Dialect Change

Convergence and Divergence in European Languages

Edited by

Peter Auer, Frans Hinskens, and Paul Kerswill

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521806879

First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Dialect change : convergence and divergence in European languages / edited by
Peter Auer, Frans Hinskens, and Paul Kerswill.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-521-80687-9
1. Europe – Languages – Dialects. 2. Sociolinguistics – Europe. 3. Linguistic
change – Europe. I. Auer, Peter, 1954– II. Hinskens, Frans. III. Kerswill, Paul.
P380.D52 2004
471′.2′094 – dc22 2004051858

ISBN-13 978-0-521-80687-9 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-80687-9 hardback

Contents

accounting for similarity between speakers, based on their shared class, background, age, gender, etc. However, to penetrate the individual's choices in his or her everyday life, intermediate tools, such as social networks, are needed. Through the study of network structures we can understand why and how speakers are accepted or rejected by a particular group and, hence, know more about individual convergence towards, and divergence from, linguistic uses within the group.

The naturalness of social networks as stable interactive groups, and as a source of norms of behaviour, does not imply that they can necessarily be successfully used for explanatory purposes. Social network structures have been used as independent variables with promising results in some cases, but the impression is that they have been misused, as they have been employed only as correlational tools. However, social networks should be understood as they are. Gumperz (1997: 200) puts it very clearly:

> The social science concept that perhaps comes closest to capturing what is involved here is the notion of network. Although this term has other definitions, I use it here to refer to the kind of sharing that is likely to evolve among individuals who have a common history and have undergone similar communicative experiences within the context of institutional networks of relationships where members cooperate over relatively long periods of time in the achievement of common goals. (Gumperz 1997: 200)

With this in mind, it is possible to consider correlation between speech and network markers only as a means of locating speakers. But it is an important means. Thanks to it, the researcher gains access to the speaker's choices at the individual level and can then perform an interpretive analysis. This is, of course, a rather weak interpretation of the social network's explanatory power, but, in the end, it is the best way to take the investigation beyond a macrosocial correlational analysis. Furthermore, interpretive network analysis constitutes the third step of an integrated sociolinguistic theory with the following range: (1) correlational social-structural analysis (involving age, gender, etc.); (2) correlational social-network analysis; (3) interpretive social-network analysis.

13 The role of interpersonal accommodation in a theory of language change

Peter Auer and Frans Hinskens

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the available evidence for Niedzielski and Giles' claim that 'accommodation theory should be one of the major frameworks to which researchers in language change should turn' (1996: 338). We will investigate the validity of a model of the implementation of structural language change which is intricately linked to verbal communication in face-to-face situations,[1] and which, if only for this reason, is highly appealing. In its prototypical version, the model stipulates the following (hierarchically ordered) components.

1st component. In face-to-face communication between speakers with more traditional speech habits and those who use an innovative form, the former accommodates to the linguistic behaviour of the latter. Accommodation may consist of either the adoption of the new feature and/or the abandonment of the older one(s). It is the first case which may, in the long run, lead to the expansion of the innovation in geographical and social space. Thus, interpersonal accommodation is seen as the root of any structural convergence or advergence (as it should more correctly be called since in the prototypical case it is unilateral). However, interpersonal accommodation does not always lead to language change, since it is restricted to the interactional episode at hand, i.e. it does not always have a lasting effect on the accommodating speaker's linguistic 'habits'. In order to have such an effect, two further steps are necessary.

2nd component. Short-term accommodation becomes long-term accommodation as soon as it permanently affects the accommodating speakers. This is the case when they transfer the innovation from direct interaction with the innovating speakers to situations in which these 'model speakers' fail to be the addressees. Convergence (advergence), and therefore accommodation

[1] More adequate but less widespread than face-to-face communication is the term direct communication. With the advent of long-distance communication by telephone, temporally synchronised interaction no longer requires face-to-face contact. The notion of direct communication excludes both unidirectional, mass media communication and communication in which the act of communication is stretched out through the temporal separation of production and reception, as in prototypical written communication.

of the innovation, now becomes an individual speech 'habit'. The model predicts that a person will be the more likely to take over a given feature into his or her own speech the more often he or she converses with a co-participant who displays the linguistic innovation. But, of course, such speech habits may be idiosyncratic and restricted to individual speakers. For language change in the usual sense of the word, something else is needed.

3rd component. The linguistic innovation may spread into the community at large, eventually leading to language change. Since long-term accommodation presupposes frequent exposure to this feature, spread into the community can be expected to proceed quickly when the innovators (i.e. those who adopt the spreading feature) are part of the same multiplex, dense, networks as the model speakers.

In sum, the model integrates three components into a hierarchy in which higher steps presuppose the lower ones (Auer and Hinskens 1996: 22):

Lowest level (interactional episode): short-term accommodation
↓
Middle level (the individual): long-term accommodation
↓
Highest level (speech community): language change

This scenario of the origins of language change has a long history which goes back to the beginnings of (social) dialectology, starting with the Neogrammarians (Paul 1870) and with classical dialect geography towards the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries (cf. Auer in print). Dialectologists in particular have resorted to explicit or implicit models based on interactional frequency as they have tried to explain bundles of isoglosses at natural or (former) political boundaries by pointing to a lack of communication across these frontiers, or the spread of a feature by means of ease of communication along routes of 'intercourse' (*Verkehr* – in Paul's terminology). Labov (1990: 207), whose arguments are very much in line with the Neogrammarians in this instance (as in many others), calls change-through-accommodation the 'principle of intimate diversification' and describes it as follows: 'Each act of communication between speakers is accompanied by a transfer of linguistic influence that makes their speech patterns more alike.' He believes that this 'automatic and mechanical influence' is responsible for the so-called gravity model according to which innovations spread from larger to smaller communities.

A particularly sophisticated version of the model can be found in Trudgill's book *Dialects in Contact*, where he argues (1986: 39) that

> in face-to-face interaction . . . speakers accommodate to each other linguistically by reducing the dissimilarities between their speech patterns and adopting features from each other's speech [= 1st component above]. If a speaker accommodates frequently enough to a particular accent or dialect, I would go on to argue, then the accommodation may in time become permanent, particularly if attitudinal factors are favourable. [= 2nd component above]. . . . People on average come into contact most often with people who live closest to them (40) [= one aspect of the 3rd component].[2]

As the extract makes clear, there is some ambiguity in the model concerning the driving forces behind the first step, or short-term accommodation; while some writers seem to believe in a mechanical process of imitation, or an attempt to optimise information transfer by using maximally overlapping codes, others argue that the accommodated speaker must hold some kind of prestige, and that the accommodating speaker attempts to gain his/her co-participant's social approval by using speech patterns that are familiar to him/her. This ambiguity itself has a long tradition, as it is already present in Bloomfield's account of 'dialect borrowing' in *Language* (1933: 476–477).

The model has undergone a number of revisions and engendered non-orthodox versions; for instance, in social psychological approaches to language variation (Giles *et al.* 1987; Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991), a distinction is drawn between objective (actual) and subjective (intended) accommodation (see below). Another revision of the model has been proposed by Bell (1984), who argues that it is not only the addressee that a speaker can accommodate to: speakers may also accommodate to third persons, such as auditors or even overhearers. For Bell, the degree of accommodation decreases the further away the 'audience' is, thus: addressee > auditor > overhearer (160, 163–167, 170–178). Bell's 'responsive' style matching, i.e. the accommodation by an individual speaker to a more or less distant audience, can be the short-term form of what may become 'long-term outgroup initiative style design' (Bell 1984: 187). This is a necessary step in the adoption of a new feature (a process that we will refer to as 'positive accommodation') or the abandonment of an old one ('negative accommodation'). For a critical evaluation, see Kerswill (2002: 680–682).

We will not discuss these non-orthodox versions of the model but, instead, restrict ourselves to the discussion of the original change-by-accommodation model which essentially relies on frequency of (direct) interaction, and on the adaptation of the behaviour of one person to that of another co-present speaker. In this sense, it may be opposed to what could be called an identity-projection model[3] according to which the adoption of certain dialect features (or their suppression) is the outcome of the speaker's wish to identify with a certain

[2] Also cf.: 'We can assume that face-to-face interaction is necessary before diffusion takes place' (42), and: 'the geographical diffusion of linguistic forms takes place, for the most part, when face-to-face interaction between speakers from different areas happens sufficiently frequently for accommodation to become permanent, and on a sufficiently large scale for considerable numbers of speakers to be involved' (42).

[3] In Anglo-American research, this idea of language change and linguistic variation is often associated with Robert Le Page and his model of verbal 'acts of identity' (cf. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985).

group (i.e. the consequence of projecting a persona of himself or herself); it is irrelevant whether the interlocutor belongs to this group or not. Although it requires the converging speaker to have some (possibly limited, or even mistaken) knowledge of the language of the model group, frequency of contact is not essential, and neither is face-to-face contact. Convergence rather proceeds towards an abstract image of the group.[4]

In the following sections, we will first look at general evidence for interpersonal short-term accommodation (section 2), and then concentrate on the more central issue of whether or not dialect change requires short-term dialect accommodation to proceed in a community (section 3). In section 4, we will briefly deal with evidence from network theory, as the third component of the change-by-accommodation model links the spread of an innovation on the community-level to frequency of interaction.

2 Evidence for Interpersonal Accommodation of Linguistic Features

Accommodation Theory has led to an impressive amount of empirical research. However, many studies cannot directly be linked to language change because the linguistic variables investigated are not those which undergo structural change (such as speaking tempo or the amount of joking), because it is not individual variables but whole varieties which are accommodated (as in code-switching, eventually leading to language shift), or because instead of linguistic variables, it is only the perception and evaluation of these variables by external judges that is investigated. However, there is some evidence for the mechanistic version of the change-by-accommodation model in the literature. Thus, the model receives indirect support from psycholinguistic research on syntactic priming according to which the realisation chosen in prior discourse can influence the choice of one variable form over another. For instance, Levelt and Kelter (1982) tested the matching or non-matching use of the preposition in the responses to Dutch questions such as

Aan wie laat Paul zijn viool zien? (lit. 'To whom lets Paul his violin see?' 'Whom does Paul show his violin to?') vs.
Wie laat Paul zijn viool zien? ('Whom lets Paul his violin see?' *idem*).

(In Dutch, both versions are equally acceptable.) They found a high covariation between the syntactic form chosen by the experimenter in the question and the informant's answer. Although the effect was stronger with some prepositions

[4] See Bell 2001 for a recent attempt to reconciliate the two views, which he calls 'audience design' and 'referee design'.

(*naar*) than with others (*van*), the syntactic form of the question undoubtedly influenced that of the answer.

Corpus-based research on natural discourse supports these and similar results from experimental studies; for instance, in a study on Nigerian Pidgin English, Poplack, and Tagliamonte (1996) found that the best predictor of the use of tense/aspect forms (which are all optional in this variety) was not stylistic, social, or linguistic, but the mere fact of the occurrence of the same form in the preceding sentence.

The reason for this effect seems to be purely cognitive and for the most part unconscious: activated structures tend to be used again for the simple reason of already being available. There are some other studies in which structural repetitions of the words of one speaker by another – verbatim repetitions – were performed consciously. These repetitions usually receive sanctions, because they are perceived as being 'parody', or 'mimicking' by the speaker of the first token. Face-threatening repetitions of this kind have been reported from prosody, particularly intonation. Thus, Couper-Kuhlen shows that pitch register matching on an absolute scale in verbatim repetitions of prior speaker's utterances expresses a critical comment on the utterances (1996). Similarly, Schwitalla (2002) shows that verbatim repetitions (instead of ellipsis) regularly indicate disaffiliation or disagreement. In these cases, it is, of course, highly implausible that the 'accommodating' speaker may (permanently) adapt his or her speech behaviour to that of the speaker whose utterance is repeated.

The studies cited so far deal with local processes of accommodation across sentences or speaking turns. In contrast, the bulk of research on accommodation in social psychology is interested in accommodation over the course of the whole of an interactional episode by the speaker, who is hypothesised to adapt in order to 'gain the receiver's approval' (Giles 1973).

Convincing linguistic evidence for interpersonal accommodation of this type comes from Trudgill's (1986) *ex post hoc* analysis of his own sociolinguistic interviews carried out in Norwich, which shows that he accommodated to the speech of his informants very precisely – at least in some, salient sociolinguistic variables ('markers') such as glottalling/glottalisation of medial and final /t/ (Trudgill 1986: 8; see figure 13.1, below).

Another frequently mentioned piece of evidence for interpersonal accommodation is Coupland's study of a shop assistant in a Cardiff travel agency and her accent convergence towards the customers (Coupland 1984). When her mean values for dialect features, such as h-dropping, tapping of intervocalic /t/, alveolar instead of velar realisation of /ŋ/, and final cluster simplification, are compared with those of her customers (aggregated into occupational classes), the shop assistant's adaptation to the nonstandard speech of her custumers becomes evident; cf. table 13.1 for absolute values and correlations.

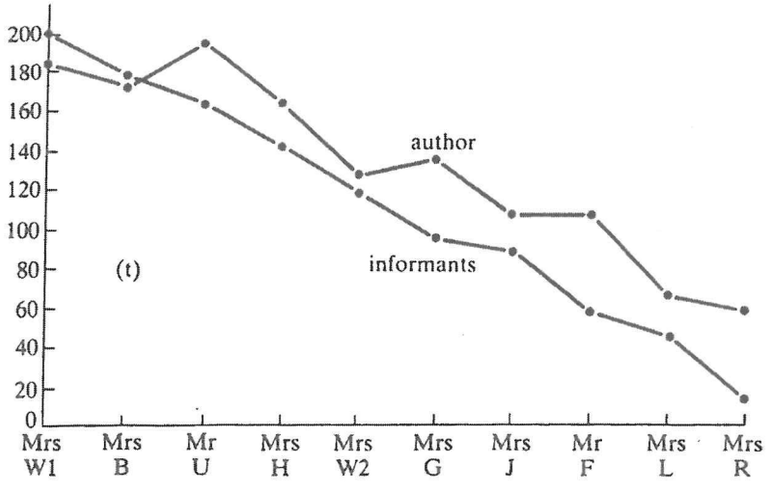

Fig. 13.1 Selected scores for the variable (t) in Trudgill's Norwich study (data reanalysed by the author, 1986: 8).

Table 13.1 *Range of percentual nonstandard usage in 'Sue' and her customers, aggregated into occupational groups (summarised from Coupland 1984)*

	Variation (% of nonstandard forms) in customers	Variation (%) in 'Sue'	Covariation
h-dropping	16.7–88.7	3.7–35.3	.87
/ŋ/ > /n/	0–100	53.8–85.7	.90
t-tapping	0–80	12.0–66.7	.76
cluster reduction	34–77.9	30.1–67.1	.86

Co-variation even increases when adaption is calculated relative to the individual speakers' phonological range.

However, in the interpretation of his results, Coupland rejects the idea of 'direct matching', and advocates an 'interpretive version' of Accommodation Theory which comes rather close to what we have called 'identity projection' above: 'If the participants' pronunciation characteristics converge, it is only as a result of attempts to reduce dissimilarities in social *images*' (1984: 65 [our emphasis]). This is, in fact, the view in many other studies as well: despite the claim by Niedzielski and Giles with which we began this chapter, and despite the contention of sociolinguists such as Labov or Trudgill, most

Table 13.2 *Use of the tag question* eh *by ethnic background and gender (M = Maori, P = Pakeha [Anglo], M = Male, F = Female, I.er = Interviewer, I.ee = Interviewee; data rearranged from Bell (2001: tables 9.2 and 9.3.; arrows: speaker to recipient, e.g. first line: index value 6 for male Maori interviewer speaking to male Maori interviewee, index value 46 for male Maori interviewee speaking to male Maori interviewer)*

Index value	Speaker/recipient constellation	Index value
6	MMI.er ↔ MMI.ee	46
10	MMI.er ↔ MFI.ee	2
0	MMI.er ↔ PMI.ee	0
28	MFI.er ↔ MMI.ee	2
25	MFI.er ↔ MFI.ee	4
35	MFI.er ↔ PFI.ee	0
29	PMI.er ↔ MMI.ee	19
0	PMI.er ↔ PMI.ee	0
14	PMI.er ↔ PFI.ee	0
5	PFI.er ↔ MFI.ee	0
3	PFI.er ↔ PMI.ee	1
9	PFI.er ↔ PFI.ee	0

social-psychological studies on accommodation question the first component of the change-by-accommodation model as stated above. Instead of advergence of one speaker to the observable behaviour of the recipient, they argue that speakers converge to a stereotype of the 'model' receiver, not the actual partner in direct communication.

As an example, consider the use of the discourse particle (tag question) *eh* in New Zealand English, a stereotype particularly of male Maori English. Bell (2001: 152ff.) has investigated this feature and found the *eh*-index values in table 13.2 in interview data.

For some speakers (interviewers and interviewees) there is no evidence of accommodation at all; the female Maori interviewer, the female Anglo interviewer, the female and the male Anglo interviewee and the female Maori interviewee show about the same index value with all partners. Most of them seldom or never use the tag *eh* and they therefore do not provide evidence for, or against, the accommodation hypothesis. The female Maori interviewer, however, shows relatively high index values irrespective of the moderate-to-zero values of her interviewees. This surely contradicts the predictions made by Accommodation Theory. The male Maori interviewer shifts between index values from zero

and 10, but not in the predicted way: with the Maori female interviewee, he uses more *eh*-tags (10) than he does with the Maori male interviewee (6), despite the fact that the former hardly uses any but the latter speaker uses the highest amout of particles of all them (index value 46). Also incompatible with the accommodation model is the fact that the Anglo male interviewer, who does not use any *eh* with the Anglo male interviewee, increases their number considerably with the Anglo female interviewee, although both interviewees do not use the tags themselves.

More interesting than these results, which flatly contradict Accommodation Theory, are some others: as already mentioned, the male Maori interviewee uses a high amount of *eh*-tags despite the fact that his recipient, the male Maori interviewer, has very low index values. And the male Anglo interviewer uses the second highest amoung of *eh*-tags when talking to the male Maori interviewee, by far exceeding his co-participant's values. This points to the possibility that the speakers do not actually wish to conform to their co-participants' behaviour, but rather, to some kind of stereotype that they have of the way in which, say, typical Maori men speak (i.e. with many *eh*-tags).

Experimental research done by Giles and colleagues points in the same direction. Giles focused on 'accent mobility' (i.e. regional variation in British phonology) in his earlier work,[5] but in later publications he has replaced the notion of accent convergence/divergence by the more general term 'communicational accommodation', which now includes the accommodation of prosodic features, of 'information density', of 'joking', of gesture and posture, and much more (cf. Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991: 7). The link between structural convergence of linguistic features in face-to-face interaction and social psychological accommodation is now stated in very cautious terms (cf. Thakerar, Giles, and Cheshire 1982; Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991). One reason for being cautious is that experimental research showed that total convergence on such parameters as pronunciation, speech rate, and message content was not a good strategy to attain the listener's approval, and that phonetic accommodation in particular was often perceived as sounding patronising and was much less efficient in gaining the co-participant's social esteem than, say, accommodation of speech rate or content (Giles and Smith 1979). Other empirical results showed that the 'psychological dimension' (i.e 'individuals' beliefs that they are integrating with and differentiating from one another respectively' thus Thakerar, Giles, and Cheshire 1982: 222) must be strictly separated from the 'linguistic dimension' of convergence in actual speech behaviour. This leads the authors to the conclusion 'that accommodation is often cognitively mediated by our

[5] More precisely, he investigated *perceived* accent divergence and convergence, since the 'linguistic' side of his research usually consisted of judgements rather than factual phonological descriptions; cf. Giles (1973); Giles and Powesland (1975).

stereotypes of how socially categorized others will speak' (Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991: 16).[6,7]

All these studies support the identity-projection model rather than the change-by-accommodation model: psychological convergence does not mean imitating the actual speech of one's co-participant, but rather conforming to some stereotyped image of how a person in the social role of the co-participant ought to, or can be expected to, behave.[8] A similar argument is provided by Selting (1983) in an investigation of style shifting in the speech of a then famous German radio presenter (Carmen Thomas in the WDR show *Hallo Ü-Wagen*). Selting demonstrates how the moderator adapts, not so much to the actual style of her callers when she used nonstandard, Ruhr German features, but rather, to a stereotype of colloquial Ruhr German. Similarly Christen (2000) shows how a Swiss German speaker on a TV talk show does not accommodate to the speech of any of his co-participants but orients himself to a general stereotype of 'acceptable' pan-Swiss German.

In sum, there is some evidence that interpersonal accommodation occurs, but is better explained as accommodation towards a stereotypical *persona* or mental representation (model) of a social group than as accommodation to the actually co-present interlocutor.

3 Short-term Accommodation and Language Change

For a theory of language change in general and dialect change in particular, the question of whether interpersonal dialect or accent accommodation exists is of secondary importance. Let us assume for the moment that there are at least some situations and some linguistic parameters in which such accommodation occurs. The crucial point for the convergence-by-accommodation scenario is that *accommodation is the first step to linguistic changes on the community level.* The model predicts that in those communities in which dialect convergence takes place, interpersonal accommodation should be observed as well, and in

[6] This shift in perspective was due to the unexpected results of several studies on accommodation in hierarchical situations, where, according to Accommodation Theory, the need to adapt to the speech of the more dominant (high-status) speaker should be particularly strong. In fact, it turned out that speakers *diverged* from each other in these hierarchical situations when compared to their behaviour in the equal-status condition.

[7] Cf. among others Giles and Bourhis (1976); and Beebe (1981). In the latter study, it was shown that Chinese–Thai bilingual children adopted Chinese phonology in an interview with a standard Thai speaker who looked Chinese.

[8] Another often-cited example Giles and colleagues use to illustrate the identity aspect of their model is intersexual attraction 'when two young people are out on a date' (Thakerar, Giles, and Cheshire, 1982: 218); here, masculine and feminine behavioural qualitites (including voice register, accent, dialect use) have to remain distinct, i.e. both partners adopt the norms of an absent group (that of young males or females).

the same linguistic variables that undergo linguistic change. There are several studies we can resort to in order to test this hypothesis.

3.1 Accommodation and change in Rimburg and Luxembourg

In his study of the dialect of Rimburg (southeast Limburg, Netherlands), Hinskens (1992) investigated face-to-face accommodation by speakers of the Rimburg dialect interacting with speakers of two adjoining, increasingly more standard-like, dialects and the regional standard variety. The hypothesis was tested that dialect levelling is foreshadowed in accommodation. It was operationalised in two steps:

(a) dialect use shows gradually differing extents of accommodation depending on both
   - the degree to which dialect features are unique to the speaker's dialect, and
   - the variety spoken by audience members – other things being equal

(b) accommodation and levelling show analogous patterns.

Both accommodation and dialect levelling were studied on the basis of fieldwork data which fit an experimental design. The data make it possible to relate both accommodation and dialect levelling to the parameters (apparent) time, geographical space, linguistic structure, as well as the geographical and structural distance between the varieties in contact.

The databases consisted of spontaneous dialect use in situations of in-group (labelled C1) and out-group contact. Three types of out-group contact were created:

- C2, contact with a speaker of a slightly different dialect variety, spoken a few kilometres west of Rimburg;
- C3, contact with a speaker of a fairly different variety of the dialect, spoken some 15 kilometres west of Rimburg; and
- C4, contact with a speaker of the regional variety of the standard language.

Accommodation was operationalised as the suppression of the usage of those features of the speaker's own dialect that do not occur in the interlocutor's dialect, i.e. as 'non-divergence' or 'negative accommodation'.

Accommodation was traced in the application of the rules for ɣ-weakening (a local feature, which only occurs in the Rimburg dialect, i.e. in the C1 condition), n-deletion (which occurs in the dialects spoken in C1 and C2), and t-deletion (a supraregional feature, occurring in the dialects spoken in C1, C2, and C3) to the extent that it is manifested in significantly lower frequencies of use in out-group than in in-group contact situations.

The analyses of *accommodation* were carried out at three levels of specificity. On the first level of specificity, the average overall use of the three dialectal rules in in-group (C1) and out-group contact (aggregated over C2, C3, and C4) were

Table 13.3 *Mean use of the dialectal rules in in-group and out-group contact, the difference between the means and the one-tailed probability of the difference*

	I	O	d	p
ɣ-weakening	31.62	22.26	9.36	.000
n-deletion	45.06	39.31	5.75	.022
t-deletion	80.32	76.52	3.80	.032

analysed. In table 13.3 the means of the overall in-group and the out-group use of the three dialect features are presented; the indexes range from 0 to 100. Remarkably, the out-group means for the use of the three dialect features are systematically lower than the in-group ones. It is particularly interesting that the differences in the use of the dialect features between in-group and out-group contact situations are smaller if the areal spread of the dialect features is wider.

In order to gain an insight into a range of main and interaction effects, multivariate analyses of variance[9] were carried out. On the basis of the outcomes of this statistical approach to the problem, accommodation was studied on a second level of specificity. This concerns the effect of in-group vs. out-group contact on the use of the three dialectal rules, both overall and in certain linguistic conditions. Overall, the in-group vs. out-group effect on ɣ-weakening and t-deletion is highly significant ($p = .001$) and significant ($p = .048$), respectively, whereas it is just outside the level of significance for n-deletion ($p = .065$). These results accord well with those of the univariate analysis shown in table 13.3.

Taking into account the relative number of different linguistic conditions studied, accommodation is more evident as the areal spread of the dialect feature concerned is smaller. So, in this particular respect, accommodation is dialect-geographically gradual; the more a dialect feature is unique for a speaker's dialect, the bigger the relative number of different linguistic conditions in which he will accommodate its use in situations of out-group contact.

Compared to the analyses at the second level of specificity, those on the third level (which were equally based on outcomes of the multivariate analyses of variance mentioned earlier) add systematic differences between the three types of out-group contact situation, C2, C3, and C4. On the assumption that language accommodation is interactionally determined, it must be related not only to a

[9] With age group, out-group contact situation, and the interaction between these two as between-subjects factors and IvsO, age x IvsO, out-group contact situation x IvsO and age x out-group contact situation x IvsO as within-subjects factors. The analyses were carried out both on the overall level and in specific linguistic conditions.

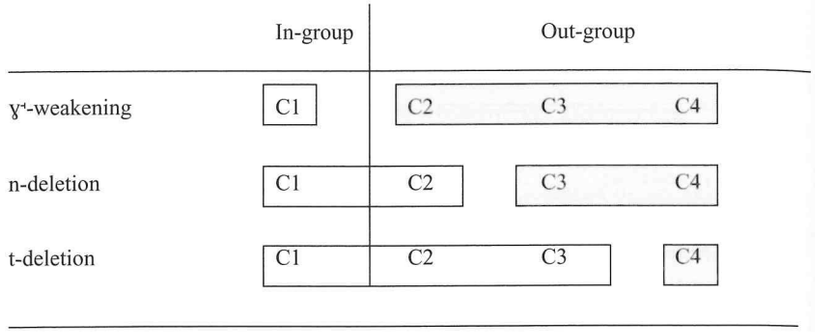

Fig. 13.2 Shaded area: expected accommodation as a function of the distance of the three out-group contact varieties (from Hinskens 1992: section 11.3.2).

speaker's 'normal', everyday language use but also to the language use of his or her interlocutor. In the Rimburg data the first point of reference is the speakers' in-group dialect use (C1); the other one, the variety spoken by the interlocutor, was systematically varied between the three out-group contact situations C2, C3, and C4. Comparing the speakers' out-group dialect use to their in-group speech (C1) shows whether accommodation occurs. Relating accommodation to C2, C3, and C4 makes it possible to establish to what extent accommodation is determined by the language variety spoken by the interlocutors.

In Bell's (1984: 167) audience design, 'a sociolinguistic variable which is differentiated by certain speaker characteristics (e.g. by class, or gender, or age) tends to be differentiated in speech to addressees with those same characteristics'. Following this line of reasoning, one would predict accommodation to increase with the distance between the varieties involved in the out-group contact. This amounts to three predictions (not as such presented here; for details, cf. Hinskens 1992: section 11.3.2). Each of these predictions is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition. Prediction 1 concerns the probability of the relevant interaction effect. The predictions 2 and 3 concern the direction of the interaction effect, i.e. the 'site' where the break should occur, seen from two different perspectives (cf. figure 13.2). The three predictions are therefore complementary. For a pattern in the data to be considered a case of geographically gradual accommodation in the sense of Bell's hypothesis, all three predictions need to be borne out simultaneously.

The outcomes of the required analyses show that none of the three dialectal rules meets all three predictions. So this part of the research shows (and a superficial inspection of the figures in table 13.4 already suggests this) that there is no evidence in favour of the idea that this kind of accommodation is related to the distance of the variety spoken by the out-group interlocutor, *contra* Bell.

Table 13.4 *Mean use of the three dialect features in the four interactional conditions (from Hinskens 1992: section 11.3.2)*

	In-group C1	Out-group C2	Out-group C3	Out-group C4
ɣ-weakening	31.62	22.70	16.30	27.78
n-deletion	45.06	48.95	35.01	33.97
t-deletion	80.32	74.18	80.45	74.94

In short, the claim according to which accommodation in dialect use is gradual is

- supported in so far as the degree to which dialect features are unique to a speaker's dialect allows predictions about the relative number of different linguistic conditions (such as grammatical status, position in the word, degree of stress, etc.; see Hinskens 1992 (section 11.4.2) or 1996 (section 11.3.2)), in which accommodation occurs;
- rejected in so far as the structural distance of the interlocutor's variety is concerned.

So much for part (a) of the operational hypothesis. Moving on to part (b): does this approach produce any evidence for the reflection of *levelling* in *accommodation*? The answer depends partly on how the notion of dialect levelling is operationalised. If it is operationalised as either the loss of geographically limited dialect features, or the growing use of widely distributed ones, in short as structural homogenisation across dialects, the hypothesis is supported by Hinskens' findings. The effects of the variables age group and in-group vs. out-group contact (second level of specificity) show identical patterns across the three dialect features. Both reach statistical significance in the use of the rules for ɣ-weakening and t-deletion, but not in the speakers' application of the n-deletion rule. As for n-deletion, it is most remarkable that the effects of the factors age group ($p = .059$) and in-group vs. out-group contact ($p = .065$) on the overall use are both just outside the level of significance.[10] Both accommodation and levelling seem to hesitate, as it were, in the overall application of the n-deletion rule. And two out of the four linguistic conditions in which this deletion rule is undergoing significant levelling exhibit nearly significant accommodation effects.

In sum, there is sufficient support for the hypothesis that levelling (3rd component) is foreshadowed in accommodation (1st component of the model

[10] Note that the p-values in table 13.3 refer to the significance of the *difference* in the mean use of each dialect feature between in-group and out-group contact in a *univariate* analysis, whereas the latter p-value mentioned here refers to the significance of the *effect* of in-group vs. out-group contact in a *multivariate* analysis.

discussed in section 1) if levelling is defined as structural homogenisation across dialects, and operationalised as either the loss of dialect features with a relatively restricted areal spread (ɣ-weakening and n-deletion) or the increasing use of fairly widespread features (t-deletion). If, however, the meaning of the notion dialect levelling is restricted to the loss of dialect features, there is considerably less evidence in favour of the hypothesis, since the use of the t-deletion rule shows accommodation but the opposite of loss.

Another recent investigation in which language change and interpersonal accommodation were studied and which, therefore, can be used to test our hypothesis is Peter Gilles' study of the dialects of Luxembourg (*Letzebuergesch*, Gilles 1999). When compared to the data in the *Luxemburgischer Sprachatlas* (Linguistic Atlas of Luxembourg) which was compiled in 1925–1939, the situation today is characterised by a high amount of levelling between the various dialect areas, usually with the dialect of the capital (Luxembourg city) as the winner.[11] Yet in interdialectal speech (i.e. conversation between speakers from the various dialect areas) Gilles found no accommodation in most of his variables. For instance, the eastern and northern dialects of Luxembourg are today in the process of converging towards the central Luxemburg pronunciations /i/ and /u/ for older /ei/, /ə/, /ig/, etc., and /ou/, /ug/, /aː/, respectively (Gilles 1999: 153). Nevertheless, of the three speakers of the northern and eastern dialects in the sample who in an intradialectal conversation (i.e. with co-participants from the same area) still used a more than negligible number of the older forms at all, two (O1, O2) *increased* the use of the older forms in the interdialect condition, while only one (N1) decreased it (figure 13.3).

All three speakers were investigated in interaction with co-participants who did not, or only rarely, use the diphthongal, non-central forms. It seems that the way in which the three informants adjusted their speech to the interdialectal situation varied on an individual rather than on a systematic basis, and certainly not in accordance with the change-by-accommodation model.

The same picture emerged for the variable (ei), which is also in a process of levelling towards the diphthongal form, typical of the speech of the southern and central areas, i.e. the standard variety (Gilles 1999: 183). Of the four northern and eastern speakers, who still used the areally peripheral monophthongal forms with some frequency in the intradialect condition, three differed only very moderately in the intra- and the interdialectal condition; two of them shifted towards the monophthongal variant, one increased the diphthongal realisation (cf. figure 13.4). Only one informant (N3) accommodated to her co-participant's

[11] Gilles shows this to be the case by comparing questionnaire-type wordlists with the LSA data, which were collected in a similar way. In interview data the differences are even more pronounced.

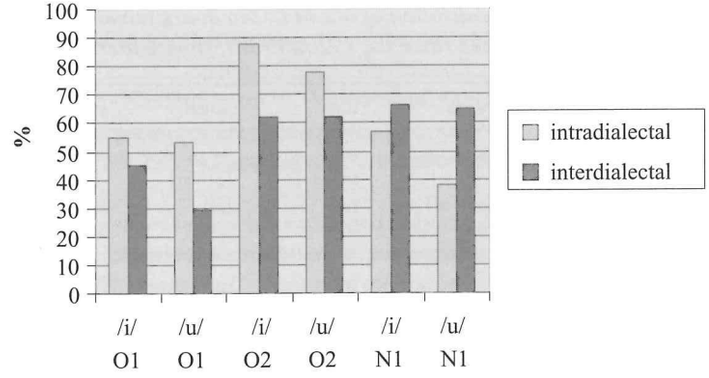

Fig. 13.3 Standard (i.e. non-Luxemburg city) realisations of the variables (i) and (u) in high-scoring dialect speakers from the east (O1 and O2) and the north (N1) (= nonstandard speakers) in intra- and interdialectal condition (from Gilles 1999: 153).

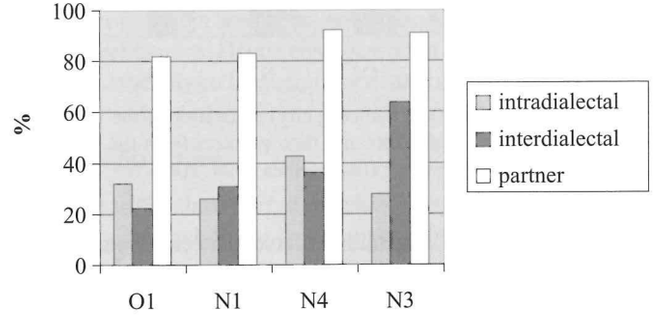

Fig. 13.4 Standard (i.e. Luxemburg city) realisations of the variable (ei) in high-scoring dialect speakers from the east (O1) and the north (N1, N4, N3) in intra- and interdialectal condition, and the scores of their interlocutors (from Gilles 1999: 183).

speech by reducing her northern monophthongs in a way that is unlikely to be due to chance.[12]

Finally, let us look at Gilles' analysis of the variable /aː/ in the inter- and intradialectal condition, the only variable in his study which, at first glance,

[12] In figure 13.4, the scores for the out-group co-participants refer to their speech in the intradialectal condition, since Gilles does not provide the respective figures for the interdialectal condition. The two do not differ in important ways, however (P. Gilles, pers. comm.).

Table 13.5 *Realisation of /a:/ in Luxembourg (shaded areas refer to changes since the 1920s/1930s; from Gilles 1999: 111)*

Variants	North	East	South	Centre (capital)
[a:]	+	+	+	+
[ɔ:]	[ɔ:~a:]	[ɔ:~a:]	[ɔ:~a:]	–
[o:]	[o:~ a:]	[a:]	[a:]	–
[ɑ:]	[ɑ: ~ɑ:]	–	–	–

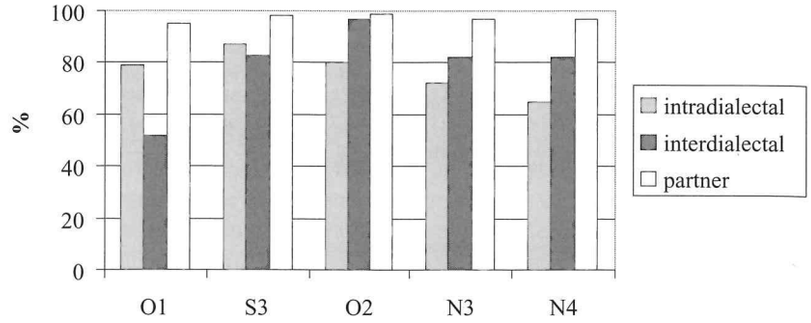

Fig. 13.5 Standard (Luxembourg city) realisation of the variable (a:) in high-scoring vernacular speakers and their partners from the centre area in intra- and interdialectal contexts (from Gilles 1999: 106).

provides evidence for interdialectal interpersonal accommodation. In the variation space /a: (~ æ:)~ ɔ:/ for the reflexes of OHG /a/ and /ou/, Gilles once again finds massive levelling towards /a:/, the variant of the centre and of Luxembourg city. As shown in table 13.5, older forms different from the Luxembourg city (central) realisation are now in variation with the central form [a:], in the north, the east, and the south. [o:] has disappeared in the east and south entirely. Only the eastern and southern [a:]-forms have resisted levelling towards [a:]. Figure 13.5 illustrates the use of the central form in intradialect and interdialect conversational speech.

All conversational partners in the interdialectal condition used less back/raised, i.e. more standard realisations, than the speakers investigated. In three out of these five cases, accommodation towards the standard forms took place; only in one case was there the opposite effect (O1); one speaker showed no change. This can be interpreted as evidence for face-to-face accommodation. The exceptional case of O1, who used more nonstandard features in interacting with a non-backing/raising partner than with a backing/raising partner, is of some interest, however; whereas all other informants were recorded while

speaking to an informant of the central area in the interdialectal condition, speaker O1 talked to another speaker from the east who, on the basis of her highly diverging (but still eastern) dialect, was classified as coming from a different dialect area (Niederdonven vs. Vianden; cf. Gilles 1999: 68). Although this conversational partner of O1 used the standard, non-velarised forms as often as the partners of S3, O2, N3 and N4 did, O1 responded very differently from her, by *increasing* her use of the peripheral forms instead of reducing them. This factual *divergence* is plausibly explained as being a case of 'psychological accommodation' towards the stereotype of the northern and eastern speakers, along the lines of Thakerar *et al.*'s argument mentioned above. It seems that with speakers from the central area the number of non-central forms is suppressed, while in interaction with speakers from the periphery, an increase in the dialectal forms can be observed, independently of the actual speech behaviour of their partners, simply because they are *known* to come from the periphery.

The studies by Hinskens and Gilles therefore do not support the change-by-accommodation model in any straightforward way. Although in both cases (that of the Limburg dialects of Dutch and that of the Luxembourg dialects), an ongoing language change can be observed at the community level, individual speakers do not, or only in a few cases, accommodate to others who do not use the divergent dialect features (Hinskens), or who in their speech already use the spreading feature much more frequently or even exclusively (Gilles).

4 Network Structure

Let us finally turn to the third part of the change-by-accommodation model as outlined above. It seems relatively uncontroversial that long-term accommodation foreshadows change on the community level (cf. Kerswill 2002a); however, the data presented in this article make it less clear whether more *frequent* interaction with persons whose speech displays the new, spreading feature should favour long-term accommodation in the individual and thereby in the community. One way of testing the hypothesis is to build on the insights of network theory, taking the position of the speakers in the network, their types of network contacts, and, in particular, the intensity of these contacts, into account.

The first generation of sociolinguistic studies based on the concept of social networks (Labov 1973; Milroy 1980) focused on the conservative effect of dense and multiplex network structures (i.e. their effectiveness in slowing or preventing change, in particular a shift from more local to more regional or standard way of speaking). There is some evidence, however, that densely structured networks with a tight internal organisation and frequent intensive contacts between members may not only prevent but also favour the diffusion of a change once the change is admitted. This is not as contradictory as it may appear; while densely structured networks will keep an innovation out for a

long time, as soon as it has entered the community (at relevant positions in the network) there is a good chance that it will spread fast. For instance, Kerswill and Williams (2000) argue that the emerging local variety of the new town of Milton Keynes is shaped in important ways by older children and adolescents. The adoption of variants which may eventually become features of the Milton Keynes variety, such as fronting of the diphthong /ou/ ([æʏ], [æɪ]) in words like *goat*, seems to crucially depend on the networks of these young speakers. Kerswill and Williams summarise their findings as follows: 'All the high scorers [for fronting of (ou)] . . . are very well integrated into a (mainly school-centred) group of friends; they are sociable and are often cited as friends by other children. By contrast, the low scorers are largely cut off from their peers.' And they conclude, following Labov: 'It is not the socially peripheral . . . groups who innovate, but groups with more resources and more extensive social contacts.' Note, however, that while the peer group had a high linguistic appeal for these young speakers, and a considerable impact on their speech, the language of their mothers, with whom they arguably had just as frequent and intense contacts, was entirely irrelevant to them linguistically. What does seem to be involved are not only matters of frequency or intensity of network contacts, but also issues of identity. Peers have social appeal, mothers do not.

There are other studies which support the idea that strong network contacts favour change. For instance, Siebenhaar (1999) is able to show in his study on language change in Aarau (Switzerland) that those speakers in his sample who had more social contacts with the west (Zurich) used significantly fewer eastern (Berne) phonological variants[13] than did those who had their more important social contacts in the east. Here, lacking network contacts with Berne speakers and having strong contacts with Zurich speakers seem to have shaped the speakers' dialect as well. On the other hand, and following a very different line of thinking in network theory, one which echoes Granovetter's insistence on the importance of 'weak-network' ties for the transmission of information and innovation from one community to another (Granovetter 1973), Milroy and Milroy have claimed that 'outside influence increases in inverse proportion to strength of ties in a group' (Milroy and Milroy 1985b, 1992). According to this view, we need to distinguish between the central areas of a multiplex and dense network and the peripheral areas in which community members may have numerous but superficial network ties with people from diverging social backgrounds. In the central areas, the network impedes innovations from spreading, since people firmly positioned in this zone are too saturated with social contacts to reorient themselves socially and to be willing to accept new forms. But in the peripheral areas, we will find the innovators: those members of the community

[13] To be more precise, he found this effect in his factor '2', which he dubs 'phonological', whereas his factor '1' ('morphology') showed no such effect.

who are familiar with many ways of life and, therefore, also with the ongoing innovations.

Barden and Großkopf (1998)[14] address this question in a study on long-term dialect accommodation as a consequence of migration by Saxon (east German) speakers into two different dialect areas in the west and south of Germany during, or shortly after, the collapse of the GDR. Internal migration is a suitable testing ground for the relevance of weak- and strong-network ties for linguistic accommodation, since it is essentially linked to network formation. Migrants are almost always in a situation in which old networks break down and new ones must be constructed. On the other hand, they are confronted with strong local networks. Depending on the way in which they relate to these local networks, three main integration types can be distinguished:

1. Immigrants may join networks with other immigrants from the same background, erecting a dense social structure around them which provides shelter against the new social environment and mutual help to survive socially in relative autonomy. Contacts with local members are restricted to a minimum. Linguistic accommodation is not required and does not take place. Rather, linguistic developments in the group are suppressed, sometimes more than in the society from which the migrant group has originated. This case of segregated but strong networks was never observed in the Saxon migrants but is, of course, well known from overseas migration out of Europe (prototypically in the so-called language islands).
2. Immigrants may join the local networks and become members of a densely structured social aggregate in which the locals are dominant. This applied to 19 out of the 52 informants (integration type 'A'). These Saxons were highly satisfied with their new social environment; contacts with Saxon compatriots no longer played an important role in their new life. According to the third component of the change-by-accommodation model, short- and long-term accommodation of the local speech habits can be expected, since there is frequent interactional contact with local speakers. At the same time, this accommodation will lead to the suppression of the salient features of the Saxon vernacular.
3. Immigrants may not succeed, or not be interested, in establishing strong network ties with any – local or migrant – network; instead, they are engaged in open networks, withunstable, rapidly changing and often superficial contacts. Since this case was quite frequent, three subtypes were distinguished, i.e.
   - migrants who where satisfied with this situation (18 informants, integration type 'B');
   - migrants who were unhappy with this situation, and who attempted to change their situation (although unsuccessfully); in doing so, and in

[14] Cf. Barden and Großkopf (1998) as well as for summaries Auer, Barden, and Großkopf (1998); and Großkopf, Barden, and Auer (1996). The figures are taken from Barden and Großkopf (1998).

Table 13.6 *Mean loss of Upper Saxon Vernacular features and adoption of local features*[a]

Integration type	A	B	C	D
loss of Saxon features	38%	27%	−29%	45%
adoption of local features	yes	no	no	yes

[a] For more details, cf. Großkopf, Barden, and Auer (1996); intermediate types AB and BC have been left out of the table here for clarity. They do not alter the argument. The minus value in integration type C indicates an increase of Upper Saxon Vernacular features, i.e. a divergence from the standard-speaking co-participants.

experiencing failure, they developed a strong dislike for the receiving region and for West Germany in general. Their attitudinal and factual orientation was backwards towards Saxony (this applied to a small subgroup of 4 speakers, integration type 'C');

- finally, migrants who were also unhappy with this situation and made an effort to change it (again without much success), but had no orientation towards Saxony; rather, they tried to make their way in the West (a group of 10 informants, integration type 'D').

According to the change-by-accommodation model, informants with weak ties with members of the local community would not be expected to accommodate the local dialect features nor give up their own vernacular; however, they would be ideal carriers of an innovation back into the Saxon context according to Granovetter's and Milroy's theory. The overall results of the longitudinal study which spanned over a period of two years[15] are summarised in table 13.6, above; they refer to the relative loss of Upper Saxon features (average of all 13 phonological variables investigated), i.e. *negative* accommodation (cf. Hinskens' study discussed in section 3.1 above), and to accommodation to the local regiolect (*positive* accommodation).

A look at some phonological variables gives a more concrete picture of the impact of network structure on long-term accommodation (cf. figures 13.6 and 13.7). A typical distribution is the one shown in figure 13.7 for the variables 'lowering of long /e:/' (as in /le:ben/ 'to live' → [lɛ:bm]), 'unrounding of the high short vowel /y/' (as in /hʏtə/ 'hut' → [hɯtə]), and 'monophthongisation of /au/ (> MHG /ou/)' (only calculated in the word /aux/ 'also' > [ɔ:x]). In all these variables, it is integration type D which loses most Upper Saxon Vernacular.[16] The less-frequent pattern, in which type A surpasses type D with

[15] Informants were recorded in three-monthly intervals by speakers of standard German who had neither a local West German nor an East German accent.

[16] Figures include strong and weak Upper Saxon Vernacular realisations.

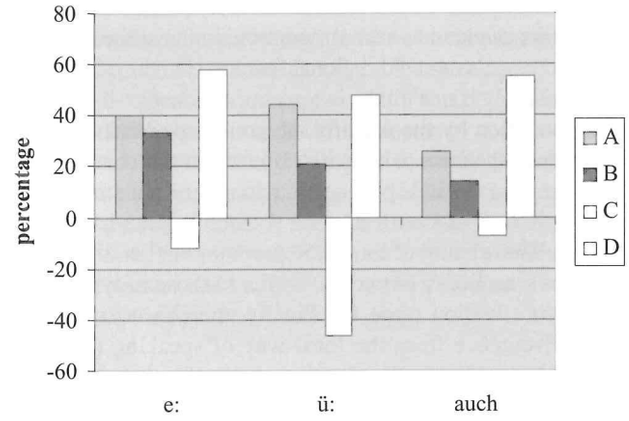

Fig. 13.6 Degree of loss of the Upper Saxon Vernacular features lowering of /e:/, unrounding of /y:/, and monophthongal realisation of /ou/ in the word *auch* according to network types.

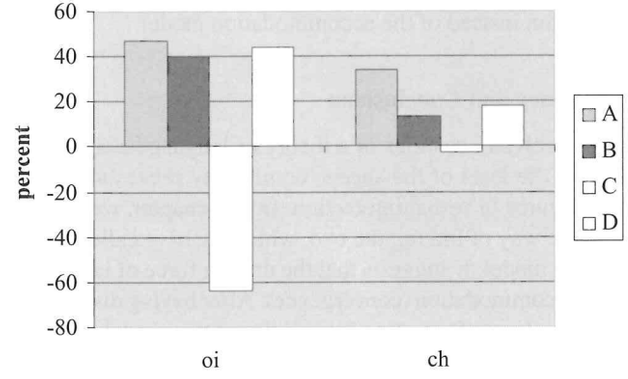

Fig. 13.7 Degree of loss of the Upper Saxon Vernacular features unrounding of /oi/ onset and coronalisation of /x/ according to network types.

respect to the loss of Upper Saxon Vernacular features, is exemplified in figure 13.7 by the variables 'coronalisation of /ch/' (as in /li:gt/ → [li:çt] → [lijt]) and 'unrounding of /oi/' (as in /froind/ 'friend' → [fʀɔ̈ɪnt]). As it turns out, integration type D accommodates to the standard variety more than the other integration types in 9 of the 13 variables; integration type A in three variables, integration type B in only one. In types A and D we also find accommodation to the local dialect.

These results clearly show that a fast and successful integration of immigrants into local networks can lead to accommodation, in the sense of taking on local features and losing one's own old regional features. On the other hand, and possibly more surprisingly if one thinks in terms of the change-by-accommodation model, accommodation by the socially integrated speakers of type A is often surpassed by type D speakers, who, with respect to network structure, represent the opposite case: here we find speakers with loose and ephemeral network contacts who are highly dissatisfied with their social life, yet who try to make their way in the West. The amount of linguistic accommodation decreases markedly in those speakers who live in networks similar to those of type D but are quite content with their situation (type B). Finally, there is no accommodation at all, but rather divergence from the local way of speaking (and a return to a more Saxonian Vernacular) in the (few) speakers who show a strong backward orientation to Saxony, again combined with weak network ties and a highly negative perception of one's own situation. It appears that the best predictor of accommodation is not frequency of interaction with speakers of the variety to which they accommodated, but, instead, a strong attitudinal orientation towards the group with whom one wants to associate, or a strong attitudinal dissociation from those from whom one wants to dissociate. This finding supports the identity-projection instead of the accommodation model.

5 Summary and Conclusions

One of the unresolved questions of a theory of language change is how structural change on the level of the speech community relates to the variable use of linguistic features in verbal interaction. In this chapter, we have looked at a relatively simple way of linking the two, which we have called the change-by-accommodation model. It suggests that the driving force of language change is interpersonal accommodation (convergence). After having discussed the results of some studies relevant for testing the validity of this model, we certainly cannot exclude the possibility that participants in interaction accommodate to each other's behaviour, nor can we exclude the possibility that the frequency of exposure to a new, spreading, feature through intensive network contacts with its users can lead to the adoption of this variable. It has been difficult, however, to find evidence for the co-occurrence of interpersonal accommodation and community-level change. Several findings suggest that the driving force behind change in the individual, and also in the community, is not imitation of the language of one's interlocutor but, rather, an attempt to assimilate one's language to the possibly stereotyped characteristics of a group one wants to be part of, or resemble. Only such a view is compatible with the well-known phenomenon of hypercorrection (or, for that matter, hyperdialectalism). The hypercorrecting speaker arguably overshoots the target of the actual speech behaviour of

the group he or she wants to resemble; behavioural data are not available to a sufficient degree, or are not perceived with the necessary accuracy, to replicate the target group's speech behaviour, and since the stereotype is different from actual behaviour, the speaker overcompensates. This more abstract, identity-related motivation for the selection of certain forms of speech can go together with interpersonal accommodation if the speaker wants to resemble the group to which his or her co-participants belong, and if his or her stereotype of this group is close to the co-participant's actual behaviour. This, however, is by no means always the case. In the absence of such a fit between behavioural data in face-to-face encounters and stereotyped social personae, the latter seem to override the effect of the former.