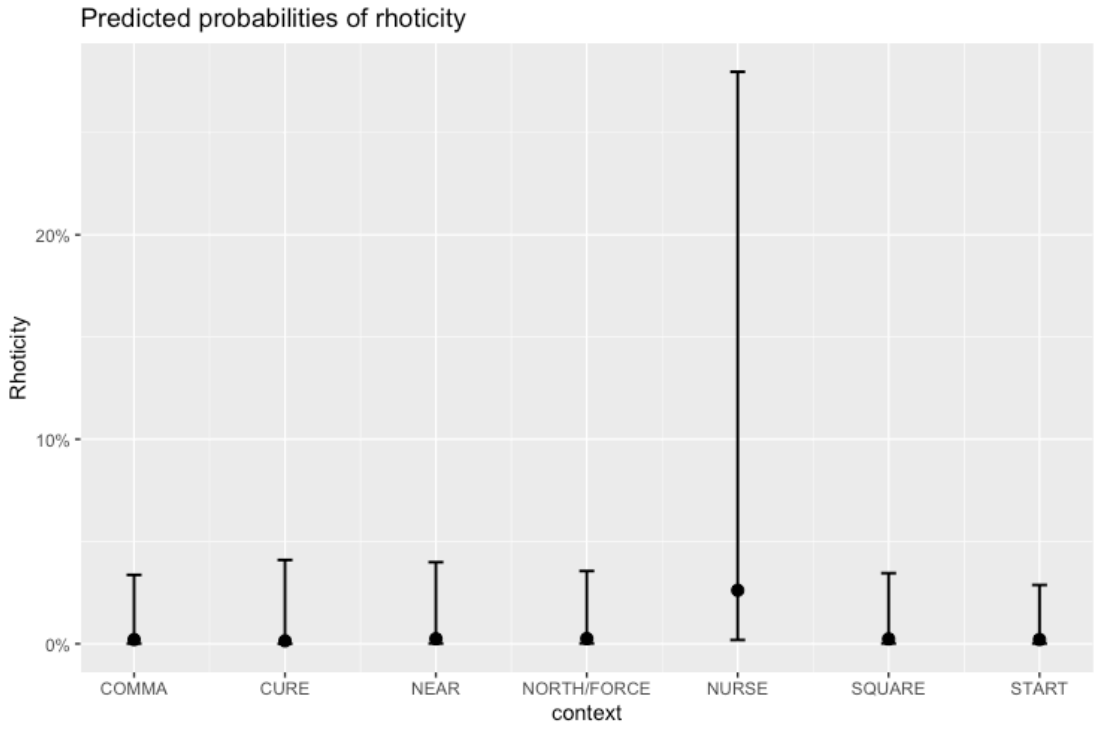

Fig. 15. Predicted probabilities for the presence of rhoticity (different vowel contexts).

5.14. Contextual styles

The statistical model confirms what impressionistically I observed already at an early stage of performing the interviews. Speakers who were fully non-rhotic in the conversation part, from time to time started pronouncing the non-prevocalic /r/. I was not sure how strong this effect might be, but it seemed that with every other reading task, there were more rhotic pronunciations. This pattern repeated for many speakers. The results confirm that rhoticity rates rise with formality in speech. Each interviewee had four reading tasks, always performed in the same order: dialogue, passage, wordlist and minimal pairs. Figure 16 below presents how probabilities for rhotic pronunciation rise with all other variables kept constant. This means that the most formal speech style which is reading the minimal pairs is the strongest predictor ($p < 0.001$) for the presence of rhoticity. The next

is reading the wordlist ($p < 0.001$), and then reading the fable (passage) ($p = 0.03$). These values are relative to the dialogue task for which the estimate is 0, meaning this contextual speech style neither favours nor disfavours rhoticity.

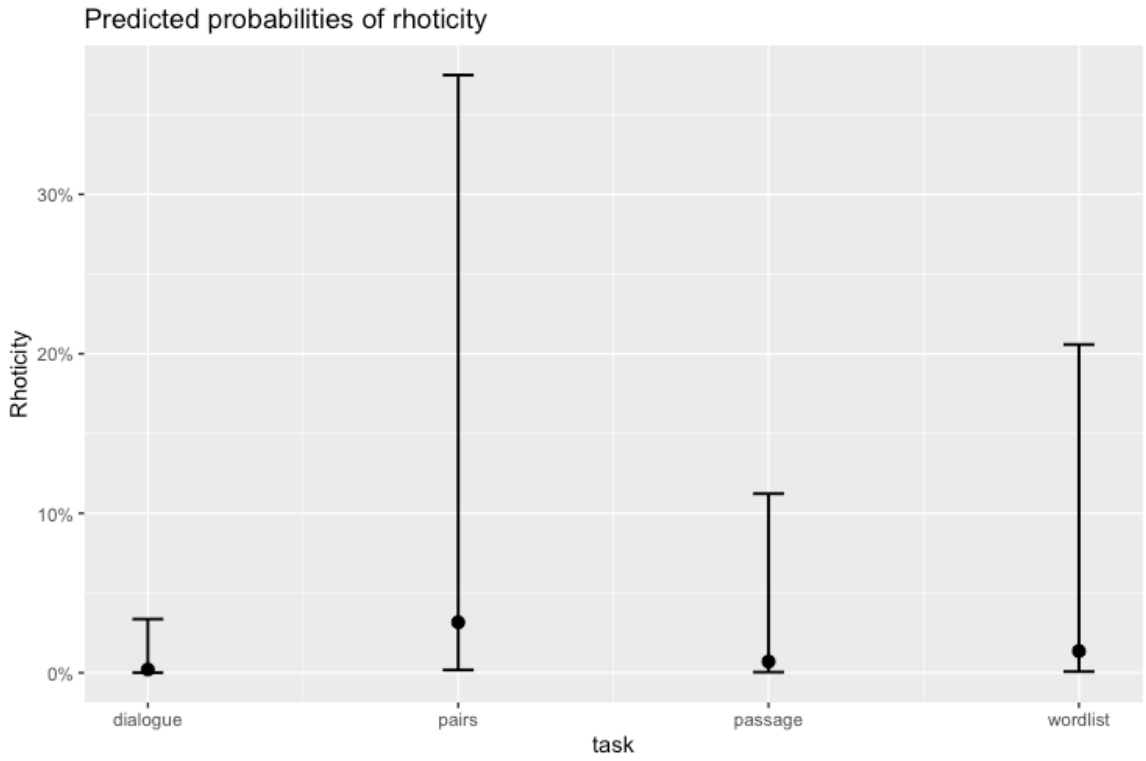

Fig. 16. Predicted probabilities for the presence of rhoticity (different vowel contexts).

5.15. Remaining linguistic factors

The position of the /r/ phoneme within a word is a good predictor for rhoticity / non-rhoticity. In fact, the word-final position (as opposed to preconsonantal) favours rhoticity ($p < 0.001$). It seems then that the preconsontal /r/ sounds are lost first in the process of the shift from rhotic to non-rhotic. Lexical words are also expected to feature more rhoticity than function words, however, the effect is marginal ($p = 0.052$). Thirdly, the more frequent the word, the less likely its pronunciation is going to be rhotic ($p < 0.001$). Finally, unstressed syllable positions of /r/ disfavour rhoticity ($p < 0.01$).

5.16. Discussion

Rhoticity, as in many previous studies, proves to be prone to variation along the socio-economic (or language-external), as well as the linguistic-phonetic (or language-internal) factors. Many observations came as predicted or as observed in previous studies, while some factors (especially the role of the preceding vowel context) turned out to be less significant than in previous studies. The larger picture, however, is observable as hypothesized. Namely, rhoticity in general is being lost in the South-West of England. It is being retained only in certain speakers, and according to the strongest predictors, the group where rhoticity is persistent relative to non-rhoticity are older male working-class speakers. It may seem then that the feature will start dying out with the oldest speakers, because of the important dynamic changes in the class structure which are happening in the region where it is less and less common for a young person to truly represent the working class with all its characteristics (traditionally understood physical job, primary education, lower income than compared with the middle classes etc.). However, the potential complete shift towards non-rhoticity in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset may take longer than it might seem. There is evidence, for instance, that the expected near disappearance of non-rhotic variants of pronunciation in New York is not on the horizon, although the shift very slowly progresses towards rhoticity since observed by William Labov in the 1960s (see Chapter 3). Moreover, it seems that the close social ties in the working class, especially in South-West England, as well as the fact that rhoticity possesses a great deal of covert prestige in the region, may suggest that rhoticity will not disappear in the region as soon as it was initially expected.

In this dataset, similarly to the data discussed in Chapter 4, there is more rhoticity in male speakers. However, the effects are small when compared to other social or linguistic factors conducive to rhoticity and non-rhoticity. It seems then that in order to explore the potential gender differences in the adoption of rhoticity, a larger sample is needed. As signalled above, in many linguistic communities the tendency is that women display more standard or more innovative pronunciation features than men (see e.g. Baranowski 2017, Blaxter and Coates 2019, Trudgill 1974). Although it seemed that this theory would be applicable to women adopting non-rhoticity at a much higher rate in South-West England, the captured differences are too small for now to state this with certainty.

Finally, telling results seem to be those about the effect of the contextual style in the interview. Out of the four tasks considered in the model, the context of the dialogue was neither favouring, nor disfavouring for rhoticity. This is understandable given the very conversational-like nature of the task. The contextual style of the next task was already found to be favouring rhoticity. The task was about reading out a fable. Most interviewees did recognise *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* fable. They either remembered it from their school years, or they remembered it had been read to them when they were kids. This task was supposed to elicit a speech style more formal than the dialogue task. The next task was reading the list of words, both containing and not containing the possible non-prevocalic /r/ instances. Once more, this task was more formal than the previous one and promoted rhoticity even more. The last task was reading the minimal pairs. It was designed to elicit the most formal speech style possible and, indeed, it also strongly predicted the presence of non-prevocalic /r/. These results are rather surprising. For example, Labov (2006) found that in an increasingly more rhotic accent, fewer variants of rhoticity were found in the most casual parts of the interview, while in those promoting the most formal speech styles, there was more rhoticity. Because the situation is exactly the opposite one in South-West England when compared to New York City (Labov 2006) in terms of the adaptation of rhoticity (the incoming feature there is rhoticity), it could have been hypothesized that these numbers would also be reversed in the present study. In this scenario, there would be more rhoticity in the unstructured conversation and the dialogue parts of the interview, while less rhoticity in other reading tasks. It seemed probable that more formal contexts would elicit fewer vernacular forms. The results obtained, however, were the opposite, i.e. comparable to the Labov's results in New York. One probable explanation is the role of spelling in the stylistic variation of rhoticity.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1. Introduction

This chapter aims at consolidating several theoretical concepts not extensively discussed before like sampling in terms of age groups or non-discriminatory policies of this research. It opens with a discussion of the relative disappearance of working-class behaviours in young people and how this may result in strengthening dialect levelling mechanisms and the sociolinguistic research method in general. In Sections 7.4–7.6, there will also be room for short qualitative analysis based on the narratives of the informants, which felt out of the scope of the data presented in the previous chapters. Finally, it will briefly discuss the secondary data explored through the responses to the demographic questionnaires like perceptions about the region, the accents spoken in the region, and self-identities of the speakers representing the linguistic South-West. In order to avoid overfitting of the statistical models, they were not previously analysed. In additional analyses, it will be shown whether these self-reported perceptions correlate with the speakers' rhoticity rates.

6.2. Class and social mobility

The reader may have noticed that this work makes use of rather humble differentiation of speakers into socio-economic classes. Some recent works which use more elaborate socio-economic indexing of speakers divide them into more socio-economic classes, e.g. into lower-working, upper-working, lower-middle, middle-middle and the upper-middle subclasses (e.g. Baranowski 2017 researching Manchester). This practice has its source in other seminal larger-scale sociolinguistic works, e.g. in New York (Labov 1966) and Norwich (Trudgill 1974). In the surveys I administered in South-West England, I divided the speakers into three (anonymous surveys) and two (sociolinguistic interviews) groups. The main reason for this lies mainly in the fact that dividing speakers into five socio-economic groups would go beyond the scope of this PhD project. The people living the communities living in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, although also slightly differing

between themselves, are a little less stratified socio-economically than larger urban areas like New York, Norwich or Manchester. The most striking observation during the recruitment process, however, was the great difficulty in recruiting young working-class speakers. This brings us to the discussion about the notion of the class and social mobility in the present-day United Kingdom. For many years, the United Kingdom has been characterised in general by low social mobility relative to many other European countries (Breen 2004). Although sources differ in the way they index social mobility, the situation has been changing for some time and people are much more socially mobile now in England than they used to be (see Buscha and Sturgis 2018)[8]. Arguably, the class division in the way it is prevailing in the United States or in the United Kingdom has been paradoxically conducive to sociolinguistic studies because the researchers have been able to find speakers of many different socio-economic profiles. Now, as societies are becoming less diversified in terms of education, financial wealth and other criteria, researchers will find fewer such socio-economic profiles. However, social mobility or the lack thereof may surprisingly be much less connected with the income and the economic wealth than it may first seem, and more with social behaviours connected with the rise of the civil society like collective actions, group mobilization, charitable giving and similar (for overview see Rogers et al. 2018).[9] This is especially true for young people in the United Kingdom whose life experiences, behaviours and lifestyles are nowadays less prone to be driven by the economic divide (Shildrick 2015). All this directly translates to the potential near disappearance of the group of young people representing the working class in the way that the traditional dialectological method has seen them and may have a colossal influence on the ways sociolinguistic studies will be performed in the future. Sociolinguistics has come a long way from traditional dialectology which was mostly about interviewing very homogenous groups of speakers (e.g. the infamous NORM speakers). With the rise of the variationist sociolinguistics, the descriptions started focusing more on the variation rather than the isolated idealised, or too often idiosyncratic, models of pronunciation. Britain (2005) links the changes in the structure of the British society to dialect attrition and dialect levelling, the process which has already been initiated and, as he supposes, the loss of rhoticity in South-West England is a part of it. The most intriguing question is whether,

[8] We still do not know the exact outcomes and do not have all the data but many sources suggest that the 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically widened social inequalities around the world, including in the United Kingdom.

[9] It has to be remembered, however, that *social mobility* and *social mobilization* are dissimilar terms.

with the fall of dialect words and regional pronunciations, and before the new dialectal variants are formed, sociolinguists will in fact have to resort again to studying the minority speakers who use at least some dialectal forms. This, more than of anything else, would be reminiscent of the traditional format of the dialectological research from before the rise of variationist sociolinguistics. English will also not be the first language to experience such a devolution. For example, because of the heavy standardisation policies at the level of school education and post-war migrations of Polish people, the Polish language is now much less prone to stylistic, regional or inter-speaker variation than it was before the War, and the researchers often have to resort to studying the standard or educated speech (Kaźmierski et al. 2019, Jassem 2003). Ultimately, the simplification of any part of the grammar and dialect levelling may be both natural phenomena in a wider perspective of the evolution of language. Trudgill (2015: 136) cites argumentation according to which some grammar categories of Indo-European were lost as a consequence of the communities using it becoming much more mobile.

6.3. Age groups

This dissertation makes use of the traditional division into age groups in Chapter 4. Traditionally, the young speakers are represented by people aged 18–30, the middle-aged group of speakers is represented by speakers aged 35–50, and people who are above 55 are classified as the oldest speakers; this is the most common procedure, however, sometimes the 5-year margin is not taken into the account (see Labov 1966, Trudgill 1974).[10] More and more often these days age is interpreted as a continuous variable (e.g. Baranowski 2017). This is understandable given the changes in the society. It is increasingly more difficult in many cultural contexts to argue that someone who is 35 is a middle-aged person, or someone who is 56 could represent the same group of speakers as 75-year-old speakers. Over the past decades, the structure of the society has changed in the way that people are active professionally for much longer, young people get married much later into their lives etc. Thus, the traditional age division in Chapter 4 may be seen as a

[10] One of my informants (Seth) who was really curious about my study and its design, quite rightly told me that being 38 he definitely did not feel to be representative of the middle-aged group when I mentioned how age grading is sometimes treated in similar studies.

methodological limitation of this work, yet, the study was designed to approximate the design of the department store surveys performed by William Labov in the 1960s as closely as possible. The initial idea was to group the speakers recorded in Chapter 5 into the same three age groups to later compare the results from these two datasets, but after speaking to Seth and hearing his remarks, as well as consulting the literature once again, I have decided to treat age as a continuous variable in Chapter 5.

6.4. Dialect boundaries

Admittedly, the sample size this paper is offering in Chapter 5 makes it difficult to state decisively what the detailed accentual differences between the three researched counties are. Because of having at the disposal 23 samples from female speakers and 23 from male speakers, this study treated them more as a homogenous group, and this is also why county did not turn out to be a good predictor for the presence of /r/ in the regression model. If the variable was to be treated with more care and indexed better, the sample size should have featured at least three times as many informants. Considering, however, the amount of work devoted to the supermarket surveys, to record that many interviews seemed unmanageable in a project of this kind.

There is also one more aspect to be emphasized when discussing dialect boundaries in the South-West. Namely, the accents and dialects are often divided along the lines of county borders; however, what follows from both traditional sources like *SED* and modern dialect descriptions, it seems that the boundaries for both the dialects and the accents spoken in southwestern England do not align with the administrative divisions of the counties (which is rarely the case also in other regions, in fact). On the one hand, they can be treated as one entity, for example according to the presence of rhoticity. On the other, clearly the dispersion of certain variants of pronunciation runs along different social or geographical boundaries. This has been emphasized by many of my informants. Many of them said they were able to recognise the differences between either rural North Devon and South Devon, or between Plymouth and Exeter in terms of accent variation. Once again, as very often shown in studies on accent, the perception of the accents from different subregions may often depend on how this region is seen as a whole (see also Section 6.5 below). For example, most people have commented on Exeter as being a

much nicer, more affluent, green place offering better job prospects as compared to Plymouth.

> Yeah and then there's different accents within Devon as well as you know, the Plymouth accent's quite different than the Exeter accent (Seth)

> Um, I think they're very unique to each part of the Southwest region. So I have family in Cornwall and they call me "maid" that's their "maid". And in Plymouth, it's the (...) in Plymouth, we call it the Janner dialect, which is, is a totally different, it's a different sounding kind of language. I would say Plymouth, um, and then Exeter, I would say is different again. Softer, I would say. I would say that Plymouthian is (...) can be quite harsh at times. (Alex)

> Plymouth is very, very different to Exeter, I think in a number of ways. Um, I went to the university there and I was there for six years, I think. So I don't really know how to explain the differences. I suppose it is a kind of more of a working class city as a whole, um, purely in terms of the dockyard and kind of those sorts of jobs that are associated with that and so Wembury where I'm from is very much kind of the other side. It's actually interesting thinking about the class dynamics of Plymouth. Um, I'm from kind of a middle class area, I suppose, in terms of, you know, the professions and things like that most people out there are doctors or paramedics or nurses or, you know, those kinds of things. Um, so I'm probably about twenty minutes I think, drive from the city centre. So yeah, it's ... And I think it's well within the context of Plymouth, there are very different ideals, very different accents, very different views and ideologies which you can sort of trace as you go through, I suppose if you're driving through the different areas. Um, and I'm much more in the countryside than the city, um, which is quite interesting. I mean, I guess Plymouth is obviously a seaside city, but I it's very much kind of in the sticks I think is how we would put it out here. Um, whereas Exeter ... It's a lovely city. It's a lot smaller than Plymouth actually yeah in terms of population sizes. Um, and I think that in terms of it, class is probably upper middle if not upper class in many ways. And I think even just its student population, it's much more wealthy in Exeter, which I think probably comes across to most people, whereas Plymouth is is much more kind of well, I mean, obviously you'd still have people from those classes there. (Jennifer)

> Oh, maybe not very favourably. People tend to ... people look down on Plymouth a little bit and it's definitely not as affluent as Exeter. Exeter's got a lot going for in terms of, um, it's got a lot more money. It's got, um, a bit of a nicer reputation. So, Plymouth used to have a lot of industry which has been on the decline for a really long time. The dockyard, um, being the main part of that, I think. So, yeah. Yeah, I'd say Plymouth is slightly, I don't want to say it's rough, because that's not really fair. It's got a very different look to it. Exeter looks nice and Plymouth looks quite (…) It's very grey. It's very square. Um yeah. They're very different cities. (Debbie)

6.5. Speaker identities and accent regard

The concept of the speaker identity is an important one in the discussion about the language in the society and the concept of the speaker or accent identity has not been directly

discussed above. In order to avoid overfitting of the statistical model, in the data in Chapter 5 the three below aspects have been excluded from the model. They oscillate around these questions asked to the informants through the demographic questionnaires.

- On a scale 1–9, how much do you like the traditional accent from this region?
- On a scale 1–9, how much do you feel a West Country woman/man?
- On a scale 1–9, how much do you enjoy living in this region?

They focus on the sentiment the speakers have towards the accents spoken in the region, about their reported self-identity of a person representing the South-West, and about how high esteem they have for the region. For example, let us have a look at how one of the female speakers (F05) comments on her attachment to Devon.

> My dad does. Yes. Yeah. My dad, he lives in Wembury as well. So, we've sort of kept the family home actually. So, childhood home. He's never moved. He's a paramedic. So yes. So, he does a lot of shift work. And, um, I think he's been a paramedic for about thirty-two years. So, a long time. A really long time. Yeah. And he's Plymouth-based. He's from Plymouth. Um, in fact I think certainly on my mum's side of the family, they've been in Plymouth. Gosh. Going back quite a few generations, at least four or five, if not more. Um, and my dad's side, my dad was born in Plymouth, um, but his mum was from just outside of Exeter, from, you know, actually and his dad is from Wales. So, yeah. So, it's quite a mix, but still very much kind of south-west kind of demographics I suppose. (Jennifer)

Many speakers also emphasized how important closeness to nature is to them. Many commented on the beautiful and scenic landscapes one can find in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. There were also quite a few speakers who juxtaposed the calm rural lands of southwestern England with either London or the urban North of England. When asked, my informants who were a married couple, M15, 72 and F13, 72, said they would never move to London, for any reason. They lived in a tiny village in rural Dorset and had spent all their lives there and in the neighbouring villages. They were a retired accountant and a retired builder.

> You've got Exmoor, you've got all the various different places that you can go walking. You've got obviously the coast as well. And I think the coast going from kind of even North Devon all the way down to Cornwall round the South Devon is also different, um, which makes it really quite stunning as opposed to somewhere like London ... which I'm not a huge fan of, I have to say a big kind of industrial cities. (Jennifer)

> And I think that the south west are the very different, even as a whole, obviously, they were different counties within it, but even as a whole, it's got a very different kind of ethos to

> kind of north and northern kind of places, places, which is quite interesting even. I mean, to me as a Plymothian, um, it's sort of a joke, but even Exeter is north to us in inverted commas. So there is that sense of I don't really go beyond London. (Jennifer)

> I do. I love living in Devon. Yeah, definitely. It's, it's a beautiful part of the world. We're really lucky. I think it's, it's really unusual to have such a mix of different places in one county. So you've got cities, we've got the Moorland. We can get to the beach really easily. We've got two coastlines. Um, I don't know if it's the only county in Britain that has two coastlines. I think I read that somewhere. I don't know if that's true, but, um. Yeah, it's a lovely place to live. (Debbie)

> love Cornwall. I really, I ... Bath is lovely. If I had to live in a city again, I would definitely move there again because it's got, it's accessible countryside all the way around it, but it's very, I don't know, upper-class countryside. It's very neat. Um, but it's peaceful. Um, Devon's great because you don't get overrun with tourists in the summer, whereas Cornwall. It's not yours in the summer, but it is the most beautiful place. And so like the North coast of Cornwall. So I love swimming in the sea and that kind of thing. So that's it's yeah. Cornwall... Cornwall the south-west is definitely where it's at. (Jane)

One can notice that there is a lot of sentiment in these narratives for the traditional accent spoken in the area. Let us examine a little bit more whether how someone views the region and the accents spoken in the South-West may be linked to how often they produce non-prevocalic /r/ sounds. Three correlations are presented below in Figures 17-19. In the first graph, identifying oneself as a West-Country person correlates with rhoticity rates. There is also a correlation found between how much the speaker likes the region and how much rhoticity is featured in their speech (Figure 18). However, there is no correlation found between the accent rating and the rhoticity rates. The ratings for the accents spoken in the area are also much lower than for the self-identification and the liking of the region. All scatter plots are presented below.

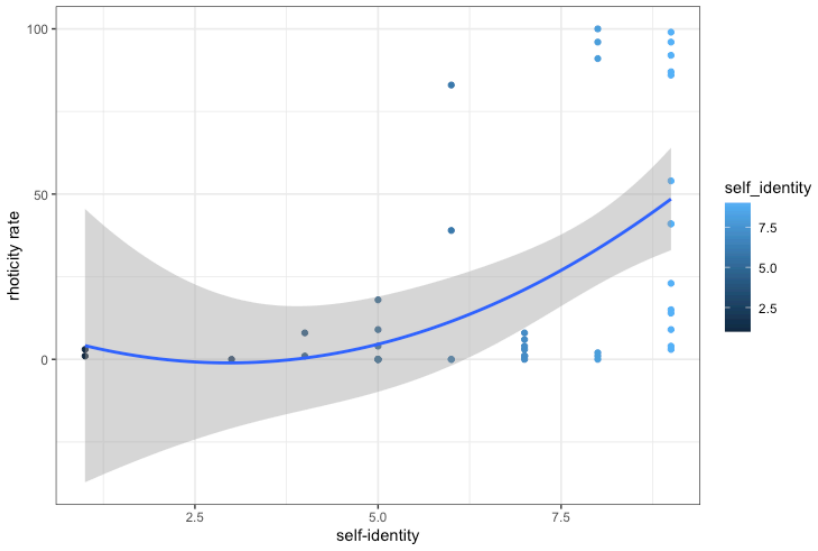

Fig. 17. Correlation between identification as a West-Country person and rhoticity rates ($r(44) = 0.47$, $p < .05$).

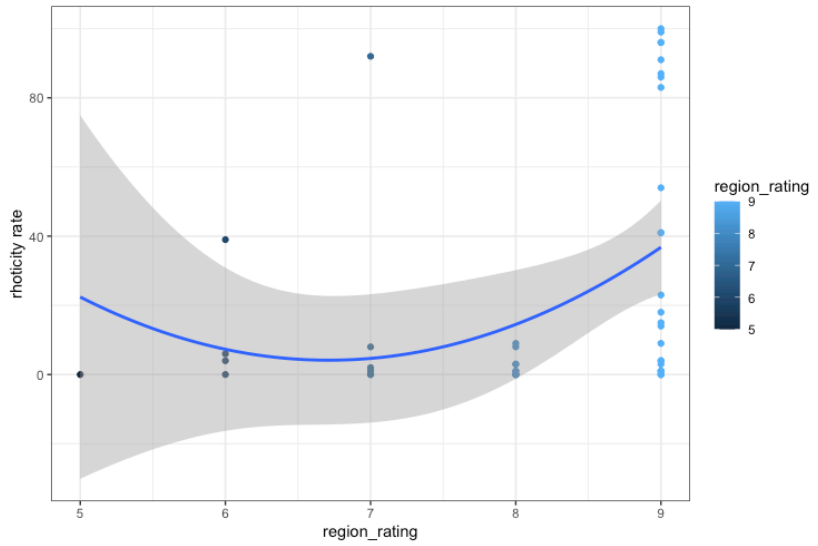

Fig. 18. Correlation between liking the region and rhoticity rates ($r(44) = 0.32$, $p < .05$).

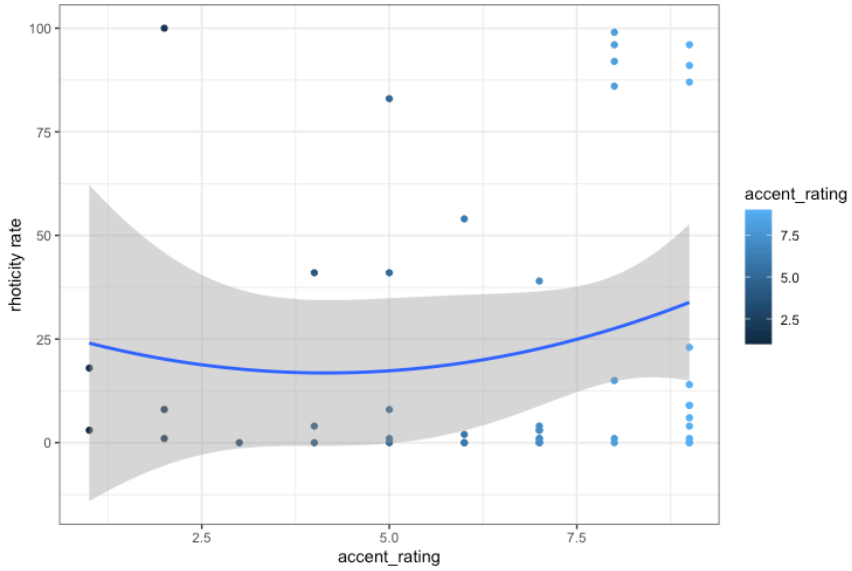

Fig. 19. No correlation is found between liking the accent spoken in the region and rhoticity rates. ($r(44) = 0.13$, $p > .05$, $p = .38$)

6.6. Accent self-awareness

In the narratives of most of my informants one can sense that they are aware of different accents spoken in the South-West and are of the opinion that they are rather universally spoken. Almost everyone knew someone from their circles who allegedly spoke with either a Cornish, Devon or Dorset accent. They often said that older members of their families, especially those who lived in the countryside, had stronger West Country accents. The examples were many. One of them was how M05, Rogan, 27, was commenting on the accent of his father who was a physical labourer. Rogan was pursuing his studies in history. He was living in Plymouth at the time but was travelling very often between Exeter and Plymouth. Rogan was 7.5% rhotic in the casual conversation part of the interview, but 0% rhotic in the rest of the interview.

> Yeah, my dad is (pause) he's fifty-five (pause) and he's erm a builder carpenter erm all round kind of erm yeah provides all-round building services with like plumbing and electrics and all that. He was born in in Devon and has the single thickest Devon accent I'd ever **heard** in my life (pause) it's unbelievable.[11] [12] (Rogan)

[11] The underlined words were non-rhotic, while words in bold were rhotic. This notation is used throughout the dissertation.

[12] Interestingly, Rogan's first rhotic pronunciation in the interview was when talking about his father's thick Devon accent of his father, which, undoubtedly, he associates with pronouncing the non-prevocalic /r/.

Another speaker, Seth, who was 38 at the time of the interview, notices that rhoticity is a strong factor in the identification of the accents from South-West England. He also argues that non-r-coloured vowels are perceptually nicer to him ("warmer"). Seth did not pronounce a single non-prevocalic /r/ in the spontaneous speech part of the interview, however, while reading he did pronounce several /r/ sounds which followed the vowels in NEAR, NURSE, NORTH/FORCE, SQUARE and START. He noticed that the choice of an accent depends on the interlocutor in many situations and that his friends from London did find his accent different from theirs. Finally, he also remarked that factors like schooling, peer group and the type of education one gets all impact his or her accent.

> I asked my colleagues before I came up here and I think I'm I think it depends on who I'm talking to and I think there is certain words that come out with with an accent so my friends in London would hear my accent whereas my friends down here might feel that I spoke with a more neutral accent erm but it's it's very sort of how it sounds when it's spoken by somebody else somebody who (pause) strong accent I think it sounds very (pause) sort of (pause) there's this R sound that is very strong kind of long. The vowel sounds can be a lot longer and can feel a bit it's like a warmer accent I don't know I don't know how to, it's hard to describe. [interviewer] erm not so much, no, not so much erm they grew up in Exeter so I think depending on where you grow up and depending on the kind of schools you go to I think that impacts on your accent so I've had neighbours and grandparents that had stronger accents and yeah erm and then there's different accents within Devon as well as you know the Plymouth accent's quite different than (pause) so the Exeter accent erm yeah (Seth)

The following question was posed to the informants in the demographic questionnaires that they filled out after the interviews:

– On a scale 1–9, how much do you feel you speak with an accent from this region?

The scatter plot below (Fig. 20) shows the responses to the accent self-awareness question plotted against rhoticity rates. The two measures are strongly correlated indicating that the speakers are highly aware of the use of rhotic variants in their pronunciations.

Although this is not directly tested, I have noticed that the narratives about traditional rhotic accents spoken in the South-West promoted the use of non-prevocalic /r/ on the part of the interviewees.

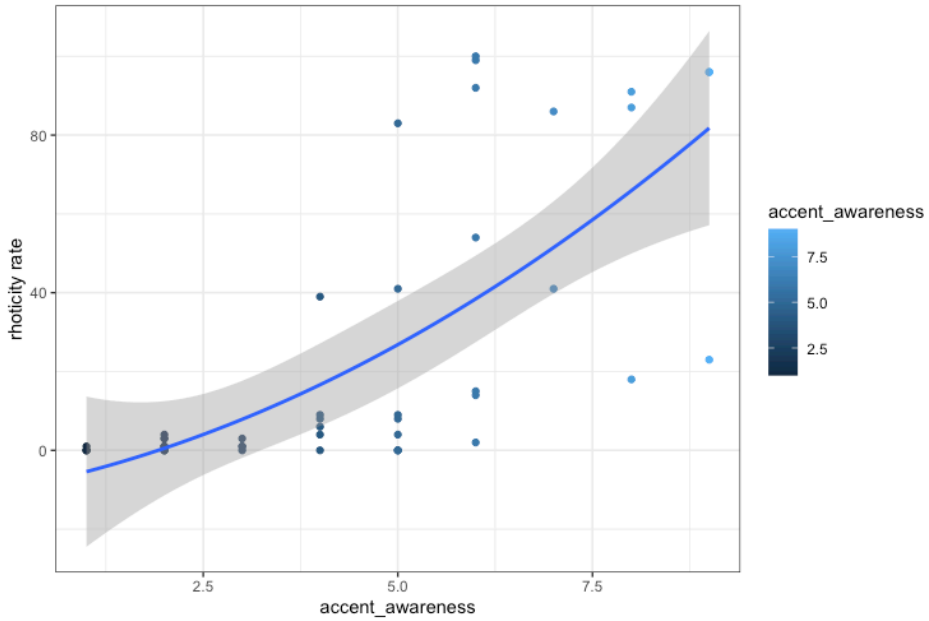

Fig. 20. Correlation between accent self-awareness and rhoticity rates. (R = 0.6876, p < .00001).

6.7. Ethical and non-discriminatory design of the study

Any sociolinguistic study which involves the direct contact with the informants, must conform to the standards of ethical research. The author has made all the efforts to ensure these, at every stage of planning, carrying out, storing and making available the research data. As the reader already knows, the data has been collected in two ways. The first mode of eliciting non-prevocalic /r/ was through rapid anonymous surveys. They may be a few ways in which such interviews may be against the academic ethics. First of all, one has to remember not to intrude anyone's privacy or sense of comfort. In fact, many times I had to withdraw from asking someone the research question when I had a suspicion that they may not like being asked a question about the time. When it comes to the recorded interviews, there were many more issues to consider. First, giving all the relevant information about the research to the potential informant (without giving away which aspects of the language one is specifically investigating) is an absolute necessity before a researcher can schedule the interview. Then when the actual interview was about to start, I was reminding my interviewees about the most important issues connected with the interview, i.e. that it was about to be recorded, that all the data processed later would remain anonymous. I also assured that I would not upload the interviews, albeit

anonymous, to any of the popular streaming services, but that they may be uploaded to academic repositories to be later used for research purposes. Once these were clarified, I would ask my informants to carefully read the consent form (see Appendix F). One of the most important aspects of my obtaining the consent was that the informants were able to change their mind at any time, stop the interview and withdraw, or inform me about their resignation after the interview. My obligation was then to remove the interview and all the data which was later produced as the outcome of the interview. In fact, the signed consent forms are still binding. The informants were given my two email addresses and my phone number (which are all still operating). Even after this work will have been submitted, they may request the removal of the interview and their personal data. The informed consent forms, as well as the demographic questionnaires filled in by my informants will not be destroyed. Archiving is a common procedure for assuring the ethical handling of the linguistic fieldwork (Bowern 2008: 152).

Another aspect worth mentioning, which is rarely discussed in this context, is the following. Sociolinguistics traditionally discusses how different communities or groups within the society differ in the way they use the language (in terms of structures, pronunciation, the lexicon etc.). The problem is that for an outside observer, or even a linguist with less insight into the traditional sociolinguist method, the discussion about different language behaviours by different groups of people may sound like strengthening stereotypes. For example, in an academic conversation about my doctoral dissertation with a linguist working in discourse and inclusive language policies, she remarked that instead of focusing on how women and men might differ with respect to certain pronunciation variants, sociophoneticians may also want to say how these two groups are the same, and that these are also very important findings. She also suggested that we should talk more about the tendencies, instead of definite differences. This was an important lesson and I will try to conform to these recommendations in all of my future work, including this one. Indeed, I draw conclusions on a limited sample of speakers only. Therefore, it is more appropriate (and academically informed) to say that women tend to feature less rhoticity than men in my sample of speakers coming from Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, or that more word-final /r/ sounds tend to be pronounced by the speakers coming from the working class more than by the speakers coming from the middle classes. Naturally, not a small portion of this dissertation tries to communicate that either of the language variants used is superior to the other, or that any social or economic group is inferior or

superior compared to other groups. Finally, no one was discriminated against in the recruitment process on any grounds, be it racial, economic, gender or other. Once again, these may seem trivial but I have met a linguist who really needed this clarification.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1. Overview

The following research is a product of studying the southwestern English accents for several years. Hopefully, a number of findings can be drawn from the descriptions and the data presented in the chapters above. First, whilst studying the available references for the current adaptation of rhoticity in the South-West, a few conclusions were imminent. The English South-West still is, despite a few important studies carried out in the last few years, very underresearched. This applies to the current status of rhoticity, as well as other dialectal and accentual features. Apart from rhoticity, at least a few other linguistic variables are very interesting topics for sociolinguistic studies, e.g. the shifted diphthongs in Dorset, or the TRAP – BATH split. Hopefully, we will see a few studies on these in the upcoming several years to be able to look at this dialectal region holistically. There are at least two other major facts to be drawn from the meta-analyses presented in the theoretical chapters. The first of these is the division into dialectal subregions in the South-West. On the one hand, the whole area can be treated as one unified entity, for example according to the presence of rhoticity; on the other, what was already evident in the analyses presented in the *SED*, the dialectal boundaries often do not go along with the county borders. The area studied is much more diversified and the dialect regions align with different geographical and social divisions. For example, some isoglosses run in the way that West Devon share pronunciation variants with Cornwall (e.g. for the vowel in BURY or SPEAK). For some other vowels, however, a single county like Cornwall features different pronunciations in its different parts (e.g. different variants of FLEECE and TRAP). It seems that many of these isoglosses would be drawn today very similarly. Due to the lack of the up-to-date reports, a lot of such questions may, however, remain unsolved until many of the regional variants become extinct. Finally, when studying the available literature on the variability of rhoticity in English accents around the world, one may notice a striking thing. Although rhoticity is sometimes treated as a benchmark feature for grouping the accents of English (e.g. American and Canadian against Australian and New Zealand accents), there are in fact very few native speakers of English who are categorically rhotic or categorically non-rhotic. For instance, the seemingly non-rhotic

accents of New Zealand do retain some rhotic pronunciations, especially in the context of the vowel NURSE. Even more interestingly, not only are there conservative rhotic variants marginally found in the seemingly non-rhotic accents in New Zealand, as well as in Australia or South Africa, but at the same time there are new innovative rhotic variants spreading there, e.g. in Pasifika communities in New Zealand. Taken all this data into account, it seems then that rhoticity is not a very good criterion for the classification of English accents, since the categorically rhotic or categorically non-rhotic speakers may in fact be in the minority among all English-speaking populations.

Similarly, in the work above, the data did not feature a single speaker who would pronounce all non-prevocalic /r/ sounds in all five speech styles during an interview. This is another prominent finding and it shows that more often than speaking about non-rhotic or rhotic English speakers in the literature, we should keep in mind that many more native English speakers than it may seem are in fact variably non-rhotic or variably rhotic. This also translates to the problem of how to systematically treat the accents where the regional pronunciation is in the process of the phonological shift from rhotic to non-rhotic (and vice versa, e.g. in New York). Can the English South-West still be called the rhotic region? Clearly, rhoticity is still found in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, in certain situations it may even be heard rather universally. With a great dose of probability, walking along the streets of Truro for a few hours, one will hear at least a few rhotic pronunciations. There are, however, increasingly more non-rhotic speakers who are born and bred in the area and who are members of the local speech communities. Very good examples are Sarah and Brady who were recorded and investigated for the purpose of this work. They were both young, Sarah was a student in Exeter but had spent all her life before entering the university in Cornwall. She had attended college in Truro. Brady at the time of the interview was working in a café in Truro and was about to start his university education in London in the months to come. He had not travelled a lot, had never been to London before, and had always lived in Cornwall in a house outside of Truro with his family. The profiles of these two speakers clearly show that they belong to the linguistic community of the South-West England. The inter-speaker variation found for rhoticity in the region is indeed difficult to be reflected in dialect atlases, handbooks of phonetics and phonology and other systematic linguistics resources. Therefore, I would argue that a good way of describing such dialect regions is to classify them as *variably rhotic*. Such a term would reflect the presence of rhotic speakers in the region but would also suggest

that there is larger intra-speaker and intra-speaker variation in the accents spoken there. Three large urban centres, i.e. Truro, Exeter and Bournemouth, as based on the data described in Chapter 4, so far display rhoticity rates at, respectively, 39%, 22% and 19%.

The data presented here clearly shows that rhoticity is becoming a minority feature in the South-West. To reformulate the title of this work, rhoticity is in the process of being lost as a pronunciation feature in English English accents spoken in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. The process has been observable for some time, but the lack of up-to-date studies still makes it somewhat difficult to assess the rate with which the rhoticity is being lost. In both datasets presented here, the differences between the young and the old age groups are quite dramatic. What is more, other studies seem also to report the dramatic drop, or a complete loss, in rhoticity rates in the youngest generations in the South-West (e.g. Piercy 2012 in Dorset). Usually, as we have seen in previous studies, it may take a few generations for a shift from rhotic to non-rhotic variants to be complete (or in the opposite direction, e.g. Feagin 1990). However, some data about the accents in southwestern England suggested that this process may be taking place even faster here. My results go in line with the previous data, i.e. they show strong stratification according to age. However, Piercy found no rhoticity in younger speakers in Dorset. The difference is less pronounced in my data. It is definitely a minority feature in this age group, but it is present. In longer interviews, in some narratives rhotic pronunciations in fact can be heard, while rhoticity rates rise in more formal speech styles, also among younger speakers. One of the first observations was that young speakers who pronounce some of the non-prevocalic /r/s (e.g. Landon, 20, 48% rhotic, Rogan, 27, 7.5% rhotic) have parents who belong to the working class, however, the statistical model did not return the professions of parents as significant. Clearly, the factors influencing the adaptation of rhoticity in one's speech are much more complex. Finally, trying to predict when the change will be complete is very difficult. It seemed at first that the shift is very dramatic but because rhoticity still survives in some pronunciations also in the young group of speakers, the change may be in progress for longer than it may seem. This would be comparable with the adaptation of rhoticity in New York. When William Labov presented his results in the 1960s, it seemed that non-rhoticity will be lost in the decades to come, because of the strong stratification of the feature along the class and age parameters. However, the most recent data (see Chapter 4) shows that non-rhoticity still can be heard in many groups of speakers, although the shift to rhoticity slowly progresses. A similar scenario may be applicable to the

spread of non-rhoticity in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, but it depends on many extra-linguistic factors which will influence the communities there in the nearest future.

Apart from age, rhoticity is stratified along other criteria. Despite the increasingly larger difficulty with grasping the real nature of the socio-economic class in today's England, as described in Section 7.1., we can see that in both datasets the working class features more rhoticity than the middle classes. This was one of the initial hypotheses and it was supported with the data collected. Another factor is gender, although the effects found are much weaker than for age. In both datasets there were more rhotic pronunciations found in male speakers than female speakers, and on the border of statistical significance in the second dataset (sociolinguistic interviews). This means that the differences could be further explored in other studies on rhoticity in the South of England, especially given that it has been shown more than once in other sociolinguistic studies that certain language features are adopted by different gender groups at a different pace. Most notably, it has been shown that women more often drive the innovations in language, the so-called changes from below (Labov 1994).

Out of the language-internal criteria which proved significant for the retention of rhoticity in the speech corpus collected for this work, only the vowel NURSE was the strong predictor among all the vowel contexts. Moreover, it follows from my data that the word frequency can be a predictor for the presence or absence of rhoticity. More frequent words tend to disfavour rhoticity, while less frequent words tend to favour rhoticity in variably rhotic speakers. Finally, the context of a stressed and unstressed syllable matters, too, i.e. in my speakers unstressed positions disfavour rhoticity.

The data has been collected using the methodologies which combined the traditional sociolinguistic methods with the up-to-date statistical description. The first methodology used rapid anonymous surveys to obtain as many responses as possible in a relatively short period of time. Out of the 270 responses, 72 were rhotic. The most rhotic region was Cornwall (39%). Less rhoticity was found in Devon (22%) and the least in Dorset (19%). This was expected, given the geographical seclusion of Cornwall but also the fact that smaller distance from London, in the case of Devon and Dorset, means more interactions with the social and cultural capital of the country. These, in turn, influence the communities living in the researched areas, including their language behaviours and, ultimately, in more and more of them, the adoption of non-rhoticity. As hypothesized, rhoticity was found to be stratified along socio-economic criteria, too, especially age and

class. The surveys were taken in supermarkets, which were stratified socio-economically. More rhoticity was found in the supermarkets attracting more customers coming from the working class and the lower-middle class. The middle-range supermarkets were supposed to attract more middle-middle-class customers. As a result, the rhoticity rates found there were intermediate between those found in the lower-range supermarkets and the higher-end supermarkets. In the most premium supermarkets selected, the respondents featured the least rhoticity out of the three socio-economic groups. In this study, less sophisticated statistical descriptions were used. Through the exploratory analyses, I tried to show how remarkably regular the stratification of rhoticity is in the South-West of England. As mentioned above, the study was the replication of the department store surveys done by William Labov in New York (1966). Possibly, one of the most important conclusions following from this work is that the traditional sociolinguistic methods are still reliable and can be used in different research contexts, as long as the research is carefully designed and performed. This is vital especially in the light of the scarcity of rapid anonymous surveys in English sociolinguistics, which has been partly caused by the criticism of the method which allegedly does not provide enough control over the respondents. This study, conversely, shows that the researcher has enough control; what is more, at their disposal, they have larger samples and the access to speech in its natural environment.

The second dataset researched the language use of the informants in a less naturalistic environment than the anonymous supermarket surveys, i.e. through sociolinguistic interviews. It offered, however, much more control over participants and the language modes. This offered, among other things, an insight into how rhoticity rates differ between speech styles. For most informants, rhoticity rates rose in the course of the interview, i.e. with speech formality. There were several speakers who did not produce any rhotic variants in the casual (or spontaneous) part of the interview, but who produced non-prevocalic /r/ sounds when they read aloud dialogues, texts or lists of words. This shows that spelling in fact plays a considerable role in the cognitive representation of a word when the speaker is about to pronounce it. Also, this is somewhat against the more likely hypothesis that rhoticity rates would be lower in more formal speech styles, given that in many contexts rhoticity has been thought of as a less prestigious pronunciation feature. However, most of my interviewees in fact spoke in favour of the traditional accents of South West England, many identified themselves as proud representatives of the region,

and many claimed they spoke with a traditional accent from the region. This may suggest that in fact rhoticity may have at least some covert prestige.

The sociolinguistic interview also proved to be the good medium for obtaining speech samples for sociolinguistic purposes. Naturally, such interviews differ considerably in their logistics from rapid anonymous surveys. They require careful planning, advertising, recruiting, and then finally the actual interview, together with archiving the files and securing them. With 46 speakers in the sample, the dataset is not huge but gives an opportunity to see the regularities for the adoption of rhoticity and non-rhoticity. The logistic regression model built showed certain patterns favouring and disfavouring rhoticity, both language-internal and language-external. The process of performing the sociolinguistic interviews was not novel but I tried to adapt to the best practices used in sociolinguistics nowadays. The end result are recordings in a very good quality which can be used in the future, also by other researchers.

Finally, to summarise the above section and to answer the research questions stated in Chapter 1, let us then conclude the most important findings of this dissertation:

(1) The retention or loss of non-prevocalic /r/ largely depends on the socio-economic characteristics of the speaker. Rhoticity rates are lower in female speakers as compared to the male speakers, while speakers classified as representing the working class and the lower-middle class feature more rhoticity than the speakers representing the middle-middle and the upper-middle classes. When the speakers are divided only into two such socio-economic classes (working vs. middle), the difference is even larger. Age is another differentiating factor. The older speakers pronounce many more non-prevocalic /r/ sounds than the younger speakers.

(2) The captured change in progress, realised in the difference between the older and the younger speakers, suggests that the shift from the rhotic to non-rhotic standard is happening at a very fast pace. Moreover, rhoticity already is the minority feature in all three researched regions. However, this phonological shift may be much more complicated than previously thought. It is dependent on many social and linguistic constraints. For example, we can still observe rhotic variants of pronunciation in reading tasks in speakers who are non-rhotic or predominantly non-rhotic in casual speech. Finally, it seems that despite the larger contribution to studies on rhoticity in the South-West in recent years, it is difficult to assess holistically

what the actual present state of the adaptation of rhoticity and non-rhoticity is in all geographical, linguistic and socio-cultural contexts in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. The current state of research makes it difficult to predict with a larger probability when the whole region will become non-rhotic. Some other studies (e.g. the most current research on variable rhoticity in New York suggesting that the shift towards rhoticity is slower than expected) point to the fact that this process may be slower than initially thought.

(3) It seems that the social mechanisms behind the loss of rhoticity in South West England may be similar to those responsible for the adoption of rhoticity by traditionally non-rhotic communities of speakers in the United States. There is a reversed prestige status for rhoticity and non-rhoticity across the Atlantic. In the United States, non-rhoticity has been the minority feature and rhoticity has carried more prestige, while in England non-rhoticity has been a more prestigious and a more standard feature for a long time. The difference, however, may be in the structure of the society in South West England, which is closely connected with language behaviours and linguistic interactions recorded there. Namely, closely-knit language communities are less conducive to linguistic innovations. It seems that because of the relatively tightly knit communities in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, rhoticity may have survived there for longer than in other English English accents. The geographical seclusion of the region, resulting in peoples' fewer interactions with urban centres inside the country, may have contributed to the situation. Finally, it seems that rhoticity and other accentual features identified as characteristic for the region possess a lot of covert prestige. Many speakers and their relatives or friends see the accents spoken there as part of the cultural and social heritage of the area. Moreover, most of my informants could rightly identify some of the features of the West Country accents and were aware of using them.

(4) The prevalence of rhoticity in older and working-class speakers leads us to believe that rhoticity, despite carrying covert prestige, is the disfavoured variant of pronunciation over non-rhoticity for younger speakers. Rhoticity is still associated with rural and working-class speech, although it probably is much less stigmatised than some accentual features of the accents carrying less regard in the country like Cockney, Scouse or Brummie.

(5) The phonetic context hugely influences the presence of the non-prevocalic /r/. The strongest predictors in this study were the presence of the preceding NURSE vowel, as well as speech style. In the sociolinguistic interviews, four different speech styles were elicited, i.e. it was divided into the casual conversation part, reading a dialogue, reading a story, reading a list of words and reading a list of minimal pairs of words. Formality was higher with every task, as well as rhoticity rates. For most speakers, rhoticity rates were higher in reading tasks than during a casual conversation. Another factor was word frequency. In this data, lower word frequency favoured rhoticity. Finally, the presence of /r/ in an unstressed syllable was a factor disfavouring rhoticity.

Hopefully, all these findings, together with other products of this dissertation like recorded interviews and other data made available contribute to the state of knowledge on the accents spoken in South West England, as well as contribute to sociolinguistics understood as a community of researchers.

7.2. Limitations and future work

Despite offering some novel findings and the thorough design of the study, this work still cannot be treated as a holistic description of rhoticity in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. Admittedly, its largest weakness is the sample size for the sociolinguistic interviews. Although it allowed a decent analysis of several factors, both social and linguistic, the number of speakers researched made it impossible to index some variables. One of the most interesting tasks to be considered in the future is a more thorough comparison between the regions described. This naturally requires recording many more speakers. Another interesting difference to be explored more is the potential contrast between rural and urban accents in the South-West, especially with relation to rhoticity. Although previous studies (e.g. Sullivan 1992) have not reported significant differences in this domain, it may be possible that with larger datasets some differences will be found. For example, impressionistically, it seemed to me while talking to people during fieldwork that the shifted diphthongs are not universally heard in urban areas in Devon or Dorset, while they are rather frequent in the speech of rural speakers. Indeed, another interesting aspect of

rhoticity in the South-West would be to test for the potential correlation with other regional accentual and dialectal features like the TRAP – BATH split, presence of shifted diphthongs, voicing of fricatives, or the use of dialect words. Finally, an especially interesting topic was raised multiple times by many of my informants when they were commenting about the accent variability in the South-West. Many of them said they were able to differentiate between the accents spoken in different parts of the county, e.g. that North Devon speakers (not recorded for this work) have got distinguishably different accents than speakers from South Devon; or that the Plymouth accents are considerably different from the Exeter accents. Because of the large dataset such research would require, the differences between the dialectal subregions within the southwestern counties has not been tested since the *SED*. To build a detailed, up-to-date accentual and dialectal map of the region would be an outstanding contribution to contemporary linguistics.

There are so many aspects of the accents spoken in the South-West that it seems that to capture them all a larger coordinated team of researchers would be needed. A larger project, instead of several smaller studies which have been published in recent years, would indeed contribute to the better understanding and better documentation of the accents spoken in South West England.

Finally, any future work or the subsequent exploration of accentual and dialectal features of the described region is possible through accessing the recordings made available to other researchers as a product of this dissertation. Any reader who works in sociophonetics, or is interested in any other aspect of dialectology, is more than welcome to make use of these materials.

Abstract

The following doctoral dissertation describes the current state of adaptation of rhoticity in South-West England. Rhoticity is the pronunciation of the /r/ sound word-finally and preconsonantally, e.g. in words CAR and CARD. Three counties have been selected for fieldwork, i.e. Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. Despite the scarcity of research on this accentual region, as well as relying on anecdotal evidence, some reports (Piercy 2012) give evidence about the complete rhoticity loss in young speakers in Dorset which would denote a very rapid phonological shift. Comparing dialectology data coming from different periods (Orton and Wakelin 1967, Trudgill 1999), it seems indeed that the rhotic region in England has been shrinking at a very fast pace. In order to verify the hypothesis about rhoticity loss in the area, I have selected Cornwall, Devon and Dorset for fieldwork. The first methodology was inspired by Labov (1966) and was about performing rapid anonymous surveys. In each county, I have selected one city. These were Truro in Cornwall, Exeter in Devon and Bournemouth in Dorset. In each of these cities, I was visiting three supermarkets which were stratified socio-economically and geographically. The lower-end supermarkets were located in worse neighbourhoods and were attracting customers from the working class and the lower-middle class. The middle-range supermarkets were attracting the widest possible clientele. The higher-end supermarkets were located in city centres and were offering gourmet products, were never crowded and they looked aesthetically pleasing. In each supermarket, I was asking the passers-by for the time. I deliberately chose to do shopping at around 4pm, so that the word FOUR could be elicited. I was then able to verify whether the pronunciation was rhotic (with /r/) or non-rhotic (without /r/). Due to the larger popularity of non-rhotic pronunciation in England, the hypothesis adopted was that more rhoticity would be heard in the supermarkets representing the lower socio-economic spectrum, while in the supermarkets attracting the higher-income customers I would hear much less rhoticity, as such customers might aspire to adopting pronunciation features more common in the culturally influential London. Indeed, the hypothesis was supported with the data gathered. Another finding was that in shop in Cornwall, there was considerably more rhoticity than in Devon and Dorset. Given the geographical seclusion of Cornwall, and the vicinity of London in the case of Dorset, these results were also predictable. Another dataset comprised sociolinguistic interviews.

This medium for recording language data assured more control over the participants. They were designed as typical sociolinguistic interviews and were divided into five different parts, which were 1) casual conversation, 2) reading out the dialogue, 3) reading out a short story, 4) reading the list of words, 5) reading the minimal pairs of words. Each of the reading tasks 2 – 5 contained a lot of words which featured potential /r/ sounds. With each task, the level of speech formality rose. Out of all 4,544 observations (99 per all 46 informants) only 28% of the words were pronounced with the /r/ sound at the end of the word or in front of a consonant. One of the most interesting results is that rhoticity rates rose with speech formality, which shows that careful speech and spelling play an important role in the adoption of rhotic variants of pronunciation by the interviewees. Another important factor was age. The older the speakers, the higher rhoticity rates they displayed. To sum up, rhoticity may already be a minority feature in South-West England. The difference, however, was a little less dramatic than initially thought. Namely, young speakers still display some rhoticity, although in limited contexts, but this may signify that rhoticity will not disappear in the research region in the next few decades.

Streszczenie

Poniższa praca doktorska opisuje obecny stan adaptacji rotyzacji (wymowy głoski /r/ w pozycjach przedspółgłoskowych i na końcu wyrazu, np. w słowie CAR czy CARD) na obszarze Anglii Południowo-Zachodniej. Do badań terenowych zostały wybrane następujące hrabstwa: Kornwalia, Devon, Dorset. Mimo nielicznych badań akcentowych na tym obszarze i wielu anegdotycznych przypuszczeń, na których opiera się wiedza o stopniu, w jakim ten obszar wciąż pozostaje rotyzujący, w świetle doniesień Piercy (2012), która raportuje zupełny brak rotyzujących wariantów wymowy u młodych ludzi w Dorset, można przypuszczać, że proces przejścia z akcentów rotyzujących na nierotyzujące na całym danym obszarze może zachodzić w bardzo szybkim tempie. Porównując dane dialektologiczne z różnych okresów (Orton and Wakelin 1967, Trudgill 1999) rzeczywiście można dojść do wniosku, że akcentów nierotyzujących przybywa na terenie Anglii bardzo szybko. Aby zweryfikować hipotezę o zaniku rotyzacji w Kornwalii, Devon oraz Dorset, wykonałem dwa badania terenowe. Pierwsze z nich wzorowało się na badaniu Labova (1966) i koncentrowało się na szybkich anonimowych ankietach. Dla każdego z trzech hrabstw wybrałem reprezentujące je miasto. I tak były to następująco: Truro w Kornwalii, Exeter w Devon oraz Bournemouth w Dorset. W każdym z miast odwiedziłem trzy różne supermarkety, które były zróżnicowane pod względem klienteli, które przyciągały. Najtańsze sklepy były zlokalizowane w uboższych dzielnicach miast i odwiedzały je często osoby z klasy pracującej oraz niższej średniej. Z kolei supermarkety oferujące produkty ze średniej półki były największe i przyciągały najszerszą klientelę. Najdroższe supermarkety zlokalizowane były w centrum miasta, oferowały najdroższe produkty, nigdy nie były zatłoczone i oferowały także wrażenia estetyczne podczas robienia zakupów. W każdym z supermarketów pytałem przypadkowo napotkanych ludzi o godzinę. Celowo przychodziłem na zakupy około godziny 16:00 (*4pm*), aby usłyszeć od pytanych angielskie słowo FOUR. Wówczas mogłem zweryfikować, czy użytkownik języka wymawia spółgłoskę /r/ na końcu wyrazu czy też nie. Z powodu większej popularyzacji wymowy bez /r/ na terenie Anglii, hipoteza nasuwała się taka, że w sklepach o niższym prestiżu społecznym, które przyciągają z kolei mówców z niższej klasy socjoekonomicznej, usłyszę więcej głosek /r/ niż w sklepach o najwyższych prestiżu, których klienci najprawdopodobniej aspirują do używania wymowy bardziej przypominającej np.

wpływowy kulturowo Londyn. Tak też rzeczywiście się stało i w sklepach-dyskontach usłyszałem dużo więcej /r/. Dodatkowo więcej rotyzacji odnalazłem też w Kornwalii, średnie wartości rotyzacji w Devon, natomiast najmniej tej cechy w Dorset. Biorąc pod uwagę geograficzną izolację Kornwalii, a z drugiej strony bliskość Londynu w przypadku Dorset, taka hipoteza również była najbardziej prawdopodobna. Drugim zestawem danych zarejestrowanym w badaniach terenowych były wywiady socjolingwistyczne. Taka forma rejestrowania języka pozwoliła mi na dużo większą kontrolę nad badanymi. Wywiady były zaplanowane w sposób klasyczny, tj. składały się z kolejnych części: 1) rozmowy spontanicznej, 2) czytania dialogu, 3) czytania krótkiej historii, 4) czytania list słów, 5) czytania par minimalnych. Każdy zestaw 2) – 5) zawierał dużo słów, gdzie potencjalnie można wymówić głoskę /r/. Co ważne, stopień formalizacji rozmowy zwiększał się wraz z każdą częścią wywiadu. Z 4554 obserwacji (tj. 99 obserwacji przypadających na każdego z 46 badanych), tylko 28% słów zostało wymówionych z głoską /r/ na końcu wyrazów lub przed spółgłoską. Do najciekawszych wyników należy ten, że wraz ze stopniem formalizacji rozmowy, wzrastały też przypadki wymowy rotyzującej, co pokazuje, że uważność i rola ortografii odgrywa bardzo ważną rolę, jeśli chodzi o wybór wymowy przez mówcę. Ważnym czynnikiem okazał się też wiek, wraz z których przypadki rotyzacji mocno wzrastały. Podsumowując, rotyzująca wymowa na terenie Anglii Południowo-Zachodniej już dziś jest mniej popularna niż wymowa nierotyzująca. Spodziewano się, że różnica między młodszymi a starszymi mówcami będzie jeszcze bardziej diametralna, co pozwalałoby przypuszczać, że wraz z upływem kilku pokoleń może nawet całkowicie zaniknąć na badanym terenie. Obecność tej cechy, choć marginalna, wśród młodych ludzi sugeruje jednak, że ten proces może potrwać dużo dłużej niż początkowo sądzono.

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Appendix A: Reading tasks

Dialogue

This dialogue was designed by Łodzikowski, Jekiel and Malarski (2014) for eliciting rhoticity in L2 English speakers. In this study (Chapter 5), it was shown to the participants in the form below, but with a larger font (font: Georgia; dark letters against white background).

Ben: What are your plans? Are you going to the concert tonight?
Beth: Well, not really. I'm going for a jog in the park.
Ben: Really? It'll rain in a minute!
Beth: I don't think so. Look, there's still some sun out there. But I'd better take my coat.
Ben: You'd better.

Reading passage

The reading passage was a popular fable *A Boy Who Cried Wolf* as adapted for the needs of a rhoticity study by Sharbawi and Deterding (2010).

There was once a poor shepherd boy who watched his flocks in the fields next to a dark forest near the foot of a mountain. One hot afternoon, he thought up a good plan to get some company for himself and also have a little fun. Raising his fist in the air, he ran down to the village shouting "Wolf, Wolf." As soon as they heard him, the villagers all rushed from their homes, full of concern for his safety, and two of them stayed with him for a while. This gave the boy so much pleasure that a few days later he tried exactly the same trick again, and once more he was successful. However, not long after, a wolf was looking for some change in its usual diet of chicken and duck, so it actually did come out from the forest and began to threaten the sheep. Racing down to the village, the boy of course cried out even louder than before, but as the

villagers were convinced that he was trying to fool them a third time, nobody bothered to come and help him, and so the wolf had a feast.

Wordlist

This wordlist was randomized and printed again after every speaker. It features possible non-prevocalic /r/ sounds in one-, two- and three-syllable words, in stressed and unstressed positions. It was displayed in a larger font (black against white background).

between	Boyd	let
pat	spa	half
stressed	hurry	bat
buyed	better	hurry
bore	beer	palm
Boyd	sharp	mule
bit	likeable	bar
bod	bath	bra
bird	likeable	let
bra	bad	start
bared	Britain	bitter
palm	balm	Charles
start	path	bared
bayed	bored	far
pass	embroider	between
bard	pat	bar
blonde	bat	bath
green	calm	bored
barn	Colorado	path
spa	staff	Britain
morning	morning	bad
bend	beed	better
half	Barney	mule
beer	Bond	path
hammer	dance	staff
dance	barn	blonde
tell	banana	technique
embroider	bear	banana
bend	oyster	bore
bayed	yellow	stressful
yellow	bitter	path
beautiful	beard	bard
class	stew	bird
beard	bod	bed
far	stressful	balm

board	Colorado	tell
Charles	oyster	Bond
buyed	board	water
hammer	Barney	water
calm	stressed	stew
bear	bed	pass
technique	green	beed
class	bit	
sharp	beautiful	

Minimal pairs

BEER – BEE

LAST – LARS'T

BIRD – BAD

FATHER – FARTHER

SPAR – SPA

GIRL – GULL

HEART – ART

BATH – BARTH

MAR – MA

HOLD – OLD

SAUCE – SOURCE

KOREA – CAREER

PASS – PARSE

ORPHAN – OFTEN

FIRE – FAR

MATHS – MARTHS

PORE – PAW

ARE – HOUR

Appendix B: Statistical model

		X.r.	
Predictors	*Odds Ratios*	*CI*	*p*
(Intercept)	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	**<0.001**
position [word-final]	1.56	0.89 – 2.71	0.118
context [CURE]	0.69	0.08 – 6.11	0.735
context [NEAR]	1.20	0.35 – 4.13	0.776
context [NORTH/FORCE]	1.24	0.47 – 3.27	0.663
context [NURSE]	13.08	4.36 – 39.27	**<0.001**
context [SQUARE]	1.16	0.39 – 3.41	0.789
context [START]	1.01	0.41 – 2.52	0.981
word.class [lexical]	0.67	0.28 – 1.58	0.358
frequency + 1 [log]	0.89	0.80 – 0.98	**0.020**
stress [unstressed]	0.46	0.19 – 1.09	0.078
task [pairs]	15.93	6.61 – 38.35	**<0.001**
task [passage]	3.46	1.53 – 7.79	**0.003**
task [wordlist]	6.73	2.84 – 15.94	**<0.001**
gender [M]	5.07	0.84 – 30.70	0.078
age	1.15	1.08 – 1.23	**<0.001**
class [working]	22.09	0.85 – 573.47	0.062
prof_mother [working]	0.22	0.01 – 6.14	0.370
prof_father [working]	1.71	0.26 – 11.20	0.575
county [Devon]	0.44	0.03 – 6.85	0.558
county [Dorset]	0.92	0.06 – 14.94	0.955
Random Effects			
σ^2	3.29		
$\tau_{00\ word}$	0.43		
$\tau_{00\ speaker}$	7.28		
ICC	0.70		
$N_{\ speaker}$	46		
$N_{\ word}$	67		
Observations	4554		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.532 / 0.860		

Appendix C: Open repository address

The raw data along with R scripts and the interviews recorded are available at this address:

https://github.com/kmalarski-amu/rhoticity

Appendix D: Personal questionnaire form

Name and Surname:

E-mail address:

Gender:

Age:

Place of residence:

Place of birth:

Other places of residence:

(throughout your whole life when the stay period exceeded 3 months)

Your education:

(types of schools you attended; age when you finished your education)

Your occupation/profession:

Your parents' birthplace and places of residence:

Your parents' professions:

Your parents' education:

(as above)

Your preferred means of transport:

(daily basis, home to work etc.)

Your most common means of transport:

List devices on which you have got access to wireless network:

Name your favourite dish:

What are your favourite past-time activities:

How many times have you been to London:

Countries you've visited:

Languages that you speak:

On a scale 1–9, how stressful was this interview:

(where 1 is *not stressful*, 5 is *neutral*, 9 is *stressful*)

On a scale 1–9, how talkative do you feel:

(where 1 is *not talkative*, 5 is *neutral*, 9 is *talkative*)

On a scale 1–9, how much do you feel you speak with an accent from this region:

(where 1 is *not at all*, 5 is *a little bit*, 9 is *very much*)

On a scale 1–9, how much do you like the traditional accent from this region:

(where 1 is *don't like*, 5 is *I'm neutral*, 9 is *I like*)

On a scale 1–9, how much do you feel a West-country woman/man:

(where 1 is *not at all*, 5 is *a little bit*, 9 is *very much*)

On a scale 1–9, how much do you enjoy living in this region:

(where 1 is *don't like*, 5 is *I'm neutral*, 9 is *I like*)

Appendix E: Consent form

This interview is being conducted as part of my PhD project. I interview people living in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, and talk about their experiences of living in the area and their language. They also read a short story, a dialogue and a number of words. The interviews are recorded but are anonymous. Your name will not be given out to anyone.

At the time of performing this interview, I am a PhD student at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland and at University of Agder in Kristiansand, Norway. For the period March–July 2017 I am also a visiting researcher at the University of Exeter. My research visit has been financed by the LingPhil organisation supporting PhD students in linguistics in Norway, by the Adam Mickiewicz University and by the University of Agder.

Kamil Malarski

I, ..., **the interviewee**, agree to participate in the interview conducted by **Kamil Malarski**, **the interviewer**.

I will not be paid for the interview.

I understand that I will be recorded by **the interviewer** and that I may request that the recorder be turned off at any time for any reason. I also understand that I may request to stop the interview at any time, for any reason.

I understand that I remain anonymous in all materials produced as the result of this interview.

As part of this interview, I am attaching the demographic information sheet which will be used for the purpose of this work. My name will be known only to the interviewer and will not be made public.

I understand that I may request from the **interviewer** to delete all the data and destroy all the documents even after the recording has been made, for any reason.

I understand that the recording produced as part of this interview will be stored by the interviewer and will be used for research purposes only. Anonymised recordings (i.e. with any personally-identifiable information bleeped out or deleted) may be made available to other researchers (for research purposes only) through such online databases as ResearchGate for an indefinite period.

This consent form has been signed by two parties, the **interviewee** and the **interviewer**. Each party keeps one copy of the informed consent form.

Date: _____
Signed by interviewee: _____
Signed by interviewer: _____

Appendix F: Interview cheat sheet

Do you come from around here, please? Where exactly have you lived? Do you like the area? Why? What's best about living in Exeter?

What do you do? What jobs have you done? Where do your parents come from? What jobs have they done?

How old were you when you left school? Have you good any good school memories? Were you more in the geeks division or the cool kids division? What groups were there in your class? What sorts of clothes did they wear? Could a guy from group go out with a girl from another? Was there anyone you didn't like? A teachers that were really tough? Did you ever get blamed for something you didn't do?

Tell me a bit about your childhood. What games did you play with your peers? Tag? Hide and seek? Did you have a curfew? How would you describe your upbringing?

Have you had the experience that scared the shit out of you? Can you think of a situation in which your life was in danger?

Describe something very nice that has happened to you. When was the last time you had a really good laugh? Have you ever had a dream that seemed so real?

What did you do yesterday? What are your dreams? Are you a good cook? What is your favourite meal? Where would you like to travel?

Have you got strong political views? Did you go to the polls? Are you in favour of Britain's staying in the EU?

Dialogues
Reading passage
Wordlist

Minimal pairs

Questionnaire

Appendix G: Results of the supermarket surveys

30

Number of Interviewees

(each supermarket)

22%

rhoticty in Exeter

between 4pm–5pm people were asked about time in supermarkets. The elicited word was "four". Later, rhotic or non-rhotic pronunciation of the word was noted down.

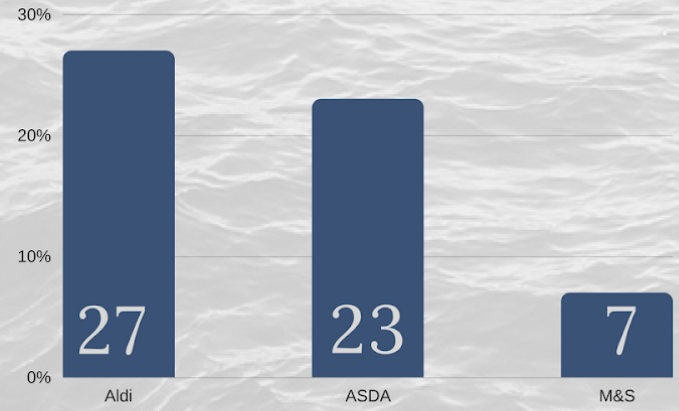
The supermarkets were stratified geographically and socio-economically
- Lidl / Wonford,
- Morrisons / Stoke Hill,
- Marks & Spencer / High Street

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

30

Number of Interviewees

(each supermarket)



19%

rhoticty in Bournemouth

between 4pm–5pm people were asked about time in supermarkets. The elicited word was "four". Later, rhotic or non-rhotic pronunciation of the word was noted down.

The supermarkets were stratified geographically and socio-economically
- Aldi / Boscombe,
- ASDA / Bournemouth,
- Marks & Spencer / Westbourne