The Space of English: Geographic Space, Temporal Space and Social Space

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This paper takes as its topic the encoding of social rank in accent and dialect, and the spread of such social values from city and hinterland to overseas colony, using as data transcriptions of recorded speech elicited in interviews, eighteenth and nineteenth-century orthoepistic comment, and written literary representation of speech. It considers the combined effects of *geographical space* on speech, that is to say, speakers living collectively in one geographical area which over time enables a dialect to develop; *social space*, that is, speakers living collectively in one place for long enough for the social distinctions within the group to be manifest in their speech; and also *temporal space*, because without a time-depth, these things cannot happen. The phonemes [h] and [j], plus an adverbial construction are used to illustrate the combination of these three effects.

Wherever people have lived together in one place for a long time-period, their speech becomes distinctive of that particular group in that particular place, and we call this dialect. Within dialects, specific social groupings are further acoustically signalled by linguistic variants, so that whatever social groups are salient within that society can be expressed by manner of speech – for example it may be race, as in North America, or social class, as in Great Britain, or whether a person has lived away from the speech-community, as in the case of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic. To illustrate these processes I consider two phonemes which have waxed and waned over the centuries in the speech of Londoners, [h] and [j], and an adverbial construction, *like to (have)* + verb + -*ed*. These all spread abroad as Londoners travelled the globe and left their language behind them, and have attracted social opprobrium in some places at some points in time, and yet indifference or even praise at others. In other words, the same linguistic feature is judged by listeners very differently, depending on when and where it is uttered.

How do linguistic features spread? Cities are made up of groups of dense speech-communities with many weak-tie networks to speakers elsewhere. Weak-tie networks are relationships that are casual and non-repetitive; that is, when speakers interact with people whom they do not know very well and do not talk to very often; people from outside their usual social ambit. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2000: 302-3) posit two levels of abstraction with regard to the city speech-community. Firstly, they assume numerous small-scale communities with dense, multiplex networks of speakers – possibly made up of just a few streets, or a block containing courts and alleys. In dense networks, speakers know each other in more than one social capacity. To take Early Modern London as an example, they could have been neighbours, they may also have been relatives or co-workers at the same enterprise, or they may have frequented the same taverns. If they were lower-class citizens they would regularly have had the same routine chores, such as shopping and collecting water from the same local pump. Their paths would have crossed frequently and they would have interacted regularly and repeatedly. Secondly, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg posit the larger-scale community of the entire city, made up of numerous weak-tie networks, containing both the mainstream native community and the various income groups, be they from elsewhere in Britain or foreigners visiting from abroad, speaking other languages. Under weak-tie conditions speakers may have interacted on one occasion only, or on repeated occasions with large time-gaps in between, or in one social direction only, such as from mistress to servant. In non-reciprocal social relationships like the latter, only one member of the dyad can initiate or prolong conversation. The abstraction is useful because dialectal features can be envisaged as *starting life under the intense speech-conditions of the small-scale localities, and then diffusing out to the larger community as a whole.* (The small-scale localities need be geographic in a loose sense only. For example, the visiting points of a gentleman's routine may have taken in many different physical locations within the city, but would have consisted of meeting and revisiting the same people, mainly from within the same social class, and hence forming a dense network rather than a weak-tie one.) The large-scale community as a whole is able to encompass any number of regional and foreign variants from outside the city, but most of these do not gain general acceptance by the citizens *en masse*. When citizens travel to remote places, they take their language with them and they speak to the people already *in situ*, if there are any.

However, if the remote place does not have weak-tie networks to speakers elsewhere (such as an island not visited by many ships, or a mountain community not often visited by plains-dwellers, or a community of speakers held in social isolation, such as under conditions of slavery), then those conduits of outside influence are greatly restricted, and features of the incoming-citizens' own dialect and accent may last longer there than in their home city, where it is continuously subject to influence from outsiders. This is not to imply that the language of remote-place speakers does not change over time, because all language changes from generation to generation, but to attempt to account for why now-obsolete features of eighteenth-century city speech (in this case, from London) can still be heard in certain overseas speech-communities.

The first phoneme to be considered is word-initial [h]. In London English, but not in all English dialects, word-initial [h] is pronounced variably. Sometimes etymologically-present word-initial [h] is omitted, and sometimes (less frequently nowadays) non-etmyological [h] is inserted in words which historically begin with a vowel rather than an etymological [h]. Note that not all Londoners are London English speakers. Social class plays a crucial role here; if a speaker is middle class or above they are likely to speak with a Received Pronunciation accent.[1] Nowadays most RP speakers only delete word-initial [h] in positions of low stress (such as when auxiliary *have* is reduced to *'ve*), nor do they insert unetymological word-initial [h]. If a Londoner is working-class, however, they are likely to be a speaker of the London English dialect, and speak with a London accent (which can be further divided into East End and non-East End, and perhaps also into North and South), and they will delete some of their word-initial [h]s in stressed position, and older speakers may occasionally insert non-etymological word-initial [h]. In the following transcript, recorded in 1960, three London speakers have varying amounts of word-initial [h]. Two of them are friends, the third is the interviewer, who is a stranger to the other two and from a different social class. The first speaker is a BBC interviewer, who was interviewing a group of teenagers from Stepney Youth Club in East London. The interviewer has what would now be regarded as a conservative RP accent, and is completely *h*-ful, that is, whenever he pro-

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[1] Walker 1791: 12 is an early user of the term "received pronunciation" to indicate the accent that is used by London middle-class speakers, which is distinct from that used by working-class speakers.

nounced a word beginning with [h], he pronounced the [h]. The first youth in the transcript was completely *h*-less in word-initial position. The second youth was variably *h*-ful:

Interviewer: When you go to the barber, erm, now you've got a particularly distinctive hairstyle because your hair is brushed forward, and it's cut fairly close to the head, well what d'you say to the barber when you want it cut like that?

Youth A: Well I go up to 'im and I say, well I'd like a "college boy," not too long at the back, and not too short in the front, and er, not too long in the sideboards, and 'e, 'e does it for you don't 'e.

Interviewer: And what d'you pay to have it done like that?

Youth A: Well it's all depend, all depends, what you want you might 'ave – want a shampoo, 'airblow, or whatever you want. Well if you 'ave an 'aircut, a shampoo and a blow it will cost you 7/6, all the style and all that; but if you, if you just want an ordinary 'aircut it cost you 2/6, 3 bob.

Interviewer: You've got your hair cut in a very distinctive way, what made you choose that particular pattern if I might put it that

Youth B: Well when I was at school, we all, they got us all in the 'all one day you see, and that was when we 'ad all the, all the sides swept back this was about three years ago that we 'ad all the sides swept back and all the front coming forward, Tony Curtis style, so they got us all in the 'all, the boys with that hairstyle, and they measured our hair, and said we mustn't 'ave it that long, so everybody said come on let's all go and have a "college boy", so we all went, went and had a "college boy." And it caught, it just caught on everywhere it just caught on.

Interviewer: What would you say mine was?

Youth B: College boy!

[BBC Archive 25859, recorded 1960]

The RP interviewer was totally *h*-ful, the London English speaker Youth A was totally *h*-less (*airblow* and *'ave an 'aircut*), and the London English speaker Youth B was variably *h*-ful (*hair* and *hairstyle*, but *they got us all in the 'all*. The contemporary listener could infer that the BBC interviewer was a middle-class speaker, Youth A was a working-class London speaker and Youth B, although from the same place, class and time as

Youth A, speaking slightly closer to the middle-class accent, was from a higher strata of the working classes. This kind of variation is valuable to a community in that it encodes social information that is salient to that community at that point in time. Providing that the contemporary listener were experienced in listening to that particular accent, they would have been able to hear the difference, and hence infer the relationship in social standing between Youths A and B. Interestingly, because *h*-variability within London became marked for working-class speech, it became stigmatised as a non-middle-class variable, and hence earlier linguists did not regard its long history as valid. (Milroy's *Linguistic Variation and Change* provides an account of how this came about). *h*-dropping was considered vulgar by the late 1700s; i.e. indexical of working-class speech. Consider Walker's (1785: 15) comment:

> A still worse habit than the last (ie not sounding *h* after *w*- [LCW]) prevails, chiefly among the people of London, that of sinking the h at the beginning of words where it ought to be sounded, and of sounding it, either where it is not seen, or where it ought to be sunk.

London English is also *h*-inserting, a phenomenon widely attested since medieval times although heard less often nowadays. The following transcript is of the speech of an army instructor from 1939, who was both an *h*-inserter and an *h*-deleter:

> Army Sergeant: I'm going to teach you 'ow to fire your revolver single haction, so I want you to watch me. With my right arm extended, I raise the revolver in a vertical plane, applying the squeezer on the trigger, so timing the 'ammer to fall the moment the revolver intercepts the line of vision. If firing consecutive shots, I lower the revolver about one foot, using this movement to 'elp me to cock the revolver again, and then I finish and fight my six rounds. That is very simple, and I want you to do it now.

> [BBC Archive 2873, recorded 1939]

h-insertion and deletion is satirised by the author Clifford B. Poultney, in his novel entitled *Mrs 'Arris* of 1923, where its function (along with many other features) is to represent working-class London speech:

> "Goo' morning," I says, chatty. None of 'em takes the least notice.
> "Ho," I thinks, "uppish – or deaf," so I tries again.
> "Deaf and dumb family?" I asks aloud.

"Come *hon*, Gwendoline," says the female, brief, "bring that picture in-
doors," and she disappears within.

"*Well!*" I thinks, but I keeps me temper and addresses the 'usband, 'oo were
trying to get a sofa through the front door.

"You'll 'ave to push 'arder than that, me lad," I says pleasant. "Why don't
you take yer coat off and set to like a man?"

"When I wants your advice," 'e says nasty, "I'll ask for it."

"Ho," I says, "you will, won't you? 'Oo d'you think you are, anyway? Get
yer 'air cut."

"Go away, please," 'e says.

"P'raps you don't know 'oo I am?" I says severe.

"Mrs. Guy Fawkes," suggests the small boy.

"Look 'ere," I snorts, "that's enough from you, you monkey-faced, pug-
nosed himp. Vulgar abuse," I says fierce, "shows a low hupbringing – as
your mother ought to 'ave told you if she'd got the fust instink of a lady,
which she don't look as if she'd 'eard of the word."

"You leave my wife alone," says the 'usband.

"I wouldn't touch 'er," I declares, "not with the longest pole in Poland."

"Look 'ere, my good woman," 'e begins.

"Don't you call me a good woman," I says passionate, "I'll 'ave you up for
libel."

"Come inside, Hedgar," calls the voice of the fair female, "don't you 'ave no
truck with 'er – she's low."

(Poultney *Mrs. 'Arris* 1923: 8-10)

Present-day London working-class speakers today are variably *h*-
deleting, perhaps still occasionally *h*-inserting, and the middle-classes are
still mostly *h*-ful. The aristocratic classes, like the working classes, were
until recently also variably *h*-deleting. The following transcript is from
an interview with Lady Diana Mosley (1910-2003), daughter of Lord
and Lady Redesdale, and wife of Sir Oswald Mosley, the British fascist
leader:

Lady Diana Mosley: well people think so now but you see we thought we
were very ordinary because when I was a child it was quite usual for girls
not to go to school for example and to have a governess at 'ome as we did

[BBC T 86172, recorded Oct. 1989]

Following a word that ends in [t] is one of the places where speakers are
most likely to delete etymological [h]. Lady Mosley also deleted [h] after
words which end in vowels:[2]

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[2] In the RP accent, word-final [r] is not articulated, so the word *sir* ends in a vowel.

> Lady Diana Mosley: I married Brian Guinness when I was eighteen and then really of course life became great fun because you see all his Oxford friends and so on they really were extremely brilliant people I mean they remain my friends all my life very few are left now but for instance there's Sir 'arold Acton and er Peter Quennell I think they're about the only ones left

[BBC Archive T 86172, recorded Oct. 1989][3]

On the recording, Lady Diana's pronunciation of *Sir Harold* sounds like one word, ([særəld]). *h*-variation is probably a moribund feature in aristocratic speech nowadays, and middle-aged speakers are more likely to be *h*-ful, that is, sounding more like middle-class speakers. Present-day teenage aristocratic speakers may also be variably *h*-ful, but this is probably not a continuation of the traditional upper-class accent as such, but rather due to the influence of the spread of London English, which is now being chronicled as "Estuary English" (cf. Wells 1997a, 1997b).

To summarise: variable *h*-deletion (and to a lesser extent, insertion) is a feature of present-day London English, and *h*-deletion is a feature, if perhaps moribund, of present-day elderly aristocratic speech. Yet the London middle classes are mainly *h*-ful. The history of variable word-initial [h] pronunciation in English can be viewed as a contact phenomenon between Middle English speakers and the Anglo-Norman French speakers of the Norman Conquest. Put simply in broad outline, its history can be described as follows: English is a Germanic language, and the Germanic languages were *h*-ful in word-initial position. After 1066, Anglo-Norman French was introduced into much of Britain and continued to be used as a spoken language probably as late as the 1400s in registers such as accountancy and law (and given that accountancy and law are two areas of written record, such registers provide much of our historical evidence). Word-initial [h] has been variable over the history of French. It looks as though in Classical Latin word-initial [h] was

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[3] Diana Freeman-Mitford (1910-2003), daughter of David Bertram Ogilvy Freeman-Mitford, 2nd Baron Redesdale and Sydney Bowles. Married, firstly, Bryan Walter Guinness, 2nd Baron Moyne, 1929, secondly, Sir Oswald Ernald Mosley, 6th Bt. 1936.
Bryan Walter Guinness, 2nd Baron Moyne (1905-1992). Married Diana Freeman-Mitford 1929, divorced 1934.
Sir Harold Acton (1904-1994) poet, author, editor.
Peter Quennell (1905-1993) poet, historian, biographer, editor, critic.

mostly pronounced, but by Late Latin times it was deleted in certain dialects (Pope 1934: para. 185). Then, as Late Latin developed into Old French, word-initial [h] again became pronounced, especially in words of Germanic origin (Pope 1934: para. 28). Standard Modern French is once again word-initial *h*-deleting, a state still not fully achieved by the later seventeenth century (Pope 1934: para. 196). Anglo-Norman is a Romance language, but Anglo-Norman speakers had borrowed a lot of vocabulary from the Scandinavian languages as Normandy was settled by Old Norse speakers. So Anglo-Norman speakers probably did pronounce word-initial [h] in Old Norse words borrowed into their French. This is the variety that was imported to Britain, and in this way English has ended up with a partial system of pronunciation for word-initial [h] (see Lass 1992: 118-9). However some English dialects are predominantly *h*-ful (Scots, Irish, Newcastle, rural East Anglian, possibly due to less Anglo-Norman influence in those areas), so geographical region is salient in [h] pronunciation (Milroy *Linguistic Variation and Change* 137-8). Word-initial *h*-variability has been in flux for many centuries and still is: according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, middle-class Londoners were still saying ['ɜrb], ['ɜːb] for *herb* in the nineteenth century, and *'otel* and *'ospital* were still prevalent in the mid-twentieth (*Oxford English Dictionary* herb n. "the *h* was mute until the 19th c., and is still so treated by many"; hotel n. "həʊˈtɛl, old-fashioned əʊˈtɛl").[4]

h-deletion and insertion can also be heard extraterritorially (that is, outside the British Isles) in several speech-communities. One speech-community that still practises *h*-insertion is that of the island of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic. The island was settled in 1816 by soldiers in a British garrison, placed there to defend the island of St Helena, where the captured Napoleon was living in exile. When Napoleon died they departed, except for one soldier, Corporal William Glass from Scotland, who went to Cape Town, married a woman called Maria, and brought her back to Tristan. They had two children, and in 1820 they were joined by three shipwrecked men, and then later by a few more, and then some American whalers. In 1827 five St Helenian women came to be their wives, and in the late nineteenth century the community was joined by a Dutchman, and in the early twentieth century by two Irish sisters and two Italian men. So today nearly all the inhabitants are descended from eight men and seven women who settled there at

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[4] The development of *h*-pronunciation in English is considerably more complicated than this outline suggests; cf. the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s long essay on H.

different times during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Schreier (2003) argues that Tristan da Cunha English is not a direct lineal descendant of any one British dialect, but a contact variety. The following extract is from an interview with the Tristanian islander Basil Lavarello when he was a refugee in Britain in 1961-2, due to the Tristan volcano's eruption:

> Basil Lavarello: And just as we left the hisland [haːlən] on the ships they went to a little hisland called Nightingale which is twenty-four and a 'alf miles south west of Tristan. This volcano blowed out of another hole, and when she blowed, it's just like a great big mushroom comes up out of de ground, she booms and blows up like this you see it and then another great hole open up and cracks start running towards the village again.

[BBC 29081, recorded 1962]

In Tristan da Cunha, *h*-insertion does not connote membership of the working classes, which it does in the speech of the army instructor quoted above, and which helps form the basis of the humour in Mrs Hedgar Hentwisle calling Mrs 'Arris "low." Thus *h*-insertion and deletion happens for historical reasons: two systems came into contact and caused fluctuation with regard to the treatment of word-initial [h]. Some dialects simply retain the Germanic rule and are *h*-ful, that is, they neither delete etymological word-initial [h] nor insert unetymological word-initial [h]. Other accents, such as the London accent, do both. This variation became marked for social class at various points in history (see Milroy *Linguistic Variations and Change*, 137-45, and 1992 and Mugglestone 2003: 95-128), and in London, *h*-variability is currently predominantly marked for working-class speech. However this social markedness and stigmatisation does not pertain to *h*-variability in the speech of the Tristan da Cunha islanders, where it simply connotes membership of the island speech-community.

Word-initial *h*-insertion and deletion may well be historically linked to another phenomenon, front-glide insertion. This interesting possibility has been raised by Ramisch (2000). He notes that the phenomenon of *h*-deletion may be mapped together with the rise of glide-insertion. Lady Diana Mosley's conservative RP accent retained glide-insertion, a feature mostly lost in twentieth-century London speech. Compare her realisations of the words *here/hear/ear/year*: in her accent, *hear* and *here* were homophones, as were *ear* and *year*.

Lady Diana Mosley: My terrible deafness forbids me to hear strings and
so that really the only thing I can hear more or less is the human voice and
er orchestra up to a point but I lose a tremendous lot
(*hear* [hja¹])

I've got wonderful friends in Paris and here and um I'm afraid we laugh the
whole time
(*here* [hja¹])

    And was it always obvious how much the duke adored her
Yes it was absolutely obvious whoever he was sitting next to he always had
half a half a ear for her and half an eye but of course he had charming man-
ners
(*ear* [jia] – note the preceding article *a*, not *an*)

I sometimes wonder whether you see had I known had I had the slightest
idea that er I should be imprisoned I would have never have touched well
say um I'd've given up going to Germany or whatever but first of all I
hoped there was going to be peace it never really I never really believed
there would be a war I hoped human reason would prevail but had I known
I suppose I really would have felt my duty was with my children because it's
a dreadful thing to miss three and a half years of their lives
(*years* [jia¹z])

[BBC T 86172, recorded Oct. 1989]

In Lady Diana's speech, [h] is realised for the lexemes *hear* and *here* but
[j] is realised as the first phoneme of *years* and *ear*. This pattern of [h]/[j]
distribution marked her speech as aristocratic. Other speakers from the
same place and date but using the working-class, *h*-deleting London ac-
cent would have had homophones for vowel-initial *here/hear/ear*, realis-
ing the front glide for *year* only.

    Ramisch (2000) surveyed the *Survey of English Dialects* (1962-71) and
found that out of 326 tokens of the word *hear*, 195 realised no word-
initial consonant, 69 began with word-initial [j-], 55 with [hi-] or [hj-],
and only 7 with [h-].

SED item	Total tokens	[o-]	[j-]	[hi-, hj-]	[h-]
hear (VI.4.2)	326	195	69	55	7

Table 1: Realisations of *hear* tokens reported by Orton, Dieth et al
(1962-71) (figures taken from Ramisch).

Ramisch notes that when mapped, it becomes apparent that twentieth-century word-initial [j-] occurs in areas that are adjacent to the [h]-retaining areas. He argues that [j]-realisation is actually a transitional phenomenon between *h*-retention and *h*-deletion, with the articulation [hi-], [hj-] as an intermediary stage. Once some etymological word-initial [h]s had been deleted, then [j] could then be inserted in front of any word-initial vowel, as most speakers did not know or care which words beginning with vowels did so historically, and which had an etymological [h-]. This would account for such realisations as [jia] for *ear*, from Old English *eare*. This process had already begun by the fifteenth century (and almost certainly earlier), as is attested by such Middle English London spellings as <The Est yende> for "the East end," from Old English *ende*.[5] And as with *h*-variability, *j*-insertion was also transported overseas: Pederson (1983) describes word-initial *j*-insertion in the speech of late twentieth-century elderly mountain-dwellers in Tennessee.[6]

This brings us to consider social attitudes towards Londoners' front-glide insertion. Turning to orthoepistic evidence, we learn that front-glide insertion occured in Southern English speech not only word-initially (as in Lady Diana Mosley's [jir] for *ear*) but also between the velar plosives /g/ and /k/ and a following front vowel, as in [kjæt] for *cat*. The orthoepist Robert Robinson, author of *The Art of Pronunciation*, 1617, was one of the first to report front-glide insertion between [g, k] and a following front vowel. All that is known of Robert Robinson is that he was a Londoner, as is declared on the title page of his book, and that he was young and poor when it was published. He was probably a schoolteacher of young children, and although of humble birth he was well-educated. Dobson (1957) states that *The Art of Pronunciation* is generally regarded as the first scientific work on phonetics in English. Robinson also wrote two manuscripts now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, probably written after 1617, which contain transcriptions of contemporary speech. These have been edited by Dobson (1947), and are also discussed in Dobson (1957: 200-210). From Robinson's transcripts

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[5] 1461/2, Corporation of London Records Office MS Bridge House Accounts, volume 3, fo. 339v.

[6] Compare the surname of the Londoner listed in 1461/2 as <Stevyn Streteyende> with the fifteenth-century-attested spelling of the surname <Townshend>, <Townsend>, with <y>, <h>, and zero all possible word-initial graphs for –*end*, presumably indicating the co-existence of realisations [-end, -hend, -hjend, -jend]. (London, Corporation of London Records Office MS Bridge House Accounts, volume 3, fo. 341).

we learn that early seventeenth-century Londoners were adding a front
glide before [a] in the word *guarded* (Robinson transcribed the pronun-
ciation in his own phonetic orthography). Dobson regards this as the
earliest orthoepistical evidence of this sound-change, but Robinson also
transcribes the words *canker*, *canst* and *can* without the front glide, so it
looks as though glide-insertion after [g, k] and before front vowels was
only just getting going, and was lexically restricted in London in 1617.
Front-glide insertion is interesting because social attitude towards it
varied over time, as can be seen from later orthoepistic comment.

An early commentator on the insertion was John Wallis (1616-1703).
He was a phonetician and grammarian from Kent who grew up in Es-
sex. His main interest was mathematics, and he became famous during
his lifetime for the deciphering of encrypted dispatches. He held the
Savilian Professorship of Geometry at Oxford, where he contributed to
the foundation of modern mathematics, and experimented with teach-
ing speech to deaf and dumb children. In his *Tractatus de Loquela* of 1653
[1699], Wallis reports that *can*, *get* and *begin* are pronounced *cyan*, *gyet* and
begyin (Wallis 1653: 41, Dobson 1957: 234, Wyld 1920: 310). This may
well represent Wallis' own pronunciation in the 1650s. As an adult he
lived in London, Oxford and Cambridge, and as he was highly educated
it is probable that his speech was relatively conservative (Dobson 1957:
218, 222). Wallis also reports in the 1765 edition that this development
was limited to the Midland area and was absent from Scottish and
Northern speech. This is most germane to Ramisch's argument, because
some Scots and Northern dialects are amongst the *h*-retaining dialects
today.

Jespersen (1909: 12.61) and Wyld (1920: 310) report that the ortho-
epist James Elphinston mentions front-glide insertion after word-initial
[k-, g-] in Elphinston (1765, 1787):

> That either power of the guttural may delicately prefix it to the diphthong *i*,
> the ear acknowledges in *kind* or *sky*; *guide* or *Guy*, &c. Equally it is inserted,
> though equally unseen, when *i* for *u* either way articulated is closed by *r*. as
> in *skirt*, *skirmish*; *gird*, *girdle*. Some small liquefaction do we find also caused
> by the same articulation before *a* closed: as in *can*, *can't*, *began*, *regard*." (El-
> phinston 1765, vol 1: 94)

His *Propriety Ascertained in her Picture* (1787) is written in his own or-
thographical system and Jespersen takes his comments on glide-
insertion there to mean that he thought it "inelegant to articulate alike

skirt (which should be *skyurt*) and *curt, gird,* and *hurdy-gurdy*" (Jespersen 1909: 12.61) – that's to say, that Elphinston regarded front-glide insertion as a good thing and he recommended it in speech; that not to do so was to sound gross and blunt.[7]

However, the orthoepist Robert Nares, writing in 1784, makes the passing comment that *"Kyind* for *kind* is a monster of pronunciation, heard only on our stage" (Nares 1784: 28).

James Beattie in his 1788 *Theory of Language* mentions front-glide insertion, but without any social judgement on it: "the words *sky* and *kind*: in which, the diphthong expressed by *y* in the one, and *i* in the other; is apparently introduced, in pronunciation with something of the sound of the English *e* as heard in the words *he, she, be.*"

Jesperson (1909: 12.61) and Wyld (1920: 310) also survey the writings of the orthoepist John Walker. Both Walker's *Rhetorical Grammar* and his *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* went through many editions in the late 1700s and first half of the 1800s, and the relevant passages changed somewhat over the years. The first edition of the *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* reads as follows:

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[7] The relevant extracts are as follows:

"... hwile at London emitting dhe slender Anallogy's emission ov dhe slender licquefier after a pallatal (*k, c,* or *q*) iz *a stil smal voice,* hwich dhe (oppozite) braudener surely nevver can picture; and hwich iz indeed dhe sole Inglish emission, dhat proovs too suttel for symbol. Dellicate ears alone can discern, hwat onely dellicate organs can convey: dhat nice licquefaccion, widh hwich dhe pallatals articculate *i* open, *a* shut, and dhe *ur* pictured by *ir.* Herd iz dhus, hwat cannot be seen; hwat, omitted or stiffened, iz equally groce; in dhe *kind guide,* dhe *card* or *gard,* in *skirt* or *guird:* hware we must hear, dho we cannot see, dhe *kyind gyide;* impossibly *guyide,* or dhe like; dhe *g* keeping hard, before dhe slender licquefier ov dhe vowel. *Sky* and *Guy* may thus be a *Shibboleth,* or distinguisher: dhe remote from ellegance (verry pardonably) guivving dhe sounds (blunt) az dhey seem; so articculating alike *skirt* and *curt,* or *curd, guird* and *hurdy-gurdy*" (Elphinston 1787 vol 1: 111).

"Dhe slender licquefier for want ov such substitue, must be dellicately blended, dho unseen (prezerved in reallity, hware it cannot be painted) between dhis mute and *a* shut, *ir* for *ur,* and dhe diphthong *i*: az in *card, gard; kirk, guird; kind, sk.*" (Elphinston 1787 vol 1: 261).

Wyld (1920: 310) reports that Elphinston considered that the introduction of [j] before the vowel in *sky, can, card, skirt, guard* was "essential to a polite pronunciation." I have been unable to trace this quotation in the 1765 edition; perhaps I have missed it, or, Wyld may have been consulting a later edition. However, although I do not find Elphinston's comments to be entirely clear, Jespersen and Wyld's interpretation that he approves of front-glide insertion is surely correct.

Paragraph 92: "When the *a* is preceded by the gutturals, hard *g* or *c*, it is, in polite pronunciation, softened by the intervention of a sound like *e*, so that *card, cart, guard, regard*, are pronounced like *ke-ard, ke-art, ghe-ard, re-ghe-ard*. This sound of the *a* is taken notice of in Steele's Grammar, page 49, which proves it is not the offspring of the present day."

Paragraph 160: "It was remarked under the vowel A, that when a hard *g* or *c* preceded that vowel, a sound like *e* interposed, the better to unite the letters, and soften the sound of the consonant. The same may be observed of the letter I. When this vowel is preceded by hard *g* or *k*, which is but another form for hard *c*, it is pronounced as if an *e* were inserted between the consonant and the vowel. Thus *sky, kind, guide, guise, disguise, guile, beguile, mankind*, are pronounced as if written *ske-y, ke-ind, gue-ise, disgue-ise, gue-ile, begue-ile, manke-ind*. At first sight we are surprised that two such different letters as *a* and *i* should be affected in the same manner by the hard gutturals, *g, c* and *k*; but when we reflect that *i* is really composed of *a* and *e*, our surprise ceases; and we are pleased to find the ear perfectly uniform in its procedure, and entirely unbiased by the eye. From this view of the analogy we may form a judgement of the observation of a late writer on this subject, that "*ky-ind* for kind is a monster of pronunciation, "heard only on our stage." – Nare's Orth. p.28"[8]
(Walker *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, 1791)

By the 1802 edition of the *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, more comment on glide insertion is added:

GARDEN When the *a* in this and similar words is preceded by *C, G*, or *K*, polite speakers interpose a sound like the consonant *y*, which coalesces with both, and gives a mellowness to the sound; thus, *a Garden* pronounced in this manner is nearly similar to the words *Egg* and *Yarden* united into *egg-gyarden*, and *a Guard* is almost like *egg-yard*. (Walker *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, 1802)

Walker's *Rhetorical Grammar*, 1801 edition, repeats some of the *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* material, adds more praise for front-glide insertion, and calls Nares' (1784) opinion "mistaken":

There is a fluent liquid sound of these consonants before the two vowels *a* and *i*, which gives a smooth and elegant sound to the words in which they occur, and which distinguishes the polite pronunciation of London from that of every other part of the island. This pronunciation is nearly as if the *a*

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[8] The 1791 edition has "a hard *g* or *e*" in the first line; this is corrected to a "a hard *g* or *c*" in the 1794 edition.

and *i* were preceded by *e*. Thus, *kind* is sounded as if written *ke-ind; card*, as *ke-ard;* and *regard*, as *rege-ard*. When these vowels are pronounced short, as in *cabbage, gander, kindle*, &c. the interposition of the sound of *e* is very perceptible, and indeed unavoidable; for though we can pronounce *guard, cart*, and *kind*, without interposing the *e*, we cannot pronounce *carriage, garrison*, and *kindred*, in the same manner. The words that require this liquid sound in the *k, c* and *g* hard, are but few. *Sky, kind, guide, girt, girl, guise, guile, card, cart, carp, carpenter, carpet, carve, carbuncle, carnal, cartridge, guard* and *regard;* – these and their compounds are perhaps the only words where this sound occurs; but these words are so much in use as to be sufficient to mark a speaker as either coarse or elegant, as he adopts or neglects it . . .
(Walker *Rhetorical Grammar*, 1801, p 11)

I say, though these words may be pronounced without the intervention of *e* or *y*, yet with it they are not only more mellow and fluent, but infinitely more elegant and fashionable.

We may see how much mistaken is a very solid and ingenious writer on this subject, who says that *ky-ind* for *kind* is a "monster of pronunciation, heard only on our stage." Nare's Orthoepy, p.28.
(Walker *Rhetorical Grammar*, 1801, p 12)[9]

Nonetheless, despite Walker's approbation ("mellowness," "fluent," "smooth and elegant," "polite pronunciation of London," "fashionable," and his claim that *carriage, garrison* and *kindred* are impossible to say without glide-insertion), Batchelor, writing in 1809, agreed with Nares in warning against front-glide insertion:

It may be heard as audibly in *back* and *bag*, as in *can*, &c.; but the pronunciation of these sounds in an audible manner is an obvious depravation of speech, and should be carefully avoided . . . The *y* which some people pronounce in *guard, guide*, &c. is the initial of the long *u* (*yuw*), the rest of which is rejected; but the *y* which Mr Walker allows in *card* (kyard) and *kind* (kyuynd), does not admit of this sort of defence, though, as he observes, established custom is a sufficient defence for any anomaly in pronunciation.
(Batchelor 1809: 60)

and Samuel Oliver, writing in 1825, goes further:

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[9] The 1797 edition of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* changes *cabbage* to *candle*, and the 1802 edition adds *catechise* to the list. Entries under *guard* and *guilt* as well as *garden* repeat the desirability of adding a front glide.

The sound here reprehended by Nares is indeed, I think, "a monster of pronunciation, heard," not exclusively *on our stage*, but from affected speakers wherever they may be among us: equally a monster of pronunciation is Walker's *ke-ard* for *card*, and equally replete with affectation: his reasoning on this point as cited above, has some ingenious subtilty; but a man of talent will talk well when he talks nonsense. (Oliver 1825: 284 fn)

Despite such railing from orthoepists about its monstrosity, depravation and affectation, over the nineteenth century the list of words in which the front-glide could be inserted grew. Odel (1806) adds *calm, gap, gape*; Hill (1821) adds *kept, care, gain, gay, insignificant*, and Rapp (1840) adds *kite, kibe, kine* (Jesperson 1909: 12.62). The inference here is that it was increasingly used by the lower classes and avoided by the middle classes. Indeed in 1850 Dickens used front-glide insertion to indicate the lower-class, East Anglian speech of Mr Peggoty in *David Copperfield* (reported in Mugglestone 2003: 193)[10]:

Ch 51: "I took my dear child away last night," Mr. Peggotty began, as he raised his eyes to ours, "to my lodging, wheer I have a long time been expecting of her and preparing fur her. It was hours afore she knowed me right; and when she did, she kneeled down at my feet, and kiender said to me, as if it was her prayers, how it all come to be. You may believe me, when I heerd her voice, as I had heerd at home so playful – and see her humbled, as it might be in the dust our Saviour wrote in with his blessed hand – I felt a wownd go to my art, in the midst of all its thankfulness."

(Dickens *David Copperfield* 1850: 619)

The linguist Ellis (1869: 206) reports the demise in London of front-glide insertion after [k, g]:

"As respects the particular usage, (kjind . . . skji . . . gjid) for *kind . . . sky . . . guide*, it is now antiquated in English . . . The custom is now dying rapidly out." Perhaps the last London commentator to hear it is Wyld writing in 1920, referring to the previous generation – although the implication is that the speaker in question, being his near relative, was not of the lower-classes and was evidently not a "monstrous" speaker:

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[10] For a discussion of Dickens's representation of East Anglian speech see Poussa (1999).

"I used to hear the pronunciations [kja:d, gja:dn], &c., as a boy, from a very near relation of mine, a most fastidious speaker, a lady born in 1802, who died in 1886." (Wyld 1920: 310)

Thereafter, [j]-insertion after word-initial [g, k] is not commented on in London speech, but it can still be heard in present-day transported varieties, notably in the Caribbean, as well as in some Irish and Welsh Englishes, with social marking (Wells 1982, vol 2: 433-4, vol 3: 569).[11] It was also heard in the speech of the Southern states of North America. As late as 1932, one English writer heard it as indexical of general American usage:

"He then, under the curious eyes of Flora's highbrow friend, said that his name was Earl P. Neck, of Beverly Hills, Hollywood; and he gave them his 'cyard' very ceremoniously and asked if they would go and have tea with him?"
(Gibbons *Cold Comfort Farm* 1932: 93-94)

So the sound-shift of inserting a front-glide in these environments moved through social space from mere observation (1617, Robinson), to praise (1765 Elphinston, 1791 Walker), to opprobrium (1784, Nares; 1809, Batchelor; 1825, Oliver), and then finally to obsolescence in the late 1880s in London, and also marking for colonial speech. I infer from the orthoepistic commentary above that the social trajectory is from lower-class to middle-class to lower-class speech, and then to obsolescence in the city but continuation of usage in regional and extraterritorial varieties.

The geographical trajectory depicted so far is from city and hinterland to colony, and a similar kind of geographical and social trajectory can be outlined for the final feature to be considered, the adverbial construction *like to (have)* + verb + *-ed*, which has the semantic property of "almost, just about, nearly." Nowadays this is mostly heard in the Southern United States of America, where it is now socially marked for low prestige. In terms of its distribution, *liketa* occurs in both positive and negative sentences, but not in questions and commands. It may co-occur with the intensifier *just*, as in "just *like to (have)* + verb + *-ed*," and it always occurs in the past. Interestingly, unlike "almost, nearly, just

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[11] Wells (1982) states that the presence of front-glide insertion in the Celtic Englishes is due to substrate influence, rather than a direct lineal descendant of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Southern English.

about" it generally occurs in violent contexts (Feagin 1979: 174-84, 344 Appendix B; Bailey 1997: 259). Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998: 335) note that *liketa* is always counterfactual, in that it signals an impending event that did not, in fact, occur. Another property that has been observed about present-day usage of *liketa* in the Southern United States is that it frequently occurs in the coda of a piece of discourse, often at the end of an anecdote.[12] Kyto and Romaine point out that the *liketa* construction became largely obsolete in Standard English in the nineteenth century. They gloss its meaning as: "was on the verge of V-ing but did not V." Continuing with literary examples, the following representations come from a twentieth-century novel set in Virginia and Tennessee, where use of *liketa* connotes rural or small-town, lower-class, traditional life:

> "I tell you the truth, Raymond," Mr Zed said, shaking his bushy white head angrily, "I declare, I rue the day I left Sow Gap!"
> "You're plumb crazy iffen you do," Raymond gasped. "Sow Gap like to have killed me. Can't do nothin no more cept sit around tryin to breathe."
> Alther *Kinflicks* (1976: 82-3)

> Doreen giggled. "Still that same old sense of humor, Ginny. Law, I like to *died* those nights at the Family Drive-In listenin to you explainin to Sparky why you couldn't screw him. Dole and I lay up there in the front seat just howlin at some of the things you come up with."
> Alther *Kinflicks* (1976: 119)

> That night at supper, in a room packed with relations, Uncle Reuben demanded of Mr Zed, "Why ain't you never been back afore, Zed? It like to killed Pa, you runnin off like that without nary no reason."
> Alther *Kinflicks* (1976: 470)

These instances all fulfil the semantic constraints as outlined by Feagin, Wolfram and Shilling-Estes, and Kyto and Romaine; that's to say, they are all past tense, they are not in questions and commands, and they are counterfactual (the speaker wasn't killed, didn't die, and Pa was not killed). Morphologically "like to have killed me" follows the prototypical blueprint for this construction: *like to (have)* + verb + *-ed*. However, "like to died" and "like to killed Pa" elide the auxiliary verb *have*. *Liketa* has had an interesting social trajectory in that it is first attested in late Mid-

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[12] I am indebted to William Carney's presentation at SECOL LXVI for the observation that present-day *liketa* often occurs in the coda of a narrative.

dle English and Early Modern English, became regarded as part of the Standard register and was used by writers such as Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Samuel Johnson, Steele, Defoe, Swift, Fielding, George Washington and Dickens, but then *liketa* became regarded as vulgar at some point in the nineteenth century and mostly dropped out of usage in Britain. Many of the following examples are taken from Jespersen (1931: IV, 146); I have provided more context so that the oral nature of its usage can be seen:

1481 Caxton *Reynard the Fox*
"I wente to her in a grete heuinesse. And wente depe in that myre and that water er I coude breke the yse and moche payne suffred she er she coude haue out her taylle and yet lefte a gobet of her tayle behynd her And we were lyke bothe therby to haue lost our lyues for she galped and cryde so lowde for the smarte that she had er she cam out that the men of the village cam out with sauys and byllis wyth flaylis and pykforkes And the wyuis wyth theyr distauis and cryed dyspytously sle sle and smyte doun right I was neuer in my lyf so a ferde"
(Caxton 1481 [1970]: 89)

1599 Shakespeare *Much Ado About Nothing*
Benedicke   Good day my Lord.
Prince   Welcome signior, you are almost come to part almost a fray.
Claudio   Wee had likt to haue had our two noses snapt off with two old men without teeth.
Prince   *Leonato* and his brother, what think'st thou? Had wee fought, I doubt we should haue beene too yong for them.
(*Much Ado About Nothing*: V.i.115)

1600 Shakespeare *As You Like It*
*Iaques*Good my Lord, bid him welcome: This is the
                    Motley-minded Gentleman, that I haue so often met in
                    the Forrest: he hath bin a Courtier he sweares.
Clowne   If any man doubt that, let him put mee to my
                    purgation, I haue trod a measure, I haue flattred a Lady,
                    I haue bin politicke with my friend, smooth with mine
                    enemie, I haue vndone three Tailors, I haue had foure
                    quarrels, and like to haue fought one.
(*As You Like It*: V.iv.48)

Shakespeare *A Winter's Tale*
Clowne	We are but plaine fellowes, Sir.
Autolicus	A Lye; you are rough, and hayrie: Let me haue no lying; it becomes none but Trades-men, and they often giue vs (Souldiers) the Lye, but wee pay them for it with stamped Coyne, not stabbing Steele, therefore they doe not giue vs the Lye.
Clowne	Your Worship had like to haue giuen vs one, if you had not taken your selfe with the manner.

(*A Winter's Tale:* IV.iv)

1663 Samuel Pepys's *Diary*

At home with my wife and Ashwell talking of her going into the country this year, wherein we had like to have fallen out, she thinking that I have a design to have her go, which I have not; and to let her stay here I perceive will not be convenient, for she expects more pleasure than I can give her here, and I fear I have done very ill in letting her begin to learn to dance.
(27th April 1663 [1985], transcription from shorthand)

1718 Samuel Sewall *Diary*

Mr. Davenport says he put the Govr. In mind of filling up the Court, and he spake of defering it to May. Mr. Bromfield and I visited the Govr., found there Mr. Stodard and his son David. Had like to have fallen grievously, by reason of my Frosts, on the Steps in the night: but recover'd. *Laus Deo.*
(5th February 1718 [1882]: 165) (*frosts* are probably a type of moccasin; see *OED* frost. Note that Sewall is an American writer.)

1719 Defoe *Robinson Crusoe*

As I imagined, so it was; there appeared before me a little opening of the land, and I found a strong current of the tide set into it, so I guided my raft as well as I could to keep in the middle of the stream. But here I had like to have suffered a second shipwreck, which, if I had, I think verily would have broken my heart; for knowing nothing of the coast, my raft ran aground at one end of it upon a shoal, and not being aground at the other end, it wanted but a little that all my cargo had slipped off towards the end that was afloat, and so fallen into the water.
(Defoe 1719 [1994]: 55)

1726-7 Swift *Gulliver's Travels: A Voyage to Lilliput*

Ch. 2: "When this Adventure was at an End, I came back out of my House, having Occasion for fresh Air. The Emperor was already descended from the Tower, and advancing on Horse-back towards me, which had like to have cost him dear; for the Beast, although very well trained, yet wholly unused to such a Sight, which appeared as if a Mountain moved before him, reared up on his hinder Feet: But that Prince, who is an excellent Horse-

man, kept his Seat, until his Attendants ran in, and held the Bridle, while his Majesty had Time to dismount."
(Swift 1726-7 [1986]: 15)

1728 Fielding *Love in Several Masques*
Lady Matchless   To say the truth, I cannot positively affirm I have: nor, if I had, am I confident I shou'd be able to keep it. For when Sir William died, I made a secret resolution never to run a second hazard: but – a – at the year's end, I don't know how – a – I had like to have fallen into the snare again.
(Fielding 1728: Act II Scene I: p. 16) (*Love in Several Masques* is a play set in London.)

1749 Fielding *Tom Jones*
Ch. 9: "Logicians sometimes prove too much by an argument, and politicians often overreach themselves in a scheme. Thus had it like to have happened to Mrs. Honour, who, instead of recovering the rest of her clothes, had like to have stopped even those she had on her back from escaping; for the squire no sooner heard of her having abused his sister, than he swore twenty oaths he would send her to Bridewell."
(Fielding 1749 [1762]: 353)
1776 Samuel Foote *Capuchin*
"Mrs Minnikin: Very kind, reverend Sir. Then, we will go after the girl to the convent directly.
Mrs Clack: But take care what you say! You see what a hobble we had like to have got into.
Mrs Minnikin: I know how to behave myself."
(Foote 1776: 111. A *hobble* is a difficulty. This comedy depends upon its depiction of lower-class London speech for much of its humour.)

1847 [1877] Dickens *Dombey and Son*
Ch. 50: "What, Wal'r my lad!" said the Captain, looking in at the door, with his face like an amiable warming-pan. "So there ain't NO other character, ain't there?" He had like to have suffocated himself with this pleasantry, which he repeated at least forty times during tea; polishing his radiant face with the sleeve of his coat, and dabbing his head all over with his pocket-handkerchief, in the intervals. But he was not without a graver source of enjoyment to fall back upon, when so disposed, for he was repeatedly heard to say in an under tone, as he looked with ineffable delight at Walter and Florence:
"Ed'ard Cuttle, my lad, you never shaped a better course in your life, than when you made that there little property over, jintly!"
(Dickens 1847 [1877]: 442)

As can be seen from these extracts, nearly all are representations of first-person speech, or reported speech, or reflect some kind of spoken

or colloquial register. During most of its life in Britain, until the mid-1800s, *liketa* was not indexical of lack of education or lower-class membership, it was merely a way of indicating dire or violent events narrowly averted in a dramatised, anecdotal, spoken, and often colloquial way. *Liketa* seems always to have belonged to a spoken rather than a written style, even in extraterritorial varieties. Evidence comes from court records from the Island of St Helena in the South Atlantic. The following two extracts from the court records are both transcripts of speech, one spoken by a soldier, one by the St Helena Governor, but as the speech-act took place under the formal circumstances of the court, they cannot be taken as instances of informal or colloquial speech, merely of early eighteenth-century English:

> Henericus Williams sold[r] sworn saith that he being going in search after the said James Greentrees Black Tottey heard Edw[rd] Smith cry out James Harris, and coming up to him saw Edw[rd] Smith and Tottey strugling, and heard the Black begg to be Let free, and That Edw[rd] Smith swore That he should not go, and saw the said Tottey have his hand about y[e] said Edward Smiths Neck, and heard the said Smith say the said Black had Likt to have Throtled him had not James Harris come as he did.
> London, British Library, Oriental and India Office, MS G/32/3, St Helena Consultation, Tues 15 Jan 1705/6

> The Governour Reports that the high seas which begun the 13th of this Instant, and Continued the 14th and 15th has done a Great Deal of Damage, It has Intirely washed Away the Lower Fort of Two Guns at Bankses, and had Like to Wash the Guns Away, for We had Enough to do to save them, And it is his Oppinion that It is a Vseless Chargeable place, and their is No Occation to build any more their, for it was Constantly Repairing upon the Damage Every high seas did it for severall years past. The same high seas has also broke the Midle Angle of the Trench in James Vally for a Matter of One hundred and Ten Foot, and has Damaged the Angle their, where the Round Tower is of One Gun, Insomuch that it was Like to Tumble down, . . . by Reason of the high seas. Which had Like to Wash down the Crane, the place were shipping Waters Att. As their is No Coales to burn Lime it is in Vain to Repair Fortifications without it, it is Nothing but making Ducks and Drakes of the Companys Money.
> London, British Library, Oriental and India Office, MS G/32/4, St Helena Consultation, 16 January 1710/11[13]

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[13] See Wright (2003) for further examples of *liketa* tokens in sixteenth-century MSS.

To summarise: the *like to (have)* + verb + *-ed* construction arose some time in the late Middle English period; it was widespread in writing in England during the Early Modern and Late Modern periods, it meant "was on the verge of V-ing but did not V," and it was not indexical of any social value as such, but it was restricted to oral delivery rather than a written style. It then got transported overseas to plantations in the USA and St Helena (and quite possibly elsewhere), and although it died out in present-day Standard English it still survives robustly in the Southern United States, where it is currently indexical of lower-class, rural or small-town, Southern speech. Grammatically speaking, over time the verb phrase *was/had been like to* + V became increasingly independent of its composite morphemes, and its internal structure became correspondingly more opaque. As time went on, the tensed verb before *like* could be omitted, and the bare form *liketa* came to act as an adverb. The new form has come to have a specific grammatical role and a specific semantics in its restricted geographical territory, as well as becoming marked sociolinguistically for social class.

To conclude this consideration of the effect of geographical, social and temporal space, it could be argued that the difference between cities and remote island communities lies not so much in the numbers of speakers (because in both cases, speakers live in dense, multiplex networks), but in the presence for city-speakers of weak-tie networks to speakers elsewhere (be it hinterland, other cities, or other nations). Speakers in remote island communities have a corresponding absence of weak-tie networks to speakers from elsewhere. Weak-tie networks are conduits of new features, and their presence for city speakers results in on-going language shifting. Remote spaces, be they physically or socially remote, can wind up as end-of-the-line repositories of earlier speech innovations. Yet this end-of-the-lineness does not necessarily entail moribundity; the acquisition of a social function can give a feature a whole new lease of life in its new home, as its speakers use it to demonstrate some salient division within their society.

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