The Effect of Social Mobility
on Linguistic Behavior

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Previous investigations of sociolinguistic structure in New York City included quantitative study of five variables of the sound system.[1] These variables displayed a regular structure of social and stylistic stratification, in which linguistic behavior was closely correlated with productive indicators of socioeconomic status. Patterns of sociolinguistic stratification will be analyzed further in the present paper by considering the added dimension of social mobility. Each sociolinguistic stratum will be differentiated into subgroups according to the speakers' histories of social mobility. It will then be possible to determine which of the subgroups represents the modal tendency of sociolinguistic behavior within each class and to ask whether a second form of stratification exists within each class which is based on social mobility. Finally, sociolinguistic stratification will be reexamined in terms of the added information on social mobility, so that further light may be shed on the question of how such stratification is maintained.

SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE MECHANISM OF A
RURAL SOUND CHANGE

Before considering the New York City situation, it is worth noting that social mobility was found to play an important part in the mechanism of linguistic change in an earlier study of the island of Martha's Vineyard.[2] The linguistic variable studied was the centralization of the diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ in words such as *right, ride, my, about,* and *down.* This sound change was unusual because of its complex distribution over several ethnic groups, occupational groups, and age

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[1] William Labov, "Phonological Correlates of Social Stratification," in John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes, editors, *The Ethnography of Communication,* (*American Anthropologist,* Special Publication, volume 66, number 6, part 2), pp. 164–176. A complete report is given in *The Social Stratification of English in New York City,* Columbia University, 1964: dissertation to be published by the Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D. C. Cf. also "Reflections of Social Processes in Linguistic Structures," to appear in Joshua A. Fishman, editor, *A Reader in the Sociology of Language,* The Hague: Mouton, and "Hypercorrection by the Lower Middle Class as a Factor in Linguistic Change," to appear in William Bright, editor, *Sociolinguistics,* The Hague: Mouton, 1966.

[2] William Labov, "The Social Motivation of a Sound Change," *Word,* 19 (December, 1963), pp. 273–306.

categories of the island population, and also because increased centralization departed from the recessive character of this feature to be found in many American dialects. The overall social significance of this sound change was its association with a positive orientation towards Martha's Vineyard. Those who laid claim to native status as Vineyarders showed the greatest centralization, while those who were excluded from this status, or who abandoned their claims to pursue a career on the mainland, would show no centralization of these vowels.

Thus the complexity of the distribution of this sound change can be attributed to the phenomenon of social mobility. The older generation of Yankee fishermen who initiated the change had behind them a history of downward social movement. Under economic and social pressures, they had retreated from their grandfathers' positions as ship captains and landed proprietors to become small-boat lobstermen and small-scale contractors. The younger Yankee Vineyarders split into two groups: one moved up and out, to college on the mainland and to urban occupations; the other remained on the island at a lower economic level. The latter showed strong centralization, the former none at all. The strongest centralization was shown by the few who abandoned their mainland careers and reasserted their claims to island status.[3]

A simpler pattern of upward social mobility was shown by the large Portuguese ethnic group. The older Portuguese were hardly considered Vineyarders at all by the Yankees; they occupied the lowest socioeconomic level on the island and showed almost no centralization. The younger generations of Portuguese moved up to positions vacated by Yankees and began to appear as merchants, aldermen, and contractors; centralization became increasingly strong in this group.

The small group of Gay Head Indians had been suffering from steady attrition of economic and social position ever since they were deprived of reservation status in 1870.[4] In the last several decades they have reasserted their Indian identity and claimed the elementary social services and rights to which they are entitled as citizens. As with the Portuguese, we find the younger Gay Head Indians increasing centralization, in most cases surpassing the Yankee islanders.

It is thus clear that the complexity of linguistic change reflected a complex set of underlying social movements, and linguistic change

[3] This is the pattern termed *hypercorrection*, which appears below in the discussion of New York City speech as an important element in the mechanism of linguistic change.

[4] The Governor of Massachusetts terminated the reservation status of Gay Head in 1870, on the ground that the inhabitants were no longer Indians as the result of intermarriage with Negroes. They were thus given the normal privileges of citizens, including the payment of taxes, and lost most of the land which had traditionally belonged to the community. Details are given in William Labov, "The Social History of a Sound Change," Columbia University M.A. essay, 1963.

could not be understood without analyzing patterns of social mobility on the island. On the other hand, linguistic data added further confirmation to our social analysis, and illuminated features that might otherwise have escaped notice. Furthermore, linguistic data were shown to facilitate the recognition of similar phenomena in diverse settings.

THE LOWER EAST SIDE SURVEY

The 1963–1964 investigation of the sociolinguistic structure of New York City was designed to study a similar problem of complex distribution.[5] Previous descriptions of New York City English had reported a very wide range of variation in the sound system—a variation so extensive that the concept of language as a structured, integrated system began to seem meaningless.

Exploratory interviews suggested that one reason for this fluctuation is that the linguistic behavior of New Yorkers varies with their socioeconomic position. This independent variable was controlled and studied through the selection of a stratified random sample of adult, native English speakers from the Lower East Side. The sample was one that had been constructed for Mobilization of Youth in 1961 in a survey of social attitudes and aspirations.

Socioeconomic information on these subjects was, therefore, already available; and the population had been classified on the basis of this data into ten socioeconomic strata by MFY analysts. The 988 adults interviewed by MFY represented a population of 100,000. From this sample, 312 native speakers of English were randomly selected.[6] Over the intervening two years, 117 had moved or died, leaving a target sample of 195. Linguistic information was obtained from 158 subjects; the most detailed interviews were completed with 122 subjects.

The interview was designed to analyze another major dimension of variation, that of contextual style as it is governed by the immediate context of discourse, the topic, and the attitudes of speaker and listener. This dimension was systematically studied through interview techniques which elicited a wide range of styles in a partly predictable manner.[7] At one extreme of the stylistic range is *casual* or *spontaneous speech*, which approximates the language used in everyday family situations. The main bulk of the interview, however, is in *careful*

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[5] This survey was carried out by the author and Mr. Michael Kac of Haverford College. Reports are given in the references of footnote 1.

[6] About one third of the population were recent arrivals from Puerto Rico, and included no native speakers of English. Of the total native speakers of English, 100 per cent of the socioeconomic groups 0–2 and 6–9 were selected, and 67 per cent of groups 3–5.

[7] The primary problem is one of eliciting casual or spontaneous speech in an interview situation for which careful speech is socially defined as appropriate. Techniques for overcoming this dilemma are discussed in Labov, "Phonological Correlates of Social Stratification," *op. cit.*

speech, which is appropriate to an interview situation.[8] At the more formal end are *reading style,* the pronunciation of individual words, and the contrasting *minimal pairs,* where the speaker's attention is focused directly on the phonological variable.

Five phonological variables were selected for quantitative study. Each occurrence of each attribute in the tape-recorded interview was rated on a codified scale which represented the possible range of articulatory variation. The mean value of these ratings for a given stylistic context in any one interview is the basic datum for further analysis—the value of the variable for that person and that style.

The simplest case is that of the variable (r),[9] representing the occurrence of a consonantal (r) in final and pre-consonantal position: in *beard, beer, guard, car, board,* and *bore,* but not in *red, berry,* or *four o'clock.* The index here is the percentage of occurrences of constricted [r] among all occurrences of (r).

Table 1 displays the typical complex of regularities which charac-

TABLE 1

MEAN (r) VALUES BY CONTEXTUAL STYLE AND SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS FOR SUBJECTS RAISED IN NEW YORK CITY WHO YIELDED FULL INTERVIEWS

Contextual Style	0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class
Casual Speech	02.5	04.0	04.0	19.0
Careful Speech	10.5	12.5	20.5	32.0
Reading Style	14.5	21.0	27.0	37.0
Word Lists	23.5	35.0	61.0	47.0
Minimal Pairs	49.5	55.0	77.5	60.0

terize the social and stylistic stratification of the variables—in this case, the variable (r). The socioeconomic classes represent subdivisions of the aforementioned ten-point index developed by Mobilization for Youth, which was based upon three equally weighted indicators of productive status: occupation of the breadwinner, education of the subject, and family income (adjusted for family size)[10] The pattern of social stratification is generally preserved for each style,[11] and similar patterns of stylistic stratification are preserved for each group. Thus

[8] No attempt is made to isolate speech styles by impressionistic means. The style used in answering interview questions is used as a reference point, and other styles are defined by contrastive cues: specifically, the occurrence of one or more contrastive "channel" cues in a set of predetermined interview situations.

[9] In the notation used here, (r) represents a linguistic variable, defined by the existence of ordered covariation with other linguistic or extralinguistic variables; (r-1) represents a particular value of a variable in one instance; (r)-22 represents a mean index value for a set of instances. Square brackets, as in [r], enclose phonetic notation and italic r indicates the unit of spelling.

[10] For further details and the rationale behind this approach as developed by John Michael of MFY, see *The Social Stratification of English in New York City, op. cit. Education of the subject,* as an indicator, gave results equivalent to *education of the male head of the household.*

[11] In casual speech, all New Yorkers except upper middle class speakers are essentially r-less; the small figures here show no significant differences.

although New Yorkers are quite finely differentiated by their use of (r),[12] they also appear to be quite similar in the direction of their stylistic shifts with respect to (r).

One major deviation from this pattern appears in the behavior of the lower middle class,[13] which surpasses the upper middle class in the use of (r) in the more formal contexts. This crossover pattern is not idiosyncratic here: it reappears in similar structures for other variables which, like (r), represent a linguistic change in progress.[14] This "hyper-correct" behavior seems to characterize the second highest status group, given its extreme range over the contextual scale. The native speech pattern used by almost all children growing up in the city is rejected whenever attention is paid to the speech process, and the pattern used by an exterior reference group is substituted.

There is considerable agreement among native New Yorkers in their unconscious evaluation of the phonological variables. A subjective response test described in earlier reports[15] was designed to isolate such unconscious reactions to particular variables. There was often remarkable uniformity of response to this test. All forty-two New York subjects in the 18–39 age group responded to this test in a manner which clearly indicated recognition of the prestige status of (r), although no such agreement was found in the responses of older people or out-of-towners. Such unanimity in the evaluation of (r) is parallel to the uniform direction of stylistic shift in the use of (r): both patterns indicate that normative behavior may be more consistent than actual performance. Indeed, it seems preferable to define the New York City speech community as a group with similar evaluative norms in regard to language, rather than similar patterns of speech performance.

The evidence of (r) is reinforced by the data for the other four main variables. In all five cases, a regular structure of social and stylistic variation was found; the degree of regularity was such that groups as small as four or five subjects fitted into the matrix in a predictable manner. Table 2 shows the pattern of social and stylistic variation for (dh), the initial consonant of *this, then, the*, etc. The (dh) index is built on a scale which rates the prestige form, the fricative [ð], as (dh-1); the

[12] This is an example of *fine stratification*, in which it appears that almost any fine subdivision of the socioeconomic scale will be reflected in a corresponding stratification of (r). The case of (dh), discussed below, is the opposing type of *sharp stratification*.

[13] Such "class" terms are employed informally to represent the objective divisions of the MFY scale as indicated in the tables. See "Hypercorrection by the Lower Middle Class . . ." cited above for a detailed discussion of this crossover pattern.

[14] These variables are: (eh), the height of the vowel in *bad, ask, dance*, etc., and (oh), the height of the vowel in *law, coffee, talk, bore*, etc.

[15] Cf. The *Social Stratification of English in New York City, op. cit.*, Chapter 11. The subjects listened to 22 sentences on a test tape, and rated the speakers on a scale of occupational suitability ranging from television announcer to factory worker. A particular variable was concentrated in a given sentence, and the listener's unconscious reaction to that variable was determined by comparing his rating of that sentence to his rating of the same speaker in a "zero" sentence which contained none of the variables in question.

TABLE 2

MEAN (dh) VALUES BY CONTEXTUAL STYLE AND SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS FOR SUBJECTS
RAISED IN NEW YORK CITY WHO YIELDED FULL INTERVIEWS

Contextual Style	0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class
Casual Speech	79	64	30	22
Careful Speech	52	45	19	7
Reading Style	49	34	12	5

affricate [dð] as (dh-2); and the most stigmatized form, the stop [d] as (dh-3). The numerical average of all ratings multiplied by 100 gives the numerical scale used in Table 2.[16] The higher the (dh) index, the greater the percentage of nonstandard, nonprestige forms. This is a case of relatively sharp stratification of the population into two major groups, with lower class and working class at the top, and middle class groups near the bottom of the scale. No crossover pattern is found for this relatively stable linguistic variable. Again we find that great differentials in the speech performance of New Yorkers are accompanied by high agreement in their directions of stylistic shift and in their subjective reactions. Two other variables which represented changes in progress yielded the same results and, in addition, the hypercorrect pattern of the lower middle class.

The results which have been shown are based on data for 81 subjects raised in New York City. The 37 informants who were raised outside New York City showed similar patterns for variables which are general throughout the country, but no pattern at all for variables specific to New York City. The 35 informants who were briefly interviewed by anonymous methods, a sample of the refusers and nonrespondents, provided similar results in the context of careful speech.

SOCIAL MOBILITY ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE

Socioeconomic classification of the Lower East Side subjects is based on characteristics they acquired at different times in their lives. Educational level is the earliest, occupations reflect decisions made somewhat later in life, and incomes reflect only present status. In many cases, income by itself would be a poor measure of status—in the case of a college student, for example, who has a high expectation of upward social mobility, or that of a plumber with a sixth grade education, who may retain behavior more characteristic of the working class

16 The scale is adjusted by subtracting 100 points, so that consistent use of the prestige form [ð] is rated as (dh)-100. The values given for the upper middle class exclude one speaker with a highly idiosyncratic use of (dh-3), initial [f] for (th), and other speech characteristics which specifically prevented him from pursuing an academic career. This case is discussed in detail in *The Social Stratification of English in New York City, op. cit.,* Chapter 8. With the values of this individual included, the upper middle class figures are (dh)-29, 15.5, 14.5.

than of the middle class despite his high income level. These cases of "status incongruence" are not always resolved by the equal weighting of the three indicators in the socioeconomic index. More regular correlations existed between phonological variables and socioeconomic status once analysis was restricted only to where there was status congruence among the three indicators.

The members of any one class also differ among themselves in characteristics which antedate the three SES indicators. One would expect that the status of the family of origin and their own earliest occupations, would provide social experience which would in turn be reflected in linguistic behavior. Lower middle class speakers with a history of upward social mobility should indeed be different than speakers whose parents were members of the same social class and who themselves had always maintained middle class status. The first, most obvious hypothesis would be that such "steady" middle class speakers would exemplify the norms of middle class society more completely than upwardly mobile speakers who grew up in a working class environment. One would expect members of the "upward" group to show erratic behavior and inconsistent performance, because they had not been trained in middle class linguistic norms early enough to have internalized them. Therefore, the structure of social and stylistic stratification would appear most clearly if we considered only the "steady" groups with a history of two generations of membership in the same class.

This reasoning fails to take into account the specific structure of New York City society, especially the fact that upward social mobility is normal, even normative, for the middle class groups. The subdivision of class groups along the additional dimension of social mobility does indeed clarify our view of sociolinguistic stratification, but in precisely the opposite manner from that suggested above.

MEASURES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The original survey of the Lower East Side carried out by Mobilization for Youth provides two data that can serve as measures of social mobility: (1) the occupation of the subject's father, and (2) the first occupation of the subject after leaving school. Combining these two measures provides an overall measure of social mobility.

Ideally, one would prefer a status history which made use of all three indicators of the SES scale. But the income levels and educational attainments of parents are difficult to ascertain, unreliable at best, and hard to calibrate against today's standards. Occupational data are more reliable, more comparable, and provide a fair measure of social mobility to use in conjunction with the current SES index. The cate-

gories by which occupations were recorded follow Census Bureau's practices with minor deviations. For the study of social mobility it is useful to establish the following four levels:

Level	Occupations
1	Professionals, semi-professionals, proprietors or managers of large and medium businesses
2	Proprietors or managers of small businesses, clerical, sales, or kindred workers
3	Craftsmen, foremen, or kindred workers
4	Operatives or kindred workers, service workers, laborers

It might have been possible to use seven categories, following the census in separating proprietors from clerical workers and operatives from service workers and laborers. But in the Lower East Side, small businessmen were chiefly shopkeepers; thus, it was more realistic to group them with clerical workers. Among the three lowest occupational groups, it would be difficult to assert that operatives performing semi-skilled work in a factory at minimum wages should be ranked higher than policemen, firemen, nurses aides, or other service workers. Furthermore, the status of laborer was more common fifty years ago and approximately equivalent to that of factory operative today. It would also be difficult to maintain that an operative had risen in the social scale because his father had been a laborer. When studying social mobility, therefore, it seems appropriate to refrain from making distinctions among these three occupational groups. The resulting types of social mobility are the following:

Mobility	Occupational History
Upward [U]	Father's occupational level or earliest occupational level lower than present level, and neither higher than present
Steady [S]	Father's occupational level and earliest occupational level same as present level
Downward [D]	Father's occupational level or earliest occupational level higher than present level, and neither lower than present
Up and Down [UD]	Earliest (or earlier) occupational level higher than father's occupational level, and also higher than present level

A fifth possible type, "Down and Up," does not appear to any noticeable degree.[17] Additional information about the subject's present status was used to correct his formal reply to the question about current occupation. Some subjects had not worked for many years, depending entirely on welfare and living under poor conditions at a bare subsistence level; their occupations of record were no longer relevant. Unless it was known that their parents had also lived under these same conditions, they were considered downwardly mobile. Married

[17] It would be difficult to detect such a pattern from the information we have on most subjects. It is not unusual for a person's first job to be relatively low ranking, as a temporary expedient in his upward career. It would be necessary to show that this first occupation did not imply future advancement to establish a "Down and Up" class.

women yielded a further datum: husband's occupation in addition to last occupation of record. The former is taken as the primary datum. In almost every such case there was no difference between last occupation and earliest occupation; consequently no new types occurred.

SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF MOBILITY TYPES

The top portion of Table 3 shows the distribution of mobility types among those informants whose linguistic behavior has been exhibited in Tables 1 and 2. Reliable social mobility data were available for 74 of the 81 subjects.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL MOBILILTY TYPES

Subjects	Mobility Type	Socioeconomic Class				
		0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class	All Classes
All Subjects	U	0	5	12	9	26
Raised in New	S	9	13	4	0	26
York City Who	D	9	4	1	0	14
Yielded Full	UD	1	3	3	1	8
Interviews						
	ALL TYPES	19	24	21	10	74
All Subjects	U	0	9	15	12	36
Raised in	S	10	14	6	0	30
New York City	D	13	7	2	0	22
	UD	2	5	3	1	11
	ALL TYPES	25	35	26	13	99
All Subjects	U	0	11	19	13	43
	S	17	19	9	2	47
	D	13	10	2	0	25
	UD	10	12	9	2	33
	ALL TYPES	40	52	39	17	148

The "Upward and Downward" type has no immediate value for the analysis, since the eight cases are distributed among four small cells. Furthermore, the "UD" class is not a consistent type. Some are women who had held white collar jobs but married working class men; others are people who had followed a normal upward path but who were subsequently disabled, blinded, or addicted to drink or drugs.

The three principal mobility types, "U," "S," and "D," form a three-by-four matrix considered together with the four SES groups. The "U" cell for the lower class and the "D" cell for the upper middle class are empty by definition. The only other empty cell is the "S"

category within the upper middle class. The absence of a steady seg-
ment of the upper middle class is a reflection of the particular social
history of the Lower East Side. It is a port of entry for immigrants
and a place of nurture for those to the way up, but normally not a
permanent home for children of upper middle class parents.[18]

The middle of Table 3 shows the distribution of mobility types for
all adult informants who were raised in New York City, including
those interviewed by brief, anonymous methods. The distribution is
approximately the same for these 99 subjects as for the basic set of 74.
A somewhat different distribution appears in the lower part of the
table, which enumerates types among all adult subjects, including
those raised outside of New York City. It is apparent that the "Up-
and-Down" type is much more heavily represented among the out-of-
town informants than for New Yorkers; this category appears as 22
per cent of the total compared with eleven per cent in other parts of
the table. Two "steady" upper middle class persons also appear among
the subjects from out-of-town.

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MOBILITY
UPON LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

The most extensive and reliable data are available for the 74 sub-
jects at the top of Table 3. The association between mobility type and
linguistic behavior will first be examined within this group, using the
larger samples for corroboration wherever possible. There are four
comparisons which can be made within class groups: (1) between "D"
and "S" in the lower class, (2) between "U" and "S" in the working
class, (3) between "S" and "D" in the working class, and (4) between
"U" and "S" in the lower middle class.

Table 4 shows the relation of (r) to mobility types for 66 native
New York City informants interviewed at length who were of the
"U," "S," and "D" types. The table gives the distribution of mean
(r) values for each mobility type within each socioeconomic class under
each of five contextual styles, from casual speech to minimal pairs.
In each socioeconomic class regular association may be seen between
mobility type and the use of (r). Among lower class subjects the "S"
class used the prestige form [r] considerably more than did the "D"
type. The lower class "D's" show a minimum tendency to use [r] in
careful speech, just as they show the least recognition of the prestige
value of [r] in subjective response tests.[19] The "U" group shows by
far the highest (r) values among working class subjects and the "S"

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[18] A number of the subjects were raised in other parts of New York City, and there is reason
to think that this characterization is generally true for the city as a whole.
[19] See Table 9.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN (r) VALUES BY CONTEXTUAL STYLE, SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS, AND
MOBILITY TYPE FOR SUBJECTS RAISED IN NEW YORK CITY WHO YIELDED
FULL INTERVIEWS

Contextual Style	Mobility Type	Socioeconomic Class				
		0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class	All Classes
Casual Speech	U	*	12	4	18	10
	S	4	2	7	*	4
	D	2	5	*	*	3
	ALL TYPES	3	6	5	18	
Careful Speech	U	*	17	23	34	26
	S	14	8	20	*	12
	D	3	15	*	*	7
	ALL TYPES	8	12	22	34	
Reading Style	U	*	23	29	35	29
	S	17	16	21	*	16
	D	4	26	*	*	12
	ALL TYPES	10	19	27	34	
Word Lists	U	*	58	62	49	57
	S	40	27	48	*	37
	D	11	45	*	*	26
	ALL TYPES	28	37	58	49	
Minimal Pairs	U	*	72	72	57	67
	S	70	46	54	*	56
	D	31	70	33	*	44
	ALL TYPES	53	57	68	57	

*No cases of this type.

group the lowest. It is perhaps surprising to find that the working
class "D's" do not show the lowest (r) indexes; for all five styles "D"
is intermediate between "U" and "S". Two considerations may be rele-
vant here. First, there is good reason to believe that the working class
is the chief exponent of a value system opposed to that of the middle
class. This does not prevent overt endorsement of middle class values,
as shown in subjective reaction tests; but underlying opposition in
their covert values could produce that extreme stratification in speech
actually used which is characteristic of New York City. The lower
class, by way of contrast, does not participate as actively in this system
of dual sociolinguistic norms—a system exemplified most clearly in
the generalization that those who have the highest incidence of a stig-
matized feature are most sensitive to its use by others.

The second consideration concerns an apparent difference in the
composition of the two "D" groups. Most members of the lower class

"D" group seemed to be less intelligent than average, were slower in their speech, and misunderstood questions more often. From their references to successful, upwardly mobile brothers and sisters it could be seen that they frequently deviate from their own family pattern. On the other hand, there appears to be no such psychological correlate of downward mobility in the working class. Broad social and economic forces seem to account for the inability to maintain middle class status. The fact that a majority of the working class "D's" are Negroes is consistent with this observation.

The working class "U" shows a surprisingly high set of (r) scores, almost equal to that of the lower middle class "U". In actual fact, these persons are members of an upper stratum of the working class, having higher occupational skills than most of the "S" group.

The lower middle class "U's" show the archetypal pattern of *hypercorrection* in the use of (r). As compared to the smaller lower middle class "S" group, the "U" group shows a much wider range of (r) usage shifting from near zero in casual speech to 72 in the most formal contextual style. Both the "U's" among the working class and those in the lower middle class show this hypercorrect pattern, going beyond the upper middle class standard in their more formal speech. Therefore, we can infer that the shift to the hypercorrect pattern is more characteristic of upward mobility than of membership in any particular socio-economic group.[20]

Because these comparisons involve small numbers, in most cases the figures are not conclusive for any one variable under any one style.[21] But repeating the comparison under many styles and for several variables, yields strong confirmation that these differences are indeed among linguistic characteristics of the subjects. We can further investigate the question whether these subjects are characteristic of the population by considering an extended sample—one which includes the briefly interviewed and anonymous r-less regions, where r is not pronounced in the vernacular of casual speech when it is in final or preconsonantal positions. Thus this group includes a large number of Negro subjects who were born in the South. Table 5 shows the distribution of (r) for the careful speech of 99 subjects.

In general, this table shows an increase in association with mobility, the larger differences occurring in the middle class groups and the

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[20] This suggestion is generalized to include linguistic stratification as a whole in New York City in the concluding section of this paper. For the role of hypercorrection in linguistic change see "Hypercorrection by the Lower Middle Class as a Factor in Linguistic Change," *op. cit.*

[21] A large portion of the difference between the "U" and "S" groups is due to a single member of the "S" group whose (dh) values are quite high. This subject is a plumber whose high income raises his objective socioeconomic index to the level of the lower middle class group —an example of status incongruence. Without his values, the "S" group shows considerably lower average (dh).

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN (r) VALUES BY SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS AND MOBILITY TYPE FOR
CAREFUL SPEECH OF ALL SUBJECTS

Mobility Type	0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class	All Classes
U	*	11	25	37	26
S	08	07	18	*	09
D	03	12	*	•	07
ALL TYPES	06	09	23	37	

*No cases of this type.

smaller ones in the two lower groups. The "D" working class is here
at a level with the "U" group; this hints at the special position of the
Negro subjects, for whom objective socioeconomic position and social
mobility may not be accurate indexes of participation in the cultural
norms of middle class society.

Comparable data are shown on Table 6 for the (dh) variable, the
form of the first consonant in the, then, these, etc. This variable differs
from (r) in that it is not an instance of linguistic change in progress;
therefore, a hypercorrect "cross-over" pattern was not expected. Only
three contextual styles are used for this variable. In the lower middle
class group, there is a sharp difference between the "U" and "S" sub-
sets, the "S" group showing much freer use of the stigmatized form
and the "U" group holding much closer to the upper middle class

TABLE 6

MEAN (dh) VALUES BY CONTEXTUAL STYLE, SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS, AND MOBILITY TYPE
FOR SUBJECTS RAISED IN NEW YORK CITY WHO YIELDED FULL INTERVIEWS

Contextual Style	Mobility Type	Socioeconomic Class				
		0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class	All Classes
Casual Speech	U	*	27	17	28	23
	S	63	80	50	*	70
	D	83	*	*	•	83
	ALL TYPES	72	68	30	28	
Careful Speech	U	•	27	9	8	12
	S	52	62	38	*	55
	D	44	40	•	*	43
	ALL TYPES	48	51	19	8	
Reading Style	U	*	17	6	6	8
	S	26	52	29	*	40
	D	69	*	*	*	69
	ALL TYPES	43	42	12	6	

*No cases of this type.

norm. A similar contrast exists between "U" and "S" in the working class. The working class "D's," shown in careful speech only, occupy the same intermediate position as with (r). Finally the situation appears to be somewhat irregular in the lower class group. Though the "D" type has a higher (dh) index in casual speech, as expected, the situation is reversed during careful speech. As in all of these tables, the most realistic and accurate view is a vertical one across styles. The "S" group conforms to the most general social norms by showing a regular downward trend in the (dh) index with increasing formality of style, but the "D" group shows lack of participation in these norms through failure to display such a regular pattern of stylistic variation.

TABLE 7

MEAN (dh) VALUES BY SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS AND MOBILITY TYPES IN CAREFUL SPEECH FOR ALL SUBJECTS

Mobility Type	0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class	All Classes
U		38	12	10	18
S	47	55	21	*	43
D	46	34	*	*	41
ALL TYPES	46	45	23	10	

*No cases of this type.

Table 7 shows the distribution of (dh) in an enlarged sample of all 107 subjects tested under conditions of careful speech. Similar results obtain. In this case, the differences within the lower class seem to disappear, while the other differences are maintained. Again, we see that downwardly mobile members of the working class do not show a linguistic pattern that corresponds to its objective socioeconomic position.

Table 8 shows the related variable, (th), an index for the form of the first consonant in *thing, three,* etc.[22] The pattern is approximately that of Table 6, with the following characteristics:

1) The lower class "D's" do not follow a regular pattern of stylistic stratification, while the "S's" do.

2) The working class "U's" are more like the lower middle class than they are like the working class "S's", the latter showing a high incidence of nonstandard (th) forms. Again the "D" group is intermediate rather than being lower.

3) The lower middle class "U" group shows a much lower (th) index than does the "S" group and a much lower percentage of nonstandard forms.

[22] This consonant is phonologically parallel to (dh), and uses the same three-point scale of fricative (th-1), the prestige form; affricate (th-2), the intermediate form, and stop (th-3), the stigmatized form. The (th) variants are voiceless, while (dh) is voiced.

TABLE 8

MEAN (th) VALUES BY CONTEXTUAL STYLE, SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS, AND MOBILITY TYPE FOR SUBJECTS RAISED IN NEW YORK CITY WHO YIELDED FULL INTERVIEWS

Contextual Style	Mobility Type	Socioeconomic Class				
		0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class	All Classes
Casual Speech	U	•	•	26	9	19
	S	97	95	35	•	82
	D	65	•	•	•	60
	ALL TYPES	80	78	29	9	
Careful Speech	U	•	19	18	8	6
	S	65	84	39	•	53
	D	68	43	•	•	60
	ALL TYPES	66	61	22	8	
Reading Style	U	•	14	6	2	5
	S	20	35	28	•	30
	D	80	•	•	•	48
	ALL TYPES	46	25	11	2	

*No cases of this type.

RESPONSES TO SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION TESTS BY MOBILITY TYPE

The high rate of agreement in recognizing middle class norms of careful speech is reflected by three different kinds of data from the Lower East Side survey: by regular patterns of stylistic stratification, by responses to subjective reaction tests, and by answers to direct questions about values associated with language. In all of these sources we found confirmation of the following scheme:

1) The highest degree of uniformity in the endorsement of these norms, and the most extreme values, appear in the second highest status group.

2) More moderate values are shown by the highest status group.

3) Least recognition of middle class values regarding language occurs in the lowest status group. For many types of data, there is sharp separation in this respect between the lowest class and all of the others.

Table 9 shows the responses to the subjective reaction tests for (r) and (dh)[23] for those adults who were raised in New York City and provided complete interviews. In the case of (r), we can see that the data parallel its actual use in Table 4. Eleven out of twelve of the lower middle class "U" group responded in a way which indicates that they recognized the prestige of (r). No differentiation appears

[23] The subjective response test for (dh) is actually a joint response to (dh) and (th).

TABLE 9

SUBJECTIVE EVALUATIONS OF (r) AND (dh) BY SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS AND MOBILITY TYPE FOR SUBJECTS RAISED IN NEW YORK CITY WHO YIELDED FULL INTERVIEWS

Mobility Type	Socioeconomic Class				
	0–2 Lower Class	3–5 Working Class	6–8 Lower Middle Class	9 Upper Middle Class	All Classes
	Ratio of (r)-Positive Response				
U	*	2/5	11/12	6/8	19/25
S	4/8	8/13	2/4	*	14/25
D	1/7	2/3	*	*	3/10
ALL TYPES	5/15	12/21	13/16	6/8	
	Ratio of (dh)-Positive Response				
U	6/8	5/5	10/11	8/9	29/33
S	6/8	11/13	3/4	*	20/25
D	3/7	2/4	*	*	5/11
ALL TYPES	15/23	19/22	13/15	8/9	

*No cases of this type.

within the working class, but in the lower class it seems clear that the "D" group is practically outside the value system which governs the behavior of the other subgroups. Only one out of seven of the lower class "D's" showed an (r)-positive response.

In the case of (dh) there is an even closer parallel with speech data (see Table 5). Again, the lower middle class "U" group shows the highest percentage of agreement, though not significantly higher than "U's" in the upper middle class. The working class also shows a high degree of agreement about the value of this variable, the "U" group more consistently so, however, than the "S" group. The only significant deviation from a (dh)-sensitive response was found in the lower class "D" group—and this it will be recalled, was the only group which did not follow a regular pattern of stylistic stratification.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

That English in the Lower East Side is socially stratified may be regarded as confirmed by a large body of evidence. Confidence in these findings is provided by many sets of correlations and crosschecks within the survey as well as by independent corroboration in another survey of a completely different type.[24] The findings on the relation of mobility type to socioeconomic status and linguistic behavior of sample subjects have been described. Whether the small cells of the sample are typical of those found in the population as a whole is difficult to state with

[24] See Chapter 3 of The Social Stratification of English in New York City, op. cit., for a discussion of the survey of New York City department stores.

complete confidence. The conclusions of this paper must therefore be considered as hypotheses which are subject to further confirmation.

The most striking finding of this discussion is that a group of speakers with a past history of upward mobility is more apt to resemble the next higher socioeconomic group in their linguistic behavior than the one with which they are currently associated. Despite the fact that these speakers may be expected to show traces of their class origins by retaining behavior patterns of the next lower class group, we find exactly the reverse. This finding is consistent with the view that linguistic behavior reflects participation in a set of norms which are widely recognized through all (or almost all) segments of the community. This observation may be specified as follows:

1) Upwardly mobile persons adopt the norms of an exterior reference group—as a rule, the norms of the next higher group with which they are in contact.[25]

2) A group which shows a past history of social stability tends to be governed more by its own linguistic norms—more precisely, to achieve a balance in which own and external norms are reflected in fairly consistent performance, without a wide range of style shifting.

3) A downward mobile category deviates in its nonacceptance of the normative patterns which other segments recognize. Here we are speaking of a set of individuals who deviate from the principal subgroup in which they were raised. This finding does not apply to an entire group, such as the Negro subjects, who were downwardly mobile through broad social factors almost independently of their own behavior.

It has been suggested in previous studies that a speech community can be defined as a group of speakers who have a common set of values regarding language. We might amplify this suggestion by saying that, in an urban society linguistic stratification is the direct reflection of underlying sets of social values, rather than sets of habits which are produced by close contact and are differentiated by discontinuities in the communication system.

In a large city like New York, we cannot explain the differential spread of a linguistic trait in terms of differential density in the communication network. Everyone is exposed to the prestige patterns of radio and television. If a person borrows a prestige element from an exterior group, it is reasonable to say that this act symbolizes more than his recognition of the values of that group; it symbolizes the adoption of at least some of these values as critical for his own behavior. This act is characteristic of an upwardly mobile person. Thus most

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[25] It appears that relatively few speakers are directly influenced by the speech patterns heard on radio and television. Some type of personal contact seems to be required as a rule.

New Yorkers can agree in deciding on the type of speech appropriate for high-ranking occupations; but this does not mean that such recognition results in the same range of behavior for all. For many New Yorkers the application of such middle class values would appear limited by conflict with other values—namely, the value system symbolized by their group's vernacular from early adolescence onward. Upwardly mobile individuals show the maximum tendency to apply the values of an external reference group to their own behavior. As a result we find that mobility types offer as good a basis as socioeconomic position or better for stratifying New York City speech. The vertical totals on the right of Tables 4 through 8 compare favorably with the horizontal totals[26] in terms of identifying discrete levels. The difference in reference group behavior reflected in mobility types may therefore be viewed as an intervening variable between social and linguistic stratification.

This line of reasoning applies to a relatively open society where such reference group behavior can bring about changes in objective socioeconomic position. The situation is quite different for groups that have limited opportunities for mobility, such as the Negro group in New York City; and linguistic behavior must be analyzed along other dimensions.

[26] These totals for mobility classes and socioeconomic classes include small cells such as "D" lower middle class, which are not shown independently in the tables.