



**Christophe Coupé**

**Sociophonological study of contemporary Dublin English**

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Master Langues, Littératures et Cultures Étrangères et Régionales : Études Anglophones  
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# SOCIOPHONOLOGICAL STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY DUBLIN ENGLISH

Christophe COUPÉ

Mémoire réalisé sous la direction de Monsieur le Professeur Manuel JOBERT



# Conventions

The present study uses the symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) available in the table<sup>1</sup> below.

## THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2015)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

© 2015 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
◌ ɸ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	ʼ Examples:
ɗ Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	ɸ' Bilabial
! (Post)alveolar	ɟ Palatal	t' Dental/alveolar
ɸ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	k' Velar
Alveolar lateral	ɠ Uvular	s' Alveolar fricative

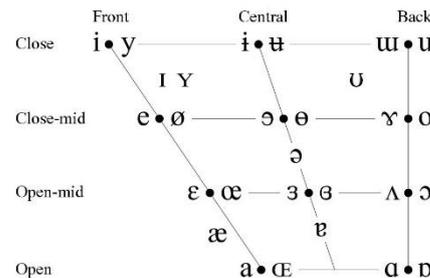
OTHER SYMBOLS

ɱ Voiceless labial-velar fricative	ɕ ʑ Alveolo-palatal fricatives
ʋ Voiced labial-velar approximant	ɺ Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɰ Voiced labial-palatal approximant	ɥ Simultaneous ʃ and x
ħ Voiceless epiglottal fricative	
ʕ Voiced epiglottal fricative	Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.
ʔ Epiglottal plosive	

DIACRITICS Some diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. ɲ̥̄

◌ <sup>◌</sup> Voiceless	◌ <sub>◌</sub> Voiced	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Breathy voiced	◌ <sub>◌</sub> Creaky voiced	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Dental	◌ <sub>◌</sub> Apical
◌ <sup>h</sup> Aspirated	◌ <sup>̚</sup> Linguolabial	◌ <sup>̠</sup> Labialized	◌ <sup>̡</sup> Palatalized	◌ <sup>̢</sup> Nasalized	◌ <sup>̣</sup> Nasal release
◌ <sup>◌</sup> More rounded	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Less rounded	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Advanced	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Retracted	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Centralized	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Mid-centralized
◌ <sup>◌</sup> Syllabic	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Non-syllabic	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Rhoticity	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Raised	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Lowered	◌ <sup>◌</sup> Advanced Tongue Root
			◌ <sup>◌</sup> Retraacted Tongue Root		

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

ˈ Primary stress	ˌ Secondary stress
ː Long	ˑ Half-long
◌̥ Extra-short	
Minor (foot) group	
Major (intonation) group	
· Syllable break	ˌi.ækt
◌ Linking (absence of a break)	

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

LEVEL	CONTOUR
◌̥ or ◌̦ Extra high	◌̥ or ◌̦ Rising
◌̥ High	◌̥ Falling
◌̥ Mid	◌̥ High rising
◌̥ Low	◌̥ Low rising
◌̥ Extra low	◌̥ Rising-falling
↓ Downstep	↗ Global rise
↑ Upstep	↘ Global fall

Typeface: Doulos SIL

<sup>1</sup> Table available at <https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/full-ipa-chart#ipachartdoulos>



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## 0. Introduction

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Dublin English is one of the oldest varieties of English spoken in the world. History has revealed that the traditional vernacular Dublin English (DE) spoken in the city has survived all the way from the 12<sup>th</sup> century – when English was implanted in Dublin – to nowadays and has been perpetuated up to this day. DE is probably the most widely spoken variety of Irish English<sup>2</sup> considering that more than a third of the overall Irish population lives in Dublin. It certainly is the most distinguishable urban variety of Irish English. Interestingly, it can also be viewed as the newest variety of Irish English since it has proved to be innovative and even more so in the recent decades during which DE has been experiencing a reconfiguration of its vowel space that started in the 1980s and has spread in Dublin and outside ever since.

Despite these innovations, DE has not aroused much interest within the linguistic community and few studies have been led on language variation and change in DE in favour of the much-preferred Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA) – among other varieties of English – which are by far the most studied varieties.

This is the main reason that motivated the present work which aims to contribute to the study of DE and especially to what is referred to as the “Dublin Vowel Shift” (DVS). This term was coined by Raymond HICKEY – a prominent Irish sociolinguist and one of the very few linguists working on Irish English and DE. It goes without saying that the name echoes the Great Vowel Shift initiated in southern England in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Giving such a name to the ongoing change in DE is all the more telling as to the significant change this shift brings to DE and, to a larger extent, Irish English.

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<sup>2</sup> By “Irish English” we only refer to the variety of English spoken in the Republic of Ireland.

Apart from the various descriptions offered by HICKEY, there has not been any detailed study of contemporary DE led on the distribution of the shift across Dublin except for John LONERGAN's (2015) captivating but all too brief quantitative study led on a 2015 corpus. The present study intends to explore and account for the spread of the DVS. However, we will analyse the spread of the shift within the scope of one of the most salient and identifiable features of the shift – the high realisation of the THOUGHT vowel. Addressing all features in the present study would require more pages than the allotted number if we want to provide as many details as possible. To conduct this study, we will use an early 2000s set of recordings provided by HICKEY in his *Dublin English: Evolution and Change* instead of a more up-to-date set of data as we will mostly base our descriptions of DE upon HICKEY's work. Our corpus analysis will thus enable us to verify his portrait of the shift.

According to the various studies led by HICKEY, the shift emerged within *new* DE, a variety which developed as a reaction to traditional DE. Its innovative character is what has made it popular among the younger generation of Dubliners. This is what will constitute our starting hypothesis: taking into account the information we have at our disposal, we assume that if the *new* THOUGHT vowel is a salient feature of the DVS, then it is hardly believable that we will find any trace of it in older speakers' speech considering the innovative aspect of the shift and its recent emergence. Instead, we expect to find the *new* THOUGHT vowel only in younger speakers' speech and especially in the speech of younger female Dubliners.

Considering that language is a social construct, it would be inconceivable to envisage a study on language variation and change without a sociolinguistic dimension. Thus, this will constitute the first chapter of our study where we will provide an overview of sociolinguistics by reviewing definitions, going back to the origins of the discipline and

by presenting two famous sociolinguistic studies – LABOV's and TRUDGILL's – which will serve as guidelines for our next two chapters.

Our second chapter will be dedicated to the sociophonological environment of Dublin. We will briefly retrace the history of Ireland and Dublin; and the history of English in Ireland and Dublin. We will then go over the supraregional features of Irish English and will narrow our perspective down to Dublin's three sub-varieties: *local*, *mainstream* and *new* Dublin Englishes, respectively established in the north, centre and south of the city. The description of these varieties will consist in an overview of the geographical and social backgrounds to which they are associated and in a detailed phonological account of the consonantal and vocalic systems of each variety. Finally, we will discuss the Dublin Vowel Shift and its most salient features, which will serve as a transition to our last chapter.

Our final chapter will consist in the retrieving of data from our corpus and its analysis with the help of acoustic phonetics methods. We will discuss the choice of our corpus and the methodology involved in the collection, processing and analysis of our data. Then, we will constitute reference values for all three varieties of DE based on selected recordings. This will serve as a reference spectrum according to which we will further account for our results. We will first comment upon the data according to each area where it was retrieved and will then make general comments on the overall spread of the shift. We will finish with a few remarks on the Dublin Vowel Shift.



## 1. A sociolinguistic approach

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In this first chapter, we will primarily provide an overview of sociolinguistics. Prior to doing so, we would like to stress that this chapter does not aim to redefine and/or revolutionise sociolinguistics, nor does it aim to go through every single study that has been led so far, for it would be utterly impossible to compile such an amount of data. Instead, we will use and discuss the material that seemed to be the most relevant for the present study in order to provide it with a general theoretical framework, hence the use of the term “approach” for the present chapter. This framework will serve as a guideline that will structure our analysis.

After reviewing a set of definitions borrowed from a variety of works from prominent authors in the field, we will go over two sociolinguistic studies so as to better grasp the many implications of a sociolinguistic study, but also to get familiar with the methods that are usually used to collect and analyse data. We will discuss LABOV’s study on the social stratification of (r) in New York department stores, which is now considered a milestone in the field of sociolinguistics that revolutionised the discipline for having opened new perspectives to sociolinguists. The next sociolinguistic study we will mention is TRUDGILL’s. It was based on the observation of the co-relation of phonological and sociological variables in Norwich. This work inherited LABOV’s methods and views, and we shall see what they consist of and how they were put into practice. We will then discuss the relevance of resorting to sociolinguistics in our own study even though we only intend to use it as a tool to guide our phonological approach. In the third subpart we will reflect on sociolinguistics and discuss its relevance for our own study. Finally, we will briefly summarise the present chapter in the last subpart.

## 1.1. Describing Sociolinguistics

### 1.1.1 Overview and Definitions

Before delving into the heart of the subject, it seems essential to define the terms we use, and so our first endeavour will be to define and explain what *sociolinguistics* is. The object of study of sociolinguistics is primarily language since the prefix *socio-* characterises *linguistics* and thus makes it a category of linguistics. However, there is no single and simple way to define what sociolinguistics is as it is a broad field and can thus be used to talk about various ways of studying language. Out of any definition, our first guess would be that it is a field of linguistics taking social interactions into account in order to account for changes in speech, be they morphological, syntactical, lexical or phonological. However, this does not seem to explain much about what it consists of and about how it studies language. Dictionaries – such as *Merriam Webster's Dictionary* – merely define it as “the study of linguistic behavior as determined by sociocultural factors”. This definition seems far too vague to us and does not provide a proper overview of the essential components of the discipline. Plus, it seems to elude one characteristic component of language, that is the focus on the individual and the individual's language in relation to others. Then, what *is* sociolinguistics?

To try and answer this question – although worth wondering when working on language – it would be preferable to examine the works of sociolinguists who can better shed light on the matter. MEYERHOFF (2006, 1-3) explains that sociolinguists, although the term *sociolinguistics* regroups many ways of studying language, have all the same interest – that is to say how people use language, who uses different forms or language varieties, what they use it for, who they use it with, etc. Yet, it must not be mistaken with sociology which studies the development and structure of human society, social institutions and

interactions out of any focus on language. On the other hand, sociolinguistics takes into account the social dimension of language and uses social factors, among other tools, to account for changes that are brought about in a language or a variety. A variety is defined as

any kind of language - a dialect, accent, sociolect, style or register – that a linguist happens to want to discuss as a separate entity for some particular purpose. Such a variety can be very general; such as ‘American English’, or very specific, such as the lower working-class dialect of the Lower East Side of New York City” (TRUDGILL, 2003, 139-140).

NUESSEL (2011, 120-121) defines sociolinguistics as “the multi-faceted study of language within the context of society. In particular, it may examine language variation at the micro-level (sounds, word-formation, syntax, vocabulary)” and stresses the importance of a distinction which must be drawn – *i.e.* the difference between sociolinguistics and the sociology of language. He explains that while the former addresses society’s effect on language, the latter is concerned with language’s effect on society.

David CRYSTAL (1999, 311) addresses the same distinction and defines sociolinguistics as follows:

A branch of linguistics which studies the ways in which language is integrated with human society (specifically, with reference to such notions as race, ethnicity, class, sex and social institutions). The subject is often distinguished from sociology, and (especially in Europe) from sociological linguistics which aims to see language as an integral part of sociological theory.

On the other hand, HUDSON’s vision of *sociolinguistics* does not make this difference when he defines it as “the study of language in relation to society” (1980, 1). However, such a distinction is necessary, for originally “sociolinguistics” and the “sociology of language” were used to refer to the same concept: the intersection and interaction of language and

society (PAULSON, 1997, 4); but the two terms eventually came to be differentiated through the way they relate to society. As previously mentioned, sociolinguistics primarily focuses on language and uses society as a tool to account for variation and change. On the other hand, society is the object of study of sociology of language, which uses language as a tool to understand society. The present thesis will thus use the term *sociolinguistics* to refer to the multi-faceted and multi-layered study of language within the scope of society's influence on it and the interaction between language and society. Considering that the present study ultimately aims to account for change in contemporary Dublin speech through having a closer look at a specific change in Dublin's vowel space, we will try and show that language can be shaped by society in light of sociolinguistic factors through the study of sound systems.

Although LABOV's ground-breaking studies in the 1960s revolutionised this subdiscipline, he was not the first to have conducted sociolinguistic studies. Other linguists such as William Moulton and Dave Britain had led studies based on speech variation. Yet, LABOV did so in so innovative a way that he is now considered by many the father of sociolinguistics even though he neither coined the term nor invented this field of linguistics *per se*. LABOV's work will be addressed later on in this chapter.

Interestingly, sociolinguistics (TRUDGILL, 2000, 27) derived from dialectology which concentrated on the speech of rural areas, and particularly on that of uneducated male informants in small isolated villages in the United States and in Canada. They were concerned with recording as many dialects as possible before they disappear without leaving any oral and/or written trace. Another reason that led them to record people living in small villages was that they believed that the oldest informants still retained the purest form of their dialect, a form that had not been influenced by the widely spread standard variety. The male informants, whom linguist Jack Chambers referred to as

NORMS (Non-Mobile Older Rural Males) were believed to retain local features of their dialect more than women did. TRUDGILL (2000, 27) adds that little by little, dialectologists started to include social and geographical information to the usual dialect surveys they conducted, but also information about education. The problem encountered in this type of studies was that in focusing too much on confined rural dialects, dialectologists failed to grasp the speech of the majority of the population as their surveys only relied on rural male informants: “they remained singularly ignorant about the speech of the vast majority of the population” (TRUDGILL, 2000, 28). Therefore, it is arguable that a lot of linguistic data must have been lost or overlooked in the process, for dialectologists would not replace rural dialects in a wider context, that of the standard variety from which dialects originated.

What significantly moved dialectology towards sociolinguistics was that urban speech began to catch the attention of dialectologists and studies on the speech of New York – among other cities – began to emerge. Yet, another issue arose as they claimed to describe these speeches based on very small numbers of speakers. The issue here is that applying rural dialectology to urban areas failed to give an accurate representation of urbanite speech, for the number of possible informants was much higher than in rural areas and so, generalising the speech of millions of people based on a handful of them proved to be highly inaccurate. Thus, dialectologists had to find a way to better account for the speech of a significant number of people. This is where LABOV came into play. Before addressing LABOV’s revolutionary methods, let us discuss the various factors taken into account when conducting a sociolinguistic study.

### 1.1.2 Factors for variation and change

Stating that sociolinguistics analyses society's influence on language does not give enough insight for someone to be able to understand what is implied, and so the question that comes to mind is: How does a sociolinguist study language? TRUDGILL (2000, 21) notes that studying language variation and change outside of any social factor would not be relevant, for language is – by definition – a social construct. Not only do sociolinguists study language, but they study variation and change *within* language. To account for them, they must take into consideration a variety of social factors. Of course, the said factors can vary from one study to another but there is a core of factors that is almost always present in studies carried out by sociolinguists: age, sex, social background (or class) and geographical situation<sup>3</sup>. These factors are at the heart of language change – *i.e.* not only do sociolinguists study language, but they also study it in relation to the individual and their social interactions with other individuals. Sociolinguistics does not separate language and individuals, for language is a social phenomenon first and foremost.

HUDSON (1980, 218) notes:

You belong simultaneously to a particular age group, region, and social group. A change may spread along any of these dimensions and into another group. Linguistic changes infiltrate groups from the speech of people on the margins between social or regional groups – via the 'middle' people who have contacts in more than one group.

TRUDGILL (2000, 25-26) emphasises:

Social stratification is a term used to refer to any hierarchical ordering of groups within a society especially in terms of power, wealth and status. In the industrialized societies of the West this takes the form of stratification into social classes, and gives rise linguistically to social-class dialects. [...] Social classes are not clearly defined or labelled entities but simply aggregates of people with similar social and economic characteristics; and social mobility – movement up or down the social hierarchy – is perfectly possible.

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<sup>3</sup> Ethnicity can also be included among these four factors but we decided not to do so in the context of our study for it does not have any implication in Dublin English.

These factors help sociolinguists to better account for variation because they vary through time except for sex; some people might change sexes in the course of their lives but the present thesis will strictly focus on binary genders only. Geographical situation is more likely to fluctuate with younger than with older generations who tend to be more sedentary. Many studies, such as HICKEY's "Taping Ireland" (2005b, 20), have shown that age is a key factor in language change. During a walk in the Irish countryside he met a grandmother, her daughter and granddaughter and discovered that each generation had a different speech, to his surprise. He accounts for this as follows:

This is part of a natural weaning process. On the linguistic level we can see that one way language changes is by each generation speaking a little differently from the previous one. For instance, the youngest member of the Arklow trio pronounced the town name something like <awrklow> while her mother said <arklow> and the eldest lady said <ahrklow>.

HICKEY – just like other sociolinguists – stresses the importance of age which must not be omitted when studying variation and change. In this quote, he explains that different generations of speakers from the same family usually display different realisations for a given phoneme. Thus, the speech of younger members constantly diverges – even slightly – from that of older members. To elucidate whether changes occur between generations one must have a look at apparent-time and real-time studies. We will go back on this in chapter 3.

It has been widely shown that sex plays an important part in variation, just like age. Women – at least in the Western world – are believed to use more of the standard variable than men due to the fact that they are evaluated more on how they appear in society while men are evaluated more on what they do (MEYERHOFF, 2006). This is a view that was already shared by TRUDGILL (2000, 73):

Firstly, it has been pointed out that working-class speech, like certain other aspects of working-class culture in our society, seems to have connotations of or associations

with masculinity, which may lead men to be more favourably disposed to nonstandard linguistic forms than women. This, in turn, may be because working-class speech is associated with the 'toughness' traditionally supposed to be characteristic of working-class life – and 'toughness' is quite widely considered to be a desirable masculine characteristic. [...] Secondly, it has also been pointed out that many societies seem to expect a higher level of adherence to social norms – better behaviour – from women than they do from men.

Although it is widely said that women resort more to a standard speech than men do, we could argue that since working-class men retain more local features – *i.e.* traditional features – women would be more inclined to lead linguistic change, be they from a working-class background or not. It can be added that if a new incoming variant comes to be normalized – *i.e.* it becomes part of the group's shared norm – it is very likely that women will adopt the variant and push the change further. As MEYERHOFF (2006, 209) notes, if the incoming variant is positively evaluated within a group, women are more likely to make use of this innovative variant. However, one must be careful not to generalise this to languages other than English, for it is not always the case outside the English-speaking world and even so, it is very unlikely to be the case 100% of the time for all varieties of English (MEYERHOFF, 2006, 209).

The present study uses the terms *variable* and *variant* according to MEYERHOFF's definition (2006, 8) who describes a variable as a feature that varies, and a variant as the actual articulation of the variable in speech. Conventionally, variables are usually written between parentheses but WELLS (1982) created a system of key words he called "lexical sets" for vowel variables. Thus, if you take the NEAR lexical set, the variable observed is (ear) while [iə] and [eə] are possible variants – *i.e.* possible pronunciations – of the same variable. For the purpose of clarity and uniformity, the present study will only refer to vowel variables using WELLS's convention. In the case where a variable has several possible variants, the variants observed can be considered allophones, that is to say linguistically non-significant variants of a phoneme (MANNEL, 2008). Sociolinguistic

variables are stratified according to social classes or groupings and, therefore, the frequencies of use of a variant vary from a class (or group) to another (MEYERHOFF, 2006, 160). Thus, this very difference in frequency of use is what differentiates social classes, for all speakers generally use the same variants of a variable but more or less do so depending on their social background.

As far as social background (or social class) is concerned, it plays a major role in speech variation as the stratification of society in social classes gives rise to social-class dialects and accents (TRUDGILL, 2000, 24-25). Since movement up and down the social hierarchy is perfectly possible in the English-speaking world – unless a closed system of caste organises social hierarchy in an English-speaking country, such as India – people's speech might move up or down this hierarchy accordingly. As TRUDGILL (2000, 30) comments, English has (almost) always been known for having different dialects and accents related to differences of social-background, which means that one accent or dialect is commonly associated with one social class. Although we did not mention this fact above, it goes without saying that the better the economic situation of a person is, the higher the class is likely to be and consequently their accent or dialect will most likely adjust to the new socio-economic status of that person.

As for the geographical location, it is most of the time related to social classes, for people from the same social background tend to live within the same area and so, they are more likely to interact. If you take the example of London, the concentration of high-class people is likely to be around areas with a high concentration of business activities such as the City or around prestigious places such as Buckingham Palace, whereas the farther away from these places one gets, the lower the classes are.

As previously seen in the present chapter, a person's speech is highly influenced by their belonging to a specific age, sex, social class group and by their living in a specific

geographical area. Moreover, any interaction within and without each of these categories is likely to influence their speech (HUDSON, 1980, 218). There is no sheer uniformity in speech within speakers and between speakers, and this is why we talk about variation and change.

It is noteworthy that the factors for variation and change are the key components of what is called *variationist linguistics*, that is to say the study of language in use focusing on the description and the explanation of the distribution of variables (MEYERHOFF, 2006, 297), or as HANNISDAL (2006, 142) puts it “variationist research is to find relations between variables”. HICKEY (2014b, 7) notes that the aim of sociolinguistics is to find the reasons for variation and change in language according to social factors:

The basic assumption of sociolinguistics is that the variation we can observe in language is non-random, i.e. variation in language is socially significant. The task of the sociolinguist has been to quantify this variation and to give a principled account of its occurrence. In a nutshell the findings of sociolinguistics have shown that language variation is largely determined by social class and status.

Taking this into account, it is safe to say that this study inscribes itself in the variationist tradition as it aims to account for change in DE according to different social factors.

The variationist tradition mainly comes from LABOV, who is largely associated with what is referred to as *secular linguistics* and which we will discuss further on.

## 1.2. Some sociolinguistic studies

### 1.2.1. LABOV and the Social Stratification of /r/ in New York City Department Stores

After having defined what sociolinguistics is, let us briefly have a closer look at one of the most famous, if not the most famous, sociolinguistic studies ever led – William LABOV’s – on the use of /r/ in New York Department Stores. During the 1960s, a survey found out an increase in rhoticity in New York City where it was mostly regarded as prestigious.

New York speech had always been /r/-less until the years when it was discovered that rhoticity had gained impetus (HOLMES, 1992, 214). To verify some of his hypotheses on the variable (r), LABOV set about analysing the speech of employees from three different department stores, taking into account the social background of every customer of each store. He predicted that the change that was taking place at the time was more likely to be audible in the speech of the younger generation than in that of older people who were likely to retain a non-rhotic speech comparable to that of British RP, as rhoticity was considered an innovation at the time. He also predicted that he would find tokens of /r/ in the speech of lower-status people since – as HUDSON (1980, 148) explains – the new standard (r) : [r] derives from the influence of the high-status community outside New York. This means that lower-status people would be more inclined to adopt a frequency of use of rhoticity similar to high-status people's as a means of preventing their interlocutors from assessing their social status. However, since the change that was taking place was an innovation and so, was not set in stone, LABOV believed that speakers would most frequently have (r) : [r] when they were less paying attention to their speech because they would worry less about how their social status was assessed by their interlocutors.

LABOV selected three stores – Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's and S. Klein – located in Manhattan and gave a thorough socioeconomic description of the three stores (1972, 45-46) according to different criteria: the social stratification of the employees in the three stores, the price and advertising policies and the type of customers. Saks Fifth Avenue was ranked the highest while S. Klein was ranked the lowest. Macy's was in between. Thus, LABOV reckoned that the higher the store's rank, the higher the values of (r) and, conversely, the lower the rank, the lower the values of (r). To verify this hypothesis, LABOV resorted to a new method he coined himself, the "rapid and anonymous survey".

### 1.2.1.1. The Rapid and Anonymous Survey

The traditional method for collecting data can be long and tedious. In his study, LABOV needed a large amount of data collected over a small period of time. As TRUDGILL (2000, 29) notes:

The methods of traditional dialectology may be adequate for the description of caste dialects (though even this is doubtful) since any individual, however selected, stands a fair chance of being not too different from the caste group as a whole. But it is not possible to select individual speakers and to generalize from them to the rest of the speakers in their social-class group. This was an important point that was demonstrated by Labov.

As previously mentioned, traditional dialectology applied to urban areas claimed to offer a description of the speech of large cities, such as New York, but lacked enough data to be able to propose a more thorough description of the speakers' speech environment. TRUDGILL explains that a few speakers cannot be considered representatives of their social-class group, for it is very unlikely that all the speakers from the same group will display the exact same variants. To overcome this issue, LABOV designed a new type of survey to help him collect as much data as possible in little time. The procedure involved locating items which involved /r/ and which could be found on the fourth floor of each store. For instance, LABOV would ask the employees the location of the women's shoes, to which they would normally answer "Fourth floor". The reason why LABOV asked employees is that they were more likely to give the desired answer than customers considering they worked in the stores. Then, he would ask the same question once again to obtain the same utterance but produced in a more articulate speech (LABOV (2006, 55) later admitted that repetition does not necessarily qualify as an effective way to elicit emphatic speech). Since he was interested in studying rhoticity, the word "fourth floor" was ideal as it would have tokens of non-prevocalic /r/ in *fourth* and final position /r/ in

*floor*. LABOV proceeded to the collection of the tokens and obtained a total of 264 interviews in less than seven hours. Asking employees to repeat their answers was used as a means to test LABOV's hypothesis on the relevance of the amount of attention to speech. Obviously, the study had to be conducted unnoticed, for the results would have been altered had the participants known their speech was analysed by a linguist. The study also served as an attempt at overcoming the problem of the observer's paradox – that is to say “the double-bind researchers find themselves in when what they are interested in knowing is how people behave when they are not being observed, but the only way to find out how they behave is to observe them” (MEYERHOFF, 293) – as he tried to turn interview conversation to more lively and personal topics (MEYERHOFF, 38) instead of having the participants read lists of words and texts. LABOV's hypotheses were eventually verified and he found out that the more the attention paid to speech, the higher the frequency of use of (r), but not for all classes. He noticed that the highest and lowest status employees, respectively from Saks and Klein, displayed a higher frequency of use of (r) for the younger participants and this frequency decreased according to the older age of some participants. However, the reverse tendency was observed at Macy's where older people used (r) : [r] more than younger people did, which led LABOV to review his hypotheses and to state that intermediate groups, unlike highest and lowest-status ones, were more likely to change accents in middle age to be more similar to the latest prestige accent according to their social aspirations (HUDSON, 1980, 151-152).

Finally, the last thing that can be noted about his study (1966, 55) is that the data was not recorded during the interviews but it was only transcribed on the go. Even so, the phonetic trait that was analysed was not considered a complex one since (r) – and consonant variables in general – has fewer variants in all varieties of English than vowels have. Plus, rhoticity is much more audibly perceptible than a subtle vowel change. Thus,

the lack of recordings was not as problematic as it could have been for a more complex trait. In case of uncertainty about a token, LABOV would remove it in order to only keep those he was the most certain of.

#### 1.2.1.2. Quantitative vs. Qualitative study of speech

It is notable that the quantitative study of speech enables an interviewer to collect as much data as possible and especially so through the use of the rapid and anonymous survey method as explained above. When studying the frequency of use of a variant within a group, the use of quantitative methods comes in handy as the higher the number of tokens for a variant, the better the chances to draw an accurate representation of speech. In the case of LABOV's study, he included variables such as sex, ethnicity and occupation for further analysis. Considering he was only interested in the variation of the variable (r) in relation to age and social-status, the use of quantitative methods was more appropriate, for this enabled him to better account for the frequency of use of variants using statistics. The more data, the more accurate the statistics.

Quantitative linguistics is also referred to as *secular linguistics*, that is to say, according to TRUDGILL (2003, 117), a way of doing linguistics based on the assumption that linguistic theories and hypotheses should rely on the observations and analyses of the speech of ordinary speakers heard in everyday social contexts. Thus, researchers should supplement their hypotheses with real language taken in real contexts and not in books only. Although secular linguistics was not born with LABOV's work – as other linguists were already working on the field<sup>4</sup> at the time his own work became famous within the linguistic community – it is widely associated with him for he stressed the importance of

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<sup>4</sup> See 1.1.1.

verifying one's assumptions with the help of field work and he did so in his study of (r) in New York department stores.

BIJEINKIENÉ & TAMOŠIŪNAITĖ (2013, 18) define qualitative linguistics as

a set of methods that aims to gather an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of the study. Smaller rather than larger samples are used for qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to answer questions *how* and *why*, rather than *what* and *how many*. Qualitative research is usually inductive.

They define quantitative methods as "a set of methods that is based on quantification or measurement and that employs statistical, mathematical and computational techniques. Quantitative research is usually deductive". Thus, quantitative study is more about using statistics to account for the frequency of use of a variable while qualitative study is more about gathering data in order to elucidate the underlying reasons as to why a given variable is preferred by a group rather than by another. The former (qualitative study) is about explaining while the latter (quantitative study) is about showing through numerical data. In other words, it can be said that qualitative methods aim to offer a complete and detailed description of the sociological context in which speech is observed while quantitative methods aim to collect numerical data, test hypotheses and look at patterns through numerical data. However, when looking at sociolinguistic studies such as LABOV's or TRUDGILL's, they cannot be considered purely quantitative even though their results are presented quantitatively. On the other hand, we could go as far as saying that the qualitative study of speech enables researchers to set the ground for quantitative studies. Collecting qualitative data allows researchers to observe a linguistic community in order to better understand the variations at play, while quantitative collection allows linguists to account statistically for the variation of one or several variants based on qualitative grounds.

It could be argued that to have a better and global understanding of the speech of a given community, one must not restrain one's study to a mere presentation of figures. As a result, a combined use of quantitative and qualitative methods seems more appropriate to analyse and interpret the data and to answer the "what", but also the "how" and "why". LABOV's study of the social stratification of (r) in department stores is a good example of a quantitative study and offers qualitative insights of (r) distribution across New York based on the prior assessment of the informants' social background.

### 1.2.2. TRUDGILL and the Social Differentiation of English in Norwich

TRUDGILL's work on Norwich speech is another example of a quantitative study of speech. He selected his native town, Norwich, for he already had a good knowledge of its social stratification and accent repartition. Plus, when conducting the interviews, he was able to use a Norwich accent, which might have encouraged speakers to speak more naturally than they would normally have, had he used RP (HUDSON, 1980, 152). If he had done so, he would have greatly influenced the speakers' speech output for they would have adopted a more careful speech. As HUDSON (1980, 152-153) explains:

This may seem a small number on which to base general conclusions about the overall patterns of the 160,000 inhabitants of Norwich, but such a sample is statistically adequate to give a broad picture of patterns of variation, provided one does not want to take account of too many different social factors, or to make too fine a set of discriminations.

This accounts for the qualitative basis of TRUDGILL's study inasmuch as he focused more on providing a detailed account of why and how phonological variables varied according to sociological variables instead of only presenting numerical data.

The aim of TRUDGILL's study (1974, 179) was to observe the co-variation of sociological variables (social class, social context and sex) and phonological variables – that is to say that he wanted to find out what variables were subject to social class differentiation and/or stylistic variation, and what variables were more prone to give away the social context or class of a speaker. To do so, he collected data from 60 speakers – 50 adults and 10 children – randomly selected among the 160,000 people that inhabited Norwich.

The pronunciation of the *-ing* sequence in final position – represented by the variable (ng) – received great attention in his study and so, we will give an overall picture of his work through this variable. (ng) is present in all varieties of English and was deemed by TRUDGILL as likely enough to provide a good example of social class and stylistic differentiation in Norwich (1974, 179). He observed the alternative pronunciation of the (ng) variable, sometimes pronounced with [n] as in *hunting* ['hʌntɪn], or pronounced with [ŋ] as in *sing* [sɪŋ]. The second variant (ng) : [ŋ] is generally perceived to represent standard English and RP, which is why TRUDGILL predicted that (ng) : [ŋ] would be used more often by high-status speakers, and even more often in situations that draw attention to speech. On the other hand, he predicted that (ng) : [n] would be more frequently used by low-status speakers. To have a better representation of the use of (ng), he classified speakers into five categories: Lower Working Class (LWC), Middle Working Class (MWC), Upper Working Class (UWC), Lower Middle Class (LMC) and Middle Middle Class (MMC).

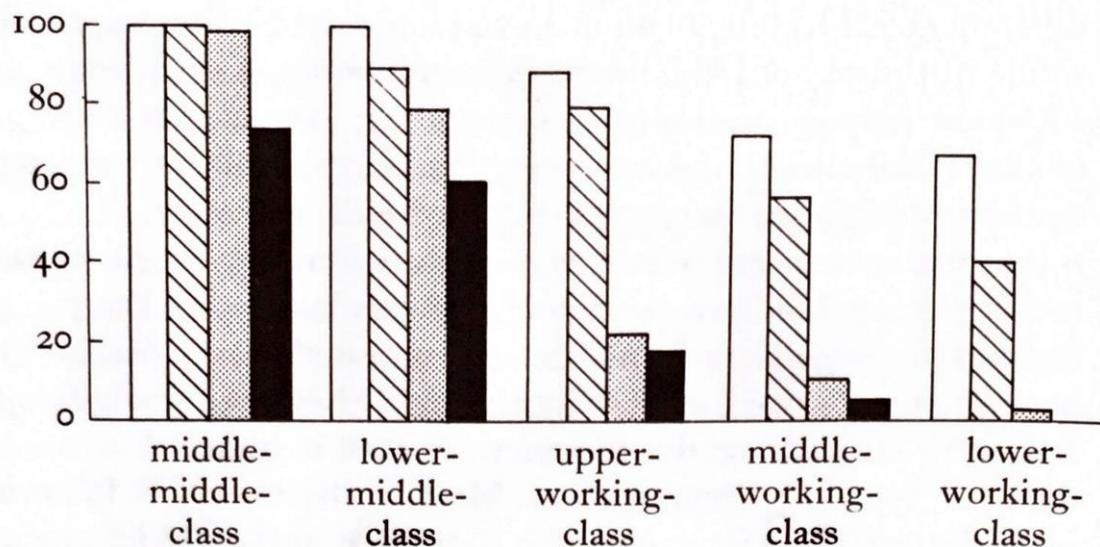
His predictions were confirmed by the results of his investigation and he found out that the use of (ng) : [ŋ] in casual speech is low for working class groups while it is much higher for middle-class groups (HUDSON, 1980, 154). The results were calculated according to a social class index designed for his study with a score ranging from 000 to 100. The following table exemplifies his results:

<i>Class</i>	<i>Style</i>			
	<i>WLS</i>	<i>RPS</i>	<i>FS</i>	<i>CS</i>
I MMC	000	000	003	028
II LMC	000	010	015	042
III UWC	005	015	074	087
IV MWC	023	044	088	095
V LWC	029	066	098	100

**Figure 1.1: (ng) index scores by class and style<sup>5</sup>**

It is notable that this table is inconsistent with the description that is provided by TRUDGILL. We assume that the author may have mixed up [n] and [ŋ] during the writing of his study, for he explains that the lower the score, the more consistent the use of [n] and the higher the score, the more consistent the use of [ŋ]. Yet, he offers the following description (1974, 181): “The variable (ng), it can be seen, is a very good indicator of social context, with scores ranging, as we have already noted, from 000 (MMC and LMC in WLS; MMC in RPS) to 100 (LWC in CS)”. Considering his claim to have verified his hypothesis, we suppose that the present description does not match the table above. On the other hand, HUDSON’s table proposes an account which does correspond to TRUDGILL’s results. To make things clearer, we decided to insert HUDSON’s table below:

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from TRUDGILL P. (1974). “The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich”. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In COUPLAND et al. (eds.). (1997). *Sociolinguistics: a Reader and Coursebook*. London: Macmillan. 180.



**Figure 1.2: Norwich (ng). Proportion of (ng) : [ŋ] in speech of five socio-economic classes in four styles: word-list (white), reading-passage (hatched), formal (dotted), casual (solid)<sup>6</sup>**

This table clearly shows that as Trudgill had predicted, the variable (ng) : [ŋ] is more often used by higher class than lower class people. What is interesting here is that the gap between the word-list and the casual speech is greater than for any other social class and so, stylistic variation for UWC speakers is more significant. This can be accounted for by the fact that UWC speakers – like other intermediate groups – are part of a liminal group at the junction of lower and higher classes. Consequently, they seem to be more aware of the social significance of linguistic variables which TRUDGILL (1974, 181) associates with the “borderline nature of their social position”, and which accounts for their linguistic insecurity. On the other hand, the gap is not as significant for middle-working-class and lower-working-class speakers who display few tokens of (ng) : [ŋ]. Their overall scores are close to their casual speech level, assumed to be representative of everyday speech in familiar social environment (TRUDGILL, 1974, 181). As for middle-class speakers, they have the least significant stylistic variation. This is clearly noticeable in the case of

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from HUDSON, R.A. (1980). *Sociolinguistics*. London: Cambridge University Press. 154.

middle-middle class speakers whose score ranges from 72 to 100, thus showing that (ng) : [ŋ] is more representative of their casual speech in the same way as (ng) : [n] is for working-class speakers.

Another element TRUDGILL's study brought to the forefront is that of sex differentiation in the case of the variable (ng) in Norwich English (his findings can be applied on a more general scale to other studies in the Western world<sup>7</sup>). He found out (1974, 182) that male speakers used a higher percentage of [n] than female speakers regardless of their social class. Thus, their score was lower than that of female speakers<sup>8</sup>. The reason for such a difference is accounted for by TRUDGILL (1974, 182-183) who explains that, generally, women are more status-conscious than men, which explains why they are more aware of the social significance of linguistic variables, and of (ng) being representative of higher classes in the case of Norwich. Moreover, women's social position is less secure than men's, even though this tends to be less the case nowadays. As a reaction to this, women assert their social status linguistically more than men who are usually rated for what they do in society rather than for their appearance as it is the case for women. Consequently, women have to find a way to assert themselves differently.

Finally, TRUDGILL (1974, 183) adds that working classes have connotations of masculinity in western societies and so, they are associated with a certain roughness that is characteristic of WC life and which is supposedly deemed a desirable masculine attribute. Thus, (ng) : [n] is more likely to be found in WC speech and especially in that of male speakers. (ng) : [ŋ] is considered to be upper-class and so, to a certain extent, it is

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<sup>7</sup> As we have explained in 1.1.2. the factors for variation and change are not the same around the world but tend to be the same in the Western world.

<sup>8</sup> Please note that in Figure 1.1. we pointed out the inconsistency between the data provided by TRUDGILL (1974) and his description of it. He states (1974, 182) that female speakers have a lower score than male speakers but if we consider that the score ranges from 000 for consistent use of (ng) : [n] to 100 for consistent use of (ng) : [ŋ], then male speakers' scores are consequently lower than female speakers', but not as high as TRUDGILL described it.

associated with a refinement and a sophistication that are not perceived as desirable in WC speech, for they do not represent the masculinity that is longed for in WC speech. This explains why “feminine” characteristics – or should we say traits favoured by women – do not fit WC life, for they are more associated with the refinement and sophistication of upper-classes than with masculine traits. It is noteworthy that this view is more and more challenged nowadays by the rising up of women in society, for more and more women hold important positions in key professional areas. Thus, we can assume that a rise in social position could have an impact on language and bridge the gap of stylistic variation between women and men. However, this hypothesis is highly debatable in the case of WC speakers whose socio-economic context is very unlikely to reconcile stylistic variation between female and male speakers.

#### 1.2.2.1. The structured sociolinguistic interview

This study uses the classical Labovian method of the structured interviews, as stated by TRUDGILL (1974, 179) who further developed the technique in his study of Norwich English. The elaboration of the structured interview by LABOV was done in New York at the time when he interviewed a random sample of people in their Lower East Side homes. As MEYERHOFF (2006, 30) explains, the structured sociolinguistic interview consists of four structured parts during which the interviewee is asked to perform various tasks. The first part is dedicated to the reading of a list of minimal pairs, that is to say pairs such as *pad* and *bad* that have different meanings but only differ from each other in only one phoneme. In the second part, the interviewee is asked to read a list of words in isolation, some of which contain the variables observed. The third part focuses on the reading aloud of a short narrative constructed by the interviewer and which contains the variables

observed in as many linguistic environments as possible. Finally, the last part consists in a conversation with the interviewer about the interviewee's life and experiences.

The reason why LABOV designed these four tasks was that each of them intended to prompt different speech styles. A style is a set of variants correlated with social meaning used in a particular context or, to put it in other words, it falls under intraspeaker variation. Changing one's style is also referred to as "style-shifting" (MEYERHOFF, 2006, 28). "Speech accommodation" is a kind of style-shifting one uses to attune one's style and/or behaviour to that of one's interlocutor(s). Style is not a set attribute of a speaker, for they can change styles depending on the context. This variation is highly dependent on the speaker's addressee. If one speaker is addressing someone using RP, they are likely to shift or accommodate their style in order not to give away their social status. It is noteworthy that style does not only affect phonology, but also grammar and lexicon.

The first and second parts of the structured interview required more attention to speech for the interviewees – that is to say that "the different distribution of forms in different *styles* was motivated by the amount of attention the speaker was paying to the act of speaking" (MEYERHOFF, 2006, 28). Speakers paid more attention to their speech in activities such as reading word lists (part I), minimal pairs (part II), and even during the reading aloud of a text (part III) than during part IV where the interviewer would lead the conversation to a more informal exchange. This specific part was all the more relevant in TRUDGILL's study since, as mentioned above, he himself was from Norwich and could thus speak with a Norwich accent to help him bridge the formal gap that is usually unintentionally created between an interviewer and an interviewee.

### 1.3. *How relevant is sociolinguistics for our study?*

After having had a closer look at LABOV's and TRUDGILL's studies and at the methods used, one question comes to mind: how can a sociolinguistic study prove useful for our own study of phonological change in DE? Understanding the relevance of sociolinguistics in the present study is essential, for, although we do not intend to make it exclusively sociolinguistic, we will rely on it to better analyse and understand the changes at play in current DE. It is noteworthy that our work will try to encompass both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to better account for and analyse our data. The qualitative aspect of our study will be dedicated to drawing a sociological framework of DE based on the works of Raymond HICKEY. This will help us interpret the results of the quantitative analysis of our corpus that will be retrieved from HICKEY's files provided with his *Dublin English: Evolution and Change*. The supraregional features of Irish English will be reviewed in the next chapter in order to better understand the variations between Irish English and DE, but also the variations within DE itself. Thus, our study will offer both a macrocosmic view as well as a microcosmic one, for we shall consider Dublin as a whole constituted of several sociophonological sub-groups forming DE. We aim to analyse variation and change in light of sociolinguistics not only to describe language, but also to understand those who speak it and why change(s) should appear. Our study should not describe the phonological changes only based on our results. Instead, using the available sociolinguistic data on Dublin English will help us complete our results and analyses in so far as variation and change are not enclosed phenomena but are the consequence of the interrelation of various factors.

#### *1.4. Summary*

In this chapter, we have tried to define and exemplify sociolinguistics with the help of authoritative sources. We have drawn the distinction between the sociology of language – which discusses only the effect of society on language – and sociolinguistics – which addresses the effect of language on society and is interested in the interrelation of the two. Then, we have shown that urban dialectology became sociolinguistics when it was acknowledged that rural dialectology could not be applied to urban areas; and so, urban representation of speech could not rely on the speech of a few speakers only. Instead, it had to take into account a wider range of factors as well as speakers themselves, for they are those who produce language. The said factors – at the root of phonological variation and change – are age, sex, social class, geographical situation and ethnicity, although the latter is taken into consideration only in studies involving multi-ethnic communities and/or ethnic communities whose speech greatly diverge from the standard norm. To better grasp the extent to which these factors have an impact on speech, we have had a closer look at two emblematic linguistic studies: LABOV's, "The Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores" and TRUDGILL's, "The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich". The first one used LABOV's revolutionary quantitative method of the Rapid and Anonymous Survey, and the second one used LABOV's traditional Structured Interviews to quantitatively account for social differentiation of several variables across Norwich English. Finally, we have discussed the necessity to adopt a sociolinguistic approach on the ongoing change in the vowel system of Dublin. We came to the conclusion that using a purely phonological approach would only result in a descriptive outcome, which we want to achieve to a certain extent, but we would like to back up the sociolinguistic approach with an analytic approach. Of course, the information provided

in the present chapter represents a small part of the sociolinguistic studies that have been carried out so far and they would certainly deserve further attention in a future study. Nonetheless, going back to key figures and concepts allowed us to have a better overview of the discipline and a steadier theoretical basis upon which we will build our phonological approach.



## 2. Dublin English

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After having addressed sociolinguistics in the previous chapter, let us now discuss the phonology of DE. This second chapter will focus on the phonological aspect of our study in order to draw a better view and representation of Dublin and of what is referred to as *Dublin English*. Before going any further, it is worth noting that this study refers to “phonology” according to CARR’s (2008, 130) definition – that is to say “The study of the sound systems found in human languages. [...] [W]e also use the word ‘phonology’ to refer to the sound systems under investigation”. Although there does not seem to be a universal consensus on the difference between phonology and phonetics, the present chapter will focus on the phonology of DE – that is to say on the sound system of DE and its patterning – while the next and final chapter will address DE by adopting a phonetic approach.

Phonetics is defined by CARR (2008, 127) as “[t]he study of human speech sounds. Often subdivided into articulatory phonetics (the study of how human speech sounds are made) and acoustic phonetics (the study of the acoustic properties of those sounds)”. In her dissertation, VIOLLAIN (2015, 93-94) defines phonology as the study of the organisation and use of a variety’s inventory of sounds and compares it to phonetics which she defines as the study of the acoustic quality of sounds, their realisation. She also defines it as the way sounds are perceived by addressers and addressees. Therefore, the present thesis will follow the same lines and refer to phonology and phonetics according to these definitions.

The aim of the present chapter is to offer an understanding of the history of DE and its contemporary phonological background in order to provide the corpus with a solid basis

according to which it can be appropriately analysed. To do so, we will review the history of English in Ireland and of the implantation of English in Dublin. Then the terminology as to how this variety of English spoken in Ireland is referred to will be addressed. Then, the supraregional features will be briefly mentioned. All this will serve as a cultural and phonological background in order to depict the sociophonological dimension at play in contemporary DE. Afterwards, we will introduce the sociolinguistic frame of Dublin before tackling the consonantal and vocalic environments of DE. Finally, we will discuss the recent changes in DE referred to by HICKEY as the Dublin Vowel Shift. This will enable us to introduce the changes in the THOUGHT lexical set that will be further analysed in our corpus in the third chapter.

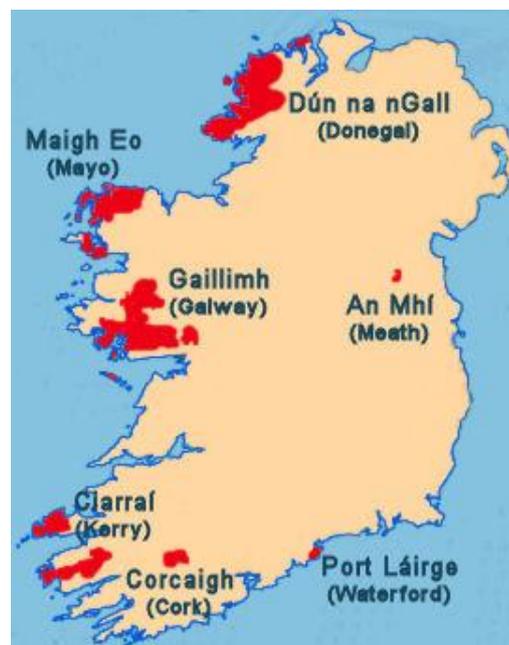
## *2.1. General History of English in Ireland*

### 2.1.1. English in Ireland

Ireland's history, and notably its relationship with England is that of trouble and unrest. Its history can be divided into two main periods outlined by HICKEY (1998a, 2) between the late 12<sup>th</sup> century to 1600 and from 1600 to present-day. Ireland has had centuries of relationships with England as the very first contacts ever recorded date back to the German invasion in 449, which marked the establishment of the first commercial exchanges between the two peoples. Irish Gaelic was the language spoken in Ireland up until the invasion of Ireland by the Normans in 1169 when Henry II and his troops landed in the south-east of the country. From then on, constant warfare, invasions and the passing of numerous decrees forced the spread of English on Irish people. The most notable event from this period was the enactment of the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366 which proscribed the use of Irish and banned Irish traditions in an attempt to de-Gallicise

Ireland and force its people to adopt English as their first and only language. However, this was to no avail as Gaelic resurged through the so-called Gaelic Revival which took root in the fourteenth century and ended at the end of the sixteenth century with the Irish defeat at the battle of Kinsale in 1601. This moment marked the resurgence of English and encouraged resentment from Irish people towards the English culture and its language. English was successfully implanted in Ireland at the beginning the seventeenth century with James I and with the arrival of Scottish Lowlands settlers, in the north, who formed the base of the Ulster Protestant community. As for the south of Ireland, new English settlers came to reinforce English under Cromwellian ruling that marked the end of the first Gaelic revival. Despite regular rebellions from Irish people, England had the upper hand over Ireland with the arrival of Cromwell at the very beginning of the seventeenth century. His hostility to Ireland was demonstrated through the various campaigns he led over the country in 1649-50, following the Civil War (1642-1649) during which Irish rebels fought against Cromwellian forces. Over this short period of time, Cromwell brutally opposed the Confederate and the Royalist coalitions. The Battle of the Boyne in 1690 was a significant event of this era for it crushed Irish hopes for Independence with the defeat of King James II by William of Orange. The aftermath of the defeat was the passing of Penal Laws in 1695 that deprived Roman Catholics of their lands. During this period English was spoken again on a large-scale and spread around the country. As a consequence, Irish became less and less spoken. On the other hand, the eighteenth century is characterised as a rather peaceful century. The situation was different in the nineteenth century during which the number of speakers of Irish drastically decreased due to the Great Famine that struck the country from 1845 to 1849. The famine triggered continued migrations from Ireland to North America and greatly contributed to the rise of English in Ireland considering that many native Irish speakers

were pushed westwards, either in Ireland or overseas, while many other died of starvation. Consequently, Ireland ended up being deprived of a significant number of its native Irish speakers. As a result of the famine, very few monolingual (Irish) speakers survived and most of the remaining population spoke English as a first language, while even fewer spoke Irish as a second language. WELLS (1982, 417) notes that by 1851, “only 5 per cent were monoglots with no knowledge of English”. Interestingly, Irish has remained the first official language of Ireland – as specified in the constitution of 1937 – despite the overwhelming dominance of speakers of English as a first language (HICKEY, 2016, 4). Irish is still spoken nowadays but not everywhere in Ireland. As a result of the westward push triggered by the Great Famine, native Irish speakers took shelter in the west of Ireland, in areas called “Gaeltacht” ([ˈgəiəltæxt]), for they represent the very last areas where Irish is still spoken as a first, and sometimes only, language. These areas are to be found in the western part of the country in counties Galway, Mayo, Kerry, Cork, Meath and in county Waterford in the South (see **Map 2.1**).



**Map 2.1: Gaeltacht Areas in Present-Day Ireland<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.writework.com/essay/irish-gaelic-brief-linguistic-analysis> (available in larger format page 141).

The second Gaelic Revival was led by emblematic Irish figures such as W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Douglas Hyde. Their involvement in the Revival was of great help to raise consciousness about the Irish language and traditions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and led to the creation of the *Conradh na Gaeilge (The Gaelic League)*, whose main purpose is to promote the use of Ireland's language and traditions. Following the War of Independence (1919-1921) – brought about by the infamous events of Easter Rising in 1916 – Ireland was granted independence in 1921 by the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The Irish Free State was finally created in 1922 and lasted until 1937 before the Irish Parliament, – the *Dàil Eireann* – put the new constitution into effect in 1937. Even though English is spoken by almost all Irish people nowadays, Ireland is currently undergoing a change as there have been many attempts at reintroducing Irish at every stage of the society. One the most notable attempts is the learning of Irish as a secondary language that has now become compulsory from primary school to secondary school.

### 2.1.2. English in Dublin

The introduction of English in Dublin dates back to the twelfth century as in the rest of Ireland. While Gallicisation of the country had taken place by the fifteenth century – which led to the decline of English by the early sixteenth century – Dublin is the only place where English never completely died out as HICKEY (2016, 359) remarks. Thus, DE is the only variety of English that can claim continuity from the time English was introduced by original settlers (HICKEY, 1998a, 2). Dublin was swiftly invaded and monopolised by the English and became a major hub for the spread of English throughout Ireland. Dublin is located at a strategic position as it is a port town directly facing England. Such a position greatly facilitated exchanges between England and Ireland. This could be

one of the reasons that would account for the spread of English in Dublin. The Charter of Dublin was issued by Henry II as early as 1172 and enabled the Anglo-Normans to strengthen their grasp over the city and anglicise it even more by the centuries. The most notable example to account for the anglicisation of Dublin is the name of the city itself, which was originally named *Dubh Linn*, meaning “black pool” (HICKEY, 2005, 42). It was later anglicised to *Dublin*.

The city is located in an area named the *Pale*, which stretches along the east coast of Ireland. It has been under English rule for centuries, which explains why it has been largely affected by the English on the political, social, military and linguistic levels. This accounts for the fact that there are very few – even no – native Irish speakers in Dublin nowadays, and for the fact that there are even fewer native Irish speakers on the east coast where English is widely spoken.

## 2.2. *Irish English – A general phonological overview*

### 2.2.1. What is Irish English?

Before addressing DE, it would be worth reviewing the terminology employed to refer to the variety of English spoken in the south of Ireland – *i.e.* the variety of English spoken in the Republic of Ireland. Three terms are used to refer to it. The first term used to refer to this variety is *Anglo-Irish* which has been mostly used in literature and in politics to refer to the relations between England and Ireland (HICKEY, 2011, 4). We could also argue that the term evokes a variety of Irish instead of a variety of English due to the place of the adjective *Anglo* which characterises the noun *Irish* and makes it a variety of Irish. For that reason, this term will not be used. Another term used to refer to the variety of English spoken in Ireland is *Hiberno-English*. This term is derived from Latin *Hibernia* meaning

“Ireland”. Even though the term has been used to refer to all varieties of English in Ireland, it suffers from two drawbacks:

On the one hand, it is too technical: the use of the term demands that it be explained in studies intended for a general readership outside Ireland. On the other hand, the use of the term within Ireland may imply a somewhat popular, if not sentimental, attitude towards English in Ireland which is often not regarded a topic worthy of academic research (HICKEY, 2007, 27).

Therefore, the term was regarded hardly understandable to lay people and had to be replaced. The term *Irish English* will thus be preferred as it is more neutral and easier to understand than the two previous terms. Interestingly, this term encompasses all varieties of English in Ireland and puts Irish English on the same level as other varieties such as British English or American English (HICKEY, 2007, 27).

It is worth mentioning that the term *variety* is used in the present study according to HICKEY’s definition (2014a, 331) – that is to say “A term used to refer to any form of a language which can be delimited from another form. The grounds for such differentiation may be social, historical, geographical or a combination of these factors”. TRUDGILL (2003, 139-140) offers a similar definition:

A neutral term used to refer to any kind of language – a dialect, accent, sociolect, style or register – that a linguist happens to want to discuss as a separate entity for some particular purpose. Such a variety can be very general, such as ‘American English’, or very specific, such as ‘the lower working-class dialect of the Lower East Side of New York City’.

Therefore, we will refer to Irish English as a *variety* to differentiate it from other varieties of English. Although the term *dialect* can be used to refer to all varieties, the term *variety* is neutral and can be applied to any kind of language (TRUDGILL, 1974, 5). On the other hand, *dialect* refers to “a variety of language which differs grammatically, phonologically and lexically from other varieties, and which is associated with a particular geographical area and/or with a particular social class or status group” (TRUDGILL, 2003, 35). Although

it can be argued that all varieties of English are dialects – even Standard English can be considered a dialect – as they differ grammatically, phonologically and lexically from one another to various degrees, the term *dialect* is often used to refer to nonstandard or traditional dialects such as Scouse in England or Forth and Bargy in Ireland, which became extinct at the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, DE differs from Irish English almost exclusively in pronunciation and can thus be referred to as an accent rather than as a dialect. For the sake of coherence, we will refer to DE as a *variety* that differs from Irish English in accent only.

### 2.2.2. Supraregional features

The Irish English accent is largely recognisable by non-native speakers thanks to a set of noticeable – yet sometimes caricatural – phonological features associated with it. These features constitute what is called the *supraregional variety* defined by HICKEY (1998a, 7) as “a core of common features which can be taken as characteristic of general middle-class speech of the south and it is these which the non-Irish use as clues for identifying an Irish accent”. This means that the supraregional variety ignores features from specific sub-varieties and refers to a more uniform set of sounds that are generally found all over Ireland in urban middle-class speech. Interestingly, HICKEY (2005, 208) notes that most of the time if a small country has a large capital city and is organised around it, then supraregionality takes root in the non-local variety of the capital – that is to say in the variety spoken by middle-class speakers. He adds that supraregionality often becomes the national standard of the country. Thus, the variety spoken by middle-class Dubliners can be seen as the standard variety spoken all over Ireland that comprises the main features of Irish English. Therefore, it means that what is generally referred to as

*Irish English* is, in fact, middle-class DE which imposed itself as the standard variety – that is to say it has become the lead variety in Ireland (HICKEY, 2014a, 299). The following section presents the most salient features of supraregional Irish English.

- Consonants:

- Rhoticity

Rhoticity – *i.e.* the use of an /r/ sound in postvocalic and preconsonantal position – is the main giveaway of a typical Irish accent and is said to have a ‘strikingly ‘dark’ resonance in Irish English, particularly in final and preconsonantal environments” (WELLS, 1982, 431-432). Irish English /r/ is typically represented as /ɾ/.

- Dental stops

Another clue as to supraregional features of Irish English is the use of the dental stops [t] and [d] instead of the RP dental fricatives [θ] and [ð]. Consequently, words such as *theory* and *this*, pronounced [θɪəri] and [ðɪs] in RP are pronounced [tʰiəri] and [dʰɪs] in Irish English.

- Alveolar slit fricative

The use of an alveolar slit fricative [ʃ] in place of [t] intervocalically – as in *city* – and pre-pausally – as in *cut* – is characteristic of an Irish accent. In Irish English, *bottom* and *hit* are pronounced [ˈbɒʃəm] and [hɪʃ] respectively. WELLS (1982, 429-430) notes that the use of [ʃ] as an allophone of /t/ does not occur in pre-consonantal position. Thus, it could be considered a kind of lenition, which is a common process in all Celtic languages. It consists in the weakening in articulation of a consonant which can range from voiceless to voiced, stop to fricative and even to the entire vocalisation of a consonant (HICKEY,

2014a, 176). For instance, the bilabial stop /p/ can be realised as the corresponding<sup>10</sup> labio-dental fricative [f].

- Labio-velar contrast

Finally, another striking Irish English feature is the conservation of the contrast between the voiceless labio-velar fricative [ɸ] and the voiced labio-velar approximant [w] in words such as *which* and *witch* that are homophones in RP [wɪtʃ] but not in Irish English, and are pronounced [ɸɪtʃ] and [wɪtʃ] respectively.

- Vowels:

- Monophthongisation of the FACE and GOAT diphthongs

As for vowels, the main supraregional features are to be found in the monophthongisation of the vowels from the FACE and GOAT lexical sets to [e:] and [o:] respectively. [ou] can sometimes be found for the GOAT lexical set.

- Open front unrounded vowel /a/

Finally, the PATH (low vowel + voiceless fricative) and DANCE (low vowel + nasal + obstruent) vowels have an open central unrounded vowel [a:] instead of the RP open back unrounded vowel [ɑ:], which gives [pa:t] and [da:ns] (WELLS, 1982, 429-430).

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<sup>10</sup> By “corresponding”, we mean that the labio-dental fricative /f/ is the closest consonant sound to the bilabial stop /p/ in terms of articulation as their realisations involve almost the same articulators.

### 2.3. *The sociophonological environment of Dublin English*

#### 2.3.1. Introducing the sociolinguistic frame of Dublin

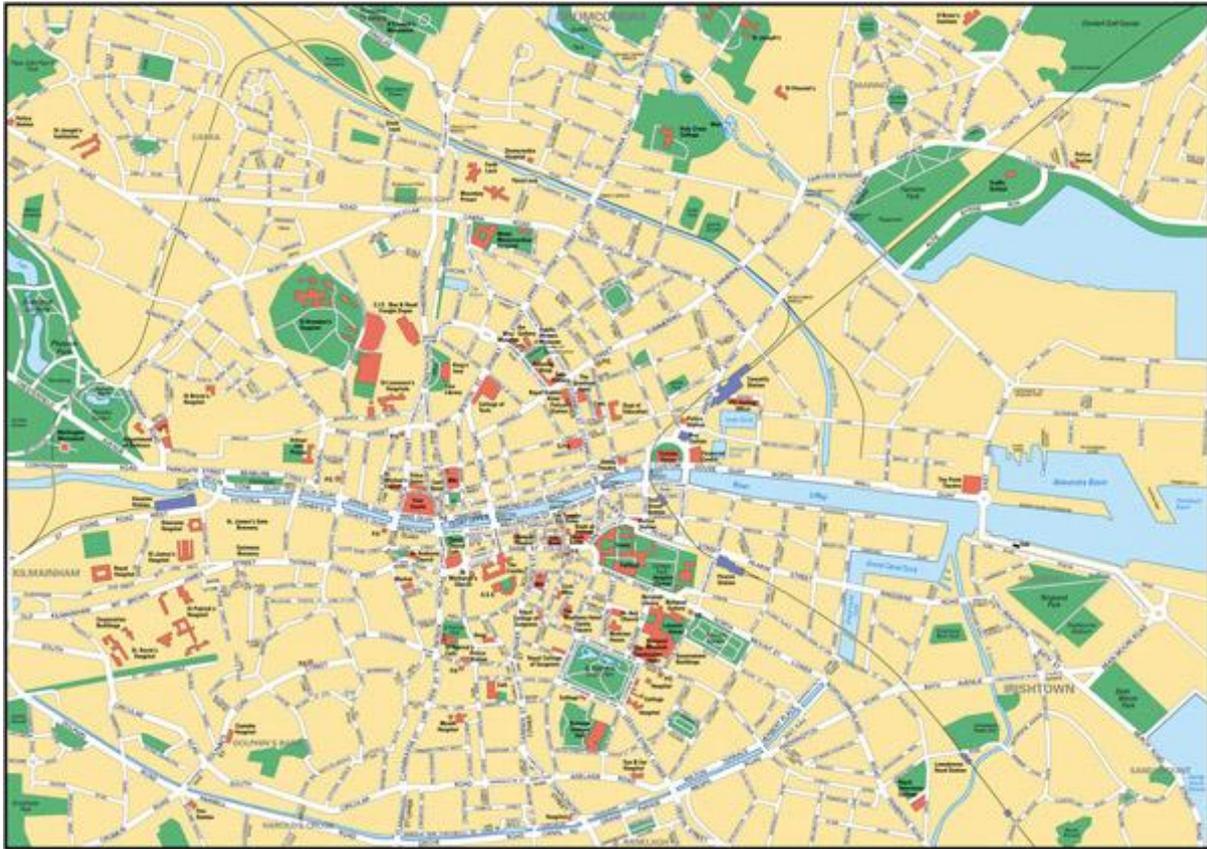
##### 2.3.1.1. Geographical context of Dublin City

Dublin is a vast city located at the mouth of the river Liffey in county Dublin, in the centre of the east coast. The river divides the city into two main parts (see **Map 2.2** and **Map 2.3**). The north of the city is mainly made up of social housing and represents an area of low prestige (except for Howth, a peninsula in the north-east of Dublin) as opposed to the southern part of the city which is considered of higher social prestige and is regarded as more residentially desirable. The reason why the south of the city is regarded as more prestigious is due to the presence of universities such as Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin along with RTE (Radio Telefís Éireann), the national television studios. The whole area is known by its postal code, Dublin 4 which – as HICKEY (2016, 22) notes – has given its name to a sub-accent known as the *Dublin 4 Accent*, or simply *D4*. As for less prestigious parts of the city, they are known by their district names such as “Finglas” or “Clondalkin”. North Dublin suburbs are mainly made of high-rise flats hosting lower-class people. Interestingly, due to the urban spread of Dublin, it now encompasses more than a third of the whole population of Ireland, which represents almost two million people. The river Liffey at its centre is a geographical separation that also stands for a social divide as we have just seen and, to a larger extent, it illustrates a phonological divide that will be addressed later on.



Map 2.2: Overview of Dublin City<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.geocities.ws/ph\\_ireland/Dublin\\_01.html](http://www.geocities.ws/ph_ireland/Dublin_01.html) (available in larger format page 142).



**Map 2.3: Inner-city Dublin and the River Liffey**<sup>12</sup>

### 2.3.1.2. *Local, Mainstream and New Dublin English*

It is worth making a clear distinction between the different varieties spoken in the city, for DE is not one unique and uniform variety from south to north Dublin. Throughout his research on DE, HICKEY (1998a, 9-14) identified two main categories of speakers he used to call *Popular* and *Educated*. He now refers to them respectively as *local* and *non-local* and defines them as follows:

The term 'local' is intended to capture this and to emphasise that these speakers show strongest identification with traditional Dublin life of which the local accent is very much apart. The reverse of this is 'non-local' which refers to sections of the metropolitan population who do not identify with what they see as a narrow and restricted local culture. This group then subdivides into a larger, more general section, labelled 'mainstream', and a further group which perhaps more clearly rejects a

<sup>12</sup>Retrieved from [www.vidiani.com/maps/maps\\_of\\_europe/maps\\_of\\_ireland/dublin/large\\_detailed\\_road\\_map\\_of\\_dublin\\_city\\_center\\_1.jpg](http://www.vidiani.com/maps/maps_of_europe/maps_of_ireland/dublin/large_detailed_road_map_of_dublin_city_center_1.jpg) (available in larger format page 143).

confining association with low-prestige Dublin. This group is labelled 'new' (Hickey, 2007, p. 354)<sup>13</sup>.

*Local* DE retained traditional features of Irish English and is thus the oldest variety of DE spoken in the city and – as mentioned in 2.1.2. – the oldest continuous variety of English. *Local* speakers strongly identify with the city and its traditions. *Mainstream* speakers do not specifically identify with *local* speakers and, consequently, deviate from them. The deviation is more significant with *new* speakers who strongly reject any association with the traditional *local* DE speech (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015, 200). In HICKEY's original terminology, *educated* speakers only referred to the middle-class speakers he now refers to as *mainstream*. Yet, over the past thirty years, the emergence of a new set of sounds deviating from *mainstream* speakers' speech needed a new term to be referred to. Hence the use of *new* DE, which accounts for the idea that it is the most recent form of DE. The emergence of *new* DE speakers can be explained by the growth of Dublin's Population and by the economic boom that occurred in the late 1980s as explained by HICKEY (2003, 361): "the increase in wealth and international position has meant that many young people aspire to an urban sophistication which is divorced from strongly local Dublin life". This "urban sophistication" which *new* speakers aspire to partly translates into the emergence of a new variety in opposition to the one already established<sup>14</sup>. This phenomenon is called "Local Dissociation" and implies distancing oneself from the local variety spoken in one's immediate surroundings (HICKEY, 2003, 361). Dissociation is one of the motivations for language change.

Making the difference between these two groups of speakers – or should we say three groups now that the *new* DE variety has clearly differentiated itself from the other two

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<sup>13</sup> HICKEY uses the term *non-local* to refer to both *mainstream* and *new* DE. Thus, we will do so as well when we intend to refer to both *mainstream* and *new* speakers and not make the distinction between the two varieties.

<sup>14</sup> *New* DE will be addressed in 2.3.3.

varieties – is all the more essential. All three varieties reflect the social dimension of present-day Dublin and will enable us to better frame the phonological variations at play in the city. It is noteworthy that the varieties are associated with a distinct geographical area. *Local* speakers are mainly to be found in the northern part of the city while non-local speakers – *mainstream* and *new* – are more likely to be found at the centre of the city (*mainstream*) and in the higher prestige residential areas of south Dublin (*new*).

### 2.3.1.3. Prestige and Received Pronunciation

The notion of prestige is noteworthy when analysing the speech of a community and is to be taken into account in a sociolinguistic study. Prestige is defined as “an attribute of varieties which is determined by how they are viewed by speakers. Usually a standard variety enjoys highest prestige in a community and is favoured in public and official usage” (HICKEY, 2014a, 249). One could assume that RP is regarded as the prestigious norm due to the cultural and economic proximity between Ireland and England but this would be hardly believable considering the tensed history the two countries share. Ireland’s scepticism and past resentment towards England prevents it from ever considering England’s prestige norm as its own, and even so in a twenty-first century context where Anglo-Irish relationships have improved. HICKEY (1998b, 5) notes how paradoxical Irish people can be towards RP. On the one hand the Irish do not want to be regarded as having too thick an accent by the English, but on the other hand, they do not want to be seen as “pro-English” by speaking with an accent too close to RP. Such an ambivalence can be accounted for by the fact that the British have had a long tradition of condescendence towards the Irish as can be exemplified with the representation of the “Irish fool” in plays. Despite this ambivalence, it is noticeable that the Irish lean towards an accent that does

not emulate RP (HICKEY, 1998b, 5) – as mentioned in 2.2.2. – considering that the supraregional IE is based on middle-class Dublin speech. Perhaps the most notable aspect of this rift between Irish English and British English is rhoticity which is not considered prestigious in RP but is present in the supraregional standard in Ireland and is regarded as a mark of prestige. Rhoticity was also considered prestigious in New York in the 1960-70s as discussed in 1.2.1. Moreover, no Irish speaker would ever adopt an English accent except for the purpose of derogatory imitation of an English person or of an Irish person whose accent is considered too close to an English accent and too snob. Thus, the Irish consider RP an extranational variety in opposition to which their accent has developed.

DE is becoming more and more a model for non-urbanites as the “Greater Dublin” conurbation expands and encompasses more and more small towns and villages. Plus, Dublin is Ireland’s main working hub where thousands of Irish people commute every day and bring back DE features to their hometowns and villages. This subject will be further addressed in 2.3.3.1.

### 2.3.2. The Phonology of *local* and *mainstream* Dublin English

After having established the sociological frame of Dublin, the phonological frame of *local* and *mainstream* DE will be addressed in the present part. First, the main consonants and processes will be reviewed. We will then review the vowel system of *local* DE and *mainstream* DE.

### 2.3.2.1. Consonants

- Rhoticity

DE displays a rhotic realisation in final and pre-consonantal positions as in the rest of Ireland. WELLS (1982, 432) discusses this feature and mentions that /r/ is realised as a post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] before a stressed vowel as in *red* [ɹɛd] and *arrive* [ə'ɹaɪv] in *local* speech. /r/ may be dropped in *local* DE after /ə/ in a pre-tonic syllable – *i.e.* preceding a stressed vowel – thus giving words such as *surprise* [sə'pɹaɪz] or *Saturday* ['satədeɪ] similar to RP. HICKEY (1999, 5) noticed that *local* DE tends to be almost non-rhotic as /r/ is dropped in unstressed word-final position as in *porter* [pɒɹə]. The low rhoticity in *local* DE is not to be mistaken as a desire to near RP pronunciation, for non-rhoticity is considered prestigious for RP but not for DE.

As for *mainstream* DE, rhoticity constitutes a salient feature and participates in dissociation. Therefore, [ɹ] is found in all environments. Yet, *mainstream* speakers did not limit themselves to the use of the traditional post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] and instead developed a retroflex [ɻ] as a reaction to the traditional *local* [ɹ]. [ɻ] is regarded as a higher sign of prestige. As a consequence, its use has rapidly increased and especially so in syllable-final position, giving [kæ:ɻd] for *card* for instance (HICKEY, 2003, 369-370).

- Stops
  - Alveolar Stops [t] and [d]

The pronunciation of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ in *local* DE results from the merging of [θ] with [t], and of [ð] with [d], giving [t] and [d] respectively in words such as *thinker* [tɪŋkə] and *breathe* [bɹi:d]. The reason for the alveolarisation of dental fricatives in *local* DE is to be found in its southern rural origins where alveolar realisations are common (HICKEY, 2016, 24). Considering that *local* DE remains very

conservative in its pronunciation, it is not surprising to hear alveolarised dental fricatives in the northern part of the city where the majority of *local* speakers is settled. The particularity of this phenomenon is that it undoubtedly led to the homophonization of what previously constituted minimal pairs such as *tinker/thinker* and *breathe/breed*.

On the other hand, there is no such homophony in *mainstream* DE as speakers keep the distinction between dental fricatives and alveolar stops, as can be seen in the table below (**Table 2.1**). Once again, the fact that *mainstream* speakers do not use the mergers can be considered the result of dissociation as they do not wish to identify with the *local* pronunciation. One could argue that this brings *mainstream* DE closer to RP as it also has the distinction between dental stops and dental fricatives. Yet, this is not the case, for the only motivation is dissociation from the *local* variety and not accommodation to RP. Moreover, as can be seen in the table below (**Table 2.1**), *mainstream* DE has dental stops /t̪/ and /d̪/ in place of /θ/ and /ð/, which nullifies the assumption that *mainstream* speakers wish to near RP given that no such realisations are present in RP.

<i>Mainstream</i> DE	<i>Local</i> DE
a. <i>thinker</i> [ˈt̪ɪŋkə]	<i>thinker, tinker</i> [ˈtɪŋkə]
b. <i>tinker</i> [ˈt̪ɪŋkə]	
c. <i>breathe</i> [bɹiːd̪]	<i>breathe, breed</i> [bɹiːd]
d. <i>breed</i> [bɹiːd̪]	

**Table 2.1: Alveolar Stops in *Mainstream* and *Local* DE**<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Reproduced from HICKEY, R. (2007). *Irish English: History and present-day forms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 353.

- Post-sonorant stops

The deletion of post-sonorant stops – *i.e.* of stops following a voiced sound – is typical of DE. HICKEY (1999, 6) notes that this feature is unique to DE and is restricted to positions after the alveolar nasal /n/ and the alveolar lateral approximant /l/. He adds that a glottal stop /ʔ/ can be found in place of the deleted stop although this is not systematic. Thus, a word like *belt* [bɛlt] may be pronounced [bɛl(ʔ)]. There is no evident clue as to which DE variety this feature belongs to or whether it is found in several varieties. Yet, HICKEY (2007, 304) listed the historical features of Irish English pronunciation in his *Irish English* (2007) and the deletion of post-sonorant stops is one of them. Moreover, in his recent *Sociolinguistics in Ireland*, HICKEY (2016, 26) notes that the use of a glottal stop for /-t-/ is “primarily” found in *local* DE in word-final position /-t#/ . Thus, taking this into account, we can argue that this type of deletion is more likely to appear in *local* speakers’ phonological set rather than in *mainstream* speakers’ since *local* DE’s ties with traditional features are strong whereas *mainstream* DE features emerged in opposition to the *local* variety.

- Glide-Cluster

As was previously mentioned, the supraregional Irish English variety does not retain the glide cluster reduction as one of its main features as can be the case for more local traditional varieties. This means that it does keep the contrast between the voiced labio-velar approximant [w] and the voiced labio-velar fricative [ɰ] in the *wh-* segment in initial position. When it comes to DE, the distinction between these two glides is not clear as their realisations may or may not occur depending on the variety. This feature has not been dealt with in detail in the recent studies of DE. Nonetheless, HICKEY does say a few

words about it and states that although the contrast between [w] and [ʌ] can be found around the city, it is losing ground:

Mainstream Irish English generally distinguishes phonetically between *which* and *witch*, but advanced Dublin English is losing this distinction (by voicing the first segment in *which*). The use of [w] in this set is also typical of local Dublin English which is probably why the merger of *which* and *witch* in advanced Dublin English is not categorical (Hickey, 2007, p. 332).

By “advanced DE”, HICKEY (2007, 316) refers to the recent forms of DE - *i.e. non-local* DE – that have spread in the south of Ireland and have ousted the older supraregional standard variety<sup>16</sup>. More and more *mainstream* speakers tend to voice [ʌ]. As a consequence, the contrast between *witch* and *which* is gradually being erased: “in more recent varieties of English based on non-local Dublin usage, the voiced approximant [w] is increasingly common, rendering *which* and *witch* homophones” (HICKEY, 2007, 13). It is noteworthy that the use of [w] in the *wh*- segment is typical of *local* DE as previously mentioned by HICKEY, which means that despite trying to distance itself from *local* DE, *mainstream* DE still displays older features. The reason as to the conservation of this feature is that it has avoided stigma from *mainstream* speakers. No further information is provided on the subject (HICKEY, 2003, 370). The use of [ʌ] in all words beginning with *wh*- is a traditional feature of Irish English and so, we assume that adopting this feature for *mainstream* DE would bring it closer to traditional Irish English, which is something it has tried to avoid. Even though [w] is used in *local* DE, *mainstream* DE only rejects the *local* features directly borrowed from traditional Irish English. Thus, we can assume that

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<sup>16</sup> Considering that *non-local* DE has well established itself as the supraregional standard in the Republic of Ireland, we can argue that regional accents have undergone levelling, that is to say “[a]ny process in which a general reduction in variation occurs. Dialect levelling is a specific instance of this in which a dialect loses (salient) features, very often in a situation in which a single dominant variety is emerging” (HICKEY, 2016, 177). As a consequence, regional features in Ireland have lost ground and are gradually being replaced by *non-local* DE.

as long as a *local* DE feature is not a traditional feature of Irish English, *mainstream* DE will not stigmatise it.

- H-Dropping

Interestingly, there is no case of H-dropping recorded in Ireland and Dublin is no different from it (HICKEY, 1999). This feature consists in dropping the phoneme [h] in initial position in words such as *harm* [hɑ:m] which becomes [ɑ:m]. Therefore, the distinction with *arm* [ɑ:m] is lost. Although this feature signals little prestige in urban English varieties, it is not part of *local* DE, supposedly the lower prestige variety. It can be argued that the absence of this feature in any Irish English variety is due to its strong English colour, for it is a salient feature of Cockney (among other varieties). The use of H-dropping in Cockney serves as a way of self-identification with this variety and with the specific socio-economic class associated to Cockney speakers. Consequently, this feature is very unlikely to be found in Irish English due to its association to Cockney (and to other varieties of English English such as Norwich English). As previously mentioned, Irish people do not wish to identify with English English and this is strongly marked in their speech.

- /l/ realisation

In Irish English, /l/ realisation is clear most of the time in all environments where RP has a clear /l/ (represented as [l]) except in coda (syllable-final position) where it is realised as a dark /l/ (represented as [ɫ]). It is important to note the distinction between clear and dark /l/ as the first one is realised with an occlusion of the vocal tract between the tongue tip and the alveolar ridge – which explains why it is considered an “apico-alveolar” consonant – while dark [ɫ] is realised in the same way except for the front of the tongue that is not raised. Instead, the back of the tongue is raised towards the velum,

which gives it a velarised quality. Thus, a word such as *lull* is pronounced [lʌɫ] in RP but [lʌl] in Irish English as there is no complementary distribution of clear and dark /l/. Most of the time DE has [l] in all environments except for *non-local* speakers who tend to display changes as the velarised [ɫ] recently emerged in their speech:

Although the use of clear /l/ [l] has long been a feature of Irish English, recent changes in Dublin English (Hickey 1999a, 2005) have led to velarised [ɫ] occurring in non-local Dublin speech. This pronunciation spread very rapidly during the 1990s so that velarisation is typical of younger non-local speakers throughout the Republic of Ireland and is presently one of the chief distinguishing features between younger and older speakers (Hickey, 2007, 13).

The introduction of this feature exemplifies the gap between *local* DE and *non-local* DE which *non-local* speakers aim to increase, for they do not identify with the traditional *local* speech. FERRAGNE and ZUMSTEIN'S study on Irish English (2015, p. 206) leans towards the same explanation as they point out that many *non-local* speakers adopt the typical RP realisation with a clear [l] in onset and dark [ɫ] in coda. Their recent study goes along the lines of WELLS'S (1982, p. 431), which noticed a certain amount of clear vs. dark alternations similar to the RP pattern in DE. Once more, the reason that can account for this change is dissociation, as HICKEY (2003, 370) explains that [l] in coda is too strong an indicator of *local* speech – and of traditional Irish English to a larger extent where alveolar [l] is salient – for *non-local* speakers to adopt this feature.

- *-ng* realisation

As for the realisation of the *-ng* sequence in word-final position, it is as variable in Ireland as it is in other varieties of English, and Dublin is no exception to it (HICKEY, 1998a, 12). It consists in replacing the final nasal of the present participle – *i.e.* replacing the voiced velar nasal [ŋ] in present participles such as *doing* [dɔɪŋ] by the voiced alveolar

nasal [n], thus giving [doɪn]. This realisation is typical of lower prestige varieties and is found in *local* DE but not in *non-local* DE.

- Processes

There are a few phonological processes that must be addressed in our study of DE. Although they are not restricted to DE and occur in many other varieties of English, their frequent use by DE speakers merits further attention as they are easily noticeable in everyday Dublin speech. The three processes in question are Cluster Reduction, Yod Coalescence/Deletion and D Epenthesis.

- Cluster Reduction

A consonant cluster consists of two or three consecutive consonants as in the words ***bend***, ***pint*** or ***spring***. While consonant clusters are common in English, some varieties might simplify them. This process is called “cluster reduction/simplification” and is defined as “the simplification of consonantal syllable codas, particularly after fricatives or sonorants” (HICKEY, 2007, 353). Cluster reduction is a good indicator of *local* DE where it is quite common unlike the supraregional variety where the feature is recessive. HICKEY (2007, 354) explains that cluster reduction mostly occurs after the voiced alveolar nasal /n/, the voiced alveolar lateral approximant /l/ and the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/. If a cluster reduction occurs in *local* DE, words such as ***pound***, ***belt*** and ***last***, usually pronounced [pɛʊnd], [bɛlt] and [læ:st], will be pronounced [pɛʊn], [bɛl] and [læ:s] respectively. Moreover, HICKEY (2003, 362) adds that intermediate registers may have a glottal stop as a trace of the deleted stop. We can assume that the intermediate registers in question revolve around upper-end *local* DE and lower-end *mainstream* DE or even exclusively around middle-class *mainstream* DE where a glottal stop emerged in opposition to the *local* DE cluster reduction. Interestingly, as HICKEY (2007, 353-354)

notes, cluster reduction is specific to the Dublin area and is nowhere to be found in the rest of the Republic of Ireland where the tendency is not to delete the stop but, instead, to keep it and devoice it if it is originally voiced, thus giving [bɛnt] for *bend*, originally pronounced [bɛnd].

- Yod Coalescence and Yod Dropping

Yod Coalescence is a process common to all varieties of DE, from popular to educated speech. It is a type of palatalisation – *i.e.* “a common historical process whereby sounds produced at the velum are progressively shifted forward towards the hard palate” (HICKEY, 2014a, 229) – which occurs in stressed syllables. Yod coalescence consists in palatalising the sounds /dj/, /tj/, /sj/, and /zj/ respectively into /dʒ/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/. During the palatalisation process, the voicing of the consonant preceding the yod (if there is any) determines the voicing of the postalveolar fricative that is used. Therefore, for articulation matter, it is very unlikely to find /dʒ/ or /tʒ/ for instance. When yod coalescence occurs, the palatal approximant /j/ – a.k.a. “yod” – loses its original place of articulation and is blended with the preceding consonant of the cluster. It can be argued that yod coalescence is a form of assimilation taking place when /j/ is preceded by the alveolar plosives [t, d] and the alveolar fricatives [s, z]. As an example, the words *dew/du* [dju:] become homophonous with *Jew* [dʒu:] when yod coalescence occurs. The same happens with *tune*, usually pronounced [tju:n], but pronounced [tʃu:n] in case of yod coalescence. It can be added that this process is not restricted to words only and is common in connected speech as can be observed in the example *Could you help me?*, which is more likely to be pronounced /kʊdʒʊhɛlpmi/ instead of /kʊdʒʊhɛlpmi/. The reason as to the frequent use of coalescence in connected speech is that sounds tend to assimilate when someone is not in a situation where they need to articulate each sound.

It also makes the words or groups of words easier to pronounce. It is noteworthy that this feature is not exclusive to Dublin and is found in many, if not all varieties of English around the world, but also in many other languages (GLAIN, 2013, 102). Such universality may account for the fact that this specific feature is not restricted to a particular DE variety.

Yod dropping is another process involving the yod and consists in deleting the yod in a consonant cluster. Although its primary purpose is not to simplify an existing cluster, it can be said that it contributes to the simplification of clusters as the said clusters lose their second element – *i.e.* the yod. WELLS (1982, 247) traces back the origins of this process to Middle English and explains that the sequence /ju:/ came from the Middle English diphthongs /εʊ/ and /ɪʊ/ which were simplified to /u:/ in many dialects of English, thus creating yod dropping. HICKEY (2007, 325) explains that yod dropping is restricted to specific conditions in Irish English:

- a. Deletion assumes that /j/ is not in absolute initial position, *i.e.* it must be preceded by another segment, hence *year* /ji:r/.
- b. The segment before /j/, in the onset in which it is deleted, is regularly a sonorant, in effect /n/ or /l/ as /j/ does not occur after /r/ in an onset, hence *lute* /lu:t/, *news* /nu:z/. After /s/, the yod is also deleted, hence *suit* /su:t/.
- c. The sonorant in question is alveolar, hence *news* /nu:z/ but *mews* /mju:z/ (and *cute* /kju:t/ with a non-sonorant velar stop).
- d. The syllable to which the onset in question belongs to is stressed, hence *numerous* /'nu:mərəs/ but *numerical* /nʃu'merɪkəl/, *Italian* /ɪ'tæljən/.

Overall, yod dropping is a common process found in all DE varieties and it is not attested to being prevalent in one variety more than in another. The reason as to this is that the frequency of use of yod dropping is highly inconsistent and falls under intraspeaker variation – that is to say the “differences in the way a single person speaks at different

times, or with different interlocutors, or even within a sentence” (MEYERHOFF, 2006, 17). It depends more on speakers themselves rather than on their accent itself, for yod dropping is found in many varieties of English, just like yod coalescence.

- D Epenthesis

The last feature that will be dealt with in this section is D epenthesis. An epenthesis consists in inserting an unstressed centralised vowel in a syllable-final cluster – *i.e.* a cluster consisting of two sonorants such as /lm/ and /rm/ (HICKEY, 2007, 13). Yet, the epenthesis cannot be realised if the sonorants in question are homorganic – that is to say if they are produced using the same vocal organs (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In the case of D epenthesis, it can be realised in two environments as described by WELLS (1982, 435): it can occur between a preceding [l] or [n] and a following /z/, thus giving *bills* = *builds* [bɪldz], *holes* = *holds* [həʊldz] and *mines* = *minds* [maɪndz]. D epenthesis can also be found between a preceding /r/ and a following [n] or [l] where [n] and [l] may be syllabic or not. Therefore, considering the following examples, *turned* [tʌɪnd], *girls* [gɜːlz] and *snoring* [snɔːɪŋ], they would be pronounced [tʌɪndɪd], [gɜːldz] and [ˈsnɔːɪndɪ] where [n] and [l] become syllabic. As WELLS (1982, 435) notes, D epenthesis triggers the creation of homophones such as *aren't* and *ardent* with the first word [aːɪnt] being pronounced as the second one [aːɪndɪt]. HICKEY (2007, 308) remarks that this feature comes from Irish and has become a traditional Irish English feature. It is evidently characteristic of *local* DE. There is no account of this feature in *non-local* DE up to this day and it is very unlikely to emerge in this variety since *non-local* speakers do not wish to identify with *local* DE features whose origins are to be found in traditional Irish English speech.

### 2.3.2.2. Vowels

Only *local* DE and *mainstream* DE will be dealt with in this section while *new* DE will be addressed later on. The aim of the present section is to provide an account of the vocalic differences between *local* DE and *mainstream* DE features in order to better grasp the main differences between these two varieties.

- Short and long Vowels

According to WELLS (1982, 422), the open-mid unrounded /æ/ from the TRAP lexical set commonly revolves around cardinal /a/, except for *mainstream* speakers whose TRAP vowel is closer to the RP [æ] in words such as *man*, *pat*, *lad*, etc. The use of [æ] instead of [ɛ] is frequent within Dublin in the word *any*, which tends to become homophonous with *Annie* [æni]. *Many* also displays this feature but only outside Dublin and becomes [mæni] instead of [meni] in Dublin where it keeps the open-mid front unrounded [ɛ] in place of [æ]. Finally, there is a variation in the pronunciation of *anything* in Dublin where the use of /æ/ and /ɛ/ is not consistent.

The opposition of the TRAP and PALM lexical sets is a major giveaway of the difference between *local* DE and *mainstream* DE. *Local* DE speakers neutralise the [æ - a:] distinction and use [æ] in all cases, be it short or long as in *grasp* [gɹæsp] or *aunt* [æ(:)nt]. However, *mainstream* DE retained the distinction between the TRAP and PALM vowels and consequently, distinguish *aunt* [a:nt] from *ant* [ænt]. The difference here lies in the PALM and BATH vowels where *local* DE has [æ(:)] for both while *mainstream* DE has [æ] for TRAP and [a:] for PALM. There used to be an ambiguity as to the realisation of the BATH vowel in *local* DE as can be seen in WELLS's *Accents of English* (1982, 423), where he offers a description of 1980s *local* DE featuring a more open realisation of the vowel with [a] for

*bath* but [æ] for *castle*. Yet, the two realisations of the vowel seem to have merged into the same vowel [æ(:)] as described in HICKEY'S (1999, 9-10) more recent studies.

The realisation of the LOT vowel /ɒ/ is usually unrounded in most cases where it can be realised as an unrounded [ɑ], but is [a] in most cases in *local* DE (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015, 202). There is no consistent distribution between the two vowels but we can assume that [a] is the preferred form in *local* DE given the data provided by HICKEY (1999, 9-10) where [a] is the only realisation listed in *local* DE for the LOT lexical set. In *mainstream* DE, we can notice that the open rounded [ɒ] is preferred among *mainstream* speakers. WELLS (1982, 422) notes that the opposition between the LOT and THOUGHT lexical sets is maintained in DE since most speakers do not neutralise pairs such as *stock* vs *stalk*, *knotty* vs *naughty* or *clod* vs *clawed*. We could argue that this feature is only partially maintained as it is restricted to a few items in the lexicon. WELLS (1982, 422) adds that some speakers do neutralise this opposition in the words *doll* and *was*, which both have [ɔ:] instead of [ɒ]. Yet, there is a free variation between [ɒ] and [ɔ:] in *cross*, *lost*, *often*, *cost*, *swan* and *wrong*. There is no clear account about which variety this feature belongs to. However, we can suppose that *mainstream* DE is more likely to neutralise the [ɒ - ɔ:] opposition and display variation on a few lexical items, for if we refer to HICKEY (1999, 9-10), *local* DE speakers use [a] and [a:] for the LOT and THOUGHT lexical sets respectively while *mainstream* DE has [ɒ] and [ɒ:], which are closer to [ɔ] and [ɔ:] in terms of backness.

HICKEY (2003, 369) points to a specific realisation of the LOT vowel occurring in *local* DE which he called SOFT-lengthening. It is originally found in traditional Irish English and consists in the lengthening of the LOT vowel before what is considered in RP a voiceless fricative – [θ], [f], etc. – and accounts for the pronunciation of words such as *off* [ɒ:f] or

*broth* [b.rɒ:t̪]. SOFT-lengthening was originally found in educated nineteenth century DE speech and was retained in *local* DE but not in *mainstream* DE.

Another short vowel whose pronunciation is again different from that of other varieties is the open-mid back unrounded /ʌ/ from the STRUT lexical set. In DE, the opposition with the close-mid back rounded /ʊ/ is maintained everywhere but in *local* DE where there is no [ʌ - ʊ] opposition (WELLS, 1982, 422). Thus, words like *put* and *putt* are both pronounced with [ʊ] and become homophones. As for *non-local* DE, the [ʌ - ʊ] opposition is maintained since speakers do not identify with *local* DE (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015, 205). Thus, STRUT and FOOT vowels are clearly distinguishable. Nonetheless, neutralisation does occur in *mainstream* DE, for there is a free variation in informal speech between neutralisation and opposition of these two vowels (WELLS, 1982, 422).

Vowels from the BATH and DANCE lexical sets are both realised as [æ:] in *local* DE and as [a:] in *mainstream* DE while RP has [ɑ:]. The THOUGHT vowel – realised as /ɔ:/ in RP – is realised as [a:] in *local* DE and [ɒ:] in *mainstream* DE. WELLS (1982, 424) highlights that in *mainstream* DE these vowels can sometimes near the RP realisation with [ɑ:] instead of [a:] and [ɔ:] instead of [ɒ:]. Therefore, words such as *plant*, *slant* and *dance* may be pronounced with either [a:] or [ɑ:] while words like *flaw*, *thought* and *awe* may be pronounced with [ɒ:] or [ɔ:]. Following this distribution, *father*, *rather* and *drama* are expected to be pronounced with [a:] or [ɑ:], yet they are commonly pronounced with [ɔ:] instead. The letter “r” follows the same pattern and is either pronounced [ɒ.r] or [ɔ:r], thus making it homophonous with *or*. Notwithstanding this distribution, it is noteworthy that it is not to be generalised to other lexical items and is confined to these four items only (WELLS, 1982, 424).

The mid long vowels /e:/ and /o:/ are traditionally associated with the FACE and GOAT lexical sets and are respectively realised as monophthongs in Irish English (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015, 204). In Dublin, the FACE vowel /e:/ ranges from [eɪ] to [ɛɪ] while the GOAT /o:/ vowel ranges from [oʊ] to [ɔʊ], thus giving *face* [fe:s] outside Dublin and [feɪs ~ feɪs] in Dublin. As for *goat*, it is pronounced [go:t] in the provinces and [gout ~ gɔʊt] in Dublin. Although these variations can still be heard nowadays, they are less and less perceptible as they were recorded at the beginning of the 1980s by WELLS (1982) and do not reflect the current pronunciation which went back to monophthongisation for the FACE vowel with [ɛ:] in *local* DE and [e:] in *non-local* DE. As for the GOAT vowel, *local* DE has [o: ~ ʌo] and *mainstream* DE has a slightly diphthongised [oʊ].

While the MEAT vowel is the same /i:/ for all Dubliners, there are a few lexical items in *local* DE whose pronunciation differ from *mainstream* speakers'. WELLS (1982, 425) highlights the fact that the FLEECE merger had yet to be carried around Ireland at the time he wrote his *Accents of English* and the consequence of this is that some lexical items in *local* DE had [e:] for the MEAT vowel [i:] as in *leave, meat, eat, beat, cheat, tea, mean, easy, quay, treat, either* and *Jesus* (found in oaths only). In the Middle Ages, the written form <ea> signalled that the word was to be pronounced with /e:/ (except for irregular items) before it merged with FLEECE and gave /i:/ for both MEAT and FLEECE. In some rural areas, the merger was not carried over from England and *local* DE retained the older pronunciation in some lexical items because of its ties with traditional rural Irish English. Nonetheless, these archaisms have become recessive in Dublin (WELLS, 1982, 425) and have not been mentioned by HICKEY in the case of DE. Due to the fact that his studies are more recent than WELLS's, it can be assumed that the merger has gained ground and that [e:] for MEAT has almost, if not completely, disappeared.

- Vowels before /r/

Due to its rhotic quality, Irish English was able to keep vocalic oppositions in environments with /ɹ/ in coda while other non-rhotic accents do not have these vowel oppositions. As FERRAGNE and ZUMSTEIN (2015, 203) note, Irish English kept a practically full inventory of vocalic oppositions before /ɹ/, and WELLS (1982, 420) remarks that there are few neutralisations in DE. The following table was taken from FERRAGNE and ZUMSTEIN's chapter on Irish English in *La prononciation de l'anglais contemporain dans le monde* and illustrates all the vowel oppositions before /r/ in DE.

Vowel before	Example
/r/	
/i:/	<i>beer</i>
/ɪ/	<i>myrrh</i>
/e:/	<i>air</i>
/ɛ/	<i>err</i>
/a:/	<i>bar</i>
/ɒ:/	<i>horse</i>
/o:/	<i>hoarse</i>
/ə:/	<i>purr</i>
/u:/	<i>poor</i>
/aɪ/	<i>fire</i>
/aʊ/	<i>flour</i>
/ɔɪ/	<i>coir</i>

**Table 2.2: Vocalic oppositions in environments with a following /r/<sup>17</sup>**

The GIRL, NURSE and SQUARE lexical sets will first be discussed. The NORTH and FORCE lexical sets will then be dealt with. It is worth noting that the GIRL lexical set is a sub-lexical set of NURSE with <i> as a graphic vowel (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015, 204).

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<sup>17</sup> Reproduced from FERRAGNE, E. & ZUMSTEIN, F. (2015). « La République d'Irlande ». In CARR, P. & DURAND, J. (2015). *La prononciation de l'anglais contemporain dans le monde*. Toulouse : Presses universitaires du Midi. 199-214.

In *local* DE the GIRLS /ɜ:/, NURSE /ɜ:/ and SQUARE /eə/ vowels are realised respectively as [ɛ:], [ʊ:] and [ɛə] followed by /ɪ/. Consequently, the opposition in the words *per*, *purr* and *pair* is maintained as can be seen in the table below:

	<b>Traditional Irish English</b>	<b>Local DE</b>	<b>Mainstream DE</b>	<b>RP</b>	
<i>care, pair</i>	e:ɾ	ɛə.ɪ <sup>18</sup>	eəɪ	ɛə	= SQUARE
<i>Kerr, per</i>	ɛɾ	ɛ:ɪ			= GIRL
<i>cur, purr</i>	ʌɾ ~ ʊɾ	ʊ:ɪ	ə.ɪ	ɜ:	= NURSE

**Table 2.3: The SQUARE, GIRL and NURSE lexical sets in Dublin English<sup>19</sup>**

Although *per* and *purr* are originally from the same lexical set (NURSE), there is an opposition between these two words in traditional Irish English. In WELLS (1982, 421), the SQUARE and nurse vowels for *local* DE were the same as those found in traditional Irish English but have become more open since then. As for *mainstream* DE, there is a partial opposition as described in HICKEY (1999, 9-10). The SQUARE vowel is realised as [eə] while the GIRL and NURSE vowels are neutralised in [ə:]. At the time WELLS surveyed Dublin, *mainstream* DE speakers, whom he formerly referred to as “smart Dublin” speakers (1982, 421), had [ʌɪ] for all three lexical sets. With time, the SQUARE vowel was diphthongized in [eə] and NURSE and GIRL moved to [ə:ɪ]. Nowadays, the vocalic opposition of SQUARE and GIRL/NURSE is similar to that of RP where SQUARE has [ɛə] and GIRL/SQUARE have [ɜ:] (see **Table 2.3**). Moreover, WELLS’s data (1982, 421) shows that there was a SQUARE/NURSE opposition in *local* DE where *pair* rhymed with *per*

<sup>18</sup> Note that [ɪ] is not dropped in this case, for as we mentioned in 2.3.2.1., [ɪ] is dropped only in unstressed word-final position in *local* DE (*porter* [pʌɔɪə] but *fair* [fɛɪɪ]).

<sup>19</sup> Adapted from Wells, J.C. (1982). *Accents of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, and updated according to HICKEY, R. (1999). “Dublin English: Current Changes and their Motivation”. In FOULKES, P. & DOCHERTY, G. (eds.) *Urban Voices*. London: Edward Arnold. 265-281.

[e:ɪ] (formerly from NURSE) but not with *purr* [ʌɪ ~ ʊɪ]. Taking into account HICKEY's data (1999, 9-10), we can argue that the opposition was not between SQUARE and GIRL but between SQUARE and NURSE, for *per* was later associated with GIRL – now considered a sub-lexical set of NURSE as previously pointed out. Finally, the move from the front realisation of the *local* DE GIRL [ɛ:] and NURSE [ʊ:] vowels to [ə:] in *mainstream* DE can be explained by the fact that front realisations are typical of traditional Irish English and of *local* DE, which pushed *mainstream* DE to centralise the vowels as a means to move away from *local* DE and reach [ə:] (HICKEY, 1999, 8). Although [ə:] is closer to RP [ɜ:] in terms of centralisation, *mainstream* speakers have no desire to near it considering that its quality is not the same and that /r/ is maintained after the centralising vowel.

The configuration of the NORTH and FORCE lexical sets is noticeably the same. Their vowels are opposed in *local* DE where the NORTH vowel is realised as [a:] and the FORCE vowel is realised as [ʌo] (HICKEY, 1999, 9-10). *Mainstream* DE also has an opposition between the two sets with [ɒ:] for NORTH and [o:] for FORCE. Consequently, *horse* [ɒ:] does not rhyme with *hoarse* [o:] as in RP where both words are homophones and are pronounced [hɔ:s]. It is not surprising to see that the NORTH and FORCE vowels are not neutralised in *local* and *mainstream* DE, for the merging of these vowels was completed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century for RP. Therefore, the convergence has yet to be carried out in these varieties (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015, 204).

- Diphthongs

Irish English is well-known for its limited inventory of diphthongs and the absence of centralising diphthongs except for *mainstream* DE SQUARE [eə] and *local* DE SQUARE [ɛɐ]. Unlike RP, the emergence of centralising diphthongs in Irish English is prevented within a post-vocalic /r/ environment. The three “remaining” diphthongs are the PRICE /aɪ/, CHOICE

/ɔɪ/ and MOUTH /aʊ/ vowels. In *local* DE, the PRICE and CHOICE vowels were still neutralised in [aɪ] at the time WELLS led his investigation. Nowadays, the *local* vowels have become opposed as in the rest of Dublin and are realised as [əjə] for PRICE and [aɪ] for CHOICE. Although this change shows that neutralisation of the opposition between PRICE and CHOICE has become recessive over the years in *local* DE, it can be argued that it is the only variety where [aɪ] is possible for CHOICE though it is becoming rarer and rarer. There is also an opposition in *mainstream* DE where the PRICE vowel is [aɪ] and the CHOICE vowel is [ɒɪ]. Once again, *mainstream* DE does not wish to identify with *local* speakers, which leads to this difference in realisation.

The MOUTH vowel /aʊ/ exhibits two different realisations in Dublin: [ɛwə] in *local* DE and [æu] in *non-local* DE (HICKEY, 1999, 9-10). WELLS (1982, 427) noted that the neutralisation of the opposition between the MOUTH and GOAT vowels in [æʊ] in colloquial *local* DE speech was particularly noticeable in the word *old*:

In fact we can in effect recognize two distinct words *old*: one is vaguely self-deprecating, but otherwise virtually meaningless, and pronounced with the MOUTH vowel; the other is the ordinary word, pronounced with the GOAT vowel. *Where's my [aʊ] coat?* May thus mean something different from *Where's my [o:ld] coat?*

This observation is corroborated by HICKEY (1998b, 4) who notes the same neutralisation in *old* and *bold* in colloquial speech, despite its move from [æʊ] to [au]. Because of the lack of information on the subject, it can be argued that the neutralisation of the opposition of the MOUTH and GOAT vowels may be considered a lexical oddity where the neutralisation in [au] is used to add some connotation to the words *old* and *bold* or even to put emphasis on them.

- Processes

The following two processes presented in this section are of importance considering they are the most salient processes in DE – yet, they are not specific to the city. The first process is schwa epenthesis and the second is vowel breaking.

- Schwa Epenthesis

As seen with D epenthesis in 2.3.2.1., schwa epenthesis is a common type of epenthesis in Ireland and is particularly striking in *local* DE. It involves the insertion of a vowel sound or a stop within a word and in this case, of an unstressed centralised vowel into “a cluster of two sonorants to break up a syllable coda” (HICKEY, 2014a, 113). A [ə] is inserted between a plosive (or [t]) – as in the words *petrol* ['pɛtɹəl], *Dublin* ['dʊblɪn] and *Kathleen* ['kætli:n], pronounced ['pɛtəɹəl], ['dʊbəlɪn] and ['kætəli:n] – or between two consonants, each one being either a nasal or a liquid – as in *film* [film], *form* [fa:ɪm], *Drimnagh* ['dɹɪmnə] and *tavern* ['tævəɪn] pronounced ['fɪləm], ['fa:ɪəm], ['dɹɪmənə] and ['tævəɪən] (WELLS, 1982, 435). It is noteworthy that this process has become recessive except for a few words and especially for *film* where schwa epenthesis occurs regardless of the variety. Furthermore, should it appear in *non-local* speech, it would only do so in colloquial speech.

- Vowel Breaking

In Dublin, vowel breaking is confined to *local* DE and consists in the realisation of the long high vowels /i:/ and /u:/ within closed syllables as two syllables separated by a hiatus (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015). A closed syllable is “[a]ny syllable which ends in at least one consonant, for example *sick*, *six*, *sixth*” and an open syllable is any syllable which does not have a coda – that is to say one or several closing consonant(s) – as in *two* and *play* (HICKEY, 2014a, 69, 224). The hiatus [j] is used with front vowels and [w] with back vowels. It is

noteworthy that [ə] follows the hiatus. The reason as to the insertion of [ə] after the hiatus is due to the fact that [j] and [w] are glides, also referred to as “semi-vowels” – that is to say sounds whose quality lies between a vowel and a consonant (HICKEY, 2014a, 136). If we follow FERRAGNE and ZUMSTEIN’s definition, then the creation of another syllable must lead to the insertion of a vowel for it to be called “syllable”. Since vowel breaking is not stress imposing in any way, it becomes logical that [ə] comes to be inserted in the new syllable given that words with at least two syllables have a stressed and an unstressed syllable and that the unstressed syllable has [ə] most of the time.

Vowel breaking occurs in the words from the FLEECE and GOOSE lexical sets, thus giving *clean* [ˈkliːjən] and *fool* [ˈfuːwəl]. Yet, words such as *be* [bi:] and *who* [hu:] are not altered by this process since the long high vowels [i:] and [u:] occur in open syllables. The PRICE/PRIZE vowel /aɪ/ and the MOUTH vowel /aʊ/ are also affected by vowel breaking in *local* DE and become [əjə] and [ɛwə] respectively. HICKEY (1999, 270) explains that the disyllabification of long high vowels affects diphthongs with a high ending point. Consequently, words like *time* and *pound* are pronounced [ˈtəjəm] and [ˈpɛwən]. Like *be* and *who*, *fly* [flaɪ] and *how* [həʊ] are not altered by vowel breaking as the vowels occur in open syllables. One is likely to hear *meet* [ˈmiːjət], but *meat* [ˈmi:t] in *local* DE although these two words are usually homophonous. As explained in 2.3.2.2., although *meet* and *meat* are homophones nowadays, it was not so until their vowels merged at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in most varieties of English. They did not completely merge in Irish English however, hence the difference between *meet* [ˈmiːjət] – whose pronunciation in Early Modern English was [mi:t] – and *meat*, which was pronounced in Early Modern English as [me:t] but also [mi:t] in a few non-standard varieties. This accounts for the presence of separate lexical sets for *meet* and *meat* which belong to the FLEECE and MEAT

lexical sets respectively (FERRAGNE & ZUMSTEIN, 2015, 204-205). This traditional process is not present in *non-local* DE, for once again it is too conservative a process to be adopted by higher-educated *non-local* speakers.

The table below summarizes the whole vocalic system of DE and will be used in the next and last section of this chapter to address the ongoing changes in the DE vowel system.

	<i>Local DE</i>	<i>Mainstream</i>	<i>New</i>
KIT	ɪ	ɪ	ɪ
DRESS	ɛ	ɛ	ɛ
TRAP	æ	æ	æ
LOT	ɑ	ɒ	ɔ
STRUT	ʊ	ʌ	ʌ
FOOT	ʊ	ʊ	ʊ
BATH	æ:	ɑ:	ɑ:
DANCE	æ:	ɑ:	ɑ:
NURSE	ʊ:	ə:	ə:
GIRL	ɛ:	ə:	ə:
FLEECE	ijə	i:	i:
FACE	ɛ:	e:	e:
MEAT	i:	i:	i:
PALM	æ:	ɑ:	ɑ:
THOUGHT	ɑ:	ɒ:	ɔ:/o:
GOAT	ʌo	ou	əʊ
GOOSE	uwə	u:	u:
PRICE	əjə	aɪ	aɪ
PRIZE	əjə	aɪ	aɪ
CHOICE	aɪ	ɒɪ	ɔɪ
MOUTH	ɛwə	æu	æu
NEAR	ɪə	iə	iə
SQUARE	ɛə	eə	ə:
START	æ:	ɑ:	ɑ:
NORTH	ɑ:	ɒ:	o:
FORCE	ʌo	o:	o:
CURE	juə	juə	juə
happy	i	i	i
letter	e	ə	ə
horses	ə	ə	ə
comma	ə	ə	ə

**Table 2.4: Vowel realisations for all three varieties of Dublin English<sup>20</sup>**

<sup>20</sup> Adapted from HICKEY, R. (1999b). "Dublin English: Current Changes and their Motivation". In FOULKES, P. & DOCHERTY, G. (eds.). *Urban Voices*. London: Edward Arnold.

### 2.3.3. Discussing *New* Dublin English

*Local* and *mainstream* DE represent a significant part of Dublin's phonological environment. The 1990s witnessed the emergence of another variety of DE that introduced major changes into the vowel constellation. HICKEY regrouped the changes under one label: the Dublin Vowel Shift. At the time, this new variety was referred to as *fashionable* DE (HICKEY, 1998b), but it is now referred to as *New* Dublin English (or *New* DE) or *New Pronunciation*:

Because the key features of this accent of English can be easily classified and, more importantly, because these tend to occur as a group of innovative features, they will be referred to collectively as the *New Pronunciation* of southern Irish English. The use of capital letters is intended to stress the fact that we are dealing here with a fairly unified, structural re-alignment of the entire accent of southern Irish English and not just one or two minor changes in pronunciation. Speakers of this variety engaged in a shift of most vowels as they did not wish to identify linguistically with popular Dublin English (HICKEY, 2005, 72).

#### 2.3.3.1. The origins of *New* DE

*New* DE was originally composed of a small group of people who hived themselves from conservative *local* DE and who rejected identification with low-prestige Dublin more than *mainstream* speakers ever did. If DE varieties were to be put on a continuum, *local* DE would be on the far left close to traditional Irish English, *mainstream* DE would be in the middle and *new* DE would be on the far right. The use of the term "fashionable" to refer to the latest trend was justified then but given the rapid increase in the number of speakers who had adopted changes from the shift, the *fashionable* variety was renamed *new* DE by HICKEY to show how significant it has become and to convey how independent this variety has become from *local* and *mainstream* DE.

The emergence of *new* DE can be explained by the rapid growth of Dublin's population over the last decades due to internal growth and migrations from the rest of the country to the city (HICKEY, 2003, 361). This increase in population was clearly prompted by the international exposure Ireland has gained during the economic boom of the 1990s. This economic change was accompanied by a linguistic change within the city:

The increase in wealth and international position has meant that many young people aspire to an urban sophistication which is divorced from strongly local Dublin life. For this reason the developments in fashionable Dublin English diverge from those in local Dublin English, indeed can be interpreted as a reaction to it (HICKEY, 2003, 361).

*New* DE emerged as a consequence of this change and established itself in the south of Dublin where prestigious universities are located and where international companies, such as GOOGLE, have set up their headquarters.

The phonological origins of *new* DE are not to be accounted for by this change only but also by what is referred to as *Dublin 4* (or *D4*). It is the small group of speakers that gave their impetus to *new* speakers. The label *Dublin 4* originates from the postal code of the area where most, if not all, *D4* speakers live. Interestingly, *Dublin 4* is located within the vicinity of institutions (Universities, RTE, etc.) that stand for a sign of prestige. In the 1980s, *D4* speakers started to reject identification with traditional Irishness (HICKEY, 2005, 47).

*D4* speakers developed a pronunciation different from *local* DE and which was regarded as trendy at the time. Yet, as HICKEY (2005, 47) explains, *D4* failed to impose itself as the new pronunciation and was quickly deemed snobbish and ridiculed, especially because of the *PATH* vowel which often had a retracted and rounded pronunciation, giving [ɒ:]. *D4* lost its impetus with the economic boom of the 1990s and many of its features did not survive in the *new* trendy pronunciation except for the

retraction of [aɪ] and the raising of non-rhotic low back vowels: “An obvious justification for their survival is that these shifts support the dissociation from local DE which is still a goal of speakers of new DE” (HICKEY, 2005, 48). It can thus be argued that *new* DE is a continuation of some of the changes brought about by *D4*.

### 2.3.3.2. Distinctive *New* Dublin English features

The consonantal system of *new* DE is roughly the same as *mainstream* DE's except for some cases. The use of retroflex [ɹ] is more salient than in *mainstream* DE especially in syllable final position. *New* speakers tend to use an intervocalic alveolar flap [ɾ] as an allophone of /t/ and use dark [ɫ] in syllable-final position.

HICKEY (2007, 358) provides a description of some other salient features of *new* DE that are worth mentioning in order to have a clearer view of what *new* DE features are. He explains that vowels that are phonemically longer in *local* DE are shorter in *new* DE, as in *caught* [ko:t̚]. *New* DE rejects the open front realisation of front long vowels in *local* DE at the profit of a more central rhotic realisation in *SQUARE* words such as *carefully* ['kæ:ɹfəli] and *daring* [dæ:ɹɪŋ] with sometimes a rounded realisation [ə:] → [ø:]. While *local* DE makes the distinction between the back and front short vowels before /r/ in the *NURSE* and *GIRL* lexical sets, giving [nʊ:(ɪ)s] and [gɛ:(ɪ)l], there is no such distinction in *new* DE where schwa retraction is avoided in *NURSE* words as can be seen in *third* [t̚ə:ɹd] and *purse* [p̚ə:ɹs]. *Sunday* is the only word from the *STRUT* lexical set whose low-mid back unrounded vowel /ʌ/ is replaced by an unrounded front vowel that is practically the same as /ɪ/, thus giving ['sɪnde]. Finally, the *GOAT* vowel is realised with a strong diphthongal value as in *go* [gəʊ]. The *new* realisation for *GOAT* is different from the

traditional [o:] realisation, from the lower retracted onset in *local* DE [ʌo] and from the slightly diphthongised [ou] in *mainstream* DE considering that the *new* DE GOAT vowel has a higher starting onset (HICKEY, 2005, 67).

#### 2.3.3.3. *Local* retentions

Although the aim of *new* DE is to oppose features from *local* DE, they do have some features in common. The first feature is the use of dark [ɫ] mentioned above. The second one is the use of a front onset in the MOUTH lexical set, giving [mæʊt]. The final one is the voicing of [ʌ] which neutralises the opposition between *where* and *wear* both pronounced [wə:ɫ].

In that respect, *new* DE is closer to *local* DE than to *mainstream* DE. The reason as to why these three features were not stigmatised is because they may have been retained in reaction to snobbish *D4* as explained by HICKEY (2007, 358): “The retention of these features in *new* Dublin English may in part be a reaction to the older *Dublin 4* accent which did not have the front onset and only variably had velarisation of /l/”.

#### 2.3.3.4. The Dublin Vowel Shift

The main changes *new* DE brings forward are not to be found in its consonantal system but in its vowel system where many vowels have been affected by the Dublin Vowel Shift (DVS). HICKEY coined this term to refer to the ongoing vowel change that emerged along *new* DE around the late 1980s/early 1990s and which was set in Dublin speech in the mid-1990s.

## 2.3.3.4.1. /aɪ/ retraction

What conspicuously differentiates *new* DE from other Dublin varieties the most is its vowel system. One of the most salient features of this new variety is the retraction of [aɪ] to [ɑɪ] before voiced segments, thus creating an opposition between the PRICE and PRIZE vowels (HICKEY, 2005, 52):

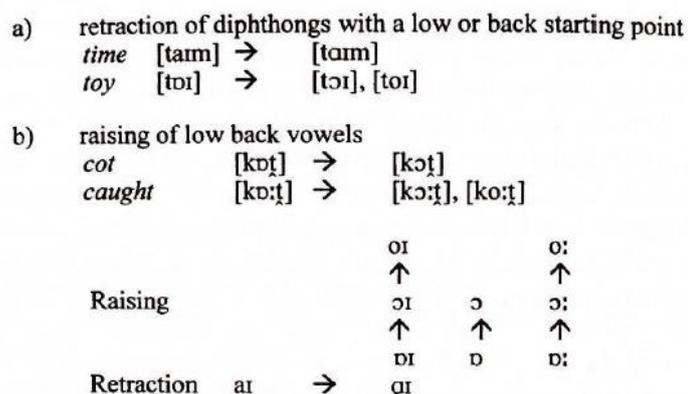
- rice [raɪs]            rise [rɑɪz]
- tight [taɪt̪]            tide [tɑɪd̪]
- life [laɪf]            lives [laɪvz]

Other distributions of [ɑɪ] have been noted by HICKEY (2005, 53): [ɑɪ] can also be found in open syllables as in *crisis* ['kraɪsɪs] but also in final position as in *July* [dʒu:'laɪ]. However, there is no clue as to whether the distribution will spread and neutralise PRICE and PRIZE or not.

## 2.3.3.4.2. Raising of low back-vowels

Last but not least, the raising of low back vowels has constituted another significant change in DE. The CHOICE lexical set usually has a lower onset in *mainstream* DE [ɒɪ] and the LOT and THOUGHT lexical sets usually have low realisations: [ɒ] and [ɒ:]. Yet, these vowels were raised in *new* DE and, as a consequence, have a higher realisation: CHOICE [ɔɪ ~ oɪ], LOT [ɔ], THOUGHT [ɔ: ~ o:].

The following table summarises the vowel movements in *new* DE.



**Figure 2.1: Summary of the present-day Dublin Vowel Shift<sup>21</sup>**

As can be noticed, the trajectory of the CHOICE and THOUGHT vowels is higher than one would have expected them to be, for [ɔɪ] and [ɔ:] are high enough to be considered different from *local* DE and yet, they have moved to [oɪ] and [o:] respectively. HICKEY (2007, 359) accounts for this by explaining that *new* DE speakers seem to be unconsciously aware of the trajectory of the vowels and, as a consequence, their vowel range shifts towards the direction of the innovation – *i.e.* backwards and upwards in the case of low back vowels.

HICKEY (1998b, 12) suggests that these changes are characteristic of a chain shift – that is to say, “Any set of changes which can be viewed as interconnected so that movement of one element entails movement of others” (HICKEY 2014a, 63). Indeed, it seems to be so given that interrelated vowels are affected by the shift. To be more precise, we can assume that this is characteristic of a pull chain as the raising of [ɔ] to [o] (see **Figure 2.6**) left an empty space for [ɒ] which then took the empty space left by [ɔ]. At the same time, the raising of [ɒ] to [ɔ] left an empty space for the onset of the PRIZE diphthong [a] to retract towards unrounded [ɑ]. We decided to further analyse the THOUGHT vowel with

<sup>21</sup> Retrieved from HICKEY, R. (2003). “What’s Cool in Irish English? Linguistic Change in Contemporary Ireland”, in HILDEGARD L. C. T. (2003). *The Celtic Englishes III*. 357-373.

the help of a corpus in order to determine the range of its raising and of its spread in the speech of early 2000s Dubliners.

#### 2.4. *Summary*

In this chapter we have provided a detailed account of the phonological environment of DE, from the historical to the sociological perspective. We have described the three varieties spoken in Dublin – *local DE*, *mainstream DE* and *new DE* – and described *new DE* and the Dublin Vowel Shift, an ongoing shift in Dublin’s vowel constellation which took root in *new DE* as a way to oppose *local DE*’s traditional features. The aim of this chapter was to offer an overview of DE varieties in order to have a better understanding of the environment in which the lexical set we will analyse is inscribed. The combination of phonology with sociolinguistics provides a steady framework to account for and analyse the data we will retrieve from our corpus.

### 3. Methodology and Corpus Analysis: the THOUGHT lexical set

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In this chapter we will introduce the corpus used for the present study and explain how and why we decided to select this specific set of speakers, and why we chose to rely on an early 2000s corpus instead of a more up-to-date set of data. We will go over the methodology and the tools used to extract and process the data from our corpus, and explain why we chose them and how they work. We will then put into practice what will have been said so far to constitute a set of reference data on which we will base the analysis of our corpus. Finally, we will present the results obtained after the normalisation of the data.

The aim of the present chapter is to depict all the steps involved in the analysis of the corpus and to draw conclusions as to the spread of the vowel shift in Dublin regarding the THOUGHT variable.

Our interest in the THOUGHT variable comes from the fact that there has not been any quantitative study led on the matter other than LONERGAN's (2015), which succinctly tackles the THOUGHT lexical set. Since change in this set has been widely described by HICKEY as prominent, we decided to focus our attention on it for the present study.

This third and last chapter inscribes itself within the framework of acoustic phonetics – that is to say the study of the physical properties of sounds (HICKEY, 2014a, 13) such as frequencies, intensity and duration.

### 3.1. *Corpus Selection*

#### 3.1.1. Why choose twenty-year old recordings?

Given that the present study aims to account for variation and change in contemporary DE through the analysis of the THOUGHT lexical set, it would seem obvious that one should use up-to-date recordings of DE. However, three main reasons ruled this possibility out: time, training and representativeness. The time required to collect enough data all over the city far exceeded the allotted time for the writing of our study. Moreover, as VIOLLAIN (2015, 321) points out, it is preferable for an interviewer to build a network of acquaintances on spot either to help the interviewer create a climate of confidence during recordings – partly because they have an accent which local speakers can relate to (as can be seen in TRUDGILL's study on Norwich English). It can also be preferable for an interviewer to conduct interviews themselves after having been trained by the interviewer in order to multiply the number of recordings. Even though we have been acquainted with some people in the city, we have not been trained enough to be able to have them help us in our endeavour, nor have we been able to make usable recordings during our stay in Dublin. Rather than constituting a corpus by recording people in the field, we used the data collected by HICKEY.

The benefit of using the files provided in HICKEY's *Dublin English: Evolution and Change* (2005a) is that all the recordings he made in Dublin were organised according to the areas where they were taped, which was of great help when it came to selecting informants.

The data was collected in the early 2000s (HICKEY, 2005, 8) and is composed of over 300 recordings from all over Dublin. The recordings may seem out of date and irrelevant in a 2018 context but its variety and representativeness of DE as spoken by younger

generations is of great value and interest when it comes to analysing variation and change in DE. For the time being, we will focus on accounting for the spread of *new* THOUGHT<sup>22</sup> in early 2000s Dublin as it constitutes an interesting entry point in the field.

### 3.1.2. Who are the *new* speakers?

As explained in the previous chapter, the *new* pronunciation is bringing forward change in the vowel constellation of DE. The speakers partaking in the vowel shift are mainly to be found in the south of the city where *new* DE originated; however, little has been said about who the speakers of this *new* variety are. Needless to say, it is essential to identify the speakers whose speech will be analysed in order to better select the required data for our study.

*New* speakers are generally defined as middle-class upwardly mobile speakers aspiring to a way of life that is different from the traditional *local* lifestyle. Their social ambition can partly account for change in DE, but the defining traits of *new* speakers are “an attitude of condescension and snobbishness towards the low-prestige and linguistically salient sections of the capital city” (HICKEY, 1998b, 9). HICKEY (1998b, 9) describes them as educated speakers but stresses the fact that the DVS is found in groups whose members have not enjoyed tertiary education and who are not necessarily among the more prosperous such as air hostesses, company secretaries, up-market shop assistants. He adds that they are not necessarily highly educated individuals such as doctors and teachers:

The determining factor for active participation in the Dublin Vowel Shift is the extent to which speakers espouse urban sophistication. This can be seen as a rejection

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<sup>22</sup> We use the term “*new* THOUGHT” to refer to the spread of the high realisation of the THOUGHT vowel from *new* DE, which is one of the most salient features of the DVS.

of an all too local identification with Dublin and a conception of self as a player on a (fictional) international stage (HICKEY, 1998b, 9).

Education is not so much the determining factor, but the motivation in actively participating in urban sophistication is. *New* speakers aim for a prestige they cannot find in *local* DE.

Motivation is a key factor in language change and HICKEY (2005, 61) distinguishes two types of actors involved in the DVS: motivated and detached participants. Motivated speakers are those who take part in the shift actively as a means to move away from *local* DE. They are the original instigators of the shift. On the other hand, detached speakers want to identify with the initial group of speakers but do not necessarily share the initial motivation of the original participants. Needless to say, for someone to become a detached participant they must be fairly exposed to the new features in order to adopt them and participate in the change. Detached participants only take part in the change indirectly since the original motivation is not what drives them to pick up *new* features. HICKEY (2005, 61) adds that whether detached participants are outside the geographical area where change is taking place is contestable since some people within the city may be affected by the change without sharing the desire for local dissociation.

Consequently, it is hardly believable that *new* features would be strictly restricted to the confines of the south of Dublin as HICKEY (1999b, 11) notes: “What has started as a feature unique to socially pretentious speakers in Dublin may well spread vertically in the city”, which means that the DVS might not be limited to *new* speakers only but might, instead, spread to *mainstream* and *local* speakers. The saliency of the shift in the THOUGHT lexical set makes it a reliable reference as to the spread of the shift.

The distribution of this *new* feature is particularly salient with the younger generations (HICKEY, 2005, 72) who – generally speaking – use more innovative forms than older speakers (MILROY J & L, 1985, 341). HICKEY (2005, 73) accounts for the

popularity of innovative features in the speech of younger speakers by explaining that these features are part of what he calls “youth norms”:

The high occurrence of the New Pronunciation among young people in present-day Ireland can be partly explained by interpreting the features in question as indicative of the current youth subculture [...] which is recognisably different from that of contemporary parents, although contained within it. In all such subcultures there are ‘youth norms’. The linguistic aspects here would include certain features which are diagnostic of young speech and delimited from that of older members of a community. [...] Translated into present-day Irish terms, this would mean that the speech of the young generation, who have adopted the New Pronunciation, is delimited vis à vis the speech of their parents’ generation but is still recognisably located within the framework of Irish accents.

Innovative features are generally favoured by younger generations inasmuch as these features are regarded positively by their community. *New* features allow younger speakers to identify with the current youth subculture and, to a larger extent, allow them to delimit their speech from their parents’ speech.

### 3.1.3. Corpus Description

According to HANNISDAL (2006, 127) a sample of at least 30 speakers is sufficient – within the frame of a linguistic study – to make viable statistical analyses. Taking this into account, we decided to rely on 42 recordings in total. 30 recordings of younger (20+) speakers – 15 men and 15 women – from the north, centre and south of the city were chosen; the remaining 12 recordings are composed of intermediate speakers (30+) and older speakers (40+). Given that the age of the speakers is fairly limited and does not exceed 50 years old, we decided to name 30+ year old speakers “intermediate” since they are in-between the younger (20+) and the older (40+) speakers. The table below shows the repartition of the speakers:

	North M	North F	Centre M	Centre F	South M	South F	TOTAL
Younger (20+)	5	5	5	5	5	5	30
Intermediate (30+)	1	1			2	3	5
Older (40+)			1	1	1	2	7
TOTAL							42

**Table 3.1: Repartition of the selected speakers according to age, sex and geographical situation**

The following map represents the geographical repartition of the selected speakers throughout Dublin:



**Map 3.1: Geographical repartition of the selected speakers in Dublin<sup>23</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> Adapted from <http://www.dailyedge.ie/alternative-dublin-maps-1374128-Mar2014/> (available in larger format page 144).

Colours and shapes are described below:

- Orange → Younger North Dublin Speakers
- Green → Younger Centre Dublin Speakers
- Blue → Younger South Dublin Speakers
- Horizontal yellow stripes → Intermediate Speakers
- Vertical red stripes → Older Speakers

We decided to leave the colours from the original map as they stand for the presence of middle-class speakers, ranging from white (0%-15%) to deep purple (60%-75%). As can be seen in the map, the majority of middle-class Dubliners is to be found in the south of the city (except for Howth and the surrounding areas in the north-east of the city). The speakers were selected randomly, and sex and balance between north, centre and south were the only criteria retained in order to increase the validity of the generalisations we will make upon analysing the corpus (HANNISDAL, 2006, 126).

The lack of recordings from intermediate and older people constitutes the only drawback of the data recorded by HICKEY. Over the 313 files collected, only 12 files represent 30+ year old inner Dublin speakers and among them, only 2 files represent 50+ year old inner Dublin speakers. This explains why we were able to work with only 12 files for intermediate and older speakers. Moreover, the majority of intermediate and older speakers is located in the south of the city. Nonetheless, we believe that 12 recordings are enough to elucidate whether the shift in the THOUGHT lexical set is restricted to younger people, and whether it is perceptible in the speech of intermediate and older people. Finally, we chose to group 40+ and 50+ year old speakers in the same category which was named “older speakers” due to the small number of recordings we had at our disposal. These speakers are from generations that are far enough from the intermediate and younger generations for us to perceive any change from one generation to another.

Given the early 2000s context in which the data was retrieved, we assume that the shift is more likely to be noticeable in younger people’s speech and probably in intermediate

speakers' speech. Due to the recent emergence of the DVS, it is hardly believable that older speakers will display the shift<sup>24</sup>. HICKEY's comment (2005, 46) on comparative features of *non-local* Dubliners by date of birth backs up our assumption as he explains that people born before c.1970 do not have back vowel raising while people born after the early 1970s have a considerable back vowel raising. Taking this into account, we can assume that younger and intermediate speakers are more likely to display high realisations for the THOUGHT variable while this is unlikely to be the case for *non-local* older speakers and even more so for *local* older speakers. Our corpus study will help us verify these various assumptions.

Considering the characteristics of this study and of what it aims to demonstrate, it is safe to say that it is realised in apparent time – that is to say the comparison of different speeches from different age groups at a given time – and not in real time – defined as the comparison of different speeches from different age groups at different times (ECKERT, 1997, 151-152). A real-time approach would not prove relevant for our study given the innovative nature of the DVS and the fact that it is said to be restricted to a specific generation.

#### 3.1.4. Method used to collect the data

The following section will be developed according to HICKEY's (2005a, 22-26) comments on the way he conducted the interviews.

Each of the 42 recordings selected for the present study consists in the reading of a series of 54 short sentences, each of which contained words from various lexical sets. The

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<sup>24</sup> This hypothesis is more likely be challenged in a present-day context given that some of today's older speakers might have been early 2000s younger *new* DE speakers.

informants were asked to read all 54 sentences, which took approximately two minutes per speaker.

The sentences are reproduced below and the words from the THOUGHT lexical set have been coloured in red:

They <b>bought</b> a KIT to make beer.	I suppose they're HAPPY now.
She <b>bought</b> herself a new DRESS.	She's learning how to DANCE.
They <b>walked</b> into the TRAP.	We took a different PATH.
There're a LOT of people outside.	I THINK it's time to go.
He CUT the piece of twine.	Now BREATHE in slowly, please.
He put his FOOT in it.	There're TWO of them here.
They didn't bother to MEET him.	She'd like to go for a DIP.
You have to put a brave FACE on it.	They've a new WATER supply.
They <b>bought</b> a new BATH last week.	Are they READY now?
Spare a THOUGHT for your parents.	Will you GET another chance?
You should go SOFT on him.	She SAID she was coming.
They kept a GOOSE in the back yard.	Take a LOOK at the car.
The PRICE has gone up again.	The RAIL track is overgrown.
They're the PRIDE of the nation.	You'll have to RUN for the bus.
The city is at the MOUTH of the river.	My back is very SORE lately.
The CHOICE was the right one.	There's a GAP in the field.
They had a GOAT on their farm.	He put his CAP on.
It's near the MODERN station.	He was TALKING about his wife.
Down by the town SQUARE.	She took her SHOES off.
There's a CURE for that now.	The whole floor is WET.
The film should START soon.	WHICH one do you mean?
He's travelling up NORTH.	That wasn't VERY FAIR. /-eri, -e:r/
The FORCE of the wind increased.	It's just his STYLE. /-ail/
Ask the other NURSE for <b>water</b> .	We haven't any TIME. /-aim/
The prison TERM was quite long.	They REALISED the problem. (stress)
There's a LETTER for you today.	We live in IRELAND. /air-/
Put a COMMA after that word.	All of us are IRISH. /air-/

**Table 3.2: 54 sentences read by informants<sup>25</sup>**

The original sentences did not contain the highlighted key words when they were presented to the informants.

<sup>25</sup> Reproduced from HICKEY R. (2005a). *Dublin English: Evolution and Change*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Most of the recordings HICKEY (2005a, 23-24) was able to obtain were made indoors, which accounts for their reliable sound quality and the minimum amount of background noise. HICKEY (2005a, 24) notes that the recordings were successful, and especially so with younger and intermediate informants. For reason of space, we will not linger on the observer's paradox that is inherent to sociolinguistic interviews (see 1.2.1.1.). We would only like to say that the informal quality of the interviews and the fact that HICKEY is a Dubliner himself were enough for him to overcome – even partially – the paradox, for he is part of the community and can thus more easily accommodate to the informants' speech.

If speakers were willing to continue reading for the interviewer, he would present them with a "free text" designed so that it contains words from all lexical sets. Speakers were asked to read it in their natural voice at their normal speed. Finally, some speakers were presented a list of key words which they were asked to read twice; the first reading was to be done in their normal voice while the second one was to be read as fast as possible in order to check whether informants were changing their native pronunciation due to the word list situation.

We chose to focus only on the short sentences as they contain more tokens of the THOUGHT lexical set than the text and the word list do. The sentences contain 8 tokens from the THOUGHT lexical set in total whereas the word list contains 3 tokens for THOUGHT and the word list contains only 1 token. Moreover, the text and the word list were not always read by all informants. As a consequence, we preferred using only the sentences so that we would have the same amount of data for all speakers. One other benefit provided by the sentence situation is that the informants' speech is more controlled inasmuch as speakers marked a pause between each sentence. Speakers tend to slow down when reading separate sentences while they tend to accelerate when reading a text where

reductions and assimilations (among other processes) might alter the vowels under scrutiny (VIOLLAIN, 2015, 517). The short sentence environment will thus enable us to better split the informants' speech. The word environment would have made our analysis even easier since all the words are out of any context, preventing the occurrence of the processes mentioned above. Yet, the sheer lack of tokens for LOT and THOUGHT opted this possibility out.

To determine which lexical set the words are from, we used a list of lexical sets<sup>26</sup> based on WELLS's lexical sets from his *Accents of English* (1982, 124-165) where he provides a list of key words and a selection of words related to them. Another method used to complete the first one was to check the pronunciation of the words both in RP and GA. The first step was to verify whether each word had only one possible pronunciation in RP and one in GA. The second step was to check the vowel in RP and the corresponding one in GA. For instance, if a word is pronounced with [ɒ] in RP and [ɑ:] in GA, then it is *de facto* from the LOT lexical set. If a word is pronounced with [ɔ:] in RP and [ɑ:] in GA, then it is from the THOUGHT lexical set.

### 3.2. Processing data

In order to be able to compare realisations of the vowels from the THOUGHT lexical set, we will need to analyse the tokens measured in our recordings. Resorting to an auditive analysis – *i.e.* analysing the vowels by ear – is not reliable enough in the case of the DVS where a slight change in vowel height is hardly perceptible to the ear. To overcome this issue, we need to resort to an acoustic analysis of the vowels using software programs that are specifically designed for this task. While auditive analyses are preferable for

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<sup>26</sup> Available at this address [www.yorku.ca/earmstro/courses/phonetics/lexical\\_sets.pdf](http://www.yorku.ca/earmstro/courses/phonetics/lexical_sets.pdf)

consonant sounds, acoustic analyses are required for vowels, for they vary more than consonants do (GLAIN, 2013, 285).

We will not take into account the effect of vowel duration on the quality of the vowel as it is subjected to many other factors such as speech rate and coarticulation, which we do not wish to analyse in the present study, for it is not the primary concern.

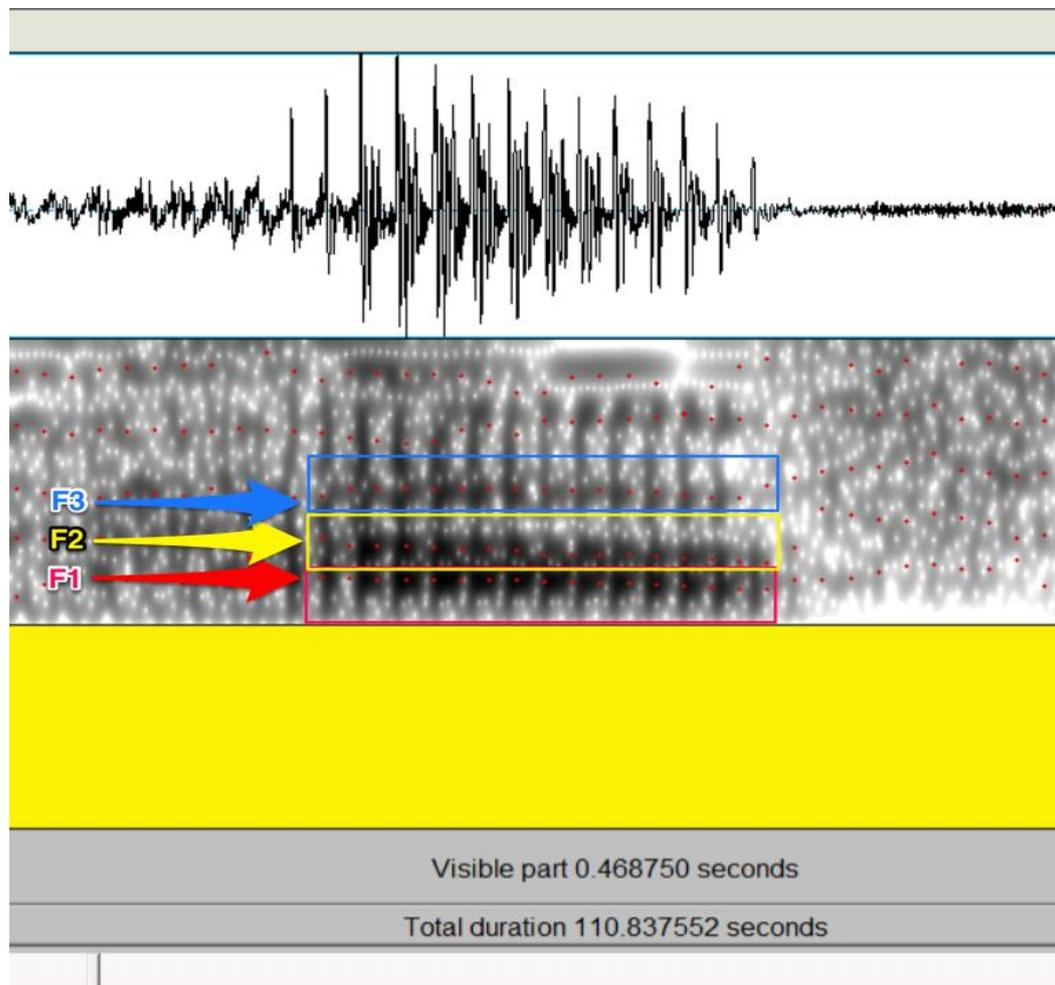
### 3.2.1. Vowel processing: PRAAT

PRAAT is a free software package developed by Paul Boersma and David Weenink available on all operating systems (Windows, Mac OS X, Linux). It is a tool designed for acoustic analyses of speech and can be used to segment speech, analyse formant frequencies, pitch, intensity, duration of sounds; it can also be used to isolate words, phonemes and align a transcription under them using interval or point tiers. This program is designed to be used by beginners as well as experienced users. Many written and video tutorials are available online for practice.

PRAAT proves to be an ideal workspace when it comes to working with vowels as it enables one to extract and measure vowel formants using WAV sound files. Formants are defined by OHALA (2004, 2) as the “resonant frequencies of the vocal tract (that is the frequencies that resonate the loudest) [...] We can see them as the peaks in a spectrum”. The frequencies of the formants are expressed in Hertz (Hz) and enable one to distinguish a vowel from another one.

When looking at vowels, we are generally interested in the first two or three formants – *i.e.* F1, F2 and/or F3 – depending on the normalising method used. F1 is related to vowel height while F2 is related to the degree of backness of the vowel. PRAAT can highlight

formants with red dots when clicking on *formant > show formant*. The figure below shows how formants are represented in PRAAT.

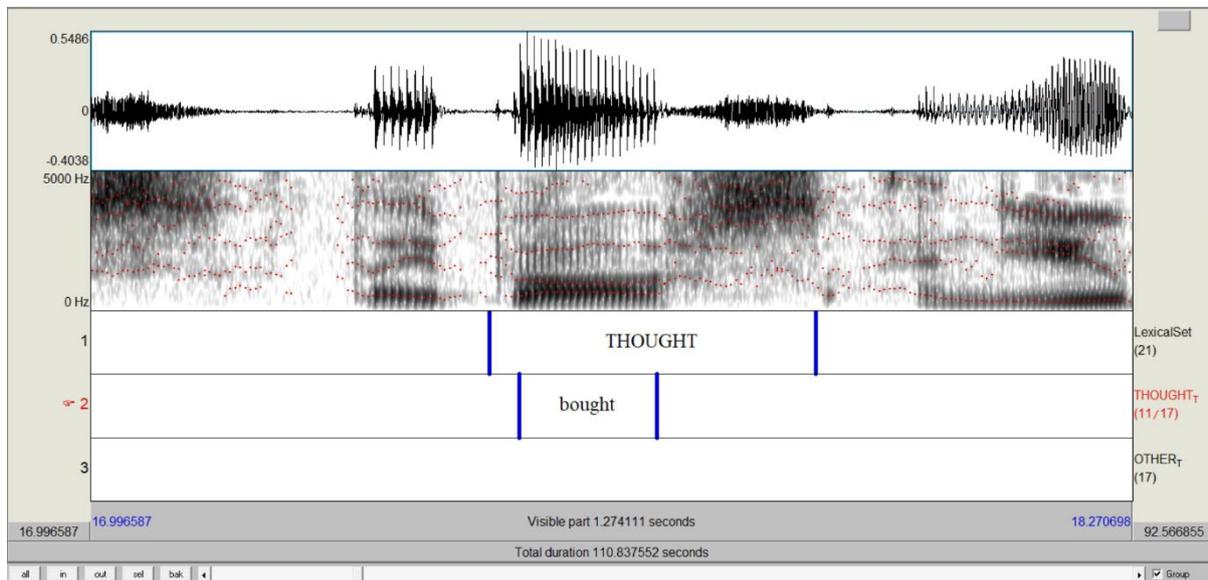


**Figure 3.1: Screenshot from PRAAT showing an example of F1, F2 and F3**

### 3.2.1.1. Organising tiers

One main advantage of PRAAT is that it can be used to align annotations with the audio signal using various tier levels depending on one's needs. In our case we will use three tier levels. The first tier will be used to loosely delimit the word whose vowel is under scrutiny and indicate the corresponding lexical set. Tier n°2 will be used to delimit tokens of the THOUGHT vowel while the last tier (n°3) will be used to delimit other vowel tokens.

The reason why we decided to separate the vowel tokens is to better organise the extracted formants before normalising them (more on this further down). The figure below shows the organisation of the tiers.



**Figure 3.2: Screenshot from PRAAT showing the different tier levels used to delimit words and vowel tokens**

It is worth noting that we did not include any tier related to the quality of the vowel observed since this is not what we wish to elucidate in our analysis.

### 3.2.1.2. Isolating vowels

Since we are interested in analysing vowels, there is no need to precisely delimit words as long as the whole word is contained within the delimitation. There will not be any problem if sounds from the preceding or the following words are included in the delimitation. What matters most is to clearly identify the consonant sounds preceding and following the vowels to better identify the environment surrounding the vowel.

To isolate vowels – monophthongs in our case – we will resort to a three-step process: the first step will be to locate the segment which contains a key word we want to isolate. Then, after having marked out the word (step n°2), we will isolate the vowel we wish to observe (step n°3). To do so, one needs to pay close attention to the spectrogram where vowel sounds are generally represented with a higher amplitude as can be seen in the following example:

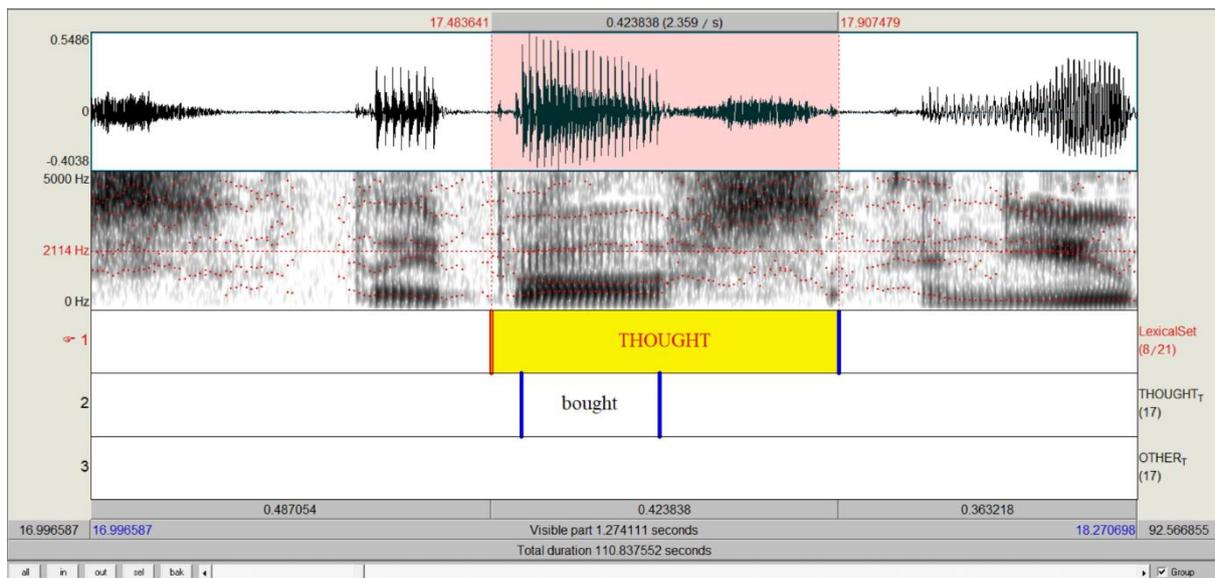


Figure 3.3: Example of a delimitation of a word in PRAAT

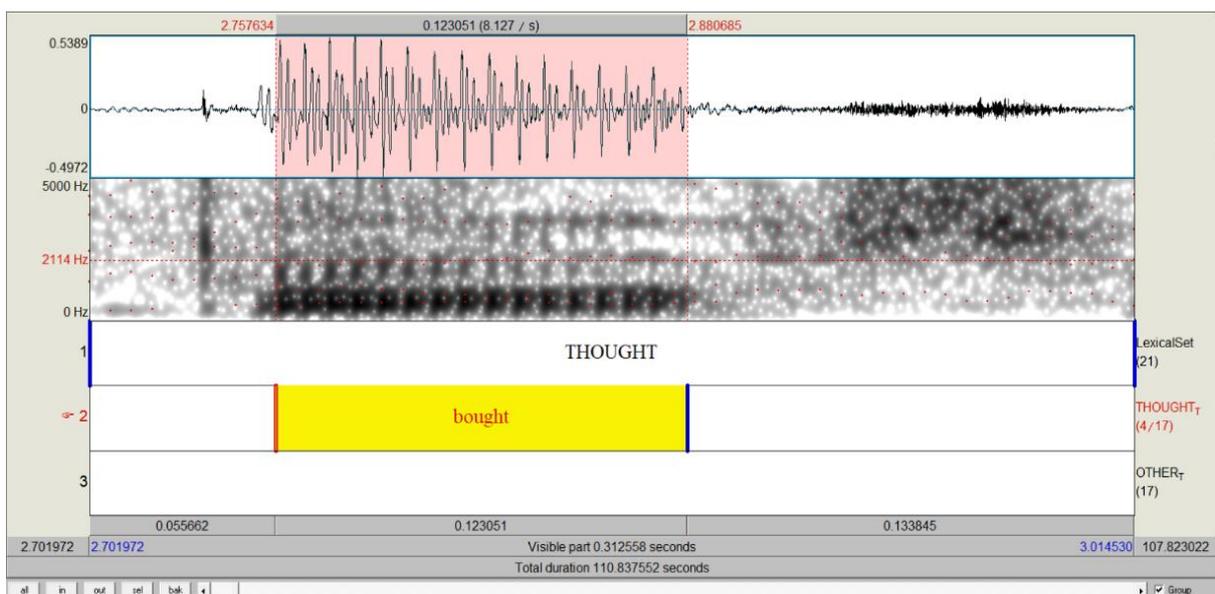
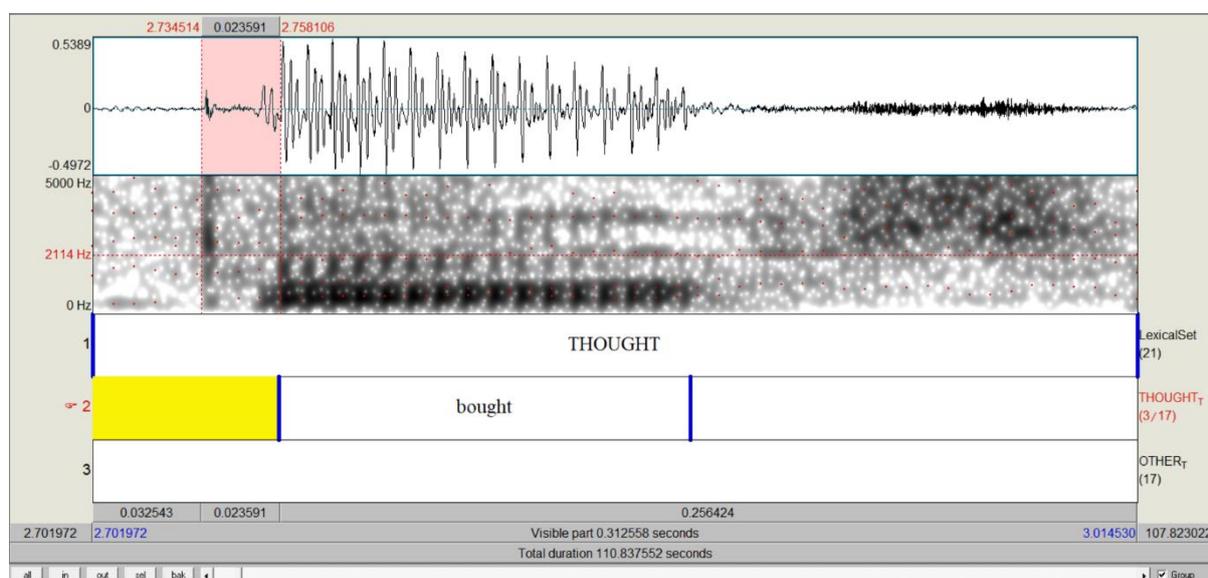


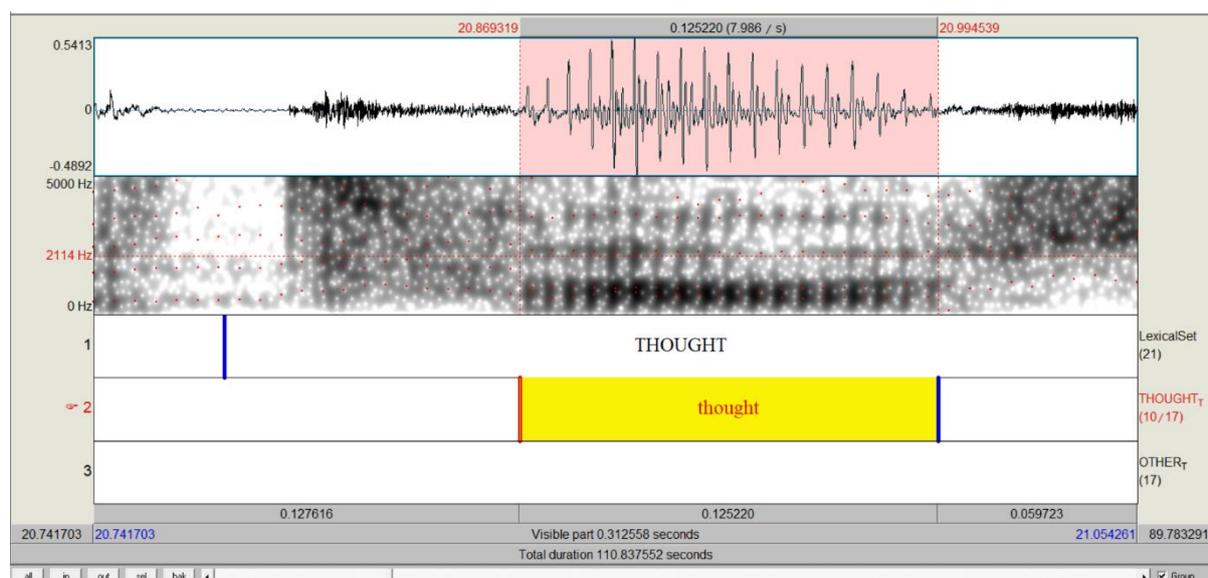
Figure 3.4: Delimitation of the THOUGHT vowel in *bought*

In this example, the vowel in *bought* is highlighted in red on the spectrogram and is clearly visible as it is the sound with the highest amplitude.

Paying close attention to the amplitude and to the formant information displayed below is generally enough to delimit a vowel. Yet, in the case of *bought*, the delimitation is somewhat tricky as the release of /b/ – and of other voiced consonants in general – can be mistaken for the onset of the vowel observed (see **Figure 3.5**). However, the sudden rise in amplitude of the spectrogram is a major giveaway as to the onset of the vowel:



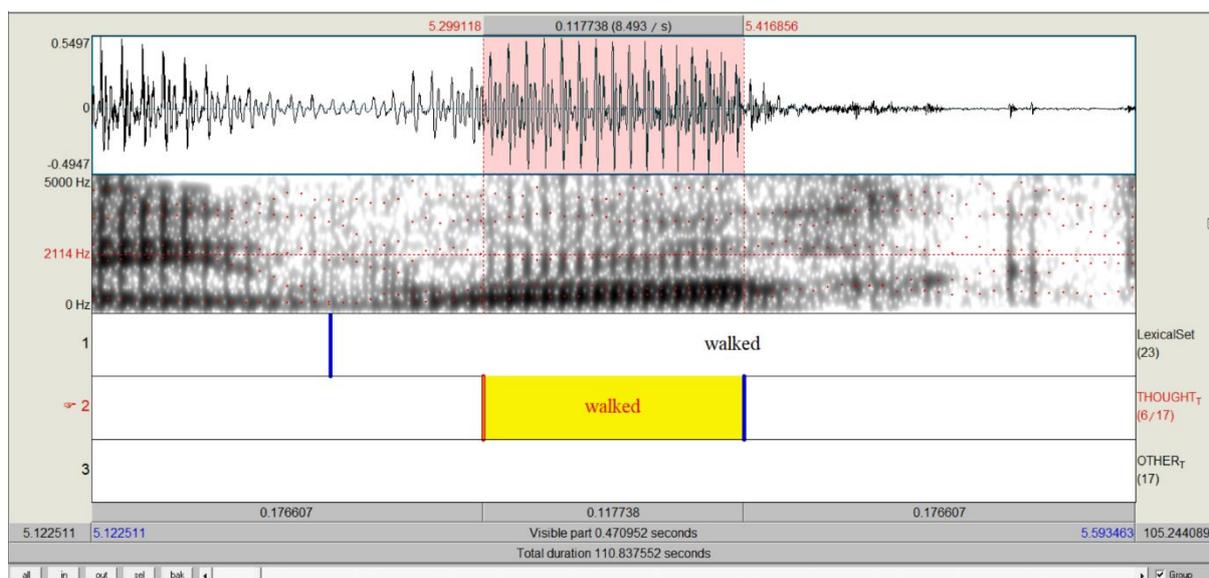
**Figure 3.5: Consonant /b/ release in *bought***



**Figure 3.6: Delimitation of the THOUGHT vowel in *thought***

As for preceding and following unvoiced consonants the onset and end of the vowel is clearly identifiable on the spectrogram (see **Figure 3.6**).

In the case of a preceding voiced approximant (/r/, /l/ or /w/) these instructions do not apply due to their acoustic similarity with vowels which cause them to merge together on the spectrogram (see **Figure 3.7**). To solve this problem, CHATELLIER (2016, 222-223) recommends looking for an area where formants are fairly stable. Another method he suggests is E. R. THOMAS's (2011, 142-143) which consists in listening to the transition between the approximant consonant sound and the vowel: "As more and more of a preceding [w], for example, is removed, the [w] eventually begins to sound like a [b], and the point at which it does so can be taken as the onset". Both methods were retained and will be applied to all vowels preceded by an approximant as a matter of consistency.



**Figure 3.7: Delimitation of the THOUGHT vowel in *walked***

### 3.2.1.3. Measuring formants

After isolating the vowels, we will measure the formants in order to obtain a numerical representation of the vowels. We decided to measure our vowels at a 50% percent point which is generally convenient when looking at monophthongs (CHATELLIER, 2016, 225). Mid-point measurement is a reliable choice – providing that the vowels were correctly and consistently delimited – as it is the point where the vowel is the least influenced by the surrounding consonant sounds. Although the mid-point can be found manually, measuring hundreds of tokens manually can be long and tedious. Instead, we will use a script designed by Daniel McCLOY (2014) to retrieve vowel formants at a mid-point on a specific designated tier. Our second and third tiers will be coded (see 3.2.1.1.) according to this script which we will modify to retrieve formants on the second and third tiers.

```
# COLLECT ALL THE USER INPUT
form Select directories for TextGrids and Sound files
  sentence Textgrid_directory C:/
  sentence Sound_directory C:/
  sentence Sound_extension .wav
  comment Which TextGrid tier contains your segment labels?
  integer Label_tier 3
  comment You can pick up where you left off if you like:
  integer Starting_file_number 1
  comment How many seconds of the sound file do you want to
  comment see during analysis? (enter "0" to view the entire file)
  real Zoom_duration 1
  comment Full path of the output file:
  sentence Output_file C:/FormantAnalysisResults.txt
  comment Default formant tracker settings (you can adjust "max formant" an
  comment "number of formants" later as you step through the intervals):
  positive Default_max_formant 5000
  integer Default_formant_number 5
  real Time_step 0.1
  real Preemphasis_from 50
  positive Window_length 0.025
  positive Dynamic_range 30
  positive Dot_size 0.5
  optionmenu Interval_measurement_option: 1
    option midpoint
    option onset, midpoint, offset
    option 20%, 50%, 80%
    option 25%, 50%, 75%
    option 10%, 30%, 50%, 70%, 90%
    option 5%, 10%, 20%, 50%, 80%, 90%, 95%
endform

# RUN SOME FUNCTIONS ON THE USER INPUT (TO BE USED LATER)
call pointsPerInterval
```

**Figure 3.8: Screenshot of the script used in PRAAT to extract vowel formants**

The script can also be modified to retrieve TextGrid files (created in PRAAT to annotate sound files) from a specific folder and save the measurements in a designated destination folder.

Retrieving data using scripts does not guaranty a 100% accuracy; consequently, it is noteworthy that all vowels will be double-checked and especially so if gaps of hundreds of Hz between two tokens of the same vowel are found. In case there are mismatches and we cannot get a more accurate measurement, the token(s) will be discarded.

### 3.2.2. Normalising data

#### 3.2.2.1. Why normalise data?

Normalisation – that is the representation of the vowel formants of several speakers on a two-dimensional space (VIOLLAIN, 2015, 519-520) – is essential when it comes to processing acoustic data, for it provides a better visual representation of the results. Above all, normalisation enables us to obtain average formant values for each vowel and each speaker regardless of physiological differences – such as the length of the vocal folds – all the while maintaining linguistic and sociolinguistic distinctions such as age and sex (VIOLLAIN, 2015, 520 & CHATELLIER, 2016, 231).

As mentioned in 3.2.1., F1 determines the height of the vowel while F2 determines the degree of backness of the vowel. These two formant values are used to represent vowels on an orthonormal coordinate system.

The many procedures available for normalising data are organised into two categories: vowel-intrinsic and vowel-extrinsic. They are described as follows:

In a vowel-intrinsic method, all the information used for the normalization formula can be found within a single vowel token. These methods use various combinations of formant values (F<sub>1</sub>, F<sub>2</sub>, usually F<sub>3</sub>, and occasionally F<sub>4</sub>), F<sub>0</sub> (the fundamental frequency), or even formant bandwidths. Vowel-extrinsic methods, on the other hand, compare formant values of different vowels spoken by a given individual (THOMAS & KENDALL, 2007).

Since we aim to compare variation and change of THOUGHT between different speakers, we decided to work with Lobanov's procedure under the guidance of VIOLLAIN's (2015,

520-522) and CHATELLIER's (2016, 232-234) studies. They both explain that Lobanov's procedure is the most reliable when analysing several vowels as it is the most efficient in excluding physiological differences between male and female speakers while preserving phonemic and sociolinguistic variations.

VIOLLAIN (2015, 522) notes that since Lobanov's method is vowel-extrinsic, it would work better if more vowels were included alongside the vowel studied. Considering this, we decided to include tokens of the KIT, TRAP, DRESS, LOT and FOOT lexical sets from each speaker. The reason why these vowels were selected is that LOT is a low back vowel while KIT and TRAP are respectively closed-front and open front vowels; DRESS is in between these two vowels and FOOT is a closed-mid back vowel. Thus, we will have a much clearer representation of the vowel space of the speakers. If we do not include additional vowels, the graphs obtained after normalisation will only be centred on the THOUGHT area whereas if additional vowels are included the graphs will show a better scaled representation of the speakers' vowel space.

#### 3.2.2.2. Normalising tool: NORM

Like VIOLLAIN (2015, 523), we opted for NORM – an online platform that allows one to normalise their data using any procedure of their choice – to normalise our results. It is laid out as follows:

[ LinksTools @UQ | WC\_Lab @UQ | LibQUALite @UQ ]

[ NORM v. 1.1 | original version ]

The Vowel Normalization and Plotting Suite **NORM**

[ NORM Form | How to Use NORM | About NORM | Methods | About Vowel Normalization | Bibliography | Change Log & Vowels Blog ]

[ Download Templates ]

- Select the vowel data file.**  Aucun fichier sélectionné.  
Ensure that the file is in a tab-delimited text format and that it matches the format of the NORM Template; see [How to Use NORM](#) for help.
- Select result type:**
- Select normalization methods:**   
  - Bark Difference Metric
  - Labov ANAE (speaker extrinsic)
  - Labov ANAE, using Telser G value
  - Labov, NORM v.0.9, using Telser G
  - Lobanov
  - Nearley, J, formant intrinsic
  - Nearley, Z, formant extrinsic
  - Watt & Fabricius
  - Watt & Fabricius, modified

You can select multiple methods by holding the **ctrl** or **shift** keys while clicking.

For information about each method, visit the [Methods](#) page.

Not all methods are equally appropriate for all vowel datasets. Note that, even though the primary component(s) for each method are listed, a number of the methods are slightly modified from their original, published versions. Explanations of these modifications are also described on the [Methods](#) page.
- Select options:**

**Web Page Layout:**  Only relevant if more than one method selected.

**Normalization & Processing:**

Include F3 in Processing:   
Only relevant for Nearley and Labov methods. Bark difference requires F3 values. Lobanov and Watt & Fabricius are not implemented to use F3. Note that including F3 for Nearley and Labov methods changes the results for values of F1 and F2. It is not just a matter of whether or not you want F3 values normalized.

Scale results:   
Only relevant for Lobanov, Nearley and Watt & Fabricius methods, which otherwise result in non-Hz or non-Bark values. Important: We do not recommend scaling. Make sure that you have read the [About Scaling](#) section.

**Plotting:**

Plot:

Plot Standard Dev:

Plot Labels:

Plot Legend:

Plot Dot Shapes:

Plot Dot Sizes:

Inline Plot Size:   
This sets the size of the plots that appear inline on the results web page.

Plot title:

Plotting Colors:   
You can override NORM's plotting colors. To do so, enter a list of colors in the below form separated by commas. Colors can be entered using hex codes (e.g., #ffffff) or valid color names recognized by R (e.g., deepsky1). Visit a website like this or use the [colours](#) function in R to view recognized colors. If you do not enter enough colors for your plot, the colors will be recycled. [Click here](#) for the default colors to be inserted in the form. [Click here](#) for an example of color names to be inserted in the form.
- Click the button to upload your file for normalization.**

**Figure 3.9: Screenshot from the online platform NORM**

The reason why we chose this tool is that it is very simple to use since there are only five steps to follow: selecting the vowel data file; selecting the desired result type (*individual means, speaker means or group means*); selecting the normalisation method (Lobanov in our case); selecting options such as the page layout and the vowel plotting; and, finally, the last step consists in uploading the file to initiate the normalisation process. Before uploading the data on the platform, it must be processed in Excel then saved in a tab-delimited text format (.txt) to allow NORM to process the data.

As VIOLLAIN (2015, 523) notes, NORM can display each vowel, speaker or group of speakers using different colours and shapes to better distinguish the normalised data. It also provides tables with average formant values for the vowels of each speaker and their corresponding graphs.

### 3.2.3. Constituting reference values for the THOUGHT lexical set in Dublin English

Despite the amount of literature written by HICKEY on DE, we could not find reference values for the THOUGHT lexical set in DE, nor could we find any in other books and articles mentioning DE. Consequently, we decided to create reference values using a specific set of recordings provided by HICKEY (2005a). These values will be compared with the results obtained from our corpus in order to have a better understanding of the informants' speech.

The files we used from HICKEY's data set were labelled "local", "mainstream" and "DVS" (corresponding to *new* speakers) and provide an overview of what to expect from each variety in terms of formant values. After selecting the files, we then proceeded to use the tools reviewed in 3.2.1. and 3.2.2. to isolate vowels and measure their formants. 17 recordings were used as shown in the following table:

		<i>Local</i>	<i>Mainstream</i>	<i>New</i>
Speakers	Male	6	2	3
	Female	0	3	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		6	5	7
		<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18</b>

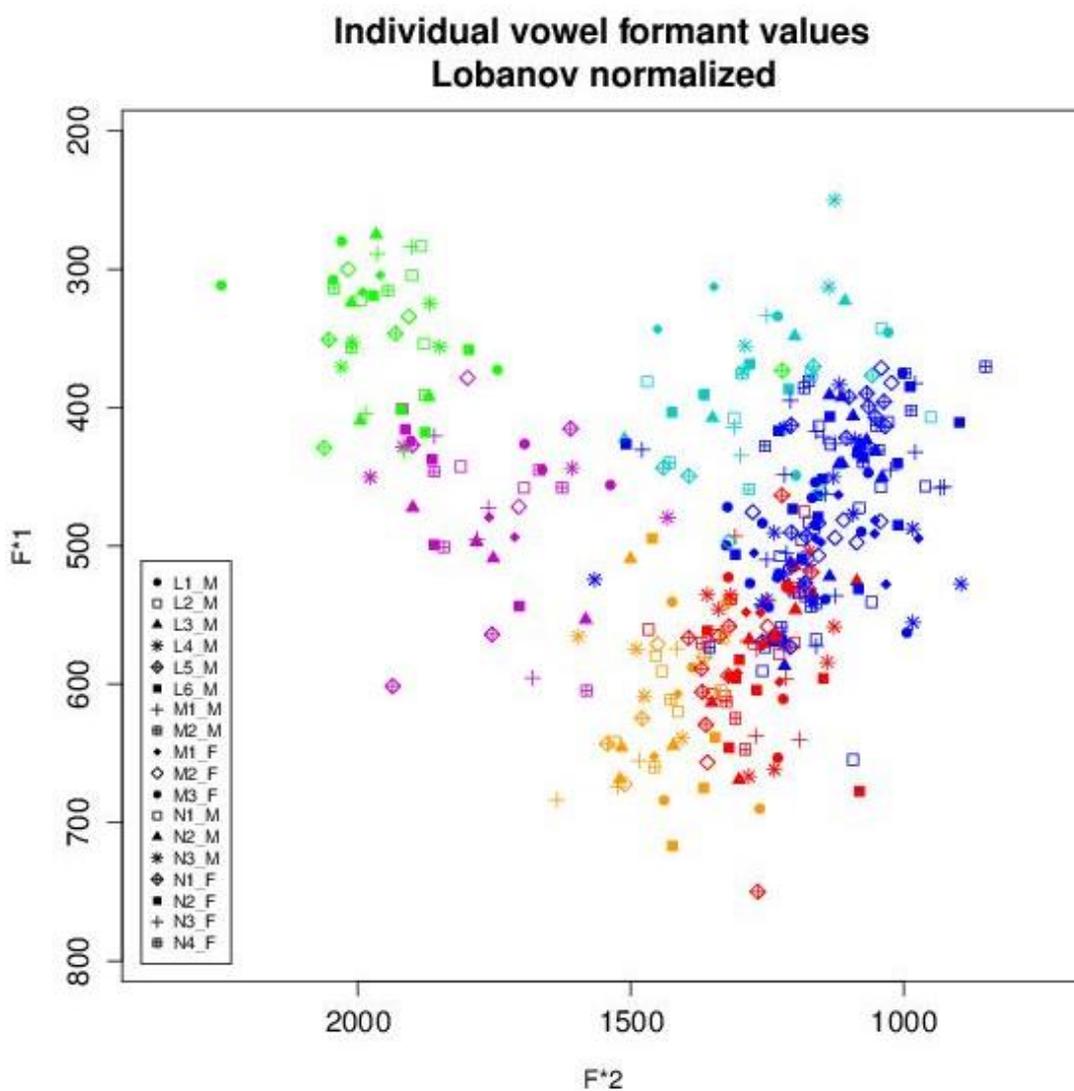
**Table 3.3: Repartition of the informants used to constitute reference values for the THOUGHT vowel**

This table shows the repartition of the informants used to calculate reference values for the THOUGHT lexical set in each variety. As far as calculation and representation are concerned, male and female informants were not separated, nor were younger speakers separated from older speakers since we wanted to have a broad depiction of the distribution of the THOUGHT lexical set in each variety independently from any sociolinguistic variable. Furthermore, we did not have any female informant for *local* DE, nor did we have the same number of younger and older speakers in all varieties. However,

considering that we normalised our results, the representation of each variety should be accurate enough for the purpose of our study.

### 3.2.3.1. Reference data for the THOUGHT lexical set

Overall, 359 vowel tokens were normalised (see **Figure 3.10**) to create the reference data in **Table 3.4**: 146 tokens for THOUGHT (blue), 69 for LOT (red), 36 for KIT (green), 36 for TRAP (orange), 36 for DRESS (purple) and 36 for FOOT (turquoise).



**Figure 3.10: Representation of all vowel tokens for all reference speakers obtained after normalisation**

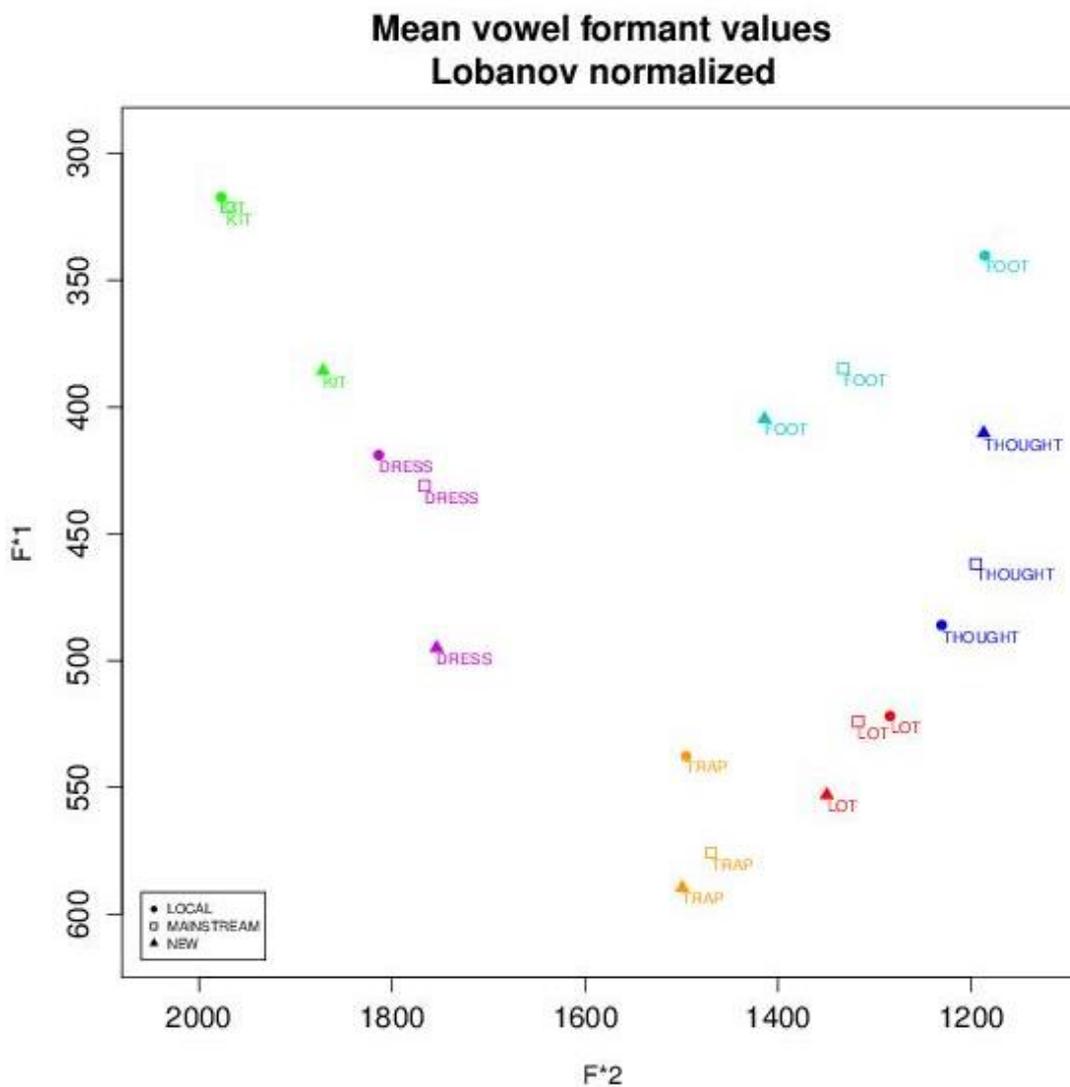
The following results are the average formant values of the THOUGHT vowel for each group of speakers. This data will be used as a reference value with which we will compare the data retrieved from our main corpus.

Speaker	Vowel	F1	F2
LOCAL	THOUGHT	486.005	1230.694
MAINSTREAM	THOUGHT	461.819	1195.306
NEW	THOUGHT	410.386	1187.083

**Table 3.4: Average reference values of THOUGHT for each group of speakers obtained after normalisation**

The results in **Table 3.4** were obtained using the *speaker means* option in NORM which normalises data according to each listed speaker.

As can be seen in **Table 3.4** and **Figure 3.10**, there is a sharp contrast between all three varieties where *local* THOUGHT is lower than *mainstream* THOUGHT which is lower than *new* THOUGHT. Our reference values confirm HICKEY's description of the shift (see 2.3.3.4.2) according to which the *new* pronunciation for THOUGHT is higher than in other varieties.



**Figure 3.11: Representation of the average values for each variety**

#### 3.2.4. Objectives of the present study

Before presenting our results, we would like to go back to the objectives of the present study in the same way as VIOLLAIN (2015, 506-509) did for her study of New Zealand English.

DE is not a variety that has been studied much and HICKEY is one of the only linguists currently working on the Dublin Vowel Shift. As mentioned earlier, there has not been

any detailed quantitative study carried out on the DVS apart from LONERGAN's (2015) which briefly mentions the results of his investigation in the field.

For the purpose of this study, we would like to present an account of the spread of high realisations of the *new* THOUGHT vowel throughout Dublin in the early 2000s. As we have seen earlier, younger speakers are perceived as the most prominent speakers of the DVS. Consequently, we want to show the degree to which the *new* realisation for the THOUGHT vowel has spread among younger people in Dublin. However, having a look at the speech of intermediate and older speakers will prove all the more useful as it will enable us to tell whether the THOUGHT variable was strictly confined to younger people in the early 2000s.

We do not intend to classify the speakers from our corpus under the labels *local*, *mainstream* or *new* DE given that we will only analyse the THOUGHT variable, which cannot be taken as representative of the whole shift. Instead, we do wish to compare the results with our reference data. Given that the realisation of a phoneme is not constant and varies within each speaker, and given that speakers cannot be classified into one variety based on their realisation of only one phoneme, we will not try to do so since we would need additional data for all vowels. Instead, we will merely describe how close their realisation of THOUGHT is to *new*, *mainstream* or *local* THOUGHT.

### 3.3. Results

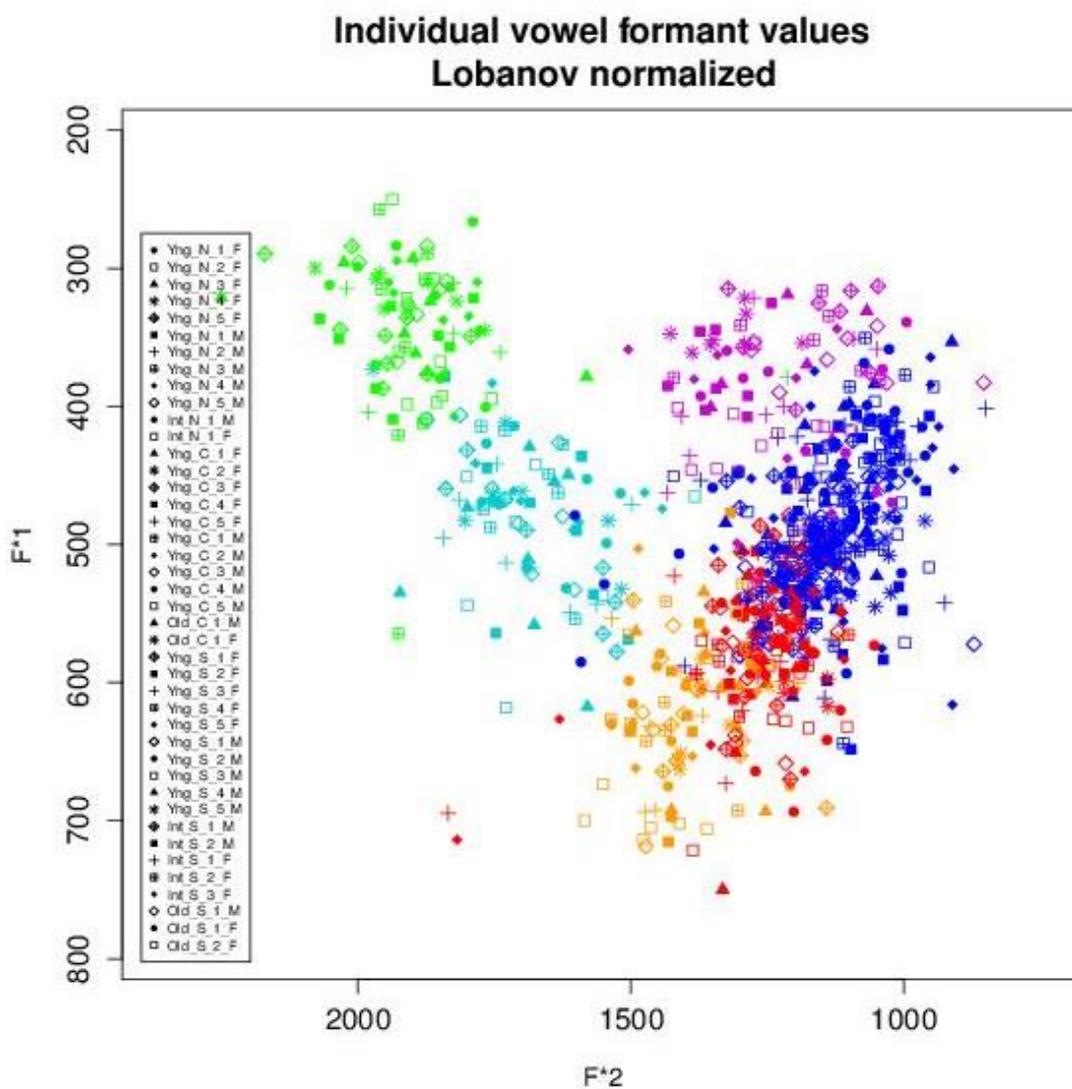
Considering the number of speakers we have, we will not present the systems of the informants individually but, instead, we will group them according to age, location and sex, and compare them to the reference values obtained earlier.

Speakers from the northern part of the city will be referred to as “north speakers” or “northside speakers”; speakers from the central part of the city will be referred to as “centre speakers”; and speakers from the southern part of Dublin will be referred to as “south speakers” or “southside speakers”.

First, the results obtained for each area – north, centre and south – will be commented upon separately. Then, all the results will be grouped so that the different sociolinguistic groups can be compared altogether. Finally, we will make general remarks as to the spread of the pronunciation of *new* THOUGHT.

The TRAP, KIT, DRESS, FOOT and LOT vowels will be represented on the figures but will not be focused on. They were included in the normalisation process only to make the normalisation of the THOUGHT vowel more accurate as explained in 3.2.2.1.

Overall, 824 vowel tokens (all lexical sets included) were retrieved from the corpus and normalised (see **Figure 3.12**): 338 tokens for THOUGHT (blue), 159 for LOT (red), 84 tokens for KIT (green), 84 for TRAP (orange), 84 for FOOT (purple) and 84 for DRESS (turquoise).

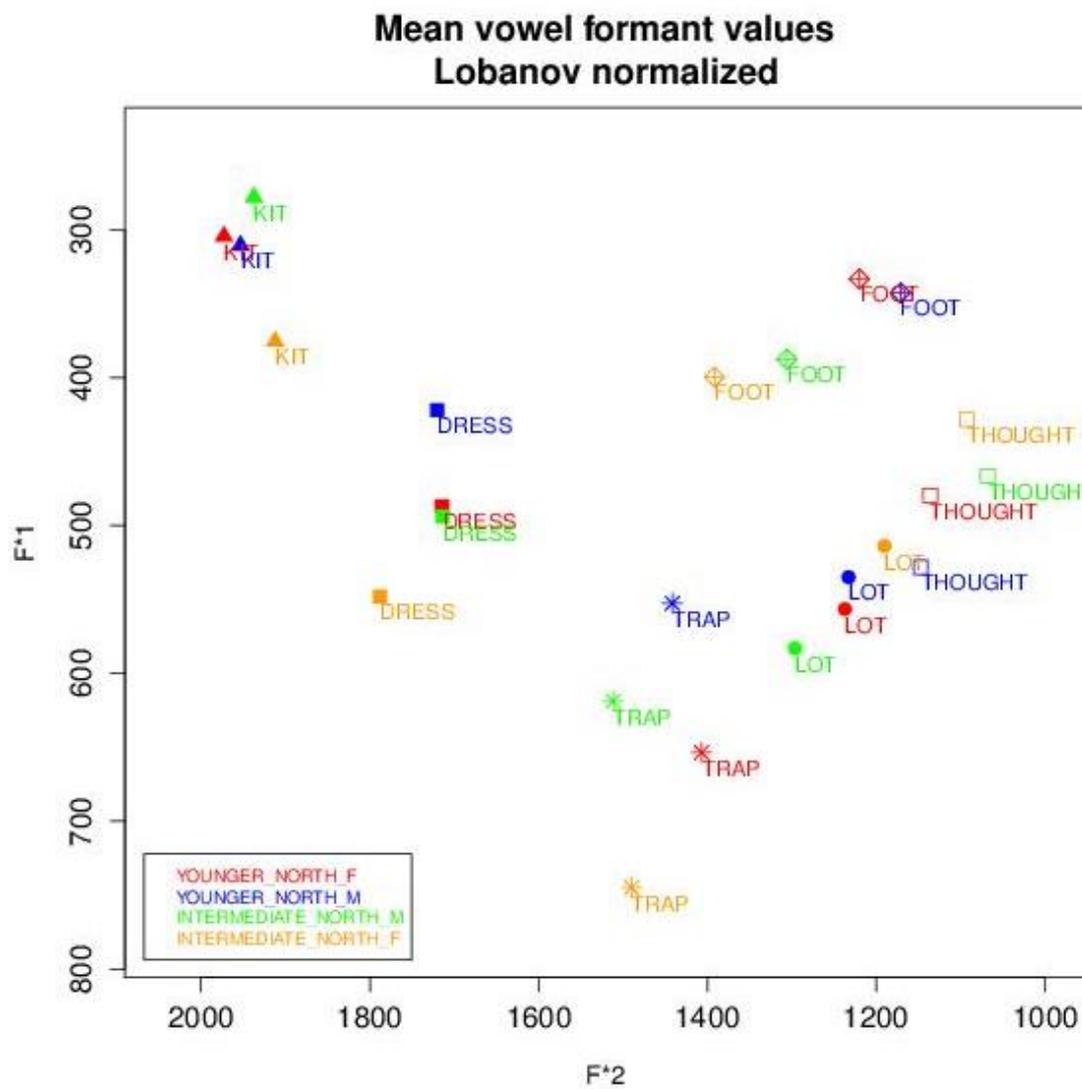


**Figure 3.12: Representation of all vowel tokens for all speakers obtained after normalisation**

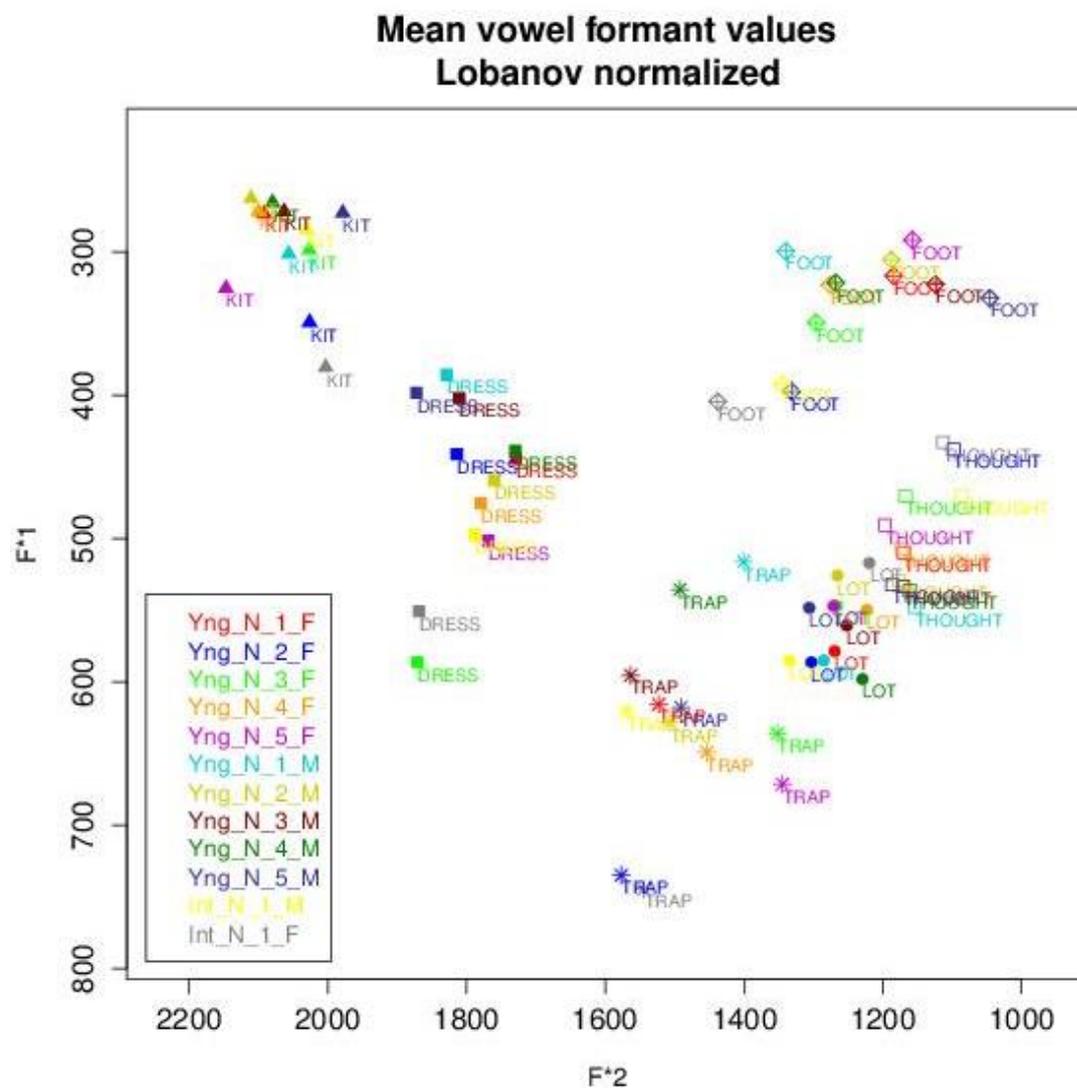
### 3.3.1. North Dublin

Speaker	Vowel	N	F1	F2
INTERMEDIATE_NORTH_F	THOUGHT	8	412.398	1165.312
INTERMEDIATE_NORTH_M	THOUGHT	8	442.071	1142.221
YOUNGER_NORTH_F	THOUGHT	40	452.527	1206.058
YOUNGER_NORTH_M	THOUGHT	41	490.576	1216.653
LOCAL	THOUGHT	48	486.005	1230.694
MAINSTREAM	THOUGHT	40	461.819	1195.306
NEW	THOUGHT	58	410.386	1187.083

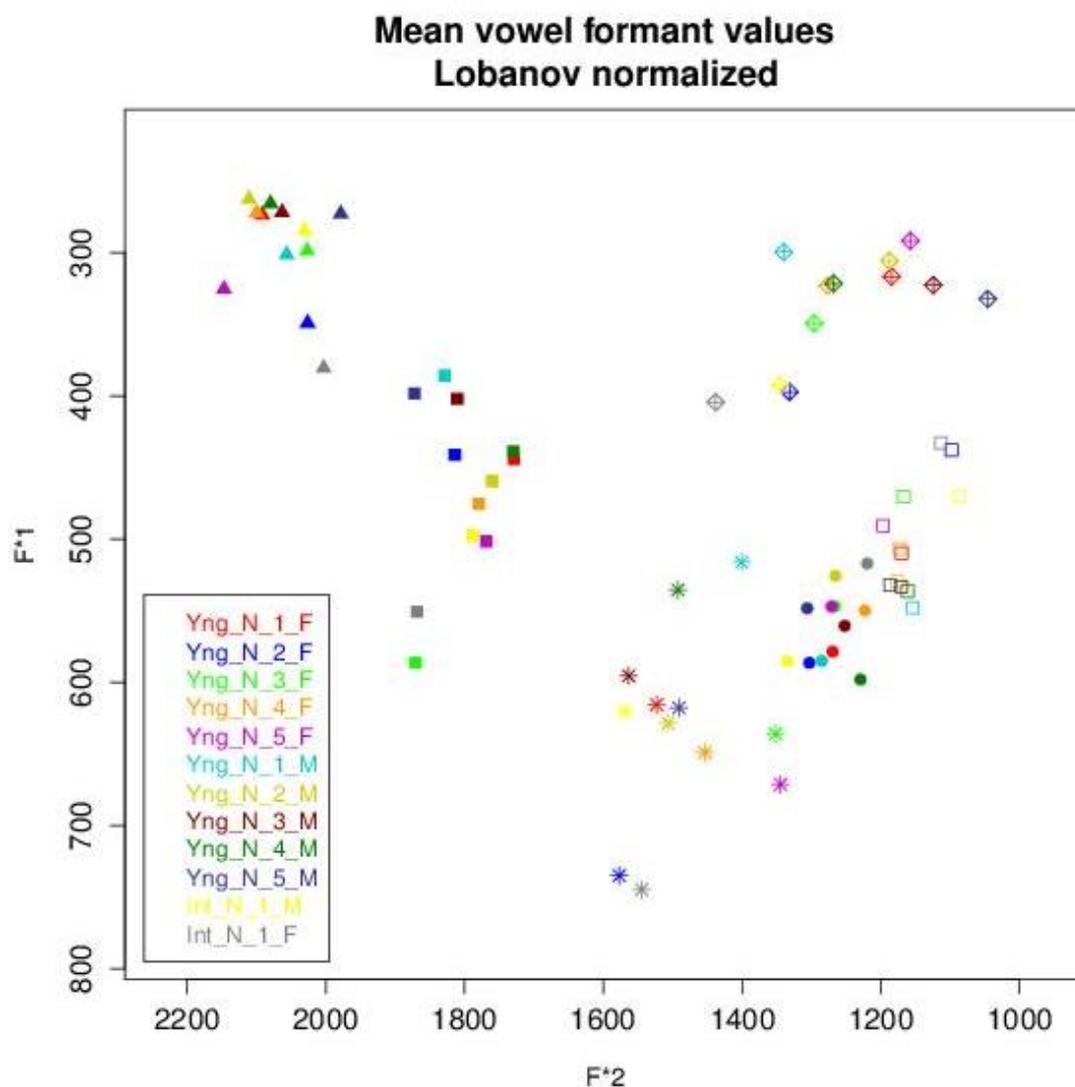
**Table 3.5: Overall average formant values of THOUGHT for northside speakers from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation (with reference values)**



**Figure 3.13: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for northside speakers according to age and sex obtained after normalisation**



**Figure 3.14: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for each northside speaker according to age and sex obtained after normalisation**



**Figure 3.15: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for each northside speaker according to age and sex obtained after normalisation (no labels)**

Surprisingly, intermediate speaker groups have the highest overall realisation for THOUGHT (see **Table 3.5**) with 412.398Hz for intermediate northside female speakers and 442.071Hz for intermediate northside male speakers. Intermediate female speakers are the closest to *new* THOUGHT while intermediate male speakers and younger northside female speakers are in between *mainstream* and *new* THOUGHT. Their liminal position seems to indicate a progressive change towards *new* THOUGHT. As for younger northside male speakers, their pronunciation is closer to *local* THOUGHT. As predicted, younger male

speakers have the lowest realisation of the THOUGHT vowel, which shows that they were not partaking in the change in the early 2000s.

When looking at speakers separately (see **Figure 3.15**), we can notice that three younger northside female speakers have the highest realisations for THOUGHT alongside the two intermediate speakers. This leads us to believe that younger northside female speakers are nearing *new* THOUGHT to some degree given their high variability in the realisation of THOUGHT. This can be observed in **Figure 3.15** where the distribution of THOUGHT for younger northside female speakers is more spread out unlike younger male speakers whose distribution of THOUGHT is more clustered around one spot and which is lower in height and reaches the LOT vowel. Both female age groups and intermediate northside male speakers have higher realisations for THOUGHT than for LOT, which indicates a departure from the *local* heights towards higher realisations.

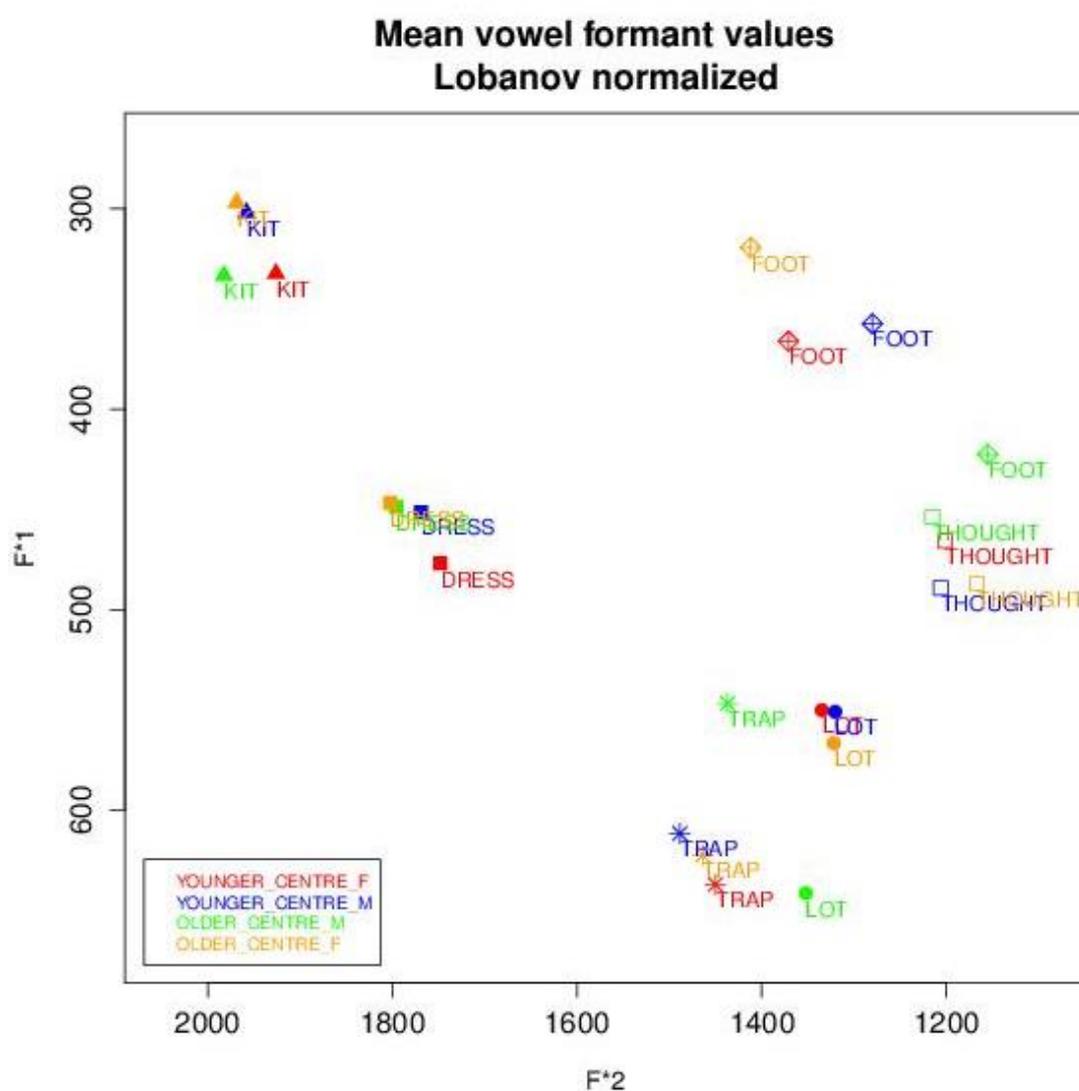
The high realisation of THOUGHT does not seem to influence the LOT vowel if we observe the speakers with the highest realisations for THOUGHT (Int\_N\_1\_F, Int\_N\_1\_M and Yng\_N\_2\_F) whose vowel heights for LOT are variable. The high realisation of THOUGHT for some speakers seems to have pushed forward the FOOT vowel. It is noticeable with Int\_N\_1\_F, Int\_N\_1\_M and Yng\_N\_2\_F.

Overall, the distribution of THOUGHT across all groups is rather scattered and shows a clear discrepancy between younger male northside speakers and intermediate speakers and younger northside female speakers.

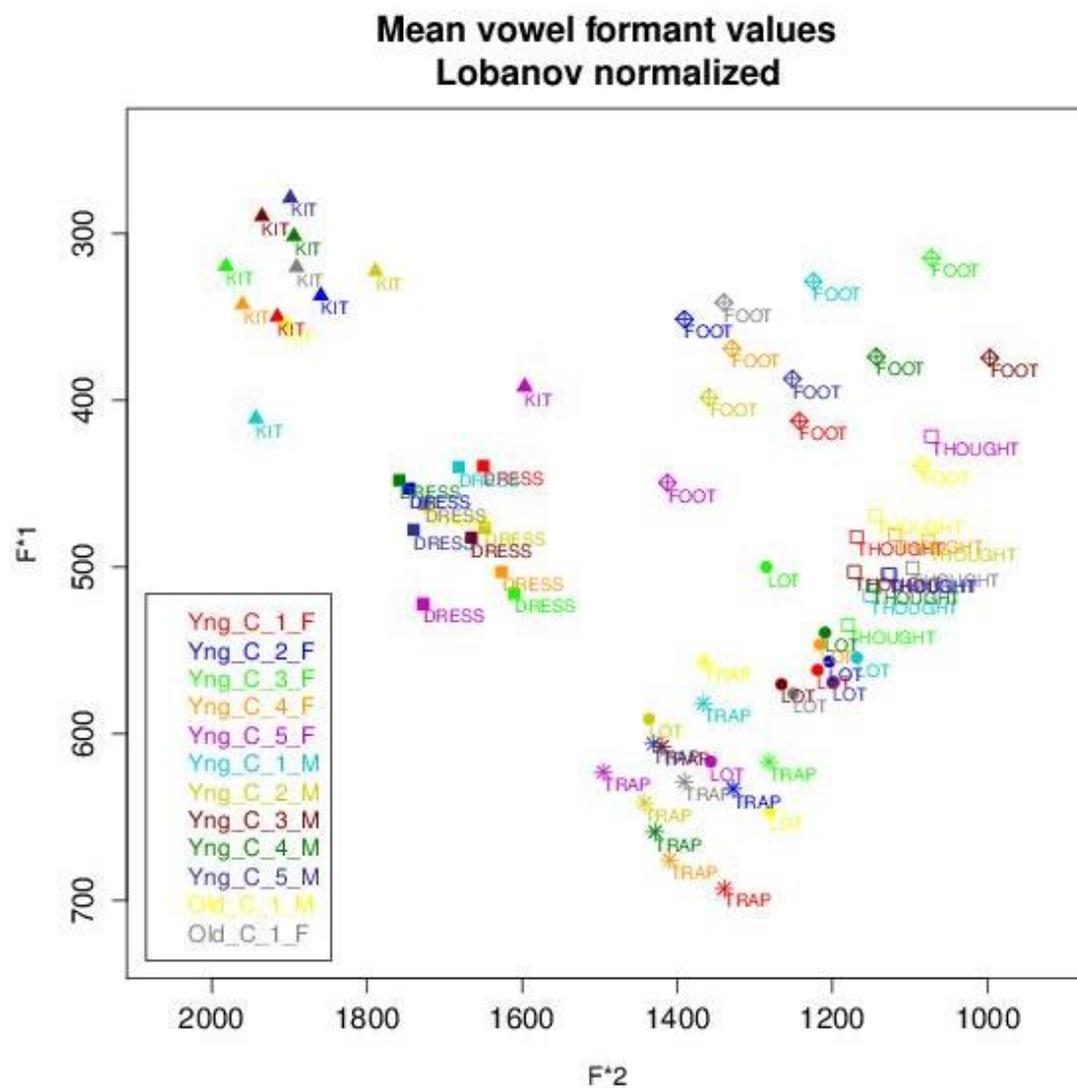
## 3.3.2. Centre Dublin

Speaker	Vowel	F1	F2
OLDER_CENTRE_M	THOUGHT	433.031	1211.874
YOUNGER_CENTRE_F	THOUGHT	443.659	1198.252
OLDER_CENTRE_F	THOUGHT	462.817	1163.927
YOUNGER_CENTRE_M	THOUGHT	464.661	1203.014
LOCAL	THOUGHT	486.005	1230.694
MAINSTREAM	THOUGHT	461.819	1195.306
NEW	THOUGHT	410.386	1187.083

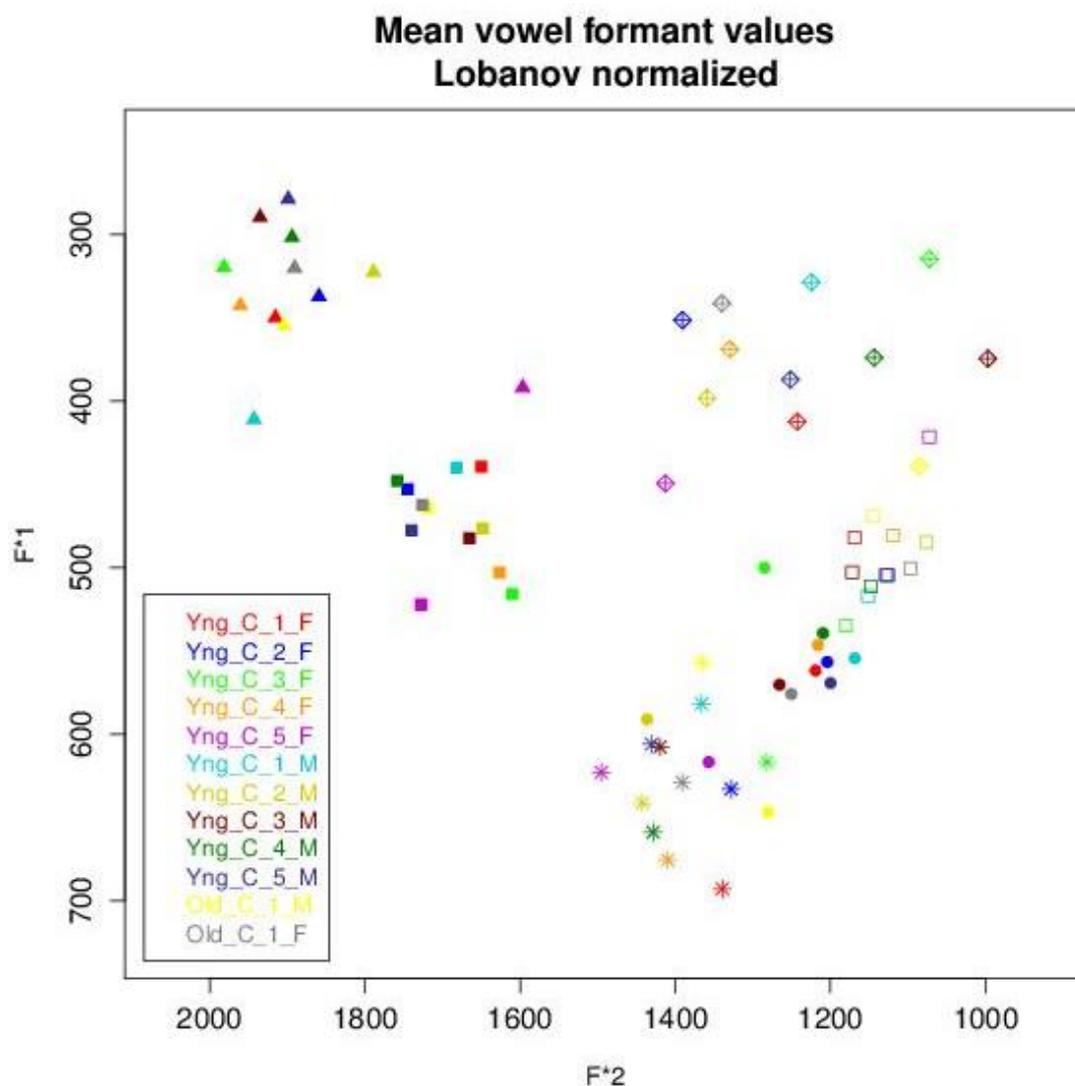
**Table 3.6: Overall average formant values of THOUGHT for centre speakers from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation (with reference values)**



**Figure 3.16: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for centre speakers according to age and sex obtained after normalisation**



**Figure 3.17: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for each centre speaker according to age and sex obtained after normalisation**



**Figure 3.18: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for each southside speaker according to age and sex obtained after normalisation (no labels)**

Surprisingly again, older male speakers have the highest overall realisation for THOUGHT (see **Table 3.6**) with 433.031Hz while younger centre female speakers have the second highest realisation with 443.659Hz. Their pronunciation for THOUGHT is between *mainstream* and *new*, but is closer to *new* compared to younger northside female speakers. Considering that their realisations of THOUGHT are higher than *mainstream* THOUGHT, it can be argued that they are aiming for *new* THOUGHT. As for older centre female speakers and younger centre male speakers, their pronunciation is close to *mainstream* THOUGHT with 462.817Hz and 464.661Hz respectively.

Looking at speakers individually (see **Figure 3.18**), we can see that Yng\_C\_5\_F has the highest realisation for THOUGHT. Again, considering that we only had one older female speaker and one older male speaker, we could argue that their realisations for THOUGHT are within the range of that of younger centre female speakers.

Interestingly, we can see that the older female speaker has a lower realisation than the older male speaker, which is quite unexpected given that women tend to have higher realisations of THOUGHT.

As opposed to younger northside female speakers, younger centre female speakers do not show a high variability in their realisations of THOUGHT which are consequently less spread out (see **Figure 3.18**). The same comment can be made about younger centre male speakers whose realisations of THOUGHT are also clustered. As opposed to younger male northside speakers, younger male centre speakers have a higher realisation for THOUGHT than for LOT; however, their relative proximity to *mainstream* THOUGHT with an average of 464.661Hz does not indicate any noticeable shift towards *new* THOUGHT despite a few significantly high realisations on a few isolated tokens. The same observation applies to older centre female speakers.

Unlike northside speakers, centre speakers seem to have departed from the LOT area to reach a higher realisation for THOUGHT.

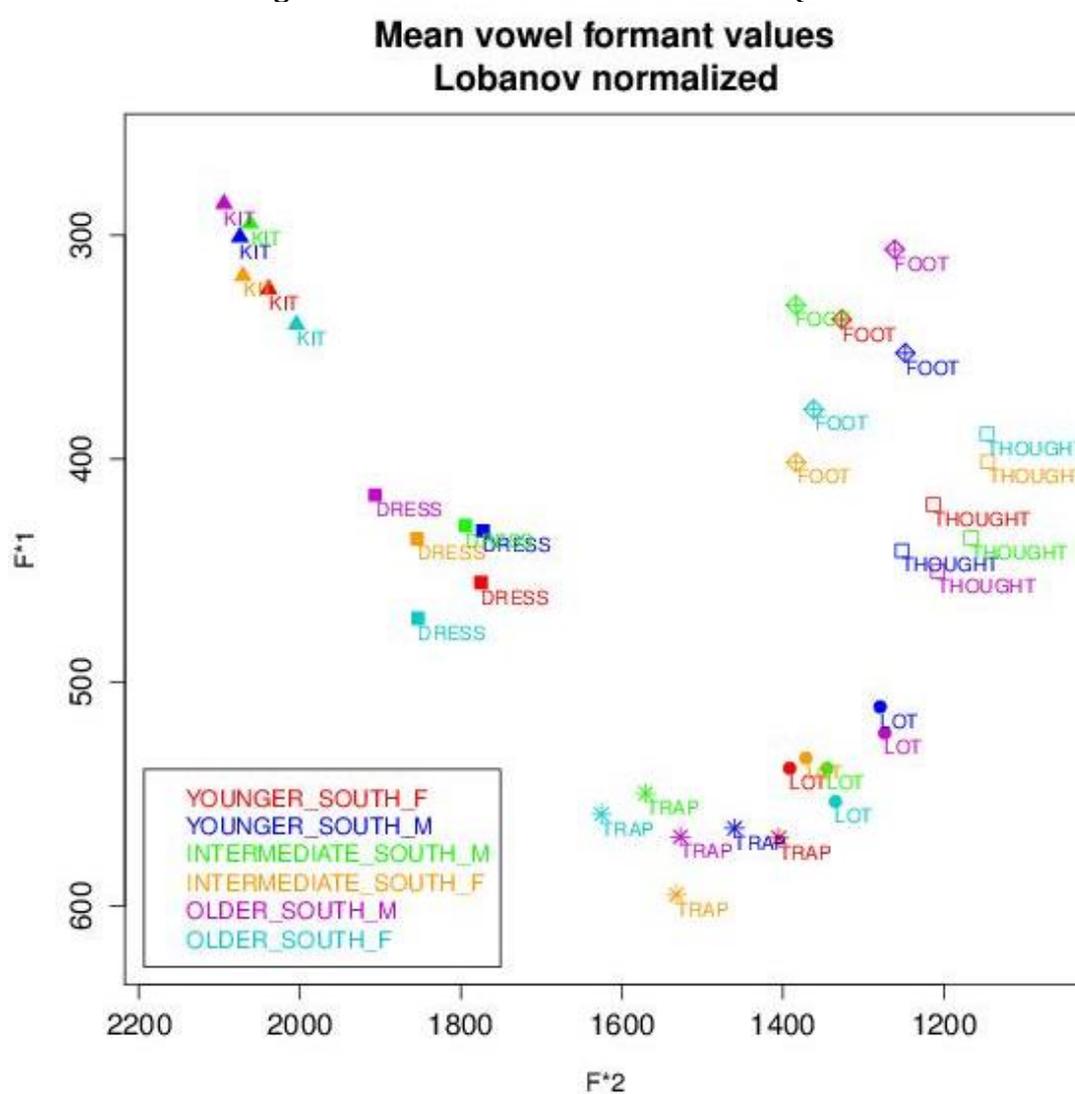
We noticed that like the northside speakers with the highest realisations for THOUGHT, some centre speakers with high realisations also display a more fronted FOOT vowel which seems to have been pushed forward by the high positions of THOUGHT in the vowel space.

Once again the LOT vowel appears not to be influenced by the rise of THOUGHT.

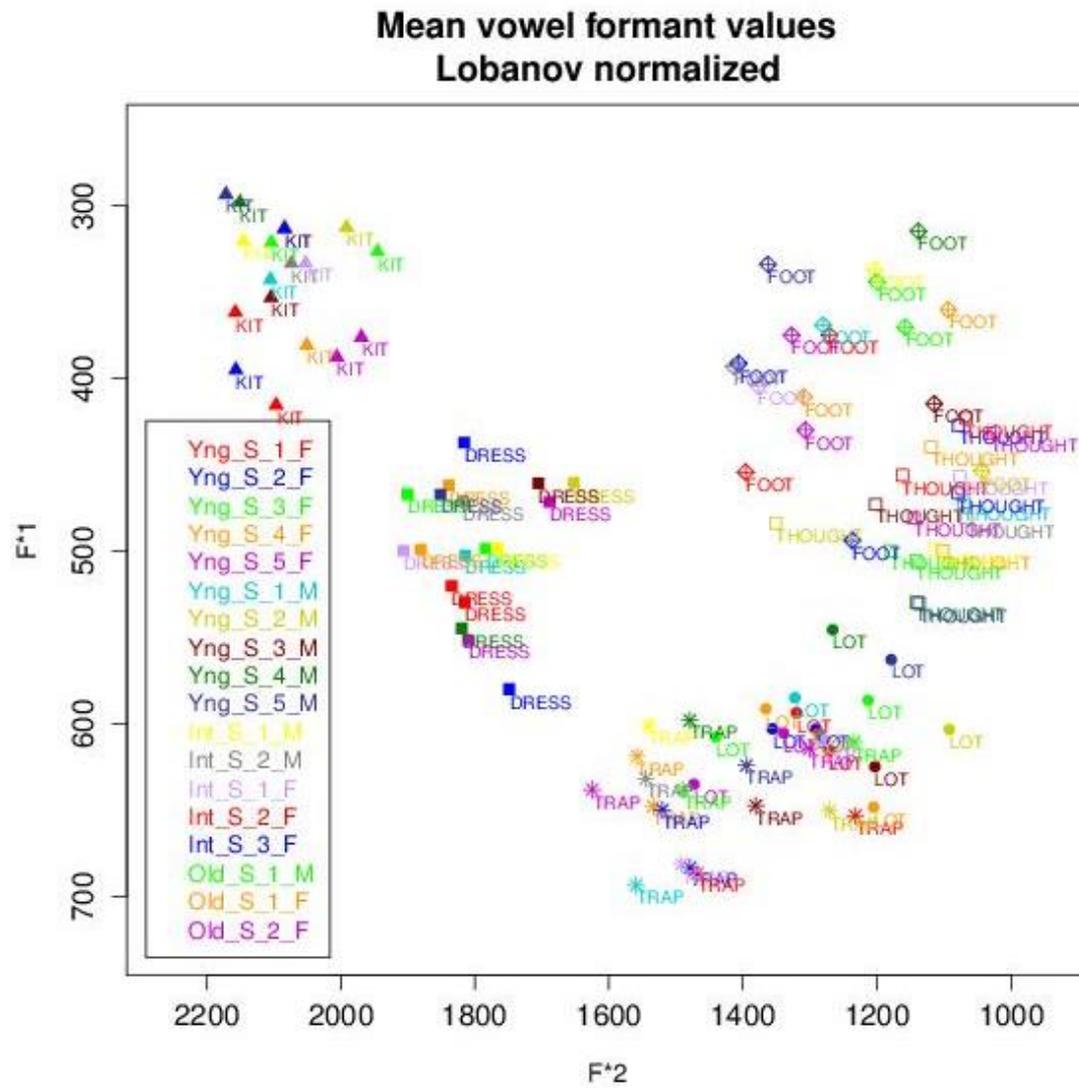
## 3.3.3. South Dublin

Speaker	Vowel	F1	F2
OLDER_SOUTH_F	THOUGHT	401.99	1156.957
INTERMEDIATE_SOUTH_F	THOUGHT	413.99	1156.403
YOUNGER_SOUTH_F	THOUGHT	432.38	1214.957
INTERMEDIATE_SOUTH_M	THOUGHT	446.773	1174.59
YOUNGER_SOUTH_M	THOUGHT	452.341	1248.664
OLDER_SOUTH_M	THOUGHT	461.116	1209.936
LOCAL	THOUGHT	486.005	1230.694
MAINSTREAM	THOUGHT	461.819	1195.306
NEW	THOUGHT	410.386	1187.083

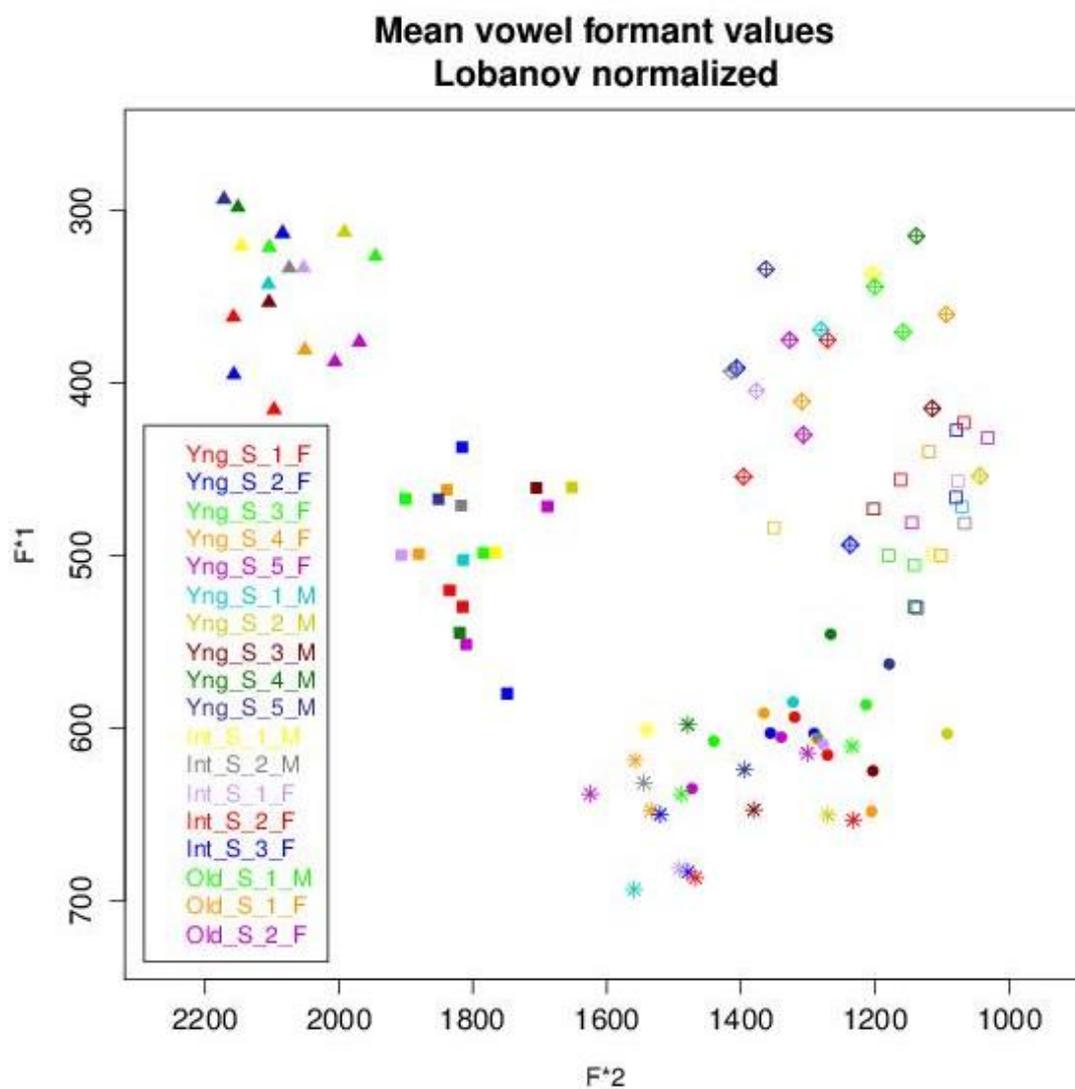
**Table 3.7: Overall average formant values of THOUGHT for southside speakers from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation (with reference values)**



**Figure 3.19: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for southside speakers according to age and sex obtained after normalisation**



**Figure 3.20: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for each southside speaker obtained after normalisation**



**Figure 3.21: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for each southside speaker obtained after normalisation (no labels)**

Older southside female speakers and intermediate southside female speakers have the highest realisations for THOUGHT with 401.99Hz and 413.99Hz respectively. They are the closest to *new* THOUGHT along younger southside female speakers (432.38Hz) while intermediate southside male speakers (446.773Hz) and younger southside male speakers (452.341Hz) are between *mainstream* and *new* THOUGHT. This shows that unlike younger centre male speakers, their distribution of THOUGHT is moving upwards. As for older southside male speakers, they are the closest to *mainstream* THOUGHT with 461.116Hz.

An intermediate female speaker (Int\_S\_2\_F) has the highest average realisations (see **Figure 3.19**) for THOUGHT and is followed by a younger female speaker (Yng\_S\_2\_F) and two older female speakers (Old\_S\_1\_F and Old\_S\_2\_F). All four have similar heights for THOUGHT.

The distribution of THOUGHT for younger female speakers is spread out as it is for younger northside female speakers while the distribution of THOUGHT for younger southside male speakers is less clustered than for younger centre male speakers.

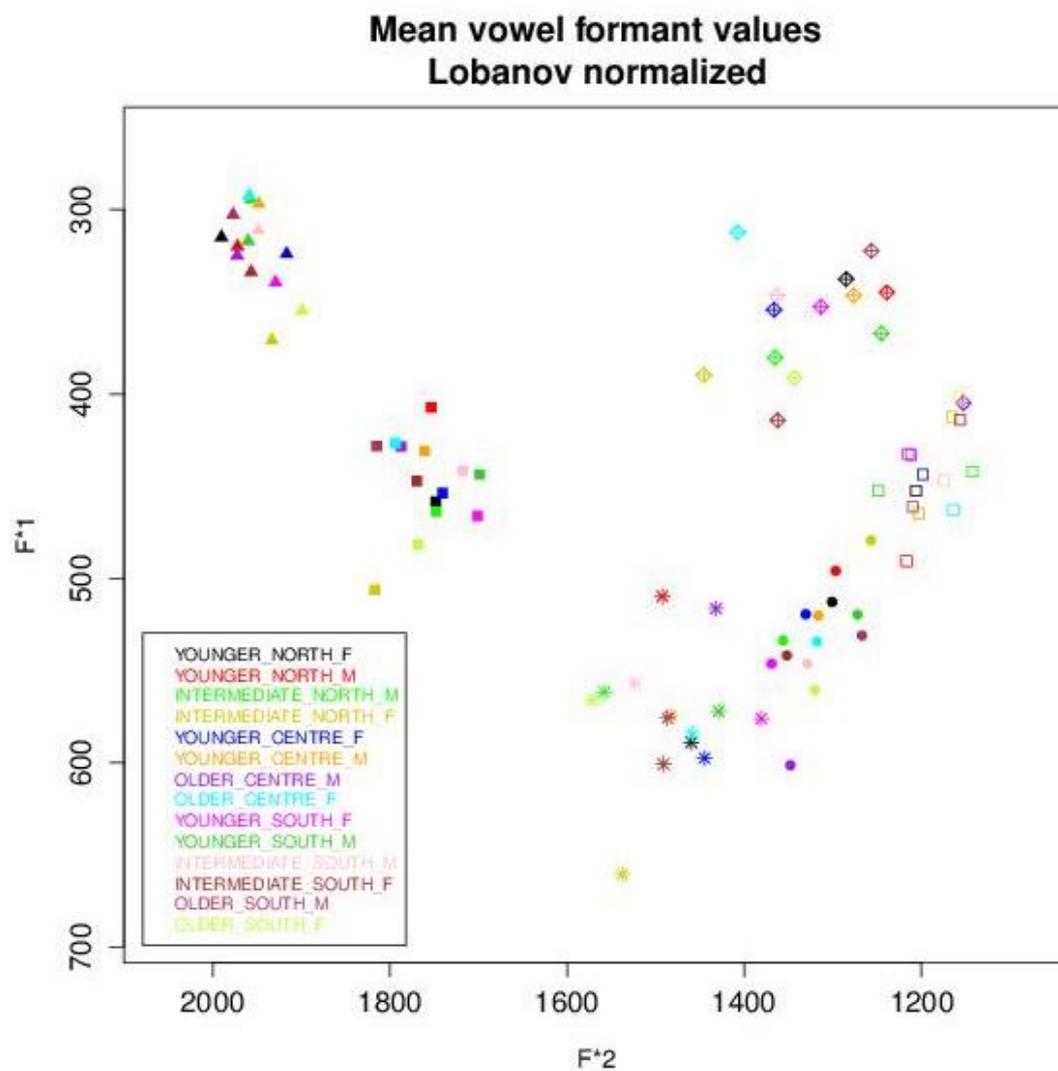
Like centre speakers, the distribution of THOUGHT is well detached from that of LOT as it has reached higher realisations, and southside speakers with high realisations of THOUGHT display a more fronted realisation of FOOT as it was noticed for centre and northside speakers.

#### 3.4. General comments

The table below (**Table 3.8**) shows the ranking of all sociolinguistic groups from the highest realisation for THOUGHT to the lowest and is accompanied by a figure (**Figure 3.22**).

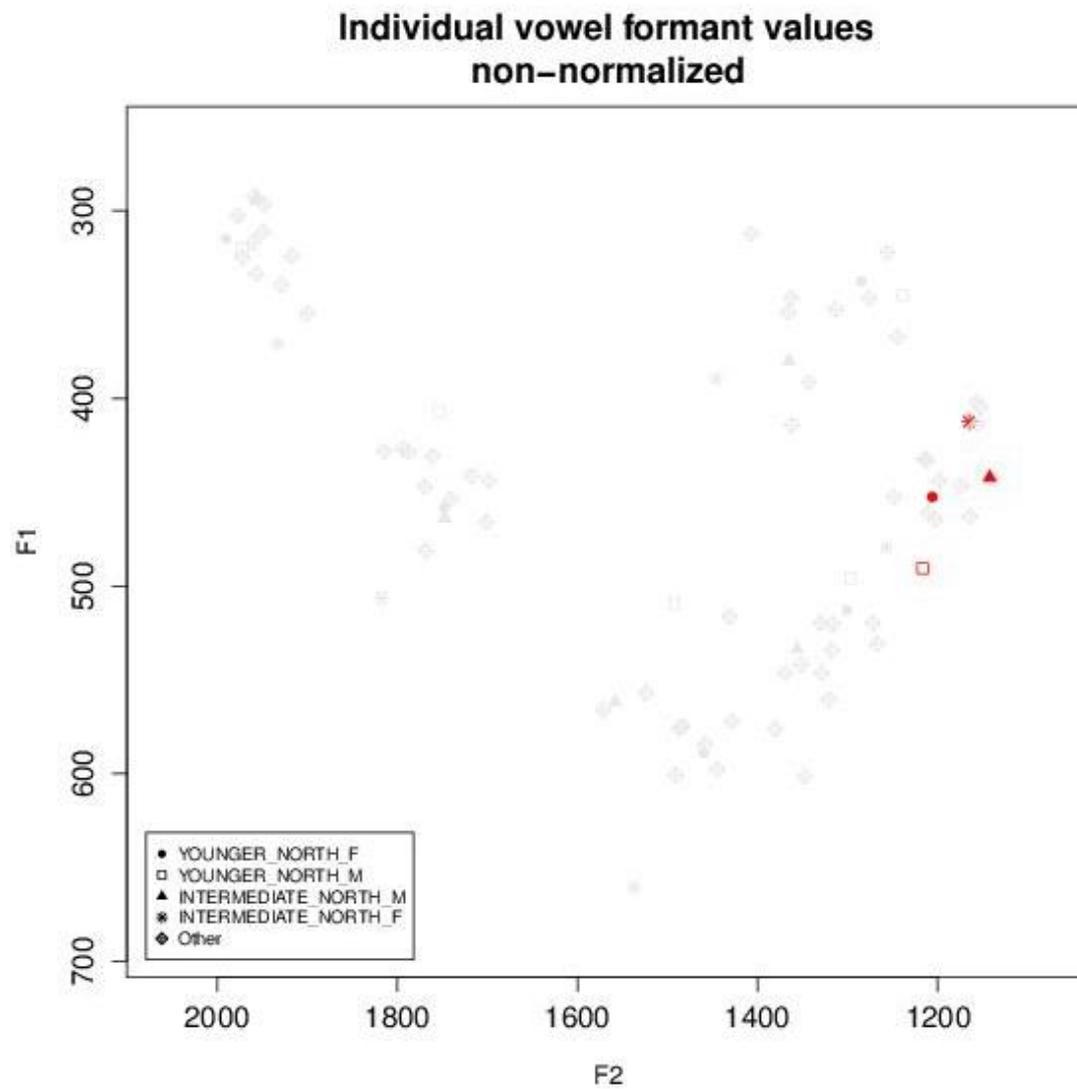
Speaker	Vowel	F1	F2
OLDER_SOUTH_F	THOUGHT	401.99	1156.957
INTERMEDIATE_NORTH_F	THOUGHT	412.398	1165.312
INTERMEDIATE_SOUTH_F	THOUGHT	413.99	1156.403
YOUNGER_SOUTH_F	THOUGHT	432.38	1214.957
OLDER_CENTRE_M	THOUGHT	433.031	1211.874
INTERMEDIATE_NORTH_M	THOUGHT	442.071	1142.221
YOUNGER_CENTRE_F	THOUGHT	443.659	1198.252
INTERMEDIATE_SOUTH_M	THOUGHT	446.773	1174.59
YOUNGER_SOUTH_M	THOUGHT	452.341	1248.664
YOUNGER_NORTH_F	THOUGHT	452.527	1206.058
OLDER_SOUTH_M	THOUGHT	461.116	1209.936
OLDER_CENTRE_F	THOUGHT	462.817	1163.927
YOUNGER_CENTRE_M	THOUGHT	464.661	1203.014
YOUNGER_NORTH_M	THOUGHT	490.576	1216.653

**Table 3.8: Ranking of overall average formant values of THOUGHT for all speaker groups from lowest to highest F1**

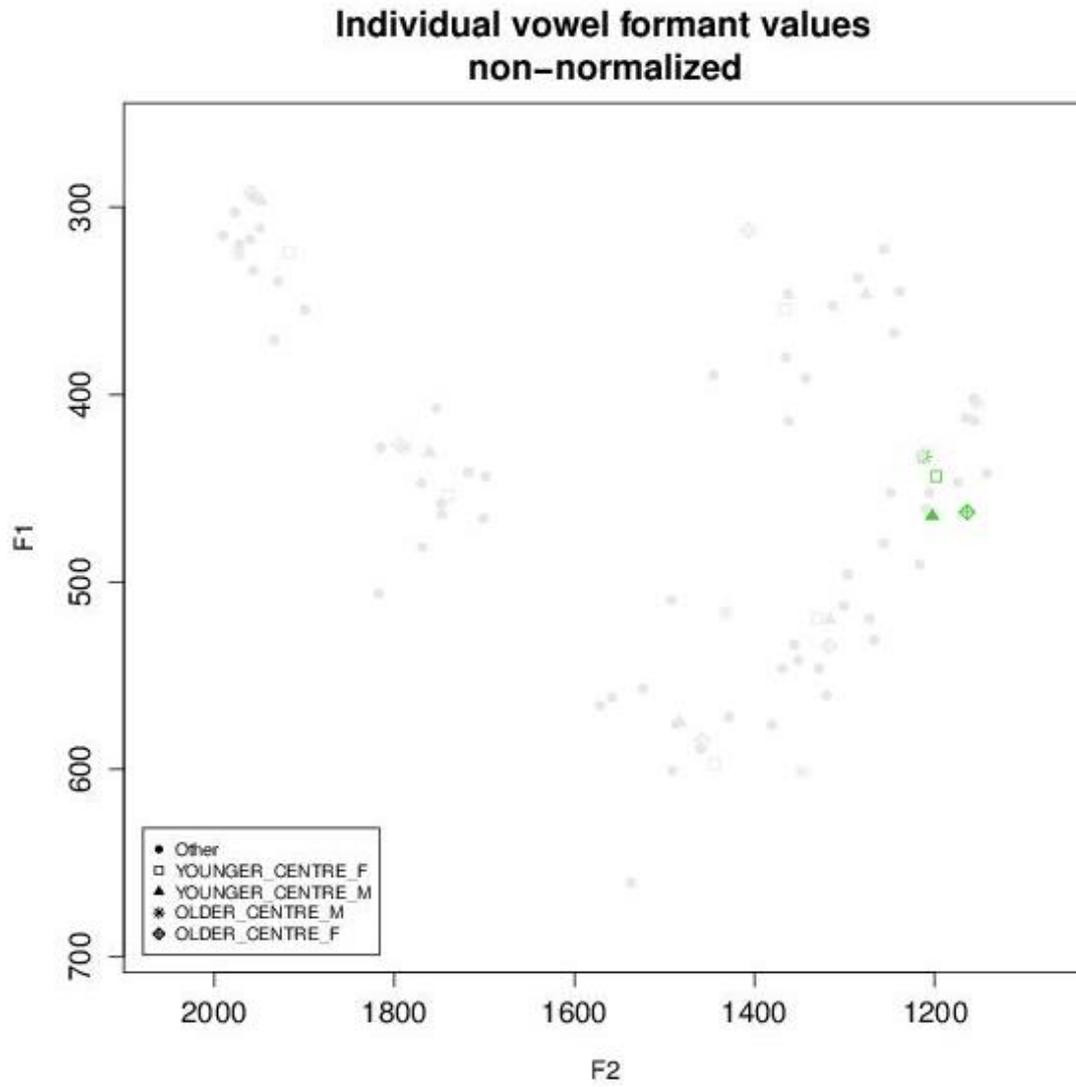


**Figure 3.22: Representation of overall average formant values of THOUGHT (holed square shapes) for all speaker groups from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation**

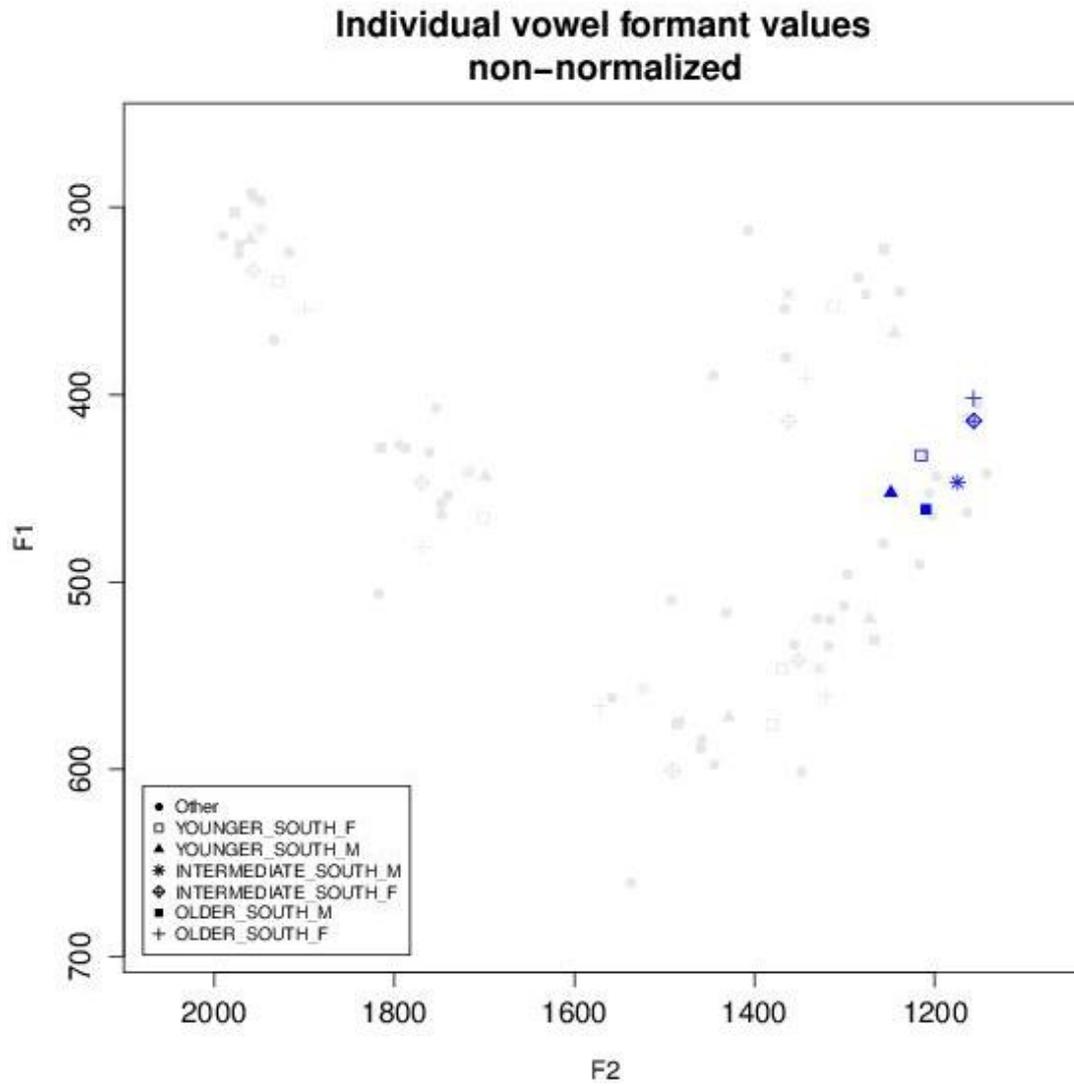
The following three figures show the same data as in **Figure 3.22** but highlight the overall average formant values of THOUGHT for northside, centre and southside speakers respectively.



**Figure 3.23: Highlighted representation of overall average formant values of THOUGHT for northside speaker groups from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation**



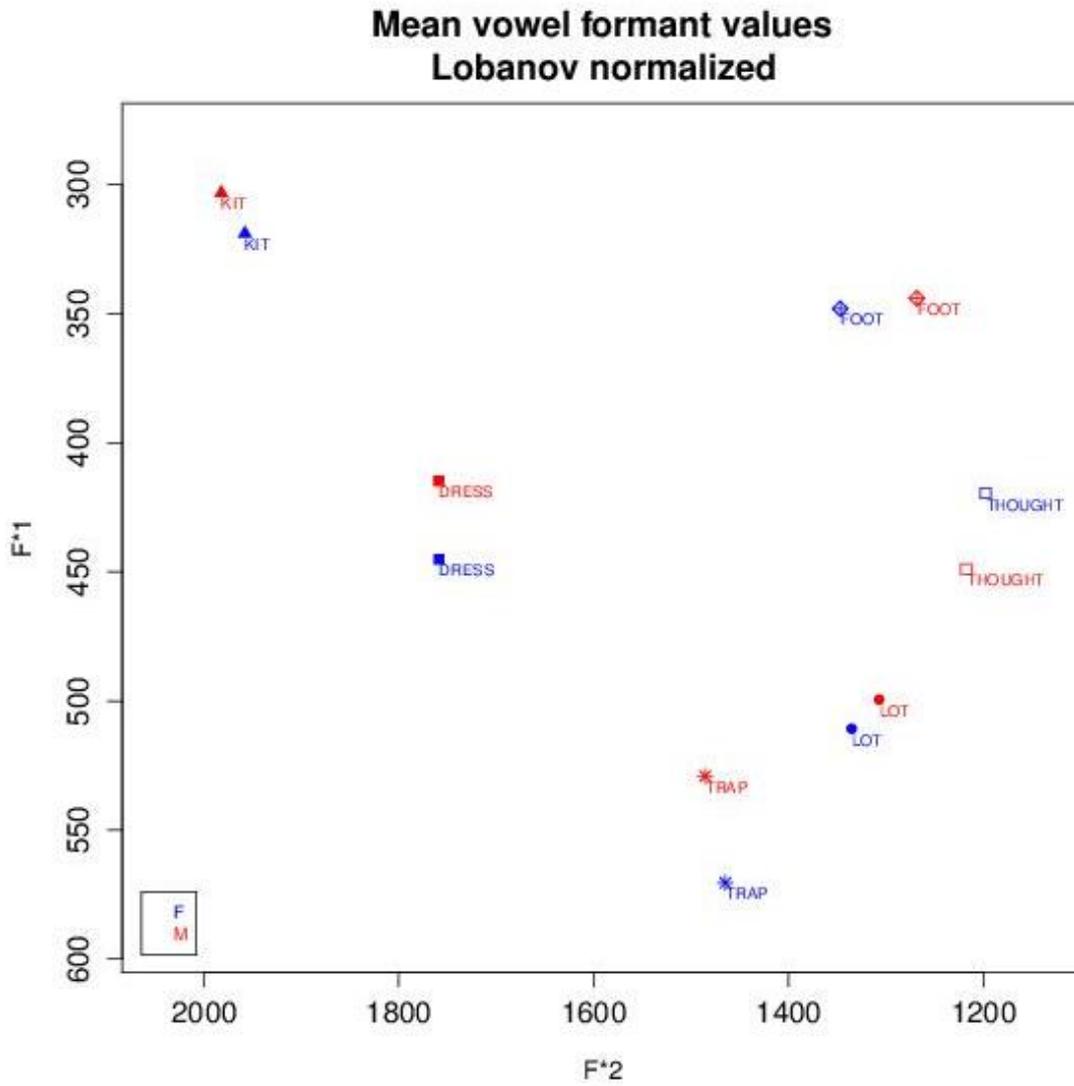
**Figure 3.24: Highlighted representation of overall average formant values of THOUGHT for centre speaker groups from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation**



**Figure 3.25: Highlighted representation of overall average formant values of THOUGHT for southside speaker groups from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation**

As can be seen in the table and figures above, the spread of *new* THOUGHT seems to have reached all three locations to various degrees. The groups with the highest average realisation of THOUGHT are older southside female speakers, intermediate north female speakers, intermediate south female speakers, younger southside female speakers and older centre male speakers. All five groups are the closest to our reference value for *new* THOUGHT.

Overall, female speakers have the highest average realisations as can be seen in the figure below (**Figure 3.26**). As explained in 1.1.2., women tend to be at the head of linguistic change and the gradual spread of *new* THOUGHT – represented in **Table 3.8** by the decrease of F1 from bottom to top – shows that this variable had started to become the standard variant all over the city in the early 2000s. On the other hand, younger northside men do not display the change yet, especially so, because of the area in which they live and because of the fact that they are not commonly subjected to social constraints contrary to women. Considering this, it may explain why HICKEY (2005) did not include *local* female speakers in his recordings as it appears that many – if not all – of them have higher realisations of THOUGHT than *local* men.



**Figure 3.26: Representation of average formant values of THOUGHT for all speakers according to sex obtained after normalisation**

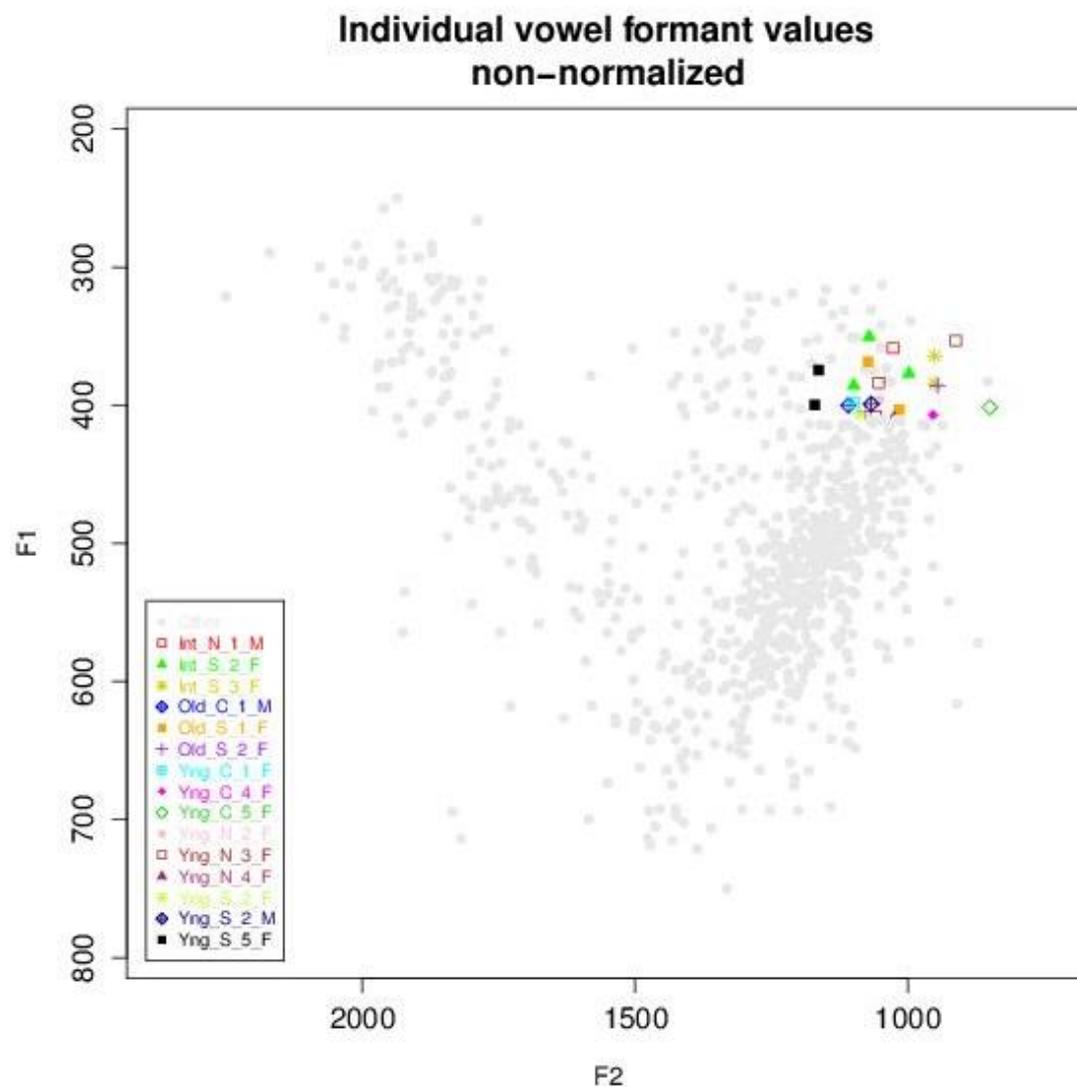
### 3.4.1. Furthering the shift

We expected women to have the highest individual realisations for THOUGHT but the following table and figure show, quite unexpectedly, that some men also have high realisations in some words:

Speaker	Vowel	Context	F1	F2
Int_S_2_F	THOUGHT	water	350.48	1071.024
Yng_N_3_F	THOUGHT	water	353.263	912.241
Int_N_1_M	THOUGHT	water	358.637	1027.04
Int_S_3_F	THOUGHT	water	364.395	951.245
Old_S_1_F	THOUGHT	bought	368.618	1072.683
Yng_S_5_F	THOUGHT	water	374.664	1163.416
Int_S_2_F	THOUGHT	water	377.159	997.994
Yng_N_3_F	THOUGHT	water	383.877	1053.596
Int_S_3_F	THOUGHT	water	384.357	950.692
Int_S_2_F	THOUGHT	bought	385.797	1099.239
Old_S_2_F	THOUGHT	water	385.893	945.436
Yng_N_2_F	THOUGHT	water	396.449	1053.043
Yng_C_1_F	THOUGHT	water	398.081	1099.239
Yng_S_2_M	THOUGHT	water	399.232	1067.151
Yng_S_5_F	THOUGHT	bought	399.808	1170.609
Old_C_1_M	THOUGHT	water	400.096	1109.198
Yng_C_5_F	THOUGHT	talking	401.536	850
Old_S_1_F	THOUGHT	walked	403.455	1015.975
Old_S_2_F	THOUGHT	water	404.607	1079.046
Yng_S_2_F	THOUGHT	bought	406.334	1087.068
Yng_C_4_F	THOUGHT	water	407.102	953.734
Int_N_1_M	THOUGHT	water	408.157	1058.852
Yng_N_4_F	THOUGHT	water	409.597	1025.38

**Table 3.9: Ranking of the highest individual formant values of THOUGHT from lowest to highest F1 obtained after normalisation<sup>27</sup>**

<sup>27</sup> Yng = Young; Int = Intermediate; Old = Older; N = North; C = Centre; S = South; F = Female; M = Male.



**Figure 3.27: Representation of highest individual formant values of THOUGHT obtained after normalisation**

Nevertheless, it is clear that women occupy the highest end of the spectrum as most highest realisations come from intermediate and older southside female speakers and from some intermediate and younger northside female speakers. Nonetheless, a few male speakers display high realisations and, surprisingly, two of these male speakers belong to older groups. However, men do not produce enough high realisations for them to be considered of any significance.

The large proportion of high realisations from female speakers clearly “overshoots” our *new* THOUGHT reference value, which leads us to think that these speakers – mostly southside female speakers – are leading change towards higher realisations of THOUGHT. LONERGAN (2015, 3) came to the same conclusion on his corpus study from 2015. This assertion is also (partly) verified by HICKEY (2005, 58) who explains that younger speakers seem to be unconsciously aware of the trajectory of the shift. Consequently, some of them are pushing the vowel higher than the average *new* realisation for the THOUGHT vowel.

It is noteworthy that this behaviour is all the more proof of an ongoing change given that the THOUGHT variable has not reached a stable height and seems to be pushed higher and higher. There is no way to know if and/or when this variant will stabilise. An argument for the stabilisation of the THOUGHT variable would be that it will stop its course when speakers will consider that it is far enough from the *local* realisation.

In addition, it clearly appears that the shift in the THOUGHT vowel had reached all parts of the city in the early 2000s but to different degrees. As for the northside, younger female speakers display a higher realisation for THOUGHT but not uniformly, which is proof of a certain degree of variability. Their average realisation of THOUGHT is 452.527Hz (see **Table 3.8**) which is past *mainstream* THOUGHT, and some can reach realisations as high as 353.263Hz. The trend initiated by *new* speakers is gradually gaining ground with younger northside female speakers – who are much more inclined towards innovation – but not with younger northside male speakers.

The situation in the centre is rather the same as for northside speakers. The same sociolinguistic differences between male and female speakers justify the raising of THOUGHT with younger centre female and not with younger centre male speakers. Again, the same applies for southside speakers.

Overall, it is safe to assume that younger and intermediate female speakers are leading change in Dublin as exemplified in **Figure 3.26**.

#### 3.4.2. The age factor in the THOUGHT vowel

We assumed that there was little to no chance that *non-local* older speakers would display the shift in the THOUGHT vowel considering HICKEY's observations (2005, 46) according to which back vowel raising was only noticeable in speakers born after c. 1970. Yet, not only do our results show that some older speakers have high realisations and, sometimes, higher realisations than younger and intermediate speakers (see **Tables 3.8** and **3.9**), but they also reveal that these older speakers are from areas associated with *local* DE in the northside. How is it possible that older speakers have these realisations while THOUGHT is part of the DVS (which emerged in the 1980s) and is said to be noticeable only in the speech speakers born after the early 1970s?

It appears that our results greatly challenge HICKEY's descriptions of the distribution of THOUGHT among *non-local* speakers and we would like to formulate a few hypotheses.

We would argue that the THOUGHT variable is not a feature of the DVS *per se* given that older *non-local* speakers show realisations as high as younger speakers' and even higher sometimes. Instead, our results point toward an older starting point in the rise of the THOUGHT vowel since *local* and *non-local* older female and male speakers have high realisations for this vowel. It either means that the high realisation for THOUGHT is older than the start of the recent DVS, or that the DVS is older than we think, or simply that it is a continuation of the raising of low-back vowel initiated in *Dublin 4*. This would benefit from further research as our data cannot provide us with an answer considering we do not have any *Dublin 4* speaker in our corpus. We also noted that there is no consistency

as to the high realisation of THOUGHT for older speakers on specific tokens, which reminds us of the hypothesis of the lexical diffusion model (HICKEY, 2005, 63) according to which a new vowel value gradually spreads in the lexicon of a variety but not in all lexical items. Retrieving enough tokens of THOUGHT for older speakers would certainly help us verify this assumption.

Intermediate northside male speakers do have a higher realisation for THOUGHT unlike younger northside male speakers (see **Figure 3.27**). We expected all northside male speakers to have lower realisations but our results have proved the opposite. We can also assume that high realisations for THOUGHT must have been old enough for intermediate speakers to adopt them. If this were true, it would confirm our hypothesis of an older start than the DVS for high realisations of THOUGHT.

Overall, the THOUGHT variable appears to be rather stable across age groups and is not so much a determining factor as sex can be, for high realisations of the THOUGHT variable are spreading among speakers of all ages and especially so among female speakers.

### 3.4.3. Motivation and dissociation

As mentioned several times in the second chapter, the *new* pronunciation developed in opposition to the *local* variety and this dissociation from *local* DE is what motivates *new* speakers to get actively involved in the shift. However, our results call this into question as we noticed this change has spread beyond the confines of the southside and is gradually appearing in the speech of younger female speakers all over the city. Younger northside female speakers particularly draw our attention. Given that they live in a *local* area, it is assumed that they are primarily *local* speakers, but since they are nearing higher realisations of THOUGHT, they are gradually shifting towards *new* THOUGHT.

Is this trend developing among younger northside female speakers motivated by the will to dissociate themselves from the *local* variety? We do not believe so. Instead, as mentioned in 3.1.2., we would argue that younger female speakers follow the trend initiated by motivated *new* speakers but are oblivious to the root motivation, which makes them detached participants in the shift.

If northside female speakers keep challenging the original motivation for *local* dissociation and if the shift keeps spreading, it is safe to assume that the primary motivation will eventually completely disappear. HICKEY (2016, 26) declared that “[t]he new pronunciation quickly spread throughout the Republic of Ireland and is now (2015) the supraregional form of Irish English used by most males and all females under 35”. Thus, it is hard to believe that the spread of the shift has been motivated by *local* dissociation if we consider that speakers outside Dublin – who are not confronted to its sociolinguistic environment – display the shift.

### 3.5. *Further comments on the DVS*

We would like to add a few final observations on the DVS that would deserve further attention even though it is not the main concern of the present study.

Upon analysing speech from all three locations in Dublin, we noticed that there might be a correlation between the height of the THOUGHT vowel and the degree of backness of the FOOT vowel which tends to be pushed forward to make room for the higher realisation of the THOUGHT vowel. Interestingly, this occurs only with younger and intermediate speakers while FOOT remains to a rather back position with older speakers. This lack of consistency between older and younger speakers as to the fronting of FOOT shows that the THOUGHT variable is stable across all age groups but FOOT is not as young speakers with

high realisations of THOUGHT do show a lower degree of backness in FOOT while older speakers do not.

As for the LOT vowel, it does not seem to be affected by the rise of THOUGHT in the speakers' vowel space. If it were to be so, then female speakers would most certainly display higher realisations of LOT but it is not the case (see **Figure 3.26**) and female speakers even display lower realisations than male speakers.

We also noticed (see **Figure 3.26**) that women have engaged in a lowering of the short front vowels in KIT, DRESS and TRAP. This peculiarity is briefly mentioned by HICKEY in his *Sociolinguistics in Ireland* (2016, 29) but not in his *Dublin English: Evolution and Change* (2005), which is quite surprising given that it included the recordings we used in our corpus. According to HICKEY (2016, 28-29), this change was not developed in DE. Instead, he assumes that it could have been imported – through exposure in the media – from California and possibly from Canada where the three vowels are more lowered than in any other variety of English. Considering our results, short front vowel lowering appears to have been adopted by younger female speakers earlier than what HICKEY describes.

### 3.6. Summary

In this third and final chapter we have introduced the corpus used in the present study and accounted for our choices as to the selection of the informants. We justified our choice of an early 2000s corpus which was motivated by the accessibility, organisation and representativeness of the data, and tried to identify the speakers of *new* DE to help us select the groups of speakers accordingly. We then proceeded to describe all the steps and tools involved in the extraction and processing of data in our phonological corpus and applied this methodology to our corpus. We then accounted for the apparent-time oriented nature of our study which tried to describe and analyse the spread of the

THOUGHT variable from *new* DE to the rest of the city, taking into account the age, sex and geographical factors. We have exposed our results through various tables and figures and explained that the spread of *new* THOUGHT in the early 2000s had already spread beyond the confines of southside *new* DE to various degrees. *New* THOUGHT was beginning to be noticeable in the speech of northside female speakers and also in the speech of centre female speakers, and we concluded that women were at the head of change for the *new* THOUGHT variable. We also observed that high realisations of THOUGHT are older than initially expected given that older speakers also displayed high realisations of THOUGHT. Finally, we offered a few non-exhaustive remarks on the other vowels of our corpus, which were initially included in the vowel-extrinsic normalisation process of THOUGHT only to obtain more accurate measurements.

## 4. Conclusion

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The impetus of this study was given by the sheer lack of studies on DE, and especially on a major change that has been reported to have emerged in the early 1980s: the Dublin Vowel Shift. Despite the reconfiguration of the vowel space of DE, the Dublin Vowel Shift does not seem to have attracted the attention of many linguists and has only been thoroughly documented by Raymond HICKEY over the last decades. The shift was initiated by *new* DE speakers, in the south of the city, who speak a variety that is trying to maximally distance itself from the traditional *local* variety located in the north of the city. It has been observed that *new* speakers engaged in a pull chain phenomenon – initiated by *Dublin 4* speakers in the early 1980s – which leads to the raising of low-back vowel and the retraction of /aɪ/.

The main objective of the present study was to provide a multidimensional account of the spread of the Dublin Vowel Shift through the scope of one of its most salient features, the THOUGHT variable which is said to have experienced considerable raising over the last decades and to have become especially popular with younger generations. Describing and analysing only one feature of DE through quantitative methods seemed a more realistic endeavour to us within the context of the present study, instead of merely tackling all the features of the shift. We assumed that the spread of high realisations of THOUGHT would only be noticeable in younger speakers considering the innovative nature of the shift and the propensity of younger speakers – especially female speakers – to incorporate trendy features in their speech.

Before processing and analysing our corpus, we engaged in framing the meaning and implications of sociolinguistics and reviewed two significant sociolinguistic studies –

LABOV's and TRUDGILL's – for we believed they would prove all the more relevant for our study, especially so considering that language is a social construct and studying language outside of any sociolinguistic considerations is bound to lead to an incomplete interpretation of variation and change, be they lexical, grammatical or phonological. We highlighted the importance of key sociolinguistic factors – age, sex, social background and geographical location – which led us to our second chapter.

While the first chapter mainly focused on accounting for the use of sociolinguistics in our study (and to justify the use of the prefix *socio-* in our title), a second chapter was devoted to providing a steady phonological basis upon which the third chapter would be built. After briefly making the distinction between phonology and phonetics as a way to justify the information presented in the chapter, we moved on to a description of English in Ireland by tracing back its origins from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to nowadays. We then provided a more focused account of Dublin's history and geography, and of the introduction of English in the city. After that, we introduced the supraregional features of Irish English – based on middle-class DE – and the sociolinguistic framework of the city where DE is divided into three sub-varieties: *local*, *mainstream* and *new* DE. This part was of importance as we described the social and geographical backgrounds that distinguish each variety. It proved all the more useful in our third part when it came to selecting our informants. Finally, we provided a detailed description of the consonantal and vocalic system of each variety and ended the chapter with a description of the Dublin Vowel Shift. Although it could be argued that describing the whole system was not necessary considering that we only studied one specific vowel, we would like to argue that it proved all the more relevant for our understanding of the workings of each variety. Above all, describing all three varieties was necessary inasmuch as to study one isolated feature, we

believe that one should have a clear understanding of the sociophonological context in which this feature inscribes itself.

This eventually led us to our third and final part where we proceeded to describe as thoroughly as possible all the elements that would be involved in the analysis of our corpus and to justify the choice of the speakers. It is arguable that our corpus is not representative of all age groups from the north, centre and south of the city considering that we sometimes had only one or two – even none in the case of older northside speakers – informant(s) for these groups. However, we were able to select 10 younger speakers – 5 men and 5 women – for each area. We then included the few intermediate and older speakers from HICKEY’s inventory of sound files. To have more accurate data we do consider that one should have a decent number of informants from each desired sociolinguistic group but we were still able to draw some interesting conclusions with the small number of intermediate and older informants at our disposal.

The spread of the shift in the early 2000s was already noticeable in all areas of the city to various degrees. As expected, male speakers – and especially younger northside male speakers – displayed fewer tokens of *new* THOUGHT. To our surprise, our results contradict HICKEY’s description of *new* THOUGHT speakers as it revealed that high realisations for THOUGHT were older than expected – as was observed by LONERGAN (2015, 3) on a more recent corpus – and refute the fact that *new* THOUGHT is an innovative feature of the DVS *per se*. We lean towards an explanation of an earlier start of the raising of THOUGHT in *Dublin 4* and a continuation of the shift in *new* DE; however, our data cannot help us verify that trend.

All in all, this study of contemporary DE through the scope of the Dublin Vowel Shift has been significantly insightful and interesting to carry out. Not only has it enabled us to better understand the usefulness of a multidimensional framework to study variation and

change, but it has also helped us broaden our views on possible future studies that could be carried out on DE and on the Dublin Vowel Shift. Further attention should be devoted to accounting for the emergence of the raising of the THOUGHT vowel, but also to comparing our results with more recent data in order to determine the degree of fronting of FOOT in relation to the high realisation of THOUGHT.

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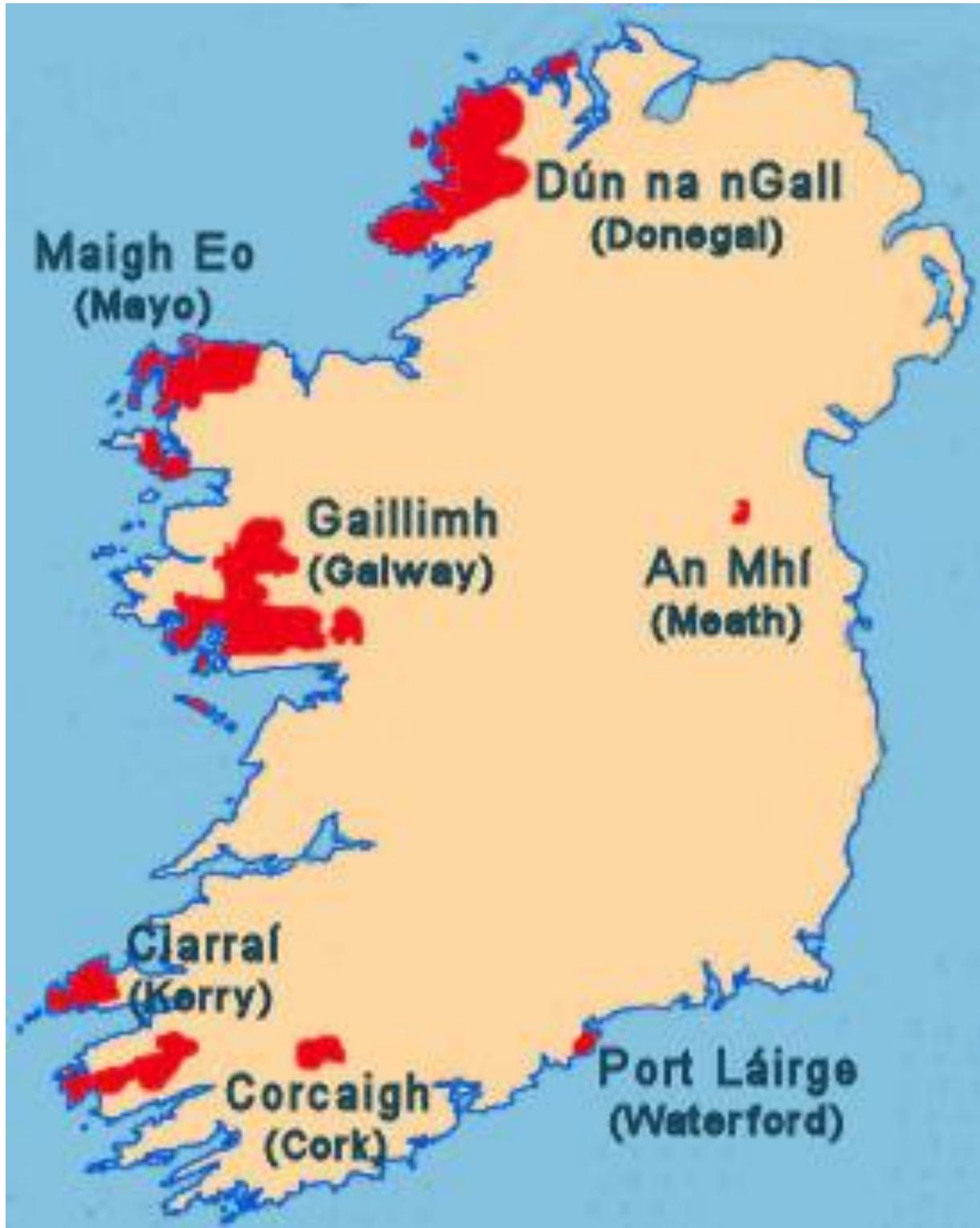
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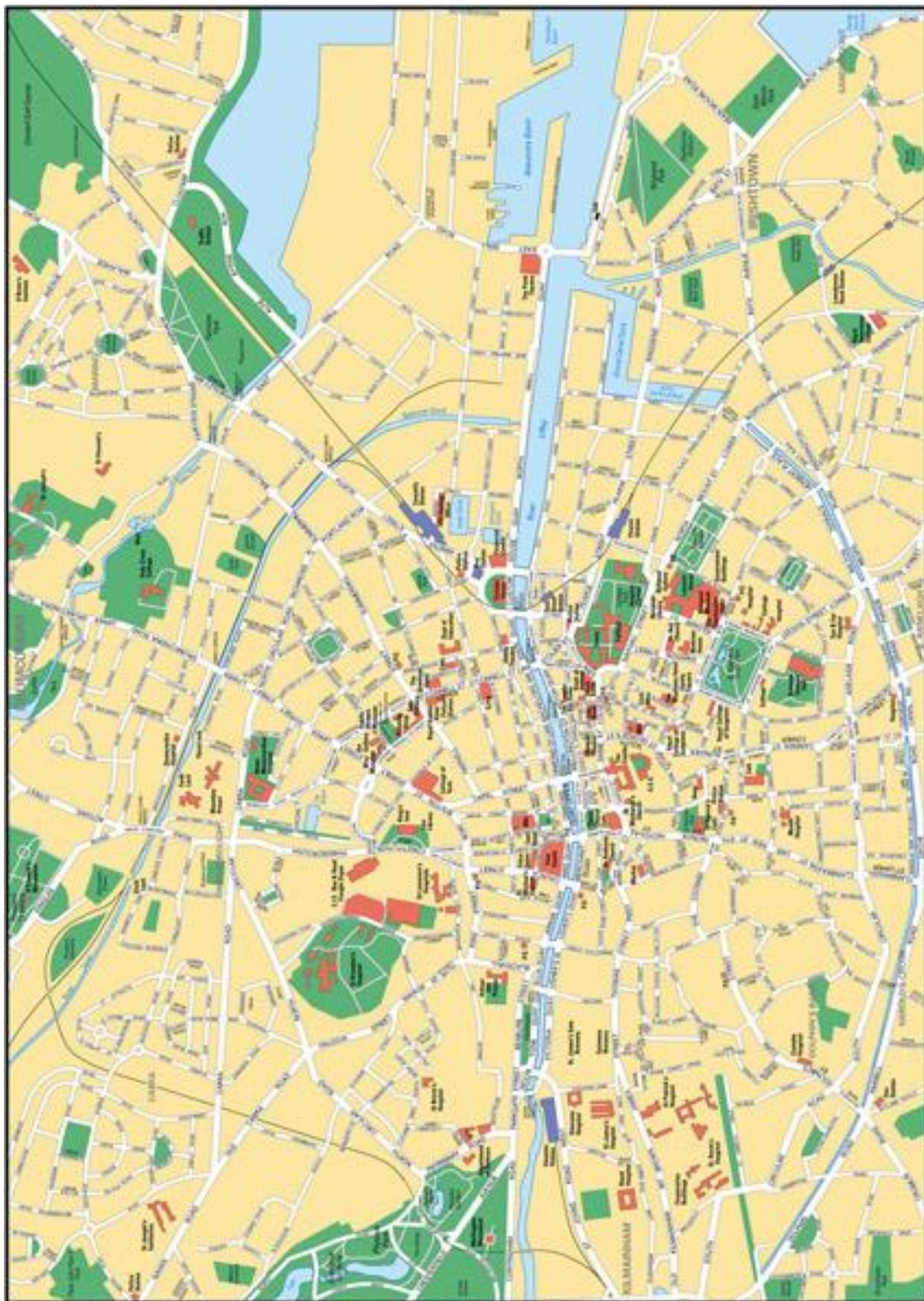
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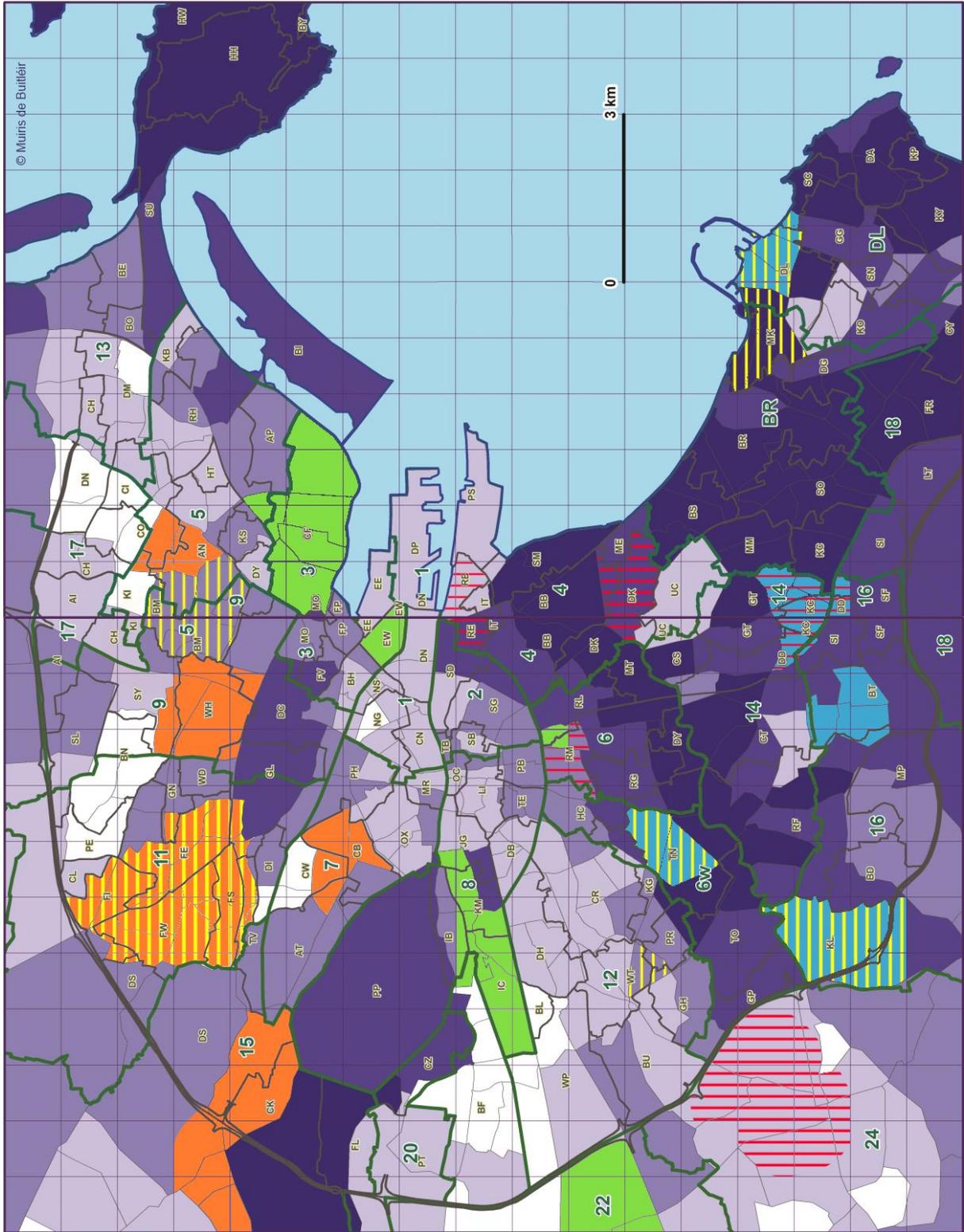
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Map 2.3: Inner-city Dublin and the River Liffey (43)



Map 3.1: Geographical repartition of the selected speakers in Dublin (80)

## Files Used for the Reference Data Corpus

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LOCAL	MAINSTREAM	NEW
DUB_Local_1_M	DUB_OldM_1_F	DUB_DVS_1_F
DUB_Local_2_M	DUB_OldM_2_F	DUB_DVS_1_M
DUB_Local_3_M	DUB_YoungMainstream_1_M	DUB_DVS_Moderate_1_F
DUB_Local_4_M	DUB_YoungMainstream_2_M	DUB_DVS_Moderate_1_M
DUB_Local_5_M	DUB_YoungMainstream_F	DUB_DVS_Moderate_2_F
DUB_Local_Moderate_M		DUB_DVS_Moderate_2_M
		DUB_DVS_Moderate_3_F

## Files Used for the Main Corpus

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	NORTH DUBLIN	CENTRE DUBLIN	SOUTH DUBLIN
<b>Younger (20+)</b>	DUB_Artane_M_20	DUB_Clondalkin_M_20	DUB_Ballinteer_F_20
	DUB_Artane_M_20_2	DUB_Clontarf_F_20	DUB_Dundrum_F_20
	DUB_Blanchard_F_20	DUB_Clontarf_F_20_2	DUB_Dundrum_M_20
	DUB_Blanchard_F_20_2	DUB_Clontarf_F_20_3	DUB_Dunleary_F_20
	DUB_Blanchard_M_20	DUB_Clontarf_M_20	DUB_Dunleary_M_20
	DUB_Cabra_F_20	DUB_Clontarf_M_20_2	DUB_Foxrock_M_20
	DUB_Cabra_M_20	DUB_EastWall_M_20	DUB_Knocklyon_F_20
	DUB_Castleknock_F_20	DUB_Inchicore_F_20	DUB_Knocklyon_M_20
	DUB_Finglas_M_25	DUB_Kilmainham_M_20	DUB_Terenure_F_20
<b>Intermediate (30+)</b>	DUB_Whitehall_F_20	DUB_Ranelagh_F_20	DUB_Terenure_M_20
	DUB_Beaumont_M_35		DUB_Dunleary_M_30
	DUB_Finglas_F_35		DUB_Terenure_M_30
			DUB_Knocklyon_F_30
			DUB_Monkstown_F_30
			DUB_Walkinstown_F_30
<b>Older (40+)</b>		DUB_Ringsend_M_45	DUB_Tallaght_M_40
		DUB_Rathmines_F_50	DUB_Dundrum_F_40
			DUB_Donnybrook_F_50

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