

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics

In the last 500 years or so, the English language has undergone remarkable geographical expansion, bringing it into contact with other languages in new locations. This also caused different regional dialects of the language to come into contact with each other in colonial situations. This book is made up of a number of fascinating tales of historical-sociolinguistic detection. These are stories of origins – of a particular variety of English or linguistic feature – which together tell a compelling general story. In each case, Trudgill presents an intriguing puzzle, locates and examines the evidence, detects clues that unravel the mystery, and finally proposes a solution. The solutions are all original, often surprising, sometimes highly controversial. Providing a unique insight into how language contact shapes varieties of English, this entertaining yet rigorous account will be welcomed by students and researchers in linguistics, sociolinguistics and historical linguistics.

Peter Trudgill is Professor of Sociolinguistics at the University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation
and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics

Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

University of Agder



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by

Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521132930

© Peter Trudgill 2010

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2010

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

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

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Trudgill, Peter.

Investigations in sociohistorical linguistics : stories of colonisation and contact / Peter Trudgill.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-11529-2 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-13293-0 (pbk.)

1. Sociolinguistics. 2. Historical linguistics. 3. Language and languages–Variation. 4. Linguistic change. 5. Languages in contact. I. Title.

P40.T7475 2010

306.44–dc22

2010026386

ISBN 978-0-521-11529-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-13293-0 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

| | |
|---|----------------|
| <i>List of maps</i> | <i>page</i> vi |
| <i>List of tables</i> | vii |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i> | viii |
| <i>Prologue: Colonisation and contact</i> | xii |
| 1 What really happened to Old English? | 1 |
| 2 East Anglian English and the Spanish Inquisition | 36 |
| 3 On Anguilla and <i>The Pickwick Papers</i> | 61 |
| 4 The last Yankee in the Pacific | 92 |
| 5 An American lack of dynamism | 108 |
| 6 Colonial lag? | 130 |
| 7 “The new non-rhotic style” | 143 |
| 8 What became of all the Scots? | 159 |
| Epilogue: The critical threshold and interactional synchrony | 181 |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | 193 |
| <i>Index</i> | 212 |

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Maps

| | | |
|---|---|----------------|
| 1 | Late British survival in Highland Britain | <i>page</i> 13 |
| 2 | East Anglian third-person singular zero | 38 |
| 3 | The survival of rhoticity | 151 |

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Tables

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Comparison of Bonin English and other English vowel systems | <i>page</i> 106 |
| 2 | <i>Do</i> -support with negative verb forms | 116 |
| 3 | <i>Have</i> and <i>take</i> in the Chadwyck-Healey databases | 124 |
| 4 | Rhotic Australian speakers | 148 |
| 5 | Scottish features | 167 |

Acknowledgements

I owe a very special debt of gratitude on the publication of this book to the co-authors who were involved in the work of preparing and writing the original versions of some of the papers which now appear here as chapters. They are Elizabeth Gordon, Gillian Lewis, Daniel Long, Margaret Maclagan, Terttu Nevalainen, Daniel Schreier, Jeffrey P. Williams and Ilse Wischer. I am grateful to you all for so cheerfully and graciously giving me permission to publish your work under my own name.

I am also very grateful to very many other people who helped and advised me on the original versions of the chapters that appear here, and/or on the work that has gone into this new book. I apologise sincerely to anybody who I have inadvertently omitted, but the list of names I have tried to keep complete reads as follows: Bas Aarts, Anders Ahlqvist, David Allerton, Laurie Bauer, Allan Bell, Leiv Egil Breivik, David Britain, Juan Manuel Hernández Campoy, Jack Chambers, Sandra Clarke, Jan Terje Faarlund (and other members of staff at the Toten Center for Advanced Studies), Małgorzata Fabiszak, Paul Fletcher, Remus Gergel, Elizabeth Gordon, Mark Greengrass, Patrick Griffiths, Walter Haas, Jack Hawkins, Jennifer Hay, Dick Hudson, Ernst Håkon Jahr, Toni O'Brien Johnson, Jeffrey Kallen, Anders Källgård, Ian Kirby, William Labov, Stephen Laker, Karen Lavarello-Schreier, Gillian Lewis, Angelika Lutz, Sharon Millar, Jim Milroy, Mike Olson, Dennis Preston, Daniel Schreier, Peter Schrijver, Janet Smith, Andrea Sudbury, Sali Tagliamonte, Hildegard Tristram, David Willis, Walt Wolfram and Laura Wright. Thank you all very much!

As for financial and institutional support, different aspects of the research reported here were funded in part by grants from: the

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements ix

Marsden Fund of the Royal Society of New Zealand; the New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology; the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand; and the British Council. The original versions of Chapters 2–8 were written while I was working in Switzerland, first as Professor of English Linguistics at the Université de Lausanne, and then as Professor of English Linguistics at the Université de Fribourg/Universität Freiburg Schweiz. I also benefited greatly during that period from research time spent at Canterbury University, Christchurch, New Zealand. The present book, including Chapter 1 in its entirety and the – often substantially – revised new versions of the other chapters, has taken form while I have been, gratefully, affiliated to the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia; the University of East Anglia in my home city of Norwich, England; and the new University of Agder in Kristiansand, Norway. I have also been able to work on the book at the Christos Research Centre, Lesbos; and while enjoying visiting professorships at the Ohio State University, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, the University of Hamburg and Memorial University Newfoundland. I am also very grateful to Andrew Winnard of Cambridge University Press, whose idea this was.

My most grateful thanks, however, are reserved for two people. My mother, Hettie Trudgill, has over the decades been a fount of wisdom on very many things, but crucially for this book on the subject of East Anglian dialect forms, and she has always helped and encouraged me. And my wife and companion of thirty years, Jean Hannah, has increased my enjoyment in the writing of this book immeasurably by just being there; and has helped enormously with the research, the writing of the original papers, their presentation at conferences and meetings, the structure of the book itself, and the selection of papers. If any errors of judgement or deficiencies of organisation do remain, they are there simply because I did not heed Jean's advice quite as much as I should have done.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x Acknowledgements

SOURCES

Eight of the ten sections in this book are (sometimes very considerable) revisions, reworkings, and/or expansions of previously published papers, or parts of previously published papers, as follows:

Chapter 2: Peter Trudgill, 1996, Language contact and inherent variability: the absence of hypercorrection in East Anglian present-tense verb forms. In J. Klemola, M. Kytö and M. Rissanen (eds.), *Speech past and present: studies in English dialectology in memory of Ossi Ihalainen*, 412–25. Frankfurt: Peter Lang; and Peter Trudgill, 1998, Third-person singular zero: African American vernacular English, East Anglian dialects and Spanish persecution in the Low Countries. *Folia Linguistica Historica* 18.1–2, 139–48.

Chapter 3: Peter Trudgill, Daniel Schreier, Daniel Long and Jeffrey P. Williams, 2003, On the reversibility of mergers: /w/, /v/ and evidence from Lesser-Known Englishes. *Folia Linguistica Historica* 24, 23–46.

Chapter 4: Peter Trudgill and Daniel Long, 2004, The last Yankee in the Pacific: eastern New England phonology in the Bonin Islands. *American Speech* 79.4, 356–67.

Chapter 5: Peter Trudgill, Terttu Nevalainen and Ilse Wischer, 2002, Dynamic *have* in North American and British Isles English. *English Language and Linguistics* 6: 1–15.

Chapter 6: Peter Trudgill, 1999, A window on the past: “colonial lag” and New Zealand evidence for the phonology of 19th-century English. *American Speech* 74.3: 1–11.

Chapter 7: Peter Trudgill and Elizabeth Gordon, 2004, Predicting the past: dialect archaeology and Australian English rhoticity. *English World-Wide* 27.3: 235–46.

Chapter 8: Peter Trudgill, Margaret Maclagan and Gillian Lewis, 2003, Linguistic archaeology: the Scottish input to New Zealand English phonology. *Journal of English Linguistics* 31: 103–24.

Epilogue: Peter Trudgill, 2001, On locating the boundary between language contact and dialect contact: Low German and continental Scandinavian. In E. H. Jahr (ed.), *Språkkontakt*:

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements xi

innverknaden frå nedertysk på andre nordeuropeiske språk (= Skrift nr. 2 fra prosjektet "Språkhistoriske prinsipper for lånord i nordiske språk"). Copenhagen: Nordisk Ministerråd, 71–86; Peter Trudgill, 2008, Colonial dialect contact in the history of European languages: on the irrelevance of identity to new-dialect formation. *Language in Society* 37.2: 241–54; Peter Trudgill, 2008, On the role of children, and the mechanical view: a rejoinder. *Language in Society* 37.2: 277–80.

Prologue: Colonisation and contact

My friend, colleague and former doctoral student Professor David Britain once told me that, of the papers I had written, the ones he enjoyed reading most were those where it seemed as if I was telling a story – particularly, he said, where they were detective stories. I had never thought of myself as writing detective stories before, but I did come to realise that David had offered an insight about my work that I had never been clever enough to arrive at myself. Some of my writing has indeed consisted of articles which begin with a historical-sociolinguistic puzzle, and then attempt to come up with a solution on the basis of the available evidence. And they are, I now see, written in such a way that the reader is left waiting to find out what the solution to the mystery is until the very end of the story. Even if there is no punchline as such, there may well be a final punch-paragraph.

This book, then, is made up of a number of such historical-sociolinguistic tales of detection which I hope, individually, will tell a coherent story; and which will also, I hope, combine to produce an overall, more general story which is also coherent. This general story has to do, I suppose, with the belief that great explanatory power in finding the solution to linguistic mysteries is to be derived from the study of vowels, consonants and grammatical constructions in combination with the study of macro- and micro-level social factors and historical events. Happily, there are many linguistics scholars who have greater goals than this – linguists who seem to be most highly motivated by the very laudable desire to learn more about the very big picture: a quest for a greater understanding of the vitally important question of why human language is like it is, in terms, perhaps, of the nature of the human language faculty. For me, this question

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

has always seemed to be far too hard, and I am happy to leave it to others. I have contented myself with doubtless less important questions, but those which I feel might be more within my capabilities. These questions, as asked in this book, are all of a particular type: I ask not so much why language is like it is, but more why is this *particular* language or dialect like it is? How did it get to be like that? Why does it have these linguistic characteristics and not others?

The chapters in this book all deal with varieties of the English language as it is spoken around the world: the British Isles, North America, the Caribbean, the Southern Hemisphere, the Pacific Ocean. I am concerned with issues such as why American English is like it is; how New Zealand English got to be that way; what factors led to the English of the Bonin Islands being as it is; why the English of my native East Anglia is not exactly like any other kind of English; and so on. There is always a historical explanation for such things, of course, but I have generally supposed that answers to this sort of question will also be as much sociolinguistic as purely linguistic-internal.

In all the papers in this volume, contact turns out to be a key problem for, and/or a key solution to, the riddles I have been trying to solve. This sometimes involves language contact, sometimes dialect contact, and often both. The English language has, in the last 500 years or so, experienced a remarkable history of geographical expansion which led it to undergo contact with other languages, indigenous and non-indigenous, in new locations. It also led to different regional dialects of the language coming into contact with each other in colonial situations, in a way that had never happened before. For example, new dialects of English developed on the east coast of North America as a result, in part, of contact between different regional dialects of English English. These new dialects then took part in further dialect contact processes with the westward journey of the language across the continent, as the colony itself began colonising. West coast varieties of American English must result from mixtures of mixed dialects which were themselves the result

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-11529-2 - Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics: Stories of Colonisation and Contact

Peter Trudgill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv Colonisation and contact

of dialect mixture of mixed dialects. One type of puzzle which I attempt to deal with in this book, therefore, is the unravelling of the different, complex strands involved in the mechanisms of contact and mixture which gave rise to the varieties under examination.

The book starts, however, with an examination of the very first process of colonisation in which English was involved, a process that began more than fifteen hundred years ago – with the original coming into being of the English language itself; and with the role that the study of contact has to play in producing explanations for why, even in the early centuries of its existence, the English language was like it was.