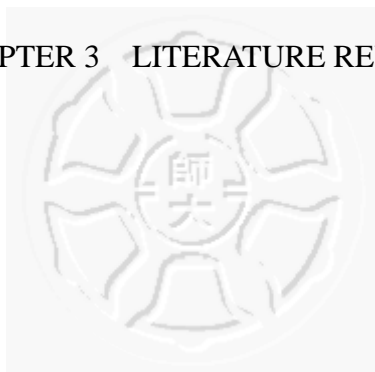


## CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW



This chapter includes five sections. Section 3.1 presents a general review of the concept of dialect leveling, particularly its connections with speech accommodation and language change. The former is believed to be the major factor that leads to dialect leveling, and the latter is believed to be one of the major outcomes of dialect leveling. Following the concept of dialect leveling introduced in 3.1, section 3.2 reviews two cases of phonological leveling-- one in New Zealand, a new settlement, the other in Milton Keynes, a new town. Section 3.3 reviews previous studies that reported the tendency of language shift toward Mandarin and dialect leveling of Mandarin in Taiwan. Section 3.4 reviews the studies of phonological changes of Mandarin in Taiwan, and section 3.5 reviews previous contrasts between Guoyu and Putonghua. In addition to presenting the phonological changes of Mandarin in Taiwan, section 3.4 and section 3.5 also provide important references for the selection of variables in the experiment of the current study.

### 3.1 Dialect Leveling

Dialect leveling (hereafter leveling), as the term “level” implies, refers to “the reduction or attrition of marked variants” with “marked variants” here referring to the “unusual or (in a) minority” forms (Trudgill 1986, p.98). The social-psychological mechanism of speech accommodation was believed to be the major factor that triggers the process of leveling. (e.g. Trudgill 1986; Kerswill 2003).

In unmarked situations, usually the situations where mutual good will is present, interlocutors tend to converge linguistically. If such short-term accommodation occurs repeatedly in countless occasions where speakers of different but mutually intelligible languages are present, long-term accommodation may appear among the same speakers (Trudgill 1986). The linguistic result of such long-term accommodation may spread out as a wave movement when the members of the original speakers involve in other groups; a language change may thus occur. Many articles in the book of Foulkes and Docherty (1999a) agreed that leveling is the main “motor” behind language change in British English.

Such accommodation can be performed consciously. On the one hand, speakers linguistically converge to the variants that are, in terms of various factors, prestigious or positive to them, such as Newcastle young speakers’ vowel change for being sounded like modern northerners (Foulkes and Docherty 1999b). On the other hand,

speakers would avoid negatively evaluated local forms (Milroy 2002). Given that face-to-face accommodation triggers the mechanism of leveling, communities with high degrees of contact are likely to experience leveling. Both Milroy (2002) and Kerswill (2003) considered mobility as one indicator of such high degrees of contact. Milroy argued that close-knit and localized networks would be disrupted by mobility, and the highly systematic and complexes of socially structured linguistic norms that had been maintained by the networks could accordingly lose (Milroy 2002, p.7). Kerswill (2003) suggested that mobility in Britain was “manifested in commuting and other forms of short-distance travel as well as relocation” (p.224). He further elaborated the concept of mobility at an abstract level of economic status, social structure and social class changes.

New settlement and new towns, to certain degrees, are the extreme performances of high mobility, as the very majority of the population are immigrants of various dialects. Previous studies indeed observed leveling mechanism in these two occasions. Kerswill and Williams presented a series of study on the new dialect creation in a UK new town, Milton Keynes (Kerswill 1996; Williams and Kerswill 1999; Kerswill and Williams 2000; Kerswill 2003); leveling was observed in the process of the formation of this dialect. The project of Trudgill, Gordon, Lewis, and Maclagan (2000) also reported leveling in the formation process of the New Zealand English.

In addition to mobility, Kerswill (2003) first pointed out that spoken media must be considered one factor that resulted in the great rapidity of the spread of new linguistic forms.

Trudgill (1986, Ch.3), briefly discussing the formation of the dialect in a Norwegian new town, Høyanger, argued that the process of leveling, in general, entailed three stages, which roughly corresponded to three successive generations of speakers. Trudgill et al. (2000) also adopted the notion of three-stage/generation dialect formation in the New Zealand English. The first stage involves initial contacts in the new location between speakers originated from various regions. Such interactions lead to language accommodation and, furthermore, rudimentary leveling. At the second stage, or second generation, children are exposed to diverse linguistic models presented by the first generation. Given thus heterogeneous models to aim at, the second generation, unlike children in stable linguistic situations acquiring dialects from their peers, demonstrates inter- and intra-individual variability to a considerable degree. At the third stage, the degree of variability reduces and a stable and crystallized variety begins to appear in the focusing process.

### 3.2 Two Cases of Leveling

This section briefly reviews two well-studied cases of leveling. One is the

leveling of New Zealand English, a leveling in a new settlement. The other is the leveling of Milton Keynes English, a leveling in a new town.

### 3.2.1 New Zealand English – leveling in a new settlement

Trudgill, Gordon, Lewis (1998), Trudgill et al. (2000) and Trudgill (2004) profoundly investigated the features and formation of New Zealand English. In fact, the formation of New Zealand English, together with other “colonial Englishes”, was studied at least as early as in Trudgill (1986). Trudgill (1986), based on the data of late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Survey of English Dialect (SED), inferred and addressed the effect of leveling in the formation of New Zealand English. What motivated the reexamination of New Zealand English was the availability in 1989 of a set of interview data recorded between the 1946 and 1948. This collection of spoken data became the basis of a project Origins of New Zealand English (ONZE) in the University of Canterbury.

The spoken data of ONZE were from the recordings conducted by National Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand from 1946 to a premature end in 1948. The Mobile Disc Recording of National Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand traveled around small towns in both the North Island and South Island of New Zealand to collect first-hand spoken data. This project recorded 325 speakers born between 1850 and 1900, most of whom were the children of first European settlers in

New Zealand. The recording data were thus considered pioneer reminiscences. Given these recordings of early English in New Zealand, the study of the formation of New Zealand English could surpass the level of inference and reach the level of real data analysis.

The analysis of ONZE data and more recent data indicated that New Zealand English was the result of “a complex series processes involving dialect contact between different British Isles varieties of English, followed by dialect mixture, new-dialect formation, and then by subsequent linguistic changes.” (Trudgill et al. 2000, p.302). Leveling is one result of such dialect contact.

New Zealand English had been considered a dialect of southeast-of-England English, at least at phonological level, as many of the phonological features of New Zealand English are similar to their southeast-of-England English counterparts. However, Trudgill et al. (1998, 2000) found that two rather salient features of southeast-of-England -- 5-vowel system and the /h/-dropping -- were absent or nearly absent in New Zealand. Their exploration of the formation of New Zealand English indicated that phonological similarities between New Zealand English and southeast-of-England English did not mean that British settlers in New Zealand originated from southeast of England. It was very likely that in the last several centuries, the features of southeast-of-England English, including London English,

had spread outwards geographically from the metropolitan area to the neighboring regions. The (near) absences of 5-vowel system and /h/-dropping in New Zealand English, Trudgill et al. (1998, 2000) argued, were the results of the leveling out of demographic minority in the population of New Zealand settlers.

Linguistic data in SED transcriptions supported this argument. Simply speaking, the British settlers in New Zealand, in spite of being linguistically influenced by southeast-of-England English, were not necessarily originated from southeast of England, and, thus, not speakers of southeast-of-England English.

Another feature that can be fairly assured to have been brought to New Zealand by some immigrating speakers but have later been leveled out in New Zealand English is the centralized /ɪ/, as the vowel in the word KIT (henceforth KIT vowel centralization) (Trudgill et al. 2000). Modern New Zealand English presents KIT vowel centralization, a Lowland Scottish English feature. However, Trudgill et al. (1998, 2000, 2003) argued that the KIT vowel centralization was not the transplantation of Scottish English, as most people would intuitively assume. It was an innovation arose in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the crystallization of a new variety, New Zealand English.

Trudgill (1986) did hypothesize in his early study that KIT vowel centralization in modern New Zealand English was the transplantation of Scottish English, as 22%

of the early migrants were Scots. However, Trudgill himself found this hypothesis incorrect after the early data of New Zealand English became available in ONZE. The KIT vowel centralization was absent from the speech of the ONZE core informants. Even the informants whose parents were Scottish did not realize this centralization (Trudgill et al.1998). Trudgill et al. (1998, 2000, 2003) suggested that the disappearance of KIT vowel centralization was another result of leveling. This leveling could be ascribed to two common factors, the demographic minority of Scot (Trudgill, Maclagan and Lewis 2003), and the highly local markedness of KIT vowel centralization.

As mentioned previously, Trudgill (1986) outlined a three-stage process of new dialect formation that roughly corresponded to three generations of speakers. Such three stages and three generations were also observed in the formation of New Zealand English (Trudgill et al. 2003). The first stage, i.e., the contact stage, involved the contacts between dialects of British Isles English in the speech of the original immigrants. The second stage, i.e., the variability stage, involved extreme variability and the beginning of leveling, as the majority of the ONZE informants performed in their languages. The third stage, i.e., the focusing stage, involved the emergence of a newly focused variety, New Zealand English.

### 3.2.2 Milton Keynes variety of English– leveling in a British new town



In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, numbers of new towns were designed and established in many parts of Europe, initiating planned domestic migrations. Milton Keynes, designated in 1967 with a population rising from 40,000 to approximately 190,000 in three decades, is one of such new towns and is the “latest and most ambitious” in the developments of new towns in Britain (Kerswill and Williams 2000, p.77). Such domestic migrations triggered language contacts between various dialects, which were likely to evolve to new dialects.

Kerswill and Williams started a sociolinguistic project in Milton Keynes in 1990. One of their major research aims was to investigate the formation of the dialect in Milton Keynes, twenty-three years after the establishment of the new town. This project investigated the speech of a sample of socially homogeneous group of 48 children, who were equally divided between the genders and into three age groups—4, 8, and 12 years of age, and one caregiver (usually the mother) for each child. All children were either born in Milton Keynes or had arrived there by the age of two. In addition, six elderly residents who had lived all their lives in that area were recorded to obtain samples of the dialect before the construction of Milton Keynes.

Milton Keynes is situated in southeastern England, at a central position roughly 80 kilometers from London, Coventry, and Cambridge. In the first twenty-two years of Milton Keynes history, 76.2% of the migrants were from

southeast of England, half of whom were from London. Recently, migrants from Greater London have decreased while those from surrounding counties have increased.

The results of Kerswill and Williams's study indicated that a new variety of English had developed in the course of the establishment of Milton Keynes. The formation of Milton Keynes English certainly involved several mechanisms of language changes, mainly triggered by language contact; leveling was one of such mechanisms. As in other new dialect formations, marked regional forms are "disfavored" in Milton Keynes variety of English. It was observed that Milton Keynes children pronounced vowels that were phonetically intermediate between the dialects of the migrants to Milton Keynes. For instance, the vowel of the word *price* was mainly pronounced as [aɪ] by Milton Keynes children. Neither the monophthongization featured in London English, nor the pronunciations observed in other studies in surrounding communities, such as [ɔɪ] in Buckinghamshire and [ɔɪ~ʌɪ] in Beckshire, were observed.

Leveling was observed not only among the Milton Keynes born, but among their mothers. Those who attended secondary school before migrating to Milton Keynes maintained their original regional varieties. However, the varieties adopted by the young mothers who attended secondary school in Milton Keynes were close to the

Milton Keynes born. The vowel in *mouth* presents an example. The variant adopted by the Milton Keynes educated mothers was [aʊ], which was, as in the case of *price*, a new variant that was not saliently associated with any of the contributing dialects in Milton Keynes.

Kerswill and Williams (2000) suggested that the adoption of phonetically intermediate variants by Milton Keynes English speakers can be viewed as a strategy of neutrality for the children when facing with inputs of different regionally marked variants.

### 3.3 Mandarin in Taiwan Being Leveled

The powerful but controversial Mandarin movement can, in certain perspectives, be considered successful. The language environment in Taiwan has shifted from diglossia-without-bilingualism in the early stage of the Mandarin movement to current diglossia-with-bilingualism (Tsao, 2000) of Mandarin and one local language. Previous studies, such as Young (1989), Chan (1994) and Hsu (1997, 1998), all reported this language shift to Mandarin in Taiwan. Leaving aside the issues of language loss and language shift that worry many mother tongue activists, we can assume that Taiwan Mandarin has become (one of) the native language(s) of the young generation and its population is expanding. The stigmatized Taiwanese

Mandarin segments are no longer salient or observable among these young Taiwan Mandarin native speakers. Even the descendents of non-Waishengren, i.e., the population that is not viewed as Mandarin native speakers in Taiwan, speak standard Taiwan Mandarin.

In the early days, one's ethnic identity of Waishengren or Benshengren could be roughly recognized by their Mandarin accents. Today, such linguistic gap has been increasingly narrowed, even vanished. Chang (1998) pointed out that in Taiwan, it was nearly impossible to identify a young speaker's mother language in terms of his/her Mandarin accents, especially those who were younger than 30 or 40 years old, and those in urban areas in northern Taiwan. Tseng (2003) described her personal experience that her identity of second generation Waishengren manifested by Mandarin had been weakening; fewer and fewer people could thus recognize her ethnic identity.

### 3.4 Taiwanese Mandarin vs. Taiwan Mandarin – The Gap Between Benshengren and Waishengren

The most studied phonological features of Taiwan Mandarin/ Taiwanese Mandarin are in segments and tones.

#### 3.4.1 Segmental analysis

In many previous studies of the Mandarin in Taiwan, the terms “Taiwanese Mandarin” and “Taiwan Mandarin” were not explicitly defined. These studies loosely employed the terms “Taiwanese Mandarin” or “Taiwan Mandarin” as the Mandarin spoken in Taiwan. The impreciseness of definitions may cause confusions, particularly in the discussions of segmental analysis, as segmental and social status differences are salient between these two varieties of Mandarin in Taiwan.

Kubler (1985) is one of the earliest systematic linguistic investigations on Taiwan Mandarin. In fact, many of the data presented in this study, especially the vowel data, were better categorized into Taiwanese Mandarin, instead of Taiwan Mandarin. It systematically compared the segments that were present in Standard Mandarin but absent in Southern Min and the corresponding segments that Taiwanese Mandarin speakers employed when pronouncing these sounds, such as Standard Mandarin [y] to Taiwanese Mandarin [i], [wo] to [o], [we] to [u+e]<sup>5</sup>. The segmental differences between Taiwan(ese) Mandarin and Putonghua pointed out in Lo(1991) roughly matched those in Kubler(1985). Tsao(2000), in spite of being a recent study, agreed with most of the phonological data and the analyses Kubler(1985).

Retroflexion may be the most discussed consonantal gap between Taiwan Mandarin/ Taiwanese Mandarin and Standard Mandarin. Previous studies, such as

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<sup>5</sup> Kubler (1985) adopted the symbol of [uo] and [ue] instead of [wo] and [we]. The replacement of [wo]/ [we] to [uo]/ [ue] in the current study is to reflect the actual phonetic realization.

Kubler (1985), described deretroflexion as a salient feature in Taiwan Mandarin/Taiwanese Mandarin and simply ascribed the dropping of retroflexion to its absence in Southern Min. It is generally believed that dentals are adopted as substitutes of retroflexes in Taiwan Mandarin/Taiwanese Mandarin, for instance, *zhi3* (paper) becomes *zi3* (child), and *chi2*(pond) becomes *ci2* (porcelain).

Unlike most of the previous descriptive studies on the deretroflexion in Taiwan Mandarin/ Taiwanese Mandarin, Tse (1998) examined this feature among young people in Taiwan by means of acoustic analysis. The results suggested that the pronunciation of retroflexes in Taiwan Mandarin could not be simply dichotomized as “retroflexion remained” and “retroflexion dropped”. In addition, the neutralization of retroflexes and dentals was more salient among male speakers and most salient on [tʂ<sub>l</sub>] and [tʂ<sub>o</sub>].

#### 3.4.2 Tonal analysis

Tonal discrepancy between Taiwan Mandarin and Putonghua has been another widely-studied issue. Compared to segmental features, tones performed in Taiwanese Mandarin and Taiwan Mandarin are not so saliently different.

The most discussed tonal features of Taiwan Mandarin are tone 3 (T3) and neutral tone. Kubler (1985) suggested that with the seven tones in Southern Min, the tones of Standard Mandarin, except T3 and the neutral tone, were not foreign to

Southern Min speakers. The dipping contour of T3 in Putonghua was not realized in Taiwan Mandarin, in which the rising part of the dipping contour disappeared. Instead of 214 in Putonghua, the tonal value of T3 in Taiwan Mandarin, Kubler suggested, was 21 or 31. In other words, Kubler suggested that T3 was performed as a falling tone in Taiwan(ese) Mandarin. Lo (1991) also reported this contour change of T3 and suggested that T3 in Taiwan Mandarin was realized as either a low level tone or a low falling tone, the tonal value of which were 11 and 21 respectively.

In the study of Taiwan Mandarin neutral tone, Kubler(1985), Tsao(2000), and Duanmu (2000) all described that the frequency of neutral tone in Taiwan Mandarin was largely reduced. Lo (1991) argued that neutral tone nearly disappeared as its function of lexical distinction had been lost. For instance, in Putonghua, the two terms “*dongxi* (things)” and “*dongxi* (east-west)” are semantically distinguished by the tone of the second syllable, with the former being neutralized and the latter remaining as a T1. However, in Taiwan Mandarin, the meanings of these two terms cannot be recognized unless they are present in the context, such as “*mai* (to buy) *dongxi* (things)” and “*dongxi* (east-west) *xiang* (facing)”. Tseng (1999) presented prosodic contrasts of neutral tones between standard Taiwan Mandarin and standard Putonghua. It was suggested that Putonghua neutral tone behaved more like an unstressed syllable with its prosodic properties being contrastive with the preceding stressed syllable,

while Taiwan Mandarin neutral tone behaved more like the fifth tone with the prosodic properties of low pitch and short duration. Tseng (1999) also observed Southern Min influence on Taiwan Mandarin neutral tone and claimed that the neutral tone in Taiwan Mandarin is similar to an entering tone of Southern Min.

### 3.5 Guoyu vs. Putonghua – the Gap Between Taiwan Mandarin and China Mandarin

Mandarin has pervaded Taiwan, especially Taipei, the capital. The Mandarin gap between Waishengren and Benshengren has, to a large extent, been leveled, as mentioned previously. However, decades of separation between Taiwan and China has resulted in another Mandarin gap -- the gap between Putonghua and Guoyu, analogous to RP English and other “colonial” Englishes (Trudgill 1987, p.127).

Recent studies, supported by acoustic evidence, reported this gap between Guoyu and Putonghua, particularly in tonal discrepancy. Fon & Chiang (1999) investigated the tonal system of Guoyu and discovered that, instead of the five-way distinction in Chao Yuen-ren’s system, Guoyu demonstrated a narrower four-way distinction. They further suggested that the tonal values of the four Mandarin tones in the Putonghua were “55, 35, 214, 51” from T1 to T4 and those in Guoyu are “44, 323, 312, 42”. In addition to the narrower tonal range, Fon & Chiang (1999) further indicated that T2 in Guoyu was realized as a dipping tone, instead of a rising tone as conventionally



viewed. Tseng (1999) systematically studied the phonological systems of Putonghua and Guoyu. One of Tseng's findings of tonal difference agreed with Fon & Chiang (1999) in that Putonghua demonstrated wider pitch range than Guoyu.

It is noteworthy that the data in both Fon & Chiang (1999) and Tseng (1999) can be considered standard Taiwan Mandarin. The subject in the former was a young (22-year-old), highly-educated female speaker, whose everyday language was mainly Guoyu. In the latter, the informants in Taiwan were even more qualified standard Guoyu speakers as they were six broadcasters of Broadcasting Corporation of China, one of the major radio stations in Taiwan and has trained many models of standard Guoyu speakers, many of whom have even been the Guoyu trainer of junior news casters.