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SOCIOLINGVISTIKA – SOCIOFONOLOGIE: COCKNEY VE 21. STOLETÍ

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SOCIOLINGUISTICS – SOCIOPHONOLOGY: COCKNEY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Plzeň 2017

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this undergraduate thesis is to undertake a sociolinguistic and sociophonological study on Cockney in use and Cockney rhyming slang status in London at present days.

Cockney variables considered in this thesis are TH-fronting (replacement of ɵ, ð by f, v), H-dropping (in the stressed syllable position) and glottal stop (replacement of t by ʔ). The status of Cockney rhyming slang is observed here in terms of the use of older expressions in comparison to newer expressions with reference to age and gender.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

1) Is there a change in traditional Cockney pronunciation?
2) Is the traditional Cockney rhyming slang still used or is it replaced by new expressions only?

Hypothesis 1:

The data will reveal that the pronunciation changed by showing more occurrences of the variables in question in the most recent years.

Hypothesis 2:

The data will reveal that new expressions knowledge prevail in both age categories.

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INTRODUCTION

In the world, on every continent, in every nation, in various regions, within different groups of people, there can be found distinctive features of the language in use, typical for any of the previously mentioned areas, which can somehow characterise it. Starting with supra-segmental features, via phonetic differences to grammatical deviations affected by a region, social status, gender etc., all of these correlations are studied by sociolinguistics. One sub-field of sociolinguistics which has not yet been described and used to such an extent is sociophonology. This linguistic science is the foundation stone of the part of this thesis dealing with the Cockney accent's phonological features.

The thesis is divided into two sections. The first one is theoretical and the second one practical. In the theoretical part, conveyed by chapters one to five, attention is drawn to the explanation of basic sociolinguistic terms that are important for better understanding of the language features studied by sociolinguistics. The next chapter is then devoted to the introduction of sociophonology. This newly emerged science is still a part of sociolinguistics; however, in my opinion, it deserves to become an independent branch of the language study in terms of social significance and stratification with regards to language phonological features. The third chapter deals with the clarification of selected Cockney variables which apply to this thesis and to the undertaken research. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the history of Cockney accent with regard not only to the accent itself but also the nature of Cockney people. The last, fifth, chapter from the theoretical part describes Cockney rhyming slang, its background and evolution from the beginning to the present day.

The second part of the thesis is the practical part. There the methodology is described and results of two researches presented, together with individual conclusions and comments on the agreement or disagreement with appointed hypotheses. The first research was undertaken on audio materials, where Cockney variables were observed via listening. The second research included questionnaires distributed in London within the area of the East End. It must be mentioned that both researches take into account only a fragment of the Cockney population and must be treated with caution as they serve to the purpose of this thesis only.

1. SOCIOLINGUISTICS

There are many interpretations of the definition of sociolinguistics. At a very basic level it might be said that it is a discipline within linguistics whose aim is to show the interdependence of language changes on changes in social structures. The word itself suggests it developed mainly from a collaboration of linguistics and sociology studies. Its connections lead also to social psychology (attitudes in and out of the groups) and anthropology.

It is one of the younger linguistic disciplines, which originated in the second half of the 1950s. The exact date of its beginning is hard to define; therefore, it must be also mentioned that there are some individuals who might be called predecessors of sociolinguistics as it is known today. The most famous among those who noticed the connection between language and society can be identified as Wilhelm von Humboldt and Ferdinand de Saussure. The breakthrough in forming the independent discipline of sociolinguistics is the work of William Labov (Labov, 1966, pp. 40-57) that includes the study of English variable /r/ in department stores in New York in 1966 where the connection between the pronunciation and the social status of the speaker was proven. The research revealed following: "The higher the socio-economic status of the store, the more /r/ sounds were produced, and the lower the status, the fewer /r/ sounds were produced by those who worked there." (Yule, 2006, p. 207). Eight years after, a study based on the variable /r/ was undertaken in Reading (England) by Peter Trudgill with opposite result. The higher the status, the less or rather no /r/ sound is present. Here can be seen the proof that American English is rhotic and British English a non-rhotic language.

The areas of sociolinguistic studies that will be involved in this thesis are accents, dialects, registers and language varieties.

1.1. ACCENT

The word accent has several meanings. According to Bauer it can refer to a graphological mark (e.g. the acute accent on the last letter of <passé>) or to some form of phonetic prominence (e.g. in an accented syllable). But the meaning that is to be discussed here is the one used in, for instance, a regional accent. (Bauer, 2007, p. 7).

Based on this information I woud define it as regional or social variations in pronunciation. It also should be said that the accent is not only a general term for a specific region but it is a specific term for each individual using the spoken language. R. A. Hudson described this phenomenon of individual usage as follows: "No two speakers have the same language, because no two speakers have the same experience of language" (Hudson, 1996, p. 11)

1.2. DIALECT

Dialect can be defined as any variety of language that differs from others by recognisable linguistic features. It can be connected with a specific region or even with a certain social group (young and old, male and female, upper class and lower class, etc.) It includes variations in vocabulary and grammar and some would also add in pronunciation (but not pronunciation alone, as then it would be a matter of accent only). This can sound perplexing and initiate a debate over the distinction between different languages and different dialects within one language. The border line is really very narrow and it might be said that it is frequently overlapping and the only factor that indicates here that a different language is in question is a political situation, i.e. the border line between the nations.

1.2.1. SOCIAL DIALECT

Social dialect, in contrast to dialect (when mainly language of the people from rural areas are studied), is said to be a dialect of townspeople. They are then divided into two groups: 'middle class' and 'working class' speakers. Each group has its own specific pronunciation and word structures.

1.2.2. SOCIAL MARKERS

Social markers are in addition to the social dialect individual variables of the language that indicate to which social group a person belongs to (with no regards to concioussness).

1.3. REGISTER

Language register varies in social occasion, purpose of the talk, audience present or context involved. Generally, the register shows us the degree of formality used in a specific situation. It is the stylistic level of the text and according to Michael Halliday (1997) consists of three aspects which are: field (subject matter), mode (written or spoken) and tenor (formality level). According to these aspects we are able to determine in which situation the language is used. The most significant register is 'jargon' which is used specifically in technical environments and has a restricted vocabulary for its branch only or "baby talk" which uses simple vocabulary and rather long explanations.

1.4. LANGUAGE VARIETIES

As already mentioned in the section entitled Dialect, it is sometimes not easy to decide whether two different dialects are really dialects of one language or whether we are talking already about two languages. Therefore, the term 'variety' is used in linguistic studies instead which shelters all, accent, dialect, register, language, etc. This neutral term enables linguists to avoid any offence which can be caused by the use of any of the previously mentioned terms, as these may already have some emotional value.

1.5. CONCLUSION

Accent is a part of dialect, which covers the local pronunciation. English accents (taking into consideration Great Britain only) differentiate to such an extent that they can easily create misunderstandings. There are over 40 dialects througout Great Britain and Ireland, see picture 1 below for reference.

Picture 1 (SOURCE: https://cz.pinterest.com/pin/131167407869227900/, access date 07/02/2017)

2. SOCIOPHONOLOGY

In this chapter I would like to explain the term sociophonology. It is a relatively new subfield of sociolinguistics and I believe it has an excellent opportunity to develop into an independent science.

> While sociolinguist studies all aspects of language variation, sociophonology is that aspect of the discipline which studies only those differences of pronunciation which are perceived as socially significant. These are differences which are unlikely to be part of the idiolect of only one speaker, but rather they are shared by groups of speakers, and may or may not coexist with other features of a regional or social dialect in its spoken form, such as distinctive grammatical forms, lexis, and idiom. (Honey, 1998, p. 65)

It is generally known that written language is not as rich as spoken (Honey, 1998, p. 65). Speech forms can be characterised by sound features (patterns typical for the group in question) which can be to some extent generalised. For example in the RP English accent and Cockney accent, it can be said that majority of the former pronounce the word *butter* as [bʌtə] and most Cockney speakers as [bʌʔ]. The difference between these two accents is, of course, distinguished by far more different pronunciation patterns and the complexity of these features is what forms accent and helps to classify the individual speaker´s accent from any other. Peter Roach notes to this topic:

> Differences between accents are of two main sorts: phonetic and phonological. When two accents differ from each other only phonetically, we find the same set of phonemes in both accents, but some or all of the phonemes are realised differently. Phonological differences are of various types: again, we can divide these into segmental and supra segmental. Within the area of segmental phonology the most obvious type of difference is where one accent has a different number of phonemes, in the case of consonants; many accents do not have the phoneme *h*, so that there is no difference in pronunciation between ´art´ and ´heart´. (Roach, 2009, p. 161)

The variation of language pronunciation features (i. e. accents) was for a long time a part of dialectology. Subsequently sociolinguistics appeared as a discipline and now in the 21st century it should employ mainly sociophonology to investigate these characteristics as it is a very extensive field for study. Especially given all the geographical changes in the world due to migration, it is worth undertaking studies of accents which may in future disappear or be transformed. This process is natural and is already described as dialect levelling. Changes can be motivated internally or externally (speakers actively adopt features found in other varieties). The reduction of localised pronunciation leads to the emergence of new forms which are quickly widespread throughout the, not only region, but the whole country thanks to media, travelling, etc.

People generally, especially the young generation, tend to be willing to adopt the mainstream features. Partly as a sort of prestige (using new pronunciation features makes them appealing) and partly as a part of the behaviour of the youth who by nature like the idea of something annoying for the older generation (also because then it is harder to understand them). As described by Stuart-Smith, this trend of dialect levelling was started in 20th century via media, especially films showing Cockney or any other accent which was attractive to young people in all regions of Great Britain. Therefore, it is not uncommon to find Cockney features in speech of, for example, Glasgow adolescents. (Stuart-Smith, 2007, pp. 221-260).

2.1. SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The social significance is an essential topic of sociophonology. All differences in pronunciation are subjected to positive or negative judgments. To provide an example, I would use general evaluations of individual languages where melodic ones are rated as nice and "guttural" ones (languages which use velar/pharyngeal sounds) are rated as unpleasant. As stated in Honey´s Sociophonology: "A technique for examining the social evaluation of the different accents with which a language is spoken, in a given country, was developed first in Canada, to explore the differential reactions to speakers of French and English respectively." (Honey, 1998, p. 70). In Britain, this study revealed interesting results. It is called "matched guise" and is a method whereby listeners are given a sound record of speech parts spoken in various accents, and the inquiry is to evaluate them, from the record only, in terms of qualities such as intellect, amicability, diligence, etc. Further, Honey claims:

For Britain, this general picture suggests a hierarchy of attitudes to accents, in which RP is at the top, followed by the most educated varieties of Scottish English and the corresponding accents of Wales and Ireland. Below these there is a cluster of English provincial accents such as "northern" English, with Yorkshire generally high, and West Country accent of the southwest of England. Five accents representing the British urban lower-class sociolects of Birmingham, Belfast, London ("Cockney"), Glasgow, and Liverpool are regularly placed at the bottom of the scale, even by speakers of those varieties themselves. (Honey, 1998, p. 70)

This leads to the respect of education. The higher the education, the less obvious the natural accent of the speaker is. However, also the tendency of social solidarity plays an important role in accent treatment. Therefore, even an educated individual with a background of strong accent who feels social solidarity retain his/her accent to show he/she is a part of a particular community but are more versatile in speech accommodation.

3. COCKNEY VARIABLES

In this section I will provide an overview of the phonological variables considered in this study. These are the variables that I will base the quantitative analysis on. The reason for choosing these features is that they are all considered characteristic Cockney features. I am interested in the accent spoken in the East End today, and I want to examine whether these features that have been identified as characteristic Cockney features still hold ground in present-day London speech. I will provide the standard realisations (RP realisations) of these features and then consider the possible realisations in London English.

3.1. TH-FRONTING

TH in RP is realised either as /θ/, or as /ð/, for instance in words such as thin [θɪn] and brother [brʌðə]. The RP realisations of TH as /θ/ or /ð/ are also commonly used by London speakers. However, TH is sometimes subject to variable TH-fronting in Cockney. When TH-fronting occurs, TH is realised as [f] or [v]. TH-fronting of /θ/ with the voiceless fricative [f] occurs in all positions, while fronting of /ð/ to [v] only occurs in non-initial position, thus one might get realisations such as [fi:f] thief, [saʊf] south, [təgevə] together, [wɪv] with, but usually not [vɪs] for this.

3.2. H-DROPPING

H-dropping is a non-standard feature and does not occur in RP. H-dropping refers to the omission of /h/ in stressed syllable position, usually in the beginning of words, but also in word-medial position, producing pronunciations such as [art] *heart*, and [biold] *behold*. H-dropping is a feature mainly attributed to working class speech, and is typically avoided by higher class speakers.

3.3. GLOTTAL STOP

The vowel /t/ in RP is mainly realised simply as [t], whereas, in London English it is frequently realised as a glottal stop [ʔ]. The glottal stop is one of the main features of Cockney accent. This thesis is focused on the glottal replacement of /t/ (even though the

replacement of /p/ and /k/ also exist) in intervocalic position, so /t/ in words like better, water and mutter is then realised as [ʔ], [beʔə], [wɔ:ʔə] and [mʌʔə].

4. THE HISTORY OF COCKNEY ACCENT

The term Cockney is used to describe both the people and the dialect spoken in the traditional East End. The traditional definition of a "true" Cockney is one who has lived in London all his/her life, and who is born within the sound of the Bow Bells, i.e. the bells of St Mary-Le-Bow in Cheapside in east central London, see picture 2 below for reference.
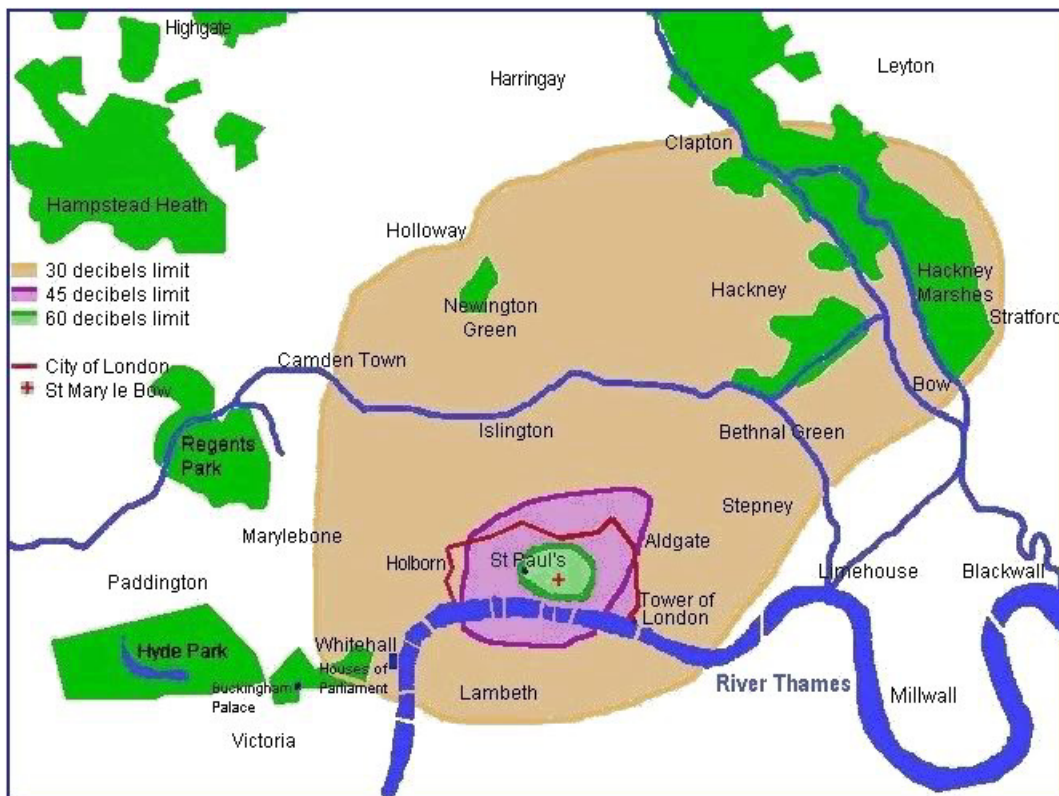
Picture 2 (SOURCE: www.british-genealogy.com, access date 09/02/2017)

According to Barltrop and Wolveridge this is a myth that should be banished. As they state:

> Fundamentally, it means East End working class. Cockneyland starts at Aldgate and runs along Commercial Road and Whitechapel Road (both changing their names at various points) as far as the River Lea. The heart of it, though not the geographical centre, is Poplar. It includes Stepney, Limehouse, Bow, Old Ford, Whitechapel, Wapping and Bethnal Green. Up to the last generation all these areas held nobody who was not working-class. (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p. 33)

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I like the first area description more; however, the second is more accurate and objective as it can be argued that a person with good ears can hear the Bow bells further than the real area of Cockney is. On the other hand, the description of a Cockney person from Barltrop and Wolveridge is definitely more vivid: "Outside the cafe, crowds drifted and bustled round the stalls: yobs and girls in jeans, shoppers from Whitechapel and Stepney Green and Shadwell, rabbis, women in saris. The Cockney tongue is the voice of them all" (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p. 1) in comparison to "a member of working class from East End" that can be found in most available sources. The origin of the word ´cockney´ is explained as follows:

> The word *cockney* has resolutely resisted any simple etymology. It is first noted in 1362, when it meant a 'cock's egg'—that is, a defective one. However there was an alternative use, first recorded in Chaucer and defined in the second edition of the *OED* (1989) as 'a mother's darling'; a cockered child, pet, minion; 'a child tenderly brought up'; hence, a squeamish or effeminate fellow, 'a milksop'. (Green, 2017)

So traditionally the term Cockney was used as a naming for a Londoner and had some amount of humiliation and ridicule attached to it; nonetheless, people who considered themselves Cockneys were proud to be one.

4.1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF COCKNEY THROUGHOUT TIME

4.1.1. HISTORY

The Cockney accent has been known for more than 500 years. It was formed in the East End of London thanks to the variety of speakers living there. Especially during the industrialisation period, this area was inhabited by factory workers from all around the world. Today there are descendants of families which came in from Essex, Suffolk and Hertfordshire to work in the docks, factories and markets. Others have their ancestry in the nearly five thousand Irish who came in 1840s. There was a little Chinese colony and a number of black people. At the end of nineteenth century Russian and Polish Jews followed by Pakistanis and Bengalis settled in the East End. These immigrants, together with locals, provided an excellent foundation for this accent´s development. There was an

increasing tendency of new words to be added to the language. Barltrop and Wolveridge say that Cockney is a tongue of tongues. Any likely word or snippet from another language or jargon is incorporated and given new life in it (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p. 33).

Many of the borrowed and incorporated words are from immigrants. Cockneys are quick to attach to their speech whatever term appears to fill a gap or be an improvement on what they have. For example, during economically uncertain periods (1914 and 1939), when unemployment was very high and young Cockneys usually spent eight to twelve years in the army as it provided food, shelter and salary, words like ´buckshee´ (meaning free in the sense of zero cost) or ´shufti´ (a look to inspect something) appeared, borrowed from Hindi. Also a number of Cockney words are Jewish. Not only different nations but also different occupations have their own slang (jargon) and Cockneys absorbed such words and expressions. Butchers, for example, were well known for their back-slang (e.g.´revil´, ´tibbar´, etc.) and here originated the word ´yob´ for boy. Commerce was another field from which Cockney derived its vocabulary. Tradesmen and dealers who came to the East End added to the language and also, in exchange, took some words out of Cockney. For example the fairgrounds slang had a lot of Cockney vocabulary in it and Cockney likewise had terms from fairground language. The mock auctioneers from the fairs and Cockney costermongers[1] met and mixed in London markets and at race meetings. Here are some words that were used between those two groups: ´gelt´ meaning ´money´ (most of the mock auctioneers were Jews and therefore Yiddish terms were common), ´homey´ for ´man´, ´gear´ was a ´grafter´s stock but later the meaning transformed into ´clothing´, ´bevvy´ for ´drink´, etc. Also well-known writers benefited from Cockney accent. Charles Dickens used a lot of it in his novels; however, George Orwell pointed out that Dickens never penned a decent picture of a working man or woman: his famous characters were drunkards, scroungers and menials. (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p. 7). Another influenced author was Herman Melville who visited London and spent his time with East End seamen. This experience was then imprinted in his second novel, *Omoo*, containing a scene where a Cockney is teased by others for his way of speaking. Lewis Mumford noted on this novel that it might have been the first evidence to the existence of modern Cockney in American literature and together with London´s novels show that Dickens´s and some others´ interpretations were just not accurate or even imaginary misrepresentations. (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p. 8).

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[1] A vendor with a stall

4.1.2. PERSONAL AFFAIRS

Cockney refers not only to the accent but also the people from the East London area. Traditionally, Cockneys had a strong code of politeness and of respectability generally. The basic words which every child was taught to use were ´lady´ and ´gentleman´. The term 'lady' referred to any adult female whom there was no reason to disrespect. ´Woman´ could be an offensive word. In this way only dishonourable or completely strange females were addressed. On the other hand, ´man´ in comparison to ´gentleman´ did not have such an offensive connotation. It referred to an unsympathetic person only – for example, a debt-collector. East London had also a reputation for patriotism but not in the sense of admiring the ruling class (Winston Churchill, for example, was profoundly unpopular all over East London). This was conditioned by two main things: wartime resilience and the Cockney´s enthusiasm for royal parades and celebrations. During the war East London was severely bombed owing to the concentration of industry and docks and Cockneys always wanted to show a brave face and a sense of humour (barbers put up notices which stated "Hitler will be shaved free"). At the beginning of the twentieth century an anniversary or a coronation was the only opportunity for the working class to be allowed in the West End. It was also possibly the only chance to take a glimpse of splendour and pageantry, remembered for the rest of one's life, and this was the motivation good enough for supporting royalty. The monarchy gave a good show and Cockneys enjoyed that (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p. 85).

There was also another point of view of what Cockney was meant to be. It showed the East End as an area filled with drunkenness, violence and crime. Undoubtedly, it would be surprising if there were no signs of this kind of behaviour, given that the area was living in poverty and degradation. However, it was not the characteristic feature of true Cockney. In the past as now, the East End had both respectability and crime and, at all times, crime involved only a small minority of the population as it was and still is in many other areas around the world. The two things do not exclude each other but Cockneys did not support crime for practical reasons more than moral ones. The attention of the police was not desirable. Cockneys disliked "the law" and thought that to be a policeman was to have a disgusting job and no decent and civilized person would watch and report on other people. Cockneys also had in common the theory that the legal system supported the upper class and the privileged against the underprivileged. No Cockney would use the affectionate word ´bobby´ for a policeman, all slang expressions and nicknames concerning police were

unaffectionate. ´Copper´ was the universal word, sometimes ´flat´ (short for flatfoot) or ´the law´ and a bit newer expression ´the old Bill´ has come into use. ´To nick´ means ´to steal´, whereas ´lift´ or ´swipe´ are words giving the plain description of physical action of stealing. There are also opinions that the Cockney rhyming slang was used mainly by criminals to code their speech and cover criminal actions but it is a misunderstanding. There was not sufficient usable rhyming slang to form a language or code that would have served to such purpose (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980).

When it comes to personal matters, Cockneys are all sentimental and open-hearted. They express publicly and collectively tenderness especially towards all those who have misfortunes. On the other hand, to show affection for another person in public is not desirable. In general, everything that counters the behaviour of the upper class is acceptable as a proof of genuineness. There was also another reason for not showing affection in public: as a result of poverty it was feared by young girls to "get into troubles". In other words, anything that could light up a sparkle of passion was avoided. Together with the worry of being pregnant, the fear of illness was present in Cockney culture throughout the ages. As stated in Barltrop and Wolveridge: "The fear of loss of income; a woman´s conviction that her family will not survive if she is not there to do everything for them; general dread of medical treatment and hospitals" were the main reasons for this feeling. (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p. 85). Phrases concerning poor health have not altered owing to frequent usage. ´None too rosy´, ´a bit weak on one´s pins´, ´not up to the mark, ´a bit dicky´, etc. are still used together with other rhyming slang expressions which will be referred later in the next chapter Cockney rhyming slang.

The most important topic among Cockneys was money. The lack of it governed lives in the East End. In the years of the Means Test[2] there were families of more than four members living on as little as thirty-two shillings (£5.00 today) a week. Out of these substantial incomes ten or twelve shillings would go in rent which made landlords nearly as unpopular as debt-collectors. Not surprisingly, there was a full vocabulary of slang terms for money. For example, a pound was a quid, a nicker, a oncer, a sheet; a shilling was a bob, a deaner, an ogg, a chip, etc. Alongside slang for money, there was and is plenty for lack of it. A person who lacks money is ´down and out´, ´a bit short´, ´on the rocks´, ´on the ribs´, ´on the floor´, ´skint´, ´stony´, ´hearts of oak´. Euphemistically it can be said: "things are ´a bit humpty´ with him" (also used concerning ill person) and in truly

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[2] A determination of whether an individual or family is eligible for government assistance, based upon whether the individual or family possesses the means, i. e. incomes and savings, to do without that help.

desperate need: "he is ´down on the knucklebones of his arse´" or "he has only got a tanner between him and the workhouse or Tower Bridge" (the jumping-off place for suicides). (Barltrop & Wolveridge, The Muvver Tongue, 1980, p. 18) Oscar Wilde once quoted: "There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor. The poor can think of nothing else." Money provided a lot of Cockney vocabulary because it was the main preoccupation. There was never a comparable amount of slang for anything else.

4.1.3. TODAY

Nowadays, the social and also economic situation in East End has changed. There were three major turns that influenced these changes. Firstly, it was a "slum clearance" programme, which was a part of the post-war construction after WWII. Due to lack of housing in the East End after the war, many of its original residents were moved out and dispersed to areas further east, or to suburbs of London like Barking and Havering, or to the new-established towns such as Basildon and Harlow in Essex, and Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire. The result of this was that the population in the East End after the war was decreasing to a point in 1981 where it was down to nearly a fourth of what it had been before the two world wars. (Fox, 2015, p. 2). Secondly, according to Fox, has to do with the closure of the docks in Tower Hamlets in the 70s, which resulted in high unemployment among the dock workers who had to seek work elsewhere. Many of them moved with their families to Tilbury where the only remaining dock was located. In 1981 the government sought to remedy the worsening situation of the dock industry in East London, and the Dockland Development Corporation was founded. The area began to prosper and a new financial centre was established. As a consequence, many new housing estates were built in the surrounding area. These prestigious housing developments attracted a community that was more Middle Class than the traditional Working Class with which the area was mainly associated. (Fox, 2015, p. 2). Thirdly, the reason for social changes in this area is the fact that London, and particularly the East End, has for a long time been the point of arrival of many immigrants to Britain. The increasing population in the East End from 1981 is by large due to Bangladeshi immigrants. The Bangladeshi is now about one third of the population in the traditional East End, and is a substantial part of the "new" working class. (Fox, 2015, p. 2). And to add to this list of changes, it should be mentioned that: "there has been an increase over the past two decades of smaller

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immigrant groups from more diverse places of origin, with London now being home to people from no less than 179 countries" (Fox, 2015, p. 213). In view of the extensive social changes in the traditional East End, it is reasonable to assume that there have been linguistic changes in this area as well. The Cockney accent can, as Fox claims, no longer be restricted to the area with which it is traditionally associated. Also bearing in mind that Cockney is considered more class than regional accent, its future depends on whether the community and its culture survive. Therefore, I think, it is worth undertaking more studies concerning this topic since the situation now is again very interesting as new immigrants are coming from other parts of the world all the time and as already said Cockney language is a great borrower of words so the slang will certainly absorb new vocabulary. There already are, according to Fox, several new expressions known, for example, ´nang´ meaning ´good´, ´creps´ for ´trainers´ or ´skets´ for ´slippers´.

5. COCKNEY RHYMING SLANG

Cockney rhyming slang can be said to be one of the wittiest Cockney grammatical devices. It involves a principle whereby a word is replaced by a phrase of two or three words that rhymes with the omitted word, e. g.: "apples and pears" for ´stairs´, "dog and bone" for ´phone´. Sometimes these two or three words consist of proper nouns (i. e. names of people or places familiar to users of rhyming slang), for example: Duke of Kent for ´rent´, Pete Tong for ´wrong´, Britney Spears for ´beers´, etc. However, the idea that Cockneys have made such phrases permanent replacements of words is a false impression. They are too long and ostentatious. The soul of Cockney phraseology is conciseness, it is quick flowing; therefore, also many of those phrases are reduced to one word only, i. e.: My china told me yesterday (china plate = mate). Formerly rhyming slang was very popular amongst East End pub goers because the usual atmosphere in a typical English pub is light-hearted and frivolous, much like rhyming slang itself. As a general rule, this type of slang is saved primarily for very informal occasions. Luckily, if one loses his or her way in London, even the most fervent Cockney will not give directions in rhyming slang. This is just as well, because an ordinary Cockney accent can itself be quite hard to follow.

The origins of Cockney rhyming slang go back to early nineteenth century when docks and railways were built. A large workforce was needed and jobs were taken by uneducated Cockneys and a massive number of Irishmen. They were all called ´navvies´, The term 'navvy' denoting "a semi-skilled labourer engaged on excavation, embankment, and other work demanding both strength and endurance" (Franklyn, 1961, p. 8). Those two ethnic groups were both fond of word plays and they enjoyed to tease each other. In order to "have a last laugh" Cockneys developed rhyming slang to mystify Irish co-workers.

Rhyming slang was (and sometimes still is) also believed to be used as a secret language of costermongers or criminals. This conviction is to some extent a misunderstanding. Julian Franklyn, in A Dictionary of Rhyming Slang, states: "If the rhyming slang was ever, during its existence, regarded as a secret language, its secrecy has long since departed from it. And now, if there is any secret about the rhyming slang, it is this – the rhyme is left out." (Franklyn, 1961, p. 13). And as already mentioned by Barltrop and Wolveridge, there was never sufficient number of rhyming slang phrases to form a code or language. In some cases it might have been used to cover the meaning and to mystify the police but it was not the primary purpose of the rhyming slang. At any rate,

rhyming slang disregards the rules and seems to be immortal. New rhymes are created all the time; some of them last, while others die out. There is no acknowledged explanation of why one term should become universally used while another is ignored. Nevertheless, it is very impressive part of Cockney speech and is still used and transformed and enriched. Some of the original meanings have been forgotten even though the terms are still widely used; however, unconscious users might not even be aware of using a part of the rhyming slang. Such case is with the phrase ´blowing raspberries´. The original phrase was ´raspberry tart´ and was a replacement of nothing else but ´fart´.

Picture 3 (SOURCE: http://williambertrand.fr/cockney-rhyming-slang/, access date 27/03/2017)

There is also a mention in Julian Franklyn´s Dictionary of Rhyming Slang where there is mentioned A. R. Marshall who for many years contributed a poem to the front page of The Pink ´Un under the pseudonym of "Doss Chiderdoss" (meaning ´sleep, gently sleep´ as explained by the author): "Many there are who have thrown together a verse in which rhyming slang appeared, but Doss Chiderdoss wrote as though rhyming slang was the only language in the world." (Franklyn, 1961, p. 24). See Appendix for reference.

It is also important to say that rhyming slang is not limited to London only, but is also found in Australia and on the western coast of United States. It travelled a long way since its birth in London. First it reached Australia via distribution of newspapers to the provinces of Great Britain. There it was adopted and soon new phrases were created and new terms are still added, nowadays. The next major journey undertaken by rhyming slang was from Sydney to Chicago, where it is known as ´Australian Slang´. Also here it was domesticated and while old phrases were transformed, new ones were added. (Franklyn, 1961, p. 19).

According to the last research undertaken by The Museum of London in 2012 the Cockney rhyming slang is in danger of extinction. The research involved 2000 people living in London and revealed that nearly 80 per cent of them do not understand basic phrases such as "donkey´s ears" (years) or "mother hubbard"(cupboard). The most-used was discovered to be the phrase "porky pies" with 13 per cent of those interrogated using it even now. In spite of this revelation, there are, as stated by David Crystal, honorary professor of linguistics at Bangor University, still many Cockney rhyming slang followers who continually add expressions to this specific slang. The proof might be the phrase "he was wearing his Barack Obamas" meaning pyjamas. (Orr, 2012).

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will explain the methodology used for this thesis. The first part of the research is based on the comparison of pronunciation throughout the time in films where Cockney is used. Materials were analysed by auditory sense. This of course may lead to some degree of inaccuracy, such as misrepresentation of some forms and overrepresentation of others, but I have attempted to keep an open mind when analysing and not be subjective. Also, I have tried to be as consistent as possible when identifying the realisations. Film materials in question are: *Pygmalion* (1932), *Steptoe and Son* (1962, series), *Minder* (1979, series) and *The Football Factory* (2004). The language variables included in the research are: TH-fronting (replacement of ө, ð by f, v), H-dropping (in the stressed syllable position) and glottal stop (replacement of t by ʔ).

The second part of the research is based on questionnaires spread among people of London concerning on and detecting the knowledge of given Cockney rhyming slang expressions which are: ´bees and honey´, ´daisy roots´, ´trouble and strife´, ´one of me chinas´, ´I´ll have a butcher´s at it´, ´doing porridge´, ´It´s all gone Pete Tong´, ´a couple of Britney Spears´ and ´You don´t have a Scooby´. The knowledge is proven not only by the answer yes or no but also by the explanation of the term in question. The sample questionnaire is a part of the Appendix.

6.2. LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

The linguistic variables (Cockney variables) analysed were presented in chapter 3. Here a summary is provided.

6.2.1. TH-FRONTING

I have identified words which have potential TH-fronting and quantified them; this includes all words where *th* occurs in all positions.

6.2.2. H-DROPPING

I have collected items where /h/ occurs in stressed syllable position word initially and I have identified them as variants [h] or Ø, which indicate presence and absence of [h] respectively.

6.2.3. GLOTTAL STOP

I have identified words where syllable-final /t/ occurs in intervocalic position word-medially and also across word boundaries. The items were analysed either as the alveolar plosive [t] or as the glottal stop [ʔ] (glottal plosive). (Roach, 2009, p. 26)

6.3. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

I have quantified the distribution of the linguistic variables in relation to the independent variables of age and gender.

6.3.1. AGE

My sample consists of both adolescent (14-18 years) and adult speakers (30-99 years). As already stated, youth usually speak differently form older people and use different expressions; therefore, I divided respondents into two age groups to monitor the change in the comprehension of Cockney rhyming slang throughout the time. As Eckert (2007) notes:

> The study of age in relation to language, particularly the study of sociolinguistic variation, lies at the intersection of life stage and history. The individual speaker or age cohort of speakers at any given moment represents simultaneously a place in history and a life stage. Age stratification of linguistic variables, then, can reflect change in the speech of the community as it moves through time (historical change), and change in the speech of the individual as he or she moves through life (age grading). (Eckert, 2007, p. 105).

6.3.2. GENDER

In my study I included both sexes to obtain as accurate results as possible because each gender speaks in a slightly different manner. According to Labov (1966) women use more standard variants than their corresponding men no matter what social class or age. It is also necessary to define the difference between ´sex´ and ´gender´. As stated in "Gender as a Sociolinguistic Variable: New Perspectives on Variation Studies": "The British sociologist Anthony Giddens defines "sex" as biological or anatomical differences between men and women, whereas "gender" concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females." (Wodak, 2007, p. 89).

7. RESULTS

In this chapter I will present the results of the analysis of three linguistic variables considered in this thesis and the results of the questionnaire concerning the knowledge of the Cockney rhyming slang. The research is a sociolinguistic study of the accent spoken in the traditional East End, traditionally referred to as Cockney, with focus on the social group with which this area is traditionally associated, i.e. white working class people. The aim is a time study where the speech of film characters in different time periods is analysed and also two different age groups are questioned to investigate synchronic variation and change in perception and understanding of the Cockney rhyming slang. The informants include eight adult (30-99 years) speakers (five males and three females), and ten adolescent (14-18) speakers (four males and six females). All the speakers can be considered as working class and all live within the area considered traditional Cockney. I hypothesise that there will be higher occurrence of the linguistic features that are considered traditional Cockney in the most recent years. I also hypothesise that the "new" features in the Cockney rhyming slang will generally prevail over "traditional" expressions in both age categories and genders.

7.1. AUDIO MATERIALS

The film *Pygmalion* (George Bernard Shaw) was the first audio material. It was the first version from 1938, directed by Leslie Howard and Anthony Asquith. I took into consideration the speech of the character of Elisa Doolittle who was considered the true Cockney here. The second audio material was the series *Steptoe and Son* from 1962 (*Divided We Stand*; *Live Now, P.A.Y.E. Later*), directed by John Howard Davies. Here I reflected both characters. Third was another series, called *Minder*, from 1979 (*You Lose Some*, *You Win Some*; *From Fulham with Love*), directed by various directors. I considered the pronunciation of the main character Arthur Daley and his companion Terry. Last was the film *The Football Factory* from 2004, directed by Nick Love. Here I took into account the character of Billy Bright (the would-like-to-be boss of the "firm").

7.1.1. TH-FRONTING

TH-fronting refers to the replacement of [θ] and [ð] by [f] and [v] respectively. According to audio materials it can be said that there is no change in replacement of [θ] by [f] during the time period 1938-2004. The vast majority of words are pronounced with the phoneme [f]. There was only one case where I recorded the phoneme [θ] and it was in the initial position of the word ´think´ in Steptoe and Son. The replacement of [ð] by [v], on the other hand, registered a shift from the usage of [ð] in nearly hundred per cent of cases within years 1938 to 1979 to absolute zero in 2004 where the phoneme [v] substituted the former in all cases.

7.1.2. H-DROPPING

H-dropping involves omission of /h/ in stressed syllable positions. According to P. Trudgill the H-dropping feature is considered a traditional Cockney feature (i. e. the feature of speech of the working class) even though it also spread to some extent to other varieties in Great Britain in the past, it is still reflected as the most significant feature of the Cockney accent. In one of the four audio materials the H-dropping was nearly not present. It was in *Steptoe and Son* where only the older Steptoe pronounced his son´s name Harold without the sound of /h/. All other recorded words were pronounced with /h/. In *Minder* and *Pygmalion* there were some words (hear, happening, her) with /h/ at the initial position but the majority was with no /h/. The *Football Factory* pronunciation provided a hundred per cent cases of H-dropping (even in the function word like ´how´ is /h/ omitted). To sum up, in the sixties there was a turn in H-dropping which in the seventies returned back to standard. This might have been influenced by the "slum-clearance" programme in the forties which led to social and geographical changes in Cockney area after the World War II.

7.1.3. GLOTTAL STOP

T-glottalling refers in this thesis to the replacement of /t/ by a glottal stop [ʔ] in intervocalic word medial or word final position, giving pronunciations such as [wɔːʔə] water and [lɒʔ əv] lot of. Here I encountered an interesting and significant shift from no glottal stops to the complete opposite. There were no glottal stops in *Pygmalion* and only

one case of the glottal stop in *Steptoe and Son* in the word ´getting´. Afterwards, in *Minder* in 1979 there was a change to a majority use of glottal stop, leaving only a few words in the standard realisation of [t] (e.g.: matter). In *The Football Factory* the use of glottal stops by the character of Billy Bright is hundred per cent.

7.1.4. CONCLUSION

Overall, the data have revealed that the pronunciation has changed in favour of the variables stated in this thesis. It means that my first hypothesis is proved. The general tendency that can be extracted from the results is that the features of Cockney accent observed here are truly still holding ground in the modern accent spoken in the traditional East End, and they have actually in general (apart from the case of [v] supplementation for [ð]) experienced an increase in recent years, i. e. in the young generation.

GRAPH 1 – an overview of linguistic variables changes throughout time
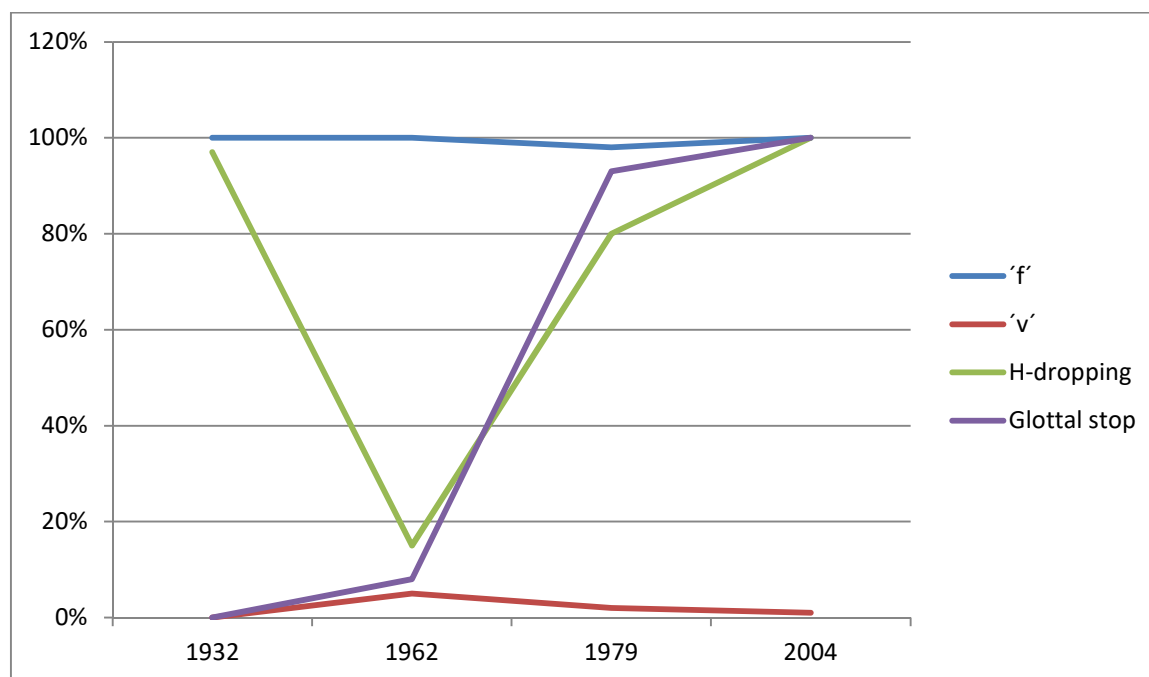
7.2. QUESTIONNAIRE

The second part of my study was a short questionnaire (see Appendix). It contained six old expressions and three new ones. Traditional old ones with explanations are: ´bees and honey´ meaning ´money´, ´daisy roots´ for ´boots´, ´trouble and strife´ referring to ´wife´, ´one of me chinas´ meaning ´mates´ (abbreviated form of ´china plate´ for ´mate´), ´I´ll have a butcher´s at it´ substitute of ´I´ll have a look at it´ and ´doing porridge´ indicating the status of ´being in prison´. Fairly new phrases and their explanations are: ´It´s all gone Pete Tong´ representing ´It´s all gone wrong´, ´a couple of Britney Spears´ for ´a couple of beers´ and ´You don´t have a Scooby´ denoting to the abbreviated form of Scooby-doo for ´clue´, i. e. ´You don´t have a clue´.

7.2.1. RESULTS - ADULT INFORMANTS

Adult speakers had in general better notion of nearly all expressions apart from the last one ´You don´t have a Scooby´. Informants had only in five cases problem with traditional rhyming slang. Results can be found in the Table 1 below (M – male, F – female).

	M	M	M	M	M	F	F	F
Bees and honey	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Daisy roots	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Trouble and strife	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
chinas	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
butcher´s	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Doing porridge	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Pete Tong	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Britney Spears	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scooby	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N

Table 1 – adult respondents

7.2.2. RESULTS – ADOLESCENT INFORMANTS

There was a surprisingly good knowledge of old expressions among adolescent respondents. The only one which was unknown was ´Doing porridge´. None of the questioned youths knew this term. Results can be seen in Table 2 below (M – male, F – female).

	M	M	M	M	F	F	F	F	F	F
Bees and honey	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Daisy roots	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Trouble and strife	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
chinas	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
butcher´s	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Doing porridge	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Pete Tong	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Britney Spears	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Scooby	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

Table 2 – adolescent respondents

7.2.3. CONCLUSION

To sum up the results from the questionnaire, it is obvious from the provided tables above that the knowledge of Cockney rhyming slang is better among adult informants, although new expressions are not known so well. However the expression ´A couple of Britney Spears´ was known to a hundred per cent of respondents, in comparison to adolescent informants where one person was completely unaware of this term. The best known rhyming slang expression between both age groups is "trouble and strife" followed by ´bees and honey´ together with ´A couple of Britney Spears´. ´Daisy roots´ is in third place succeeded by ´You don´t have a Scooby´ which is in most cases unfamiliar to adult informants. The phrase ´One of me chinas´ turned out to be a problematic one as all respondents apart from one (adult male) gave a positive answer to the question of whether it was known but the explanation given was wrong stating that it means ´plates´ instead of ´mates´. ´I´ll have a butcher´s at it´ cause difficulties to adolescent informants only (three

out of ten were aware of this term). The expression ´It´s all gone Pete Tong´ is apparently not very recognisable in either age group. The least known term is ´Doing porridge´. None of the adolescents knew this phrase and also two adults out of eight were not aware of the meaning. Results from this research disapprove my second hypothesis where I supposed that the data would reveal that the new expressions knowledge will prevail in both age categories. In fact, the opposite is true: traditional old expressions are better known among both adolescent and adult informants as well as among males and females.

CONCLUSION

In this undergraduate thesis I have undertaken two studies to prove or disprove my initial hypotheses.

The first question concerned change in traditional Cockney pronunciation. Is there any change in pronunciation now in comparison to previous times? The hypothesis to this question was that the data would reveal pronunciation has changed by showing more occurrences of the variables in question in the most recent years. Cockney variables considered in this thesis were TH-fronting (replacement of θ, ð by f, v), H-dropping (in the stressed syllable position) and glottal stop (replacement of t by ʔ). I have chosen a sociophonological study to assess the pronunciation and listened carefully to four audio materials. These materials included two films and two series; all filmed with the use of Cockney accent and represented different time periods.

The first one was George Bernard Shaw´s *Pygmalion* from 1938 and the character I listened to was Elisa Doolittle. She is a traditional Cockney flower girl talking true Cockney of that time. However, I presume that a true Cockney girl would be so proud and cautious of men[3] that Mr Higgins would have not stood a chance of persuading her to change her speech habits; as Elisa Doolittle would say: "Not bloody likely" or according to Julian Franklyn the proper Cockney phrase would be: "No bleet´n fear!" (Franklyn, 1961, p. 15). There were present features of H-dropping (in all cases but ´hear´) and TH-fronting ([f] instead of [θ]). There were no glottal stops present.

The second audio material was the series *Steptoe and Son* from 1962. I investigated the pronunciation of both characters. The main difference was in the pronunciation of ´mother´ when old Steptoe´s pronunciation of ´th´ was [ð] and Harold´s [v]. The H-dropping was completely absent in Harold´s speech whereas Steptoe called his son [ærold]. They both used [f] instead of [θ] in the middle word position but not in the initial word positions. A glottal stop appeared only in ´getting´.

The *Minder* series from 1979 was the third audio material used. There was a principal turn in the use of glottal stops in comparison to previous materials where there was nearly none. H-dropping usage increased as well.

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[3] Slum prudery is even mentioned in the film. It is a reference to the Cockney´s fear of pregnancy.

The last audio material was *The Football Factory* from 2004. The character I examined was Billy Bright. His Cockney accent brims over with glottal stops and H-dropping is omnipresent as well as TH-dropping.

These results overall confirmed my hypothesis. Cockney variables recorded growth throughout time. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that I did not have a chance to listen to the people of London in real life and it is therefore vital to bear in mind that the results presented in this study might not be a relevant source of reference to the actual situation in day-to-day life.

The second question of this thesis concerned the status of Cockney rhyming slang in the East End at present. My hypothesis was that new expressions of Cockney rhyming slang prevail in both age categories. For this research I slected a questionnaire method in order to reveal the status of Cockney rhyming slang knowledge among adolescent and adult English speakers of both genders. I managed to involve 10 adolescents (4 males and 6 females) and 8 adults (5 males and 3 females) from the East End area (Hackney and Dalston). Results from this study disapproved my hypothesis. The respondents' knowledge of traditional Cockney rhyming slang expressions was superior to that of new expressions. Furthermore, the research revealed that adult informants were more aware of the meaning of the given expressions. This might be caused by the fact that young generation in the East End area today is influenced by the Bangladeshi community that forms a major part of the traditional Cockney area. As stated by Sue Fox for the BBC voices project: "The majority of young people of school age are of Bangladeshi origin and this has had tremendous impact on the dialect spoken in the area" (BBC, 2005). Therefore, I suppose, there is an inclination among young people to digress from Cockney rhyming slang as it is not a style of speech familiar to youths of Bangladeshi origin.

THE APPENDIX

In the Appendix can be found the poem of "Doss Chiderdoss" mentioned in chapter 5 The Cockney Rhyming Slang and the sample questionnaire used for the second part of the research.

MEG´S DIVERSION´

(A sonnet in Slang)

Now, a tear-drop fell from the girl´s mince pie,
And her raspberry tart was torn
With anguish; for she had an empty sky,
And she´d nothing to bullock´s horn.

But she cooled each mince with a little scent,
And her Barnet arranged with grace;
And then down the apples and pears she went
With a sorrowful Chevy Chase.

And she saw, as she passed her landlord´s shed,
That the Rory he´d failed to close;
And the thought came into her loaf of bread,
Just to pop in her I suppose.

And she did and a quick glance round she flung,
The old pot and pan wasn´t there;
But a piar of his round the houses hung
At the Anna Maria to air.

She said to herself, ´If the´re decent stuff,
It´s all harbour, I think they´ll do;
I´ll half-inch ´em – they´re sure to fetch enough
To purchase a Brian or two!´

So she sleeved ´em under her velveteen;
And she hurried her plates once more
Round the Johnny Horner, to where she´d been
Just a birdlime or two before.

Addressing the cove behind the bazaar,

As she stood in the mashkin box,

´How much on these round me´s?´ she asked him, far

From expecting that she´d get shocks.

But the bushel of coke said, ´Go away;

Why, the half of it´s done a bunk.

(Franklyn, 1961, p. 185)

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondents,

I appeal to you with a request to fill out my questionnaire, which serves as the basis for my undergraduate thesis on "Sociolinguistics – Sociophonology: Cockney in 21st Century".

May I also ask you to be as accurate and truthful as possible while filling the questionnaire? Research is anonymous and voluntary.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and time.

Student of the Faculty of Education, ZCU, Pilsen, Czech Republic.

Please circle the correct answer.

Age: 14-18 years   30-99 years

Gender: female   male

Do you know what the expressions below means? If yes, please give a short explanation.

Bees and honey…………………………………….	YES	NO
Daisy roots ………………………………….	YES	NO
Trouble and strife………………………………….	YES	NO
One of me chinas.……………………………….	YES	NO
I´ll have a butcher´s at it……………………………….	YES	NO
Doing porridge.………………………………………	YES	NO
It´s all gone Pete Tong……………………………………	YES	NO
A couple of Britney Spears……………………………….	YES	NO
You don´t have a Scooby………………………………….	YES	NO

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SHRNUTÍ

Cílem této bakalářské práce je provést sociolingvistickou a sociofonologickou studii týkající se používání Cockney a statutu Cockney rhyming slangu v současné době v Londýně.

Fonetické proměnné v Cockney, které bere tato bakalářská práce v potaz jsou TH-fronting (nahrazení f, v za θ, ð), H-dropping (vynechání fonému h v pozici přízvučné slabiky) a glottal stop (nahrazení ʔ za t). Status Cockney rhyming slangu je zde zkoumán z hlediska užívání původních výrazů v porovnání s užíváním nových výrazů se souvztažností k věku a pohlaví.