13 How do dialects get the features they have? On the process of new dialect formation

RAYMOND HICKEY

1 Introduction

The concern of the present chapter is to look at a particular type of situation found historically in the Anglophone world outside of England and to consider the forces which have been instrumental in determining what features the varieties at this location evince. The location in question is New Zealand for what can be termed a *new dialect formation* scenario (Trudgill et al. 2000a).

The present chapter is intended to make explicit the assumptions which lie behind the discussion of new dialect formation and so hopefully clarify the many issues of theoretical importance raised by the recent innovative work on this process by Elizabeth Gordon, Peter Trudgill and their associates. Before beginning it is important to stress that the examination of this scenario rests on a significant premise, necessary for the discussion to be found below: Speakers are unconsciously aware of features in their own variety and those which they are continually in contact with. If this premise is not accepted in principle then the arguments below will be vacuous. With regard to new dialect formation, I am in broad agreement with the statement by Trudgill et al. that "we conclude that the shape of New Zealand English, a fascinating laboratory for the study of linguistic change, can be accounted for in terms of the mixing together of different dialects of English from the British Isles" (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 316). However, the deterministic view which sees the numerical superiority of variants as the main reason for the survival of some and the rejection of others would appear to be too simple and in need of further nuancing to include, at the very least, speakers' active, though unconscious, participation in the forging of a new variety and a more differentiated assessment of the status of the main ethnic groups in New Zealand society in the second half of the 19th century.

This chapter will first of all present a summary of the situation with new dialect formation and then consider what happened during focussing, i.e. at the stage when New Zealand English attained a stable and distinctive profile. New dialect formation concerns phonology almost exclusively. But it would appear that early forms of New Zealand English also showed considerable grammatical variation. However, this appears to have been levelled out with later generations of speakers (Peter Trudgill, personal communication).

Within the context of the present book this chapter would appear to be justified because it illustrates principles which seem to have been operative historically — random vs. predetermined transmission across generations, for example — and which are thus part of language change. These principles are worthy of consideration in the genesis of varieties of English which arose out of many other scenarios. Furthermore, certain aspects of this genesis differ in principle in the different scenarios and so provide illuminating contrast. For instance, peer-dialect in the critical phase of accent

determination (up to one's teens) was present, for instance, in language shift situations (in Ireland and South Africa) and absent in the earlier phases of new dialect formation in New Zealand (Gordon and Trudgill 1999, 2002).

2 New dialect formation

The term *new dialect formation* refers to a linguistic situation which arises when there is a mixture of dialects leading to a single new dialect which is different from all inputs. In the context of New Zealand, new dialect formation took place after initial immigration of speakers from different regions of the British Isles. This was a process of dialect mixture in which, over just a few generations, a clearly focussed variety arose which was then fairly uniform and distinct from any other existing varieties of the language in question.

Due to the felicitous decision of the National Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand to record the experiences of older people, mostly children of the first European settlers in New Zealand (Trudgill et al. 2000b: 113f.), there is now a body of acoustic data which documents the speech of New Zealanders reaching back into the second half of the 19th century. The Mobile Disc Recording Unit of the NBCNZ made the recordings between 1946 and 1948 and in 1989, under the auspices of Elizabeth Gordon, the Department of Linguistics of the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, purchased copies of the recordings. These have been transcribed, catalogued and remastered so as to serve as a reliable body of data on early New Zealand English. The uniqueness of this corpus lies in the fact that it goes back as far as one can get to the founding generation of settlers in New Zealand, indeed it is unique in the context of overseas varieties of English, none of which has data as close as this to the first settlers of their particular location. The data in the recordings has been analysed meticulously by Peter Trudgill, Elizabeth Gordon and their associates (Gordon 1998) and the result of their work has been published in a number of articles in recent years (see the survey in Gordon, Campbell, Lewis, Maclagan and Trudgill 2001). These studies represent the most significant examination of new dialect formation to date and have thus been consulted in detail for the present chapter which looks at the assumptions and principles of new dialect formation with a view to reaching a better understanding of this process which is central to the dissemination of English during the past few centuries.

It is an essential assumption of Peter Trudgill, Elizabeth Gordon and their associates that the distinctiveness of the variety resulting from new dialect formation is an epiphenomenon arising from the interaction of forces which are not directly under the control of speakers. The new variety is in no way constructed by its speakers in order to have a distinctive form of a language spoken elsewhere which would then match other collective differences to be found in the new society at the overseas location. This point is one where the present author differs most from Peter Trudgill, Elizabeth Gordon and their associates. The linguistic profile of a new variety can, in the present author's opinion, indeed be seen as a product of unconscious choices made across a broad front in a new society to create a distinct linguistic identity. This motivation is not one which is to be found early on (in Trudgill's first and probably his second phase as well, see below). It probably does not apply to the process of koinéisation, the levelling out of salient regional features in the initial dialect mix (Gordon 2000, Bauer 1986, 2000), but it can be seen as an unconscious motivation determining the extent to which inherited ongoing linguistic change is favoured or not. Such change, as Elizabeth Gordon, Peter

Trudgill and their associates readily concede, often involves the favouring of quantitatively minor variants. This in turn can be interpreted as motivated by speakers' gradual awareness of an embryonic new variety of the immigrants' language, something which correlates with the distinctive profile of the new society which is speaking this variety. If such a view has any validity, then this is only towards the end of the third stage of new dialect formation (see below) when focussing takes place, although the scene may be set in the second stage, for example with the favouring of somewhat raised short front vowels from the initial mixture of realisations (Trudgill, Gordon and Lewis 1998), something which provided the trajectory along which New Zealand English has moved since (Bell 1997).[1]

2.1 Three stages in new dialect formation

In the work of Peter Trudgill new dialect formation has been a theme since the mid-eighties (see Trudgill 1986) and recently he has refined his views on the stages involved here. Essentially, Trudgill recognises three stages with the second and third subdivided into two further stages. As these divisions are central to any consideration of new dialect formation, it is worth recalling the description of the three stages offered in Trudgill et al. (2000a).

> **The first stage: rudimentary levelling**
> The first stage involves the initial contact between adult speakers of different regional and social varieties in the new location, with certain types of accommodation of speakers to one another in face-to-face interaction and thus, as a consequence, rudimentary dialect levelling. In the case of New Zealand, this stage would have lasted until approximately 1860.
> For instance, a widespread 19th-century British feature which is absent from our recordings is the merger of /v/ and /w/ as /w/, giving *village* as *willage*, which was a feature of many south-of-England dialects at this time. (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 303f.)[2]

Significantly, the feature with which Trudgill et al. choose to illustrate the initial dialect levelling is one which involved not inconsiderable homophony in those varieties of southern 19th century British English which showed it. This fact is relevant to the discussion below, but to continue, the other stages are described in the words of Trudgill et al. (2000a).

> **The second stage (a): extreme variability**
> The second stage of the new-dialect formation process, of which the ONZE (*Origins of New Zealand Corpus*, RH) corpus now provides direct rather than inferred evidence, and which would have lasted until approximately 1900, is characterised by considerable variability. (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 304)[3]

The period they are interested in consists of the last four decades of the 19th century for which there is considerable demographic data available in census form as will be discussed shortly. Trudgill et al. (2000a: 305) do concede that it was in the "linguistic melting pots" that the greatest degree of variability was to be found and where new dialect formation was promoted. Such melting pots were urban centres, although not large by present-day European standards, and they mention Arrowtown specifically.

The conclusion from this is that new dialect formation is an essentially urban phenomenon, or at the very least, one which requires a density of speakers from different backgrounds and importantly from all the backgrounds which are significant for the settlement of the country in question. In the context of late 19th century New Zealand the three principal backgrounds are England, Scotland and Ireland.

The second stage (b): further levelling

Inter-individual variability of this type, however, although striking and considerable, is perhaps somewhat reduced compared to what was present during the first stage. That is, in spite of all the variability we witness in the ONZE corpus, it is possible that some further levelling occurred. For example, there are some features which we can be fairly sure must have been brought to New Zealand by some immigrating speakers, and must therefore have survived the initial contact stage and have been present in early New Zealand English, but which are nevertheless absent, or almost so, from the ONZE recordings. [4]

One such feature is the use of the FOOT vowel in the lexical sets of both FOOT and STRUT, indicating a system of five rather than six short, checked vowels. As is well known, this feature was and still is normal in middle-class as well as working-class accents in nearly all of England north of a line from the Bristol Channel to the Wash – an area comprising approximately half the geographical surface of England and containing approximately half its population. (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 306f.)

Trudgill et al. (2000a) explain the virtual absence of a five-term short vowel system, i.e. one without a STRUT vowel, demographically because the only northern country with this system and from which there was noticeable emigration to New Zealand was Warwickshire (though very little is known about this).

So a feature with such low statistical occurrence would not have any reasonable chance of surviving the process of new dialect formation.

Third stage focussing

It is only subsequently, then, in the third stage, that the new dialect will appear as a stable, crystallised variety. This crystallisation is the result of a *focussing* (italics mine - RH) process whose effects are very clear in modern New Zealand English, which has a remarkably small amount of regional variation. However, the big question is, as we have already noted, why the levelling that occurred took the precise form that it did. (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 307)

In their elaboration of this focussing, Trudgill et al. state that the focussing takes place via (i) koinéisation which involves the loss of demographically minority variants and (ii) simplification which can lead to the survival of minority variants if these display more regularity than the majority variants. An example of the latter would be the use of schwa in unstressed syllables as is found in New Zealand English in words like *David, naked*. Trudgill et al. point out that only about 32% of their informants from the ONZE archives had schwa in this position, i.e. speakers of Irish, East Anglian and West Country origin but that because schwa is a less marked vowel than /ɪ/ it survived the third stage of new dialect formation (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 311).

2.2 *The quantitative argument*

In their discussion of the survival of forms into the third stage, and hence into modern New Zealand English, Trudgill et al. emphasise that it is majority forms which survive. They stress that "majority" refers to the numerical occurrence of a form across all dialect groupings of late 19th century New Zealand and not just in the most numerous grouping, i.e. the south-east English immigrants. To illustrate this they discuss the demise of *h*-dropping in early New Zealand English (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 309, see also Bell and Holmes 1992, Maclagan 1998). This was found with the majority of south-east English speakers but with only a minority of all dialect speakers at the critical phase.

H-dropping

	S-E English	others	(Scottish 22%; Irish 20%, etc.)
with	70%	0%	
without	30%	100%	
overall:	only 35% have dropping		

Table 1: *Survival of majority forms in New Zealand English*

The south-east English constituted the largest group (though they were just less than 50%) so no feature of south-east English could survive (even if it was 100% present there) unless this feature was shared in part by another group in order to have an overall occurrence of over 50%.

To strengthen their argument, Trudgill et al. discuss another phenomenon, this time a merger, which did not occur in New Zealand English.

> Another southeast-of-England feature which did not survive into New Zealand English was the merger of /w/ and /ʍ/, as in *which, where, white*. (It is true that this merger is now appearing in modern New Zealand English, but this seems to be a recent phenomenon – see Bayard, 1987). Here again, we can advance the same explanation. Although the Englishes of southeastern England and, probably, Australia, had merged *whales* and *Wales*, it was the Scottish, Irish and northern England (and probably North American) form which was the one to survive the levelling process for purely demographic reasons – and this in spite of mergers having an advantage over distinctions. (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 310)

Two further aspects, over and beyond numerical considerations, should be added here. The first is that /h/-dropping, like the /v/ to /w/ shift (see above), is a feature which results in considerable homophony in English so that while the general principle that mergers are preferred over distinctions in contact situations holds, this is not so when significant homophony arises as a result. The second point to make concerns the status of the voiceless labio-velar glide [ʍ]. There are strong phonological reasons for considering this as consisting of /h/ + /w/ although phonetically it is a single segment. This is in keeping with the view that sonority increases from the edge to the nucleus of a syllable and that glides — [j] and [w] — are voiced in English in accordance with their unmarked value (see Hickey 1984) for further cogent arguments in favour of this phonological interpretation). Thus the retention of /h/ and /hw/ [ʍ] in early New Zealand English increased the phonological symmetry of the emerging variety. The recent tendency to lose [ʍ] could, as in the case of southern British English in general,

be a result of its restricted distribution in English, i.e. it only occurs in word-initial position and does not have a high functional load, despite such minimal pairs as *wet* and *whet*, *which* and *witch* (none of the elements of these pairs are from the same word class and any speech context is ample to distinguish them).

Trudgill et al. (2000a: 311) remark further that "what was *not* present at the first stage, of course, was the *combination* of /h/-dropping with retention of /ʍ/ demonstrated by Mr. Ritchie" (an informant from the ONZE archive — RH). Assuming that the recordings are distinct enough for this situation to be clearly recognised, then one can only conclude that this distribution is an idiosyncrasy of one speaker. There is no variety of English which has /h/-dropping and [ʍ], because /h/-dropping means that the cluster /hw/ has also been simplified to /w/.

2.3 The survival of minority variants

Ambidental fricatives in THINK *and* BREATHE5 In the discussion of third stage focussing above, it was stated that in some cases minority variants can survive if they represent the unmarked option in a set of variants. The prime example offered by Trudgill et al. (2000a) is the use of /ə/ rather than /ɪ/ in unstressed syllables in words like *trusted*. However, this does not appear to consider all factors in such instances. To illustrate that there is more involved here than appears initially, consider another case of survival and demise discussed by Peter Trudgill, Elizabeth Gordon and their associates.

> Many of our speakers have the distinctively Irish feature of using dental plosives rather than the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. We must not, however, be surprised that this feature has been levelled out in modern New Zealand English because it was still a minority form amongst our informants, as it would also have been in Australia. Trudgill et al. (2000a: 312)

But this argument is in contradiction to that used when explaining the survival of minority /ə/ in unstressed syllables (see above). The ambidental fricatives of English are cross-linguistically quite marked and are only to be found in English, Welsh, Spanish, some Italian dialects, Greek and Danish, in the context of European languages, for example. It is true that dental stops are less marked than dental fricatives (in the sense of cross-linguistic statistical occurrence and appearance in first language acquisition), but in English the use of dental stops leads to a near merger with alveolar stops causing quasi-homophony (to English ears) in pairs of words like *tinker* and *thinker*. Indeed given the fact that over 45% of the Irish emigrants were from Munster (McCarthy 2000: 272) a significant proportion of the Irish may have had a dental to alveolar merger anyway, i.e. complete homophony. The retention of English ambidental fricatives had the advantage of disambiguation for many words quite apart from it being in accord with the relative prestige of the English section of the early New Zealand population.

2.4 The interpretation of mergers

Short vowels before /r/ Peter Trudgill, Elizabeth Gordon and their associates in general support the dictum that mergers advance at the expense of distinctions in a dialect contact and new dialect formation scenario. As an instance of this they cite a common

distinction found among speakers of Scottish origin in the ONZE archives, i.e. the use of distinctive values (up to three) for vowels before /r/ as in *fir, fur, fern*. "Not only was this a minority form demographically in the original mixture, but simplification dictates that mergers normally survive at the expense of non-mergers in contact situations (Labov, 1994)." (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 314).

In the opinion of the present author this is too simplified a view of the matter: mergers are only preferred if the functional load of the distinction realised in the non-merged situation is *low*. This is clearly the case with short vowels before tautosyllabic /r/. The distinction between /i/ and /u/ has a minimal pair *fir* vs. *fur* and for the mid front vowel one of the few pairs is *tern* vs. *turn*. The homophony is nothing near that resulting from /h/-dropping or the merger of /v/ with /w/.

Short versus long low vowels English dialects are known for the fluctuation they show in the realisation of low vowels in two specific phonetic contexts. The first is before fricatives (Wells 1982) as in *laugh, path, grass,* where one finds [æ] or [ɑː], and the second is before a nasal or nasal plus obstruent (the latter applies above all to Romance loanwords) as in *sample, demand, plant, dance*, where either [æ] or [ɑː] is found. Trudgill et al. (1998) see evidence for two separate contexts, resulting from two distinct sound changes, in their ONZE recordings.

> Excluding speakers, as we obviously must, who do not have a distinction between /æ/ and /ɑː/ – presumably as a result of West Country and/or Scottish input – as well as those with obvious north-of-England accents who have /æ/ in both sets, very many ONZE speakers consistently have /ɑː/ in the lexical set of *after, grass, path* but /æ/ in the set of *dance, plant, sample*. Out of 79 eligible speakers, 38 (48%) have this pattern. In the end, in modern New Zealand English, it was the pattern used by the other 52% of our informants which won out. But it must have been a close-run thing. Trudgill et al. (2000a: 315)

Here differences in numerical distribution of 2-3% are named as the reason why a certain variant survived. It is questionable whether this 2-3% in fact existed over the entire late 19th century New Zealand population. It may have been more but it could just equally have been less. One could just as well postulate that the two vowel system was abandoned in the dialect mixture situation of late 19th century New Zealand English (on Australia in this respect, see Bradley 1991) as it did not lead to any noticeable homophony as there are few minimal pairs involving /æ/ and /ɑː/ in English and tend to be peripheral anyway, such as *Pam* and *palm* or *cam* and *calm*.

This is precisely the type of merger which occurs in contact situations: Phonotactic conditioning in the use of closely related vowels is present. Levelling occurs because language learners either do not grasp the conditioning or choose to ignore it. And they are not motivated to try and discern the conditioning as the functional load of the distinction is slight.

2.5 Numbers, distribution and status

Central to the arguments of Trudgill and his associates concerning the genesis of New Zealand English is the proportions of Anglophone settlers in 19th century New Zealand. The default case for any given feature of the later variety is that the input form was

favoured which was the majority form across all the dialect groupings represented in the country. The proportions were determined using census figures covering the period up to 1881 (at which time the third stage had got under way). The following figures are given on the basis of McKinnon (1997).

England	49%
Scotland	22%
Ireland	20%
Australia	7%
Wales	1%
N. America	1%

Table 2: *Proportions of Anglophone settlers in late 19th century New Zealand*

The purely quantitative argument for the survival of dialect features throws up a number of problems straight away. Firstly, it presumes a non-stratified society so that the relative status of various immigrants can be eliminated as a relevant factor in the process. Secondly, it assumes that the proportions of immigrants from the main areas of Britain, distinguishing at least south and north England, Scotland and Ireland, were the same across the entire country, at least for those areas which are regarded as non-isolated. But it is much more likely for this not to have been the case. It is well-known from immigration patterns in other parts of the Anglophone world, such as the south-east United States or Newfoundland, both in the 18th century and later in the United States in the 19th century, that immigrants from specific backgrounds clustered in certain areas. The most obvious reason for this is that those who went first, passed the message about where they had settled back to those in the area they came from. Others then followed on, going to the same area at the overseas location (see further discussion below). If one assumes that this was the default case for New Zealand in the 19th century as well, then one can assume local proportions for the major regions of Britain which would have varied, depending on initial settlement patterns. An obvious case of this is the Otago and Southland regions of the South Island where many Scottish settled (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 305).

There is a further difficulty with the quantitative argument. It assumes that all speakers in non-isolated areas were exposed to the variants of the regional immigrants in the precise proportions in which they existed statistically for the entire country. That is, if one assumes 49% English, 22% Scottish and 20% Irish immigrants more or less across the country, then with the purely numerical argument all non-isolated speakers must have had the proportions 49 : 22 : 20 in their immediate vicinity for them to end up making the choices across variants which the quantitative model claims to predict.

Of course Elizabeth Gordon, Peter Trudgill and their associates are aware of the difficulties of a purely quantitative model applied uniformly to the whole country. They speak of "linguistic melting pots" (usually urban centres) where a great degree of variability was to be found and where new dialect formation was promoted. Conceding this offers a more realistic picture but it also brings into focus an additional problem for later New Zealand English, namely, how did the relative homogeneity of English there develop? The answer in the opinion of the present author lies in the process of supraregionalisation, which is attested in other parts of the Anglophone world, most noticeably in 19th century Ireland. This phenomenon will be dealt with presently, but first a closer look at not just the numerical size of dialect groupings in 19th century New

Zealand but also an examination of their social status, inasmuch as this is discernible today, is called for.

2.5.1 19th century emigration to New Zealand

In the second half of the 19th century emigration from Ireland, which far exceeded that of the Ulster Scots to the United States in the 18th century, set in (Bielenberg 2000). The first census figures in Ireland are those for 1851 and examining the figures up to the last census before the First World War (in 1911) one can see that it was the south-west and the north-east of the country (Duffy et al. 1997: 102f.) which suffered the greatest depletion in population due to emigration, although counties in the west such as Roscommon and Mayo suffered most during the Great Famine of the late 1840's. Put in stark terms, the reduction in population during the famine meant simply that there were fewer inhabitants left to emigrate.

In the period under consideration the major counties of Munster each lost between 300,000 and 500,000 inhabitants due to emigration. In the north-east of the country the somewhat smaller counties of Ulster also lost a similar amount, relatively speaking, with Antrim leading here. Only a small percentage of those who emigrated left for the Southern Hemisphere, about 7% for Australia and New Zealand, this contrasting strongly with 64% to the United States and 25% to Britain.

The New Zealand Company (originally the New Zealand Association) was an organisation formed in 1837 by the colonial reformer Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862). This company, along with the Plymouth Company (founding New Plymouth in Taranaki on the west coast of the North Island), was responsible for the initial British emigration to New Zealand from about 1840 to 1860 (Bauer 1994: 383, Rice (ed.) 1992, Sinclair 1996, Simpson 1997). Scottish free-church emigrants settled in Otago and Southland on the South Island.

When considering Irish emigration to New Zealand one should first mention an early settlement from Australia which, especially in Auckland, led to a very high proportion of Irish there (over 30% in 1851, Bauer 1994: 386). This was to drop somewhat later but Auckland retained its high percentage of Irish. Australia as a source of British regional settlers was to become significant again in the gold rushes of the late 1850's and early 1860's to the West Coast and Otago, both on the South Island.

The Irish emigration to New Zealand was much slower to develop than that from England and peaked in the period from around 1870 to the outbreak of the First World War. With the outbreak of war transoceanic shipping was difficult and afterwards, Irish independence was becoming a distinct possibility (realised in 1921) so that emigration to such a distant location as New Zealand became less attractive to the Irish.

The late 19th century emigration was not the type of immediate relief emigration which was to be found to Britain and America during the Great Famine (1845-8) and immediately afterwards. But it was linked up with rural conditions in Ireland. It is the agricultural depression of the 1870's which was probably a driving force for many younger, as yet childless couples (see 2.5.4 below) to take on themselves the arduous voyage to the other side of the world.

The manner in which emigration was initiated varied in different parts of Ireland at different times. Essentially there were two types, official emigration where some government agency or non-governmental organisation — such as a recruiting company — encouraged the Irish to try their luck abroad.[6] This was often done through

advertising, extolling the advantages of life in terms of employment at the new location. The second type was what one could term individual emigration. In this situation individuals heard about prospects at some overseas Anglophone location from other members of their families or from members of their local communities, usually through emigrant letters or directly in a seasonal migration scenario. Emigration of this type was the most likely to keep intact the bonds of the social network in Ireland after emigration and was an added incentive bearing on the decision to leave the home country. It is the pattern to be found most clearly in Newfoundland where nearly all the Irish emigrants came from a clearly defined area, the city of Waterford and its immediate hinterland (Mannion 1977) and where the motivation to emigration was twofold: abundant labour and transfer to an existing outpost of one's own community at the overseas location. In the absence of externally organised emigration, the second kind, based on community-internal networks, was virtually the only other type. An essential consequence of individual emigration is that it furthered the establishment of community clusters at the overseas location.

2.5.2 How many Irish went to New Zealand?

The percentage of Irish in the ethnic composition for the late 19th century in New Zealand is usually given at around 20%. There are a number of sources for this Akenson (1990: 60f.). Three authors who have concerned themselves with this question are quoted below.

1)   Guy H. Scholefield in the New Zealand volume of *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1933) gives the following statistics.

English	52%	Scottish	22.5%
Irish	21%		
Total	95.5%		

2)   The Australian social historian J. Lyng in 1939 gave the following figures for the non-Maori population.

English	47%	Scottish	24%
Irish	20%	Others	9%
Total	100.0%		

3)   James Oakely Wilson, chief librarian of the General Assembly Library, for the article on national groups for *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand* gives these figures for the non-Maori population, broken down by periods.

	Irish	Scottish	English	Others
1858	11	20	60	9
1878	20	22	50	8
1901	19	21	51	9

Wilson's data are the most interesting in the present context as they show a steep rise in the late 1870's. This picture is confirmed by viewing the census returns from 1858 to 1901 which again show a culmination of Irish presence around 1880 (Akenson 1990: 63).

	Irish	Scottish	English + Welsh
1858	12.3	20.7	62.2
1861	13.1	22.1	56.4
1864	16.4	24.0	52.5
1867	18.3	23.4	50.6
1871	18.6	23.4	49.8
1874	18.0	22.9	50.2
1878	18.6	21.8	50.7
1881	18.9	21.7	50.7
1886	18.8	21.6	50.8
1891	18.7	21.7	51.1
1896	18.7	21.1	51.2
1901	18.7	21.5	52.1

Table 3: *Ethnic composition of non-Maori population*

The kind of picture which emerges from these data is that of an Irish section of the late 19th century New Zealand population of not more than 20% and only from the 1870's onwards.[7] Crucially for the present discussion, we can note that for the first phase of new dialect formation in New Zealand (up to 1860) there were only about 12% Irish but that for the second phase (from about 1860 to 1900, Trudgill et al. 1998) there was on average 18.5%, going on the census figures.

2.5.3 Where did the Irish settle?

It was mentioned above that the Irish tended to cluster at overseas locations given the type of individual emigration which was often practised. This clustering is in evidence in New Zealand just as in other Anglophone countries which experienced Irish emigration. Consider the figures for the distribution of the main ethnic groups from Britain in the third quarter of the 19th century (Akenson 1990: 54 f.).

	Auckland	Westland	Otago
Ire	14.1	22.7	9.2
Sco	8.8	11.9	28.0
Eng	28.5	24.0	16.9
NZ	37.5	18.3	31.0

	Southland	Nelson	Hawke's Bay	Total
Ire	7.2	13.1	12.1	11.6
Sco	31.7	8.1	10.8	14.4
Eng	12.6	28.5	28.6	26.1
NZ	38.1	37.0	40.6	36.5

Table 4: *Distribution of ethnic groups by region in 1871*

This data strongly suggests that in the area of Auckland, Westland, Hawke's Bay (all on the North Island) and in the West/North-West of the South Island the Irish were most prevalent. Indeed for all the regions listed above, except Hawke's Bay, there would seem to be an inverse proportion of Irish to Scottish settlers, a fact which may have its roots in sectarian animosities between Catholic Irish and Presbyterian Scottish.

2.5.4 *What type of emigrants were the Irish?*

The relevance of this question to the current discussion lies in the extent of influence of first generation Irish immigrants on following generations. To illustrate what is involved here bear in mind that there was a practice of assisted emigration in the late 19th century and, as part of this, details concerning the status of emigrants were registered. As the late 1870's is the period of greatest Irish influx into New Zealand, the figures for 1876 are given for some 6,051 subjects (Akenson 1990: 44f.).

1)   Unmarried adults (in all cases about half male/female and with an average age of between 22 and 25)

Ireland   60.8%   Scotland   33.4%   England   25%

2)   Male heads of household travelling with spouses

Ireland   8.5%   Scotland   15.1%   England 17.1%

3)   Proportion of couples who migrated to New Zealand without children

Ireland   34.4%   Scotland   22.1%   England 28.8%

This data is particularly revealing. Formulated in words rather than figures: compared to the English, more than twice the Irish emigrants were unmarried on arrival, fewer than half were heads of households (the reverse of the same coin, so to speak). Furthermore, more Irish emigrated to New Zealand without children than did Scottish or English. Why should these facts be of relevance to the genesis of New Zealand English? If such a large proportion of the Irish had their children in New Zealand then much more of the entire Irish population was exposed to the embryonic variety of New Zealand English from their early childhood, or conversely fewer of them had established vernacular pronunciations from their country of origin. This means quite clearly that the influence of the Irish segment of the late 19th New Zealand population on the genesis of the later variety was probably less than the 18-20% statistic would suggest. Furthermore, the possibility of unmarried individuals or childless couples influencing the incipient variety arising in other sections of the speech community would have been considerably less.

   Against this background it is now understandable that certain prominent features of 19th century Irish English apparently did not surface at all in New Zealand. Two of these suffice here for the purposes of illustration. (1) The well-known south-west feature of Irish English, the raising of /ɛ/ to /ɪ/ in pre-nasal position, resulting in a *pen - pin* merger similar to that found in large parts of the southern the United States, does not appear to be attested in New Zealand English. (2) The lowering of /e/ to /a/ before /r/ which is widely documented well into the 19th century in Ireland as in *sarve* for *serve*, *sarch* for *search*, etc. does not appear to have occurred in New Zealand either (Hickey fc. b). It should also be noted here that some features which are regarded as Scots, such as the lexical items investigated by Bauer (2000: 49f.), could equally have come from those Irish immigrants from the north of the country.

2.6 The quantitative argument again

When discussing several key features of present-day New Zealand English, Peter Trudgill, Elizabeth Gordon and their associates appeal to the quantitative argument, saying that an *overall* majority variant survives, even it is not found with the majority of speakers within a section of late 19th century New Zealand society. Some of the cases rest on a putative difference of little more than 5% in the occurrence of the form which survives and that which does not (see the discussion of a distinction with low vowels before (i) a fricative and (ii) a cluster of nasal and obstruent in 2.4 *The interpretation of mergers* above). Here is another example from Trudgill et al. (2000a) where they discuss a feature which has a direct bearing on Irish input to New Zealand.

> ... Irish English and North American English are known to be characterised by having an unrounded vowel in the lexical set of LOT, whereas, as Wells (1982: 130) writes, "in Britain the predominant type of vowel in LOT is back and rounded [ɒ ɔ]". However, he goes on to add that we also find "the recessive unrounded variant [ɑ] in parts of the south of England remote from London". He further indicates (p. 347) that the vowel "often appears to be unrounded in the west [of England], being qualitatively [ɑ], much as in the Irish Republic or in the United States". And he also quotes from Trudgill (1974) to say (p. 339) that "in Norfolk the LOT vowel has an unrounded variant". This geographical pattern, with the southeast and southwest of England being areas with unrounded vowels which are separated from one another by an intervening area including London with rounded variants, strongly suggests that the [ɑ] area was formerly much bigger than it is now. This is confirmed by our New Zealand data. The fact is that unrounded /ɒ/ in LOT = [ɑ] is very common in the ONZE recordings. Of the 83 informants, 39 (i.e. 47%) use an unrounded vowel either consistently or variably. The fact that it has disappeared from modern New Zealand English has to be ascribed to the fact that users of the rounded variant were in a rather small majority. Trudgill et al. (2000a: 314)

In the opinion of the present author the quantitative argument in such cases is especially weak. *Ceteris paribus*, the quantitative argument holds, but how often can one assume it to have been the only factor in the fate of a variable? Firstly, it rests on the ONZE recordings and one cannot be sure that they are an accurate reflection of late 19th century New Zealand English to within 1% which is what one would need to make strong claims for a 5% difference between occurrences of forms. Secondly, the data for emigration tell a story of regional clustering of emigrant groups so that any conclusions from absolute numbers of emigrants across the entire country, which the census returns represent (see Table 3), would be unwarranted with differences in the range of 5% or so, given the considerable geographical abstraction which the overall census figures represent.

   Now if one considers that the Irish emigrants, who would definitely have had an unrounded vowel in the LOT lexical set, only had a concentration above 20% in the rural region of Westland and only had an urban concentration significantly above 10% in Auckland, then the possible retentive influence of Irish-based speech in New Zealand on [ɑ] would have been slight indeed. The status of the immigrants, see *2.5.4 What type of emigrants were the Irish?* above, would offer further support for the view that the

influence of the Irish on the forging of New Zealand English was much less than the absolute figure of 18-20% for the end of the 19th century, taken on its own, would suggest.

Finally it should be mentioned that the apparent lack of syntactic features from Irish or Scottish English in the ONZE archives and, of course, in modern New Zealand English (Hundt 1998, Quinn 2000) would suggest that the influence of southeast English English went beyond what the quantitative argument would predict, operating on the 48-50% of the late 19th century New Zealand non-Maori population.

2.7 The transmission of ongoing change

The concern of the present section is the transmission of linguistic change in a new dialect formation scenario. It can be best opened by considering the words of Trudgill et al. describing continuing trends in inherited features.

> A number of changes, which have occurred in New Zealand English since anglophone settlement, represent continuations of changes already in progress in England and inherited from there. What is of interest to us is that all three major Southern Hemisphere varieties of English – Australian, New Zealand and South African – not only inherited the results of the changes that had occurred so far in England but also continued them after separation. There was a dynamism inherent in these ongoing changes which led to them continuing in parallel in the four different locations in the manner described by Sapir (under the heading *drift* — RH), although not always at the same speed, and not always coinciding in absolutely all details. Trudgill et al. (2000b: 117)

Just what does it mean to say that children inherit an ongoing change from their parents' generation? First of all children perceive variation. But they can also see that certain variants are the preferred realisation by certain individuals and in certain environments. Furthermore, children can notice that variation is not static but dynamic in the previous generation, i.e. they notice that of, say, two variants X and Y (in a simple case of an ongoing change) variant Y is preferred under circumstances and by individuals who could in some way be interpreted as innovative in their society.

Now there are two basic ways in which a linguistic change takes place. The first is the simpler of the two and is evident when the new variant Y increases in occurrence, displacing the older variant X in the process. This type of change is common in syntax and lexis where the distinction between variants is binary, i.e. the variants are discrete.

The second way for a change to occur is along a scale ranging from an older variant X to a new variant Y. This is what one would have with children favouring a minority, innovative variant Y in the speech of their parents' generation. But this is not enough to account for the progress of scalar change. For young speakers to further the change they must realise that the variants X and Y are on a trajectory, a path of change along which they can themselves push the progressive variant Y to yield Y+, an augmented variant on that path of change. To illustrate how this operates one can consider the Dublin vowel shift for a moment as this shows this process quite clearly. Traditionally, Irish English (the supraregional standard, derived ultimately from middle-class Dublin speech) has an unrounded low back starting point in the diphthong of the CHOICE lexical set so that a word like *toy* sounds to British English ears much like *tie*. Now part of the current vowel shift in Dublin (for more details, consult Hickey

1999) is the raising of back vowels so that the word *toy* has been shifted from [tɑɪ] to [tɒɪ] to [tɔɪ]. But younger progressive speakers, actively participating in the vowel shift, have carried the vowel further so that something close to [toɪ] can be heard. Now one can assume that speakers with this realisation have been exposed to both [tɑɪ] and [tɔɪ] and have realised the situational frequency of both, and they have not only opted for the latter, as the more innovative of the two realisations, but decided to augment it. But how do speakers know how to do this? The answer surely is that they recognise the trajectory of this change, basically from low back to mid open back and carry this a little further along the path, which the change is already describing, to realise the onset for the CHOICE words as closed back, i.e. [o] as in the pronunciation of *toy* just quoted. The key question here is one of directionality. Speakers will always show realisations for a particular sound which cluster around certain values but in a situation of language change these values will be skewed in a particular direction, namely that taken by innovative speakers in a speech community.

2.8 Favouring variants

Trudgill et al. accept individual differences in early New Zealand English but say that the distribution of variants for the second stage reflects the numerical distribution among the speakers of the first stage, *taken as a whole* (emphasis theirs, Trudgill et al. 2000a: 310). They readily admit that there were two riders to this thesis. The first is that certain on-going linguistic changes were inherited from the British Isles. Here they assume that speakers would have favoured newer over older variants. This is an interesting contention which is not discussed further and it throws up the question of how speakers perceive what is a new variant and what an old one. However, if the newer variants were numerically less frequent than the still present older variants (as is so often the case during language change, cf. the current Dublin vowel shift discussed in Hickey 1999), then why, given their support for the numerical dominance view, did newer variants carry the day with second stage speakers? The answer to this question, which receives support from present-day investigations such as that of current Dublin English, is that speakers are (1) unconsciously aware of the linguistic relationship between old and new variants, say lower and higher values on a trajectory in vowel space and (2) that they are predisposed to selecting innovative variants because these represent the vanguard of change in a developing society.

2.9 An illumination of drift

The investigation of the ONZE recordings initially appeared to throw up a problem for the researchers: the majority of speakers had syllable-final /r/ but present-day New Zealand English is non-rhotic. Evidence from contemporary commentators like McBurney (Bauer 1994: 424) on New Zealand English in the 1860's shows that English on the South Island and on parts of the North Island was rhotic. Clearly it is difficult to appeal to the argument based on the removal of marked variants when attempting to explain this development, especially when the loss of syllable-final /r/ leads to homophony which is disorientating for rhotic speakers, cf. mergers like *caught* and *court*.[8] Instead Trudgill et al. offer the following account.

Rhoticity was lost in parallel in England and in New Zealand through processes which we can label with Sapir's term *drift* in its — according to us — first sense. Though non-prevocalic /r/ must have been very widespread in 19th-century England, it was also clearly involved in linguistic change in lower-middle class speech in many areas: rhoticity was gradually disappearing. This is reflected in our Mobile Unit recordings. It is true that the majority of our speakers are, as we have said, rhotic. But actually, only a third are consistently so: most of our informants are variably rhotic and a number of them are only vestigially so ... English English and New Zealand English, having both been very rhotic in the 19th century, have both become very non-rhotic in the 20th century, with the respective exceptions of the English southwest and of New Zealand Southland, as a result of parallel developments. The seeds of these parallel developments, moreover, can be seen to lie in the variability of the rhoticity shared between the two varieties of English in the 19th century. New Zealand English did not inherit non-rhoticity from English English but rather inherited an ongoing process involving loss of rhoticity.

Factually this account is acceptable as it clearly corresponds to the facts of both these varieties. What is necessary here is to take a closer look at statements like "New Zealand English ... inherited an ongoing process involving loss of rhoticity" to see what it really means. In the opinion of the present author this interpretation of drift has a fatal flaw: it reifies language, it makes a language into a thing independent of its speakers and imputes a life of its own to the language. Of course it is a convenient abstraction to say, for instance, that "the English language did X or Y"[9]. Naturally it is the speakers who did X or Y. The difficulty with drift is that its locus is seen in the language as a separate entity, whereas the language as something independent of its speakers is non-existent but simply a convenient manner of conceptualising the common linguistic behaviour of a group of individuals. Such metaphorical terminology is very common and ultimately derives from the structure of human cognition and the manner in which humans conceptualise. The conclusion here is obviously that drift, if anywhere, is in the speech of the speakers. Now can one envisage this? I think the first thing is to assume that one has variation and a tendency for one variant to be preferred over another (in the simplest of situations). Now why should speakers prefer variant Y over variant X and do so consistently over generations (this is necessary to account for drift from the speakers' perspective). A variety of reasons are conceivable here. Internal reasons, such as the spread of analogical regularity, may lead, for instance, to weak forms of verbs being favoured over strong ones as is the case in the Germanic languages, albeit with different rates, and some backsliding, in the individual languages. External reasons would have to do with speakers recognising what variant in a situation of choice is more innovative and what variant more conservative. Which individuals use what variants in what situations gives speakers of the young generation at any point in time the necessary information about what to favour as dynamic members of their society.

2.9.1 HAPPY-tensing

In their treatment of drift (Trudgill et al. 2000b: 124ff.) the authors distinguish between ongoing changes, such as the loss of syllable-final /r/, and a *propensity* (emphasis mine) for a change. One example they give, which New Zealand shares with the other major Southern Hemisphere varieties (Schreier, Sudbury and Trudgill. fc.), South African and

Australian English, is what is termed HAPPY-tensing, the use of a non-centralised, tense [iː] in final, unstressed position (Wells 1982: 257). Trudgill et al. (2000b: 125) give the following percentages for the occurrence of HAPPY-tensing by decade of birth in the ONZE corpus as follows: 1850's: 0%, 1860's: 25%, 1870-1889: 42%. They then conclude:

> This makes it less likely that HAPPY-tensing arrived in New Zealand from Britain at all, and more likely that it started life independently in New Zealand. ... And it did not inherit an ongoing change which was introducing HAPPY-tensing. What it did inherit, apparently, was a propensity to replace /ɪ/ by /iː/ word-finally. Australian English and South African English also have HAPPY-tensing (Wells, 1982: 595, 616). (Trudgill et al., *loc. cit.*)

If, as their data seems to imply, there was zero HAPPY-tensing among the older informants of the ONZE archive and if — not stated implicitly in their presentation — there was a generation which did not hear HAPPY-tensing *ever* from its preceding generation, then there is no question of it having been transmitted via the initial English input.

This leaves the question as to what *propensity* is taken to mean in the context of Trudgill et al. (2000b). An interpretation, which probably represents what is meant, is a structural imbalance which was later removed in all three major varieties of Southern Hemisphere English. To illustrate what is intended by structural imbalance allow me to paint the following scenario. A language, L_1, has a pair of alveolar stops /t,d/. The voiced member is lost by a lenition process which shifts it to /ð/, giving L_2. At this stage forms of the language are carried overseas to three geographically discontinuous areas where new dialect formation (NDF) occurs (V_{1-3}). Now assume that L_1, like English, has a contrast of voice in a series of phonemes pairs. The stage L_2 is then highly marked and there is a fair likelihood of this being redressed at some later stage in V_{1-3} (through some process like the fortition of /ð/ or the voicing of intervocalic /t/ or the like), though there can be no predicting this and the temporal coincidence of the reinstatement of /d/ would be remarkable.

L_1 L_2 à (NDF) à V_1 V_2 V_3
/t,d/ à /t,ð/   /t,ð/ à /t,d/   /t,ð/ à /t,d/   /t,ð/ à /t,d/

In this scenario one could say that there is a propensity in the initial stages of V_{1-3} for /d/ to be reinstated although this propensity has no predictive power because languages can survive for long periods with 'holes' in their sound inventories, cf. /x/ which, in standard German, has no voiced equivalent /ɣ/ despite the importance of voice among consonants in German phonology.

Trudgill et al. (2000b: 125f.) hypothesise that the structural condition producing the propensity to change (towards HAPPY-tensing) in the same direction in Southern Hemisphere English lay in the fact that the distinction between /ɪ/ and /iː/ is neutralised in unstressed word-final position, and that /ɪ/ can otherwise not occur in open syllables in English. The first statement is just that, a statement, i.e. it does not predict that, given the neutralisation in unstressed word-final position, English varieties should start shifting /ɪ/ to /iː/ . The second statement is about stressed syllables. It is true that English does

not show sound structures like /dɪ/, or for that matter /dɛ, dʌ, dɒ/, with a short vowel in an open stressed syllable. But in unstressed syllables, arising from a lack of lexical stress, short vowels do occur for high vowels and schwa, e.g. *the* [ˌðɪ], *to* [ˌtʊ], *a* [ˌə]. These considerations speak against maintaining that the presence of /ɪ/ in unstressed syllables of the HAPPY type in input varieties of English to Southern Hemisphere English in any way represented such internal system pressure as to lead to the development of HAPPY-tensing in all three major Southern Hemisphere varieties of English without any precedent at all in the input varieties.

Consider now that the tensing of the final vowel in words of the HAPPY lexical set is not something which proceeded in discrete steps, though the end-point of the development is discretely different from the outset as it coalesced with the normal realisation of the /iː/ vowel in those varieties which show this tensing. So what is much more likely is that succeeding generations unconsciously perceived an increasing decentralisation, and most likely variably rather than categorically, of the final vowel which scholars later describe as a shift from /ɪ/ to /iː/.

What one is dealing with here — and in other cases of *drift* — is subphonemic variation which is later raised to a systemic level through being favoured by later generations of speakers. Hence there may be no difference in kind between a propensity for change and an ongoing change. It could simply be a matter of degree.[10] Two other cases of well-attested changes can be cited to support this. The first is actually Sapir's own original case of umlaut in Germanic. As is well-known, all the Germanic languages bar Gothic show umlaut, typically in noun plurals, strong verb forms and adjectival comparisons. Umlaut is originally a phonetic process whereby the front articulation of /i/ or /j/ is anticipated in a syllable preceding this and can still be seen in modern German noun pairs like *Sohn : Söhne, Buch : Bücher*. With the loss of the triggering syllable, due in many instances to inflectional attrition, umlaut achieved systemic status and was lost or greatly reduced in later stages of some Germanic languages so that English *foot : feet, man : men* are now lexicalised instances of former umlauted plurals. The rather late occurrence of umlaut in all but one of the Germanic languages is accounted for by an appeal to drift. But this must be demystified by stating what exactly one understands by it. The only non-speculative explanation is that generations of speakers carried in their speech a subphonemic tendency to front vowels, at first only slightly, becoming phonemic at some later stage and of course appearing in writing some time after that.

The second case which can illustrate this process if that of initial mutation in the Celtic languages. The latter have a means of indicating key grammatical categories such as past tense or distinguishing between nominative and genitive which involves altering the nature of the first consonants of a word, say from stop to fricative. The details of initial mutation are much more intricate than this brief statement suggests (see Hickey this volume) and the patterns of mutation in Irish and Welsh differ. In this case one is dealing also with a subphonemic tendency to weaken the articulation of initial segments (a sandhi phenomenon) which much later than the period of Common Celtic become systemic in the individual languages where it came to be recognised in writing.

The conclusion here is that umlaut in North and West Germanic and the initial mutations of Celtic are shared innovations among sets of languages *after* they had split up from an earlier common stage. The innovation in each case is the promotion of subphonemic phenomena to a systemic level after which they become visible in the historical attestations.

The parallel to HAPPY-tensing in New Zealand is clear: a subphonemic tendency

to decentralise unstressed final /ɪ/ could have been present in the earliest forms of the variety which then was pushed along a trajectory from central to peripheral in high front vowel space, resulting in the HAPPY-tensing of present-day New Zealand English (and other Southern Hemisphere varieties of English). A slight tendency to decentralise unstressed final /ɪ/, present in input varieties of southern English in the early 19th century, is all one needs for HAPPY-tensing to appear across the entire Southern Hemisphere.[11]

2.10 Supraregionalisation

In the section entitled *2.5.3 Where did the Irish settle?* above it was shown that there was considerable regional clustering in New Zealand in the late 19th century. All commentators on present-day New Zealand English agree that, with the partial exception of rural Southland, which has the vestigial Scottish feature of a syllable-final /r/ (Bauer 1994: 411f.), there is considerable uniformity in the English spoken throughout the country (Bayard 2000). Assuming that the regional clustering was correlated by a predominance of accents of the ethnic groups involved and given the fact that present-day New Zealand English shows virtually no regional variation,[12] some process must have occurred whereby distinctive dialect features, especially of the Irish and Scottish emigrants throughout the rest of the country, must have been levelled out with a phonetic pattern reminiscent of the south-east of England prevailing.

   In their discussion of focussing in the third stage of new dialect formation Peter Trudgill, Elizabeth Gordon and their associates stress that this happened in the "linguistic melting pots", the areas of high settler density. In those regions where the density and — significantly — the diversity of speakers was less, there must have been a stage at which younger speakers adopted the embryonic variety of New Zealand English as we know it today, a variety spreading from the areas of higher density and itself the result of the focussing process described by Trudgill et al.

        Consider once more the remarks made when discussing the third stage of new dialect formation "... the new dialect will appear as a stable, crystallised variety. This crystallisation is the result of a focussing process whose effects are very clear in modern New Zealand English, which has a remarkably small amount of regional variation." (Trudgill et al. 2000a: 307)   What is noticeable here is that they seem to equate focussing with the lack of variation. But my argument here is that the latter is the result of a different process which is to be seen in many other Anglophone countries and one, which for want of a better term, I have labelled *supraregionalisation* (Hickey fc. a)

        This is a process where dialect speakers progressively adopt more and more features of a non-regional variety which they are in contact with. The contact does not have to be through speaker contact, indirect exposure to the non-regional variety can be sufficient. Supraregionalisation is distinct from accommodation which does require such contact and it is different from dialect levelling in which the input varieties lose salient or minority variants, resulting in a new mixture not present before. Dialect levelling can be assumed to have taken place in the areas of high density in New Zealand prior to both koinéisation and supraregionalisation).

        Koinéisation is a process whereby a dominant variety comes to be used alongside vernaculars for means of general communication. It is the nearest of the traditionally recognised processes to, but not quite the same as supraregionalisation. In the latter speakers adopt features of an already present non-regional variety and by a process of

lexical diffusion can replace vernacular pronunciations or grammatical structures more and more so that the original dialect loses its strongly local characteristics. There are many corollaries of supraregionalisation which may not have affected New Zealand English. For instance in 19th century Ireland vernacular pronunciations were replaced entirely in some cases, e.g. the lowering of /e/ to /a/ before /r/ alluded to above. But others were relegated to a local mode of speech and used for vernacularisation purposes, e.g. the use of *youse* (instead of *ye* or *you*) as a second person plural pronoun. Another corollary can be a lexical split arising through the maintenance of an older pronunciation alongside the newly adopted supraregional one. For instance, in Irish English there is a contrast between *bold* [baul] and *bold* [bo:ld] the former an adjective indicating a sneaking admiration for an individual.

Vernacularisation and lexical splitting, of the type just described, do not seem to have occurred in New Zealand English, perhaps because the supraregionalisation involved a variety from within the country, whereas in Ireland it was an extranational norm stemming from England. What would seem to have happened is the adoption of the focussed variety of New Zealand English from areas of high density, varied settlement to areas of lower, less varied settlement so that today there is no linguistic correlate of the regional clustering which occurred in the Irish settlement of 19th century New Zealand.

5 Conclusion

The concern of this paper has been to highlight the processes which take place in a society where several disparate input varieties have been moulded into a new form (*new dialect formation*). In this case the events at the stage of focussing, the stage at which the varieties stabilise with a distinctive linguistic profile, show similarities in that salient features indicative of minority, non-prestige groups are removed. This leads to a variety which is supraregional, i.e. no longer typical of a certain sub-group in the society in question, and it can help to account for the relative lack of regional variation in New Zealand English. This interpretation still leaves open the question whether the supraregional variety is just an epiphenomenon resulting from the alternate processes of selection and avoidance of features in early varieties or whether speakers unconsciously and collectively contribute in their choices to the emergence of a variety which promotes internal linguistic cohesion in the society using it.

Notes

*   I am grateful to various colleagues who provided useful comments on previous versions of this chapter. In particular I would like to mention Karen Corrigan, Lyle Campbell, James Milroy, Peter Trudgill and an anonymous reviewer of Cambridge University Press. All these provided valuable suggestions, from their particular specialities within linguistics, which have hopefully benefited the article. As always, any shortcomings are the author's own.

1   Lyle Campbell points out that the raising of short front vowels which is so characteristic of modern New Zealand English was probably present embryonically with the input dialects of southern British English.

2   According to Lyle Campbell this variation was not present in the input to New Zealand English.

3   The interpretation of variation with the speakers of the ONZE corpus depends crucially on the validity of the notion of *apparent time*, that is, the extent to which speakers retain the type of pronunciation they developed in their youth throughout the rest of their lives. If one does not accept this premise then it becomes difficult to extrapolate from these speakers back towards the earliest forms of New Zealand English. And of course in the situation of new dialect formation some adults may have accommodated towards other adults thus masking their original pronunciation of key variables.

4   Lyle Campbell is doubtful about this given the lack of evidence and considers the input from the English regions to have been much more restricted.

5   Because Wells (1982) does not have lexical sets for the ambidental fricatives of standard English, I use these two here and underline the segments being referred to.

6   One should mention that, apart from such obvious emigration as that unleashed by the gold rushes to the western part of the South Island in the 1860's, which brought some 25,000 Irish to New Zealand between 1858 and 1867 (Coogan 2000: 491; Davis 1974), there was also assisted emigration to New Zealand in the late 19th century. For this the Irish could travel to England, board English ships bound for New Zealand and receive assistance in become established there.

7   Trudgill and Gordon's figures would seem to be based on the 1881 census.

8   Lyle Campbell points out here that syllable-final /r/ was lost mostly because of the impact of the large immigration of non-rhotic speakers of English, which also happened to be the group favoured for prestige reasons and points to the contuining abandonment of rhoticity by younger speakers in Southland and Otago because they wish to sound like the more prestigious supraregional variety of New Zealand English which is, of course, non-rhotic. Jim Milroy has also raised doubts about the avoidance of homophony argument when postulating resistance to the loss of rhoticity.

9   In this context one can consider James Milroy's relevant comment (this volume) that "sound changes are not literally changes of sound: they are structural correspondences between one sound and another sound that appears in its place at a later date".

10   An alternative interpretation of propensity was offered by Lyle Campbell: a propensity to change may be seen as a pan-linguistic, pan-temporal tendency, a possible change available to any language. In this case an on-going change is specific to a specific language at a specific time.

11   It should be mentioned that here, without overstressing the point, that the Irish emigrants to New Zealand would have had HAPPY-tensing anyway. All speakers from the south of Ireland (the majority of the emigrants) have HAPPY-tensing and would have had in the 19th century, not least because they would have been bilingual in Irish to a greater or lesser extent and in Irish final unstressed high vowels are always tense.

12   Bauer (1994: 386) stresses this point but unfortunately does not suggest how the earlier regional nature of New Zealand settlement could have led to present-day NZE with so little geographical variation. See also Bartlett (1992) and Bauer (1996). Gordon and

Deverson (1995: 126-34) deal with what variation there is from a present-day perspective.

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