

The Beatles, Arctic Monkeys and Lily Allen – Dialects and Identity in British (Indie) Pop Music¹

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1. Introduction

Linguists have examined the language sung by British and American pop musicians many times in the last few decades. For one thing, their goal was simply to describe features of accents and dialects in songs in the first place; they then sought to embed their use in a theoretical context. Their purpose was to respond to one of the main questions in sociolinguistics, namely that of why dialect features were being used.

The concept of indexicality, or enregisterment, gives us a new explanatory dimension with which we can approach this question. As such, it is not surprising that both sung and spoken data are undergoing this new type of analysis. Since especially the third degree of indexicality in language contains an element of conscious and potentially ironic performance of dialect (cf. Johnstone et al. 2006: 83), sung or otherwise ‘performed’ language is particularly well-suited to illustrate this phenomenon.

While large-corpus (socio-)linguistic studies of sung language have been rather sporadic, pop music has long been firmly anchored in modern cultural studies (cf., e.g., Schinko and Huck 2006). Indexicality research is therefore not just a new way to carry out linguistic analysis of pop music. It also offers a link between linguistics and cultural studies.

In the following, I will first trace the history of linguistic research on the language of British pop music. At the same time, this automatically gives us a chronology of the bands and vocalists discussed, since older studies naturally dealt with older artists. Peter Trudgill’s 1983 study was devoted exclusively to Beatles songs, and to the punk rock movement of the 1970s. In his 1999 study, Paul Simpson gives a more wide-ranging overview of the vocals of following decades, whereas Joan Beal’s 2009 look at the music of the still active, successful indie band Arctic Monkeys was the first to apply (third degree) indexicality analysis. As the use of regional dialect increased throughout the 2000s, and linguistic research has focused mainly on male vocalists and bands, I

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will also discuss two female singers, Lily Allen and Kate Nash, whose accents have been a topic in both the British and American press. I will wrap up with a proposal for ways to make indexicality research a fruitful theoretical framework for linguistic analysis of pop music and other ‘performed’ cultural phenomena so it is no longer a sporadic and impressionistic pursuit but rather a systematic approach that provides links to cultural studies.

2. *P.S. I love you* - The Beatles and 70s Punk

In 1983, Trudgill observed that when British rock and pop vocalists sang, they would do so with an accent different from the one with which they spoke, e.g., in interviews or banter with the audience. Trudgill’s analysis is mainly in reference to the Beatles’ vocals, but he also looked at other British rock and pop albums from the 1960s and 1970s by the Rolling Stones, Supertramp, Dire Straits and the Stranglers. This sung accent is strongly oriented towards an American pronunciation model, which Trudgill (1983: 141f.) defined on the basis of six phonological features, two involving consonants and the rest involving vowels.

The consonantal features include the pronunciation of the sound /t/ in intervocalic position, which is realized in British English as [t] but in American English as the ‘flap’ or ‘tap’ [ɾ] in the default environment. The word *better* would thus sound more like *bedder* in the vocals of early British bands. Trudgill also finds that /r/-realization after a vowel is widespread in the examined material, e.g., in words like *girl* or *her*. Post-vocalic /r/ is generally not realized in British English, as the standard accent Received Pronunciation (RP) is non-rhotic. In American English on the other hand it is realized as a retroflex approximant, and thus this accent is said to show rhoticity.

Turning to the vowels, the focus lay on vocalists’ pronunciation in key words such as BATH, LOT, PRICE² and *love*. The vowel in BATH appears in British English, in words such as *dance* or *laugh*, as long, open [ɑ:], but in American English more closed [æ]. The LOT vowel, on the other hand, is more closed in British English in words like *body* or *top* ([ɒ]), but in American English is realized as an open, A-like sound: [ɑ]. The diphthong in PRICE words, e.g., *life* or *my*, is often pronounced as a slightly lengthened monophthong [aː], and the vowel in the ubiquitous word *love* becomes the centralized schwa-sound [ə], which Trudgill also calls an Americanism, in both American English and the analyzed music.

² Trudgill (1983) uses the notation Wells (1982b) established for accent descriptions, in which vowel phonemes are replaced by key words, so-called *lexical sets*.

Four of these features can be illustrated by the song “P.S. I love you” from the Beatles’ first album *Please, please me* (1963): the monophthongized PRICE vowel (*write*), the /t/-flap (*letter*), the pronunciation of final /r/ (*remember, treasure, words, together*) and the centralized vowel in *love*:

As I *write* this *letter*
Send my *love* to you
Remember that I'll always
Be in *love* with you
Treasure these few *words* 'til we're *together*
Keep all my *love* forever
P.S. I *love* you
[...]

Trudgill (1983: 143ff.) proposes three explanatory approaches to the Beatles’ phonetic adaptation to an American, foreign pronunciation model.

Howard Giles’ Accommodation Theory (cf. Giles and Smith 1979) states that speakers subconsciously adapt their language to that of their interlocutors if they would want to be identified with them by third parties, or to signal their good will to them. In the context of pop music, however, this theory fits only in a limited way, since the Beatles’ early listeners and fans, like the Beatles themselves, were British or Liverpudlians, i.e., people from Liverpool. Any influence by American accents would have been foreign not only to the Beatles but also to their audience.

Trudgill cites the concept of *sociolinguistic appropriateness* as a second explanation to the accent modifications. Different situations require different linguistic registers. Just as newscasters and priests, for instance, show context-specific peculiarities in their respective pronunciations, it would be conceivable for pop music singing to call for a certain linguistic style. However, this still does not explain why an American pronunciation model, of all things, should constitute the proper form in pop music.

The ‘acts of identity’ theory Le Page developed in the 1970s (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) is Trudgill’s third proposal and seems the most satisfactory for the time being. Le Page applies it to show that speakers try to adapt their linguistic behaviour to the group with which they most *want* to identify. In the case of the Beatles and other British singers from the 1960s, these would be American rock ’n’ roll stars like Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly. In the words of Trudgill (1983: 144):

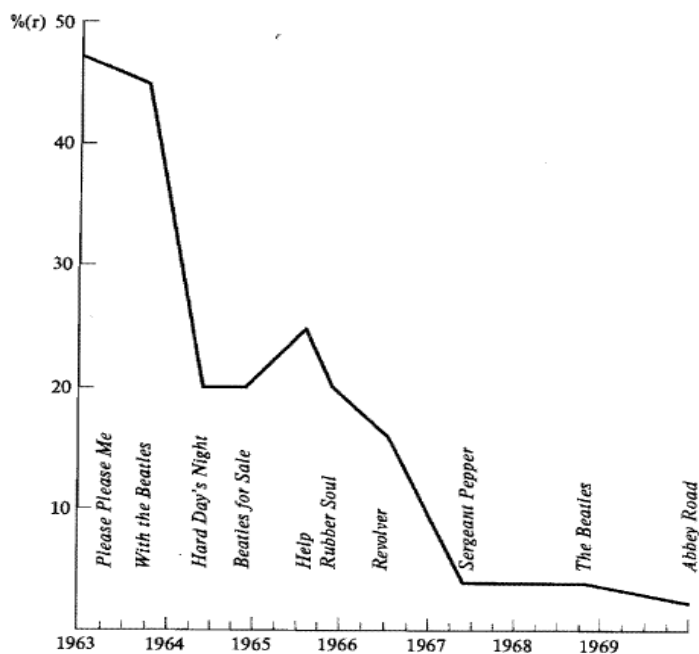
Americans have dominated the field, and cultural dominion leads to imitation: it is appropriate to sound like an American, when performing in what is predominantly an American activity; and one attempts to model one's singing style on that of those, who do it best and who one admires most.

By singing with an American accent, the Beatles and other singers follow a prestige model, identify themselves with the most successful leading representatives of the field, and thus participate in their success.

The sociolinguist Labov associates such linguistic behavior with typical markers, i.e., with linguistic variables whose stylistic appropriateness speakers are conscious of, whose realization in particular situations they can control, and which often lead to hypercorrection (cf. Labov 1966). Hypercorrection means that speakers use a prestigious marker too often, i.e., not only in appropriate contexts but also where not called for. Trudgill (1983: 149) and Simpson (1999: 347) observe that the linguistic imitation of the American model by British singers did not always succeed. In the song *Bachelor Boy* released in 1961 for example, Cliff Richard applies rhoticity both at the appropriate point in the line ‘Son, you’ll be a bachelor boy’, pronouncing the /r/ in *bachelor* according to the American model, as well as hypercorrectly after the article *a*, where it does not belong.

From an American prestige model for the Beatles, Trudgill (1983) goes on to find a continual decline of American features in the Beatles’ later albums as well as in British rock and pop music of the 1960s and 1970s in general. The following graph for instance illustrates the decline of the American rhoticity feature (pronunciation of a final /r/) in all ten Beatles albums between 1963 and 1971.

Fig. 1: Decreasing frequency of rhoticity in the ten Beatles albums (Trudgill 1983: 151)



At the same time, a new prestige model starts to emerge with the London working class accent Cockney. The vocal accent of 1960s rock bands becomes increasingly oriented toward a native British model during that period. As stereotypical features of this accent, Trudgill (1983: 155) identifies the following, among others:

Instead of /t/ in intervocalic position, pronounced [t] in standard British English as described above but in American as a tap or flap [ɾ], we now have the glottal stop sound [ʔ].

The diphthongs are subject to a systematic change known as ‘diphthong shift’. The vowel in words like FACE is articulated more like that in PRICE (e.g. *face* [fæɪs]) and the one in PRICE more like that in CHOICE (e.g., *price* [pɹɔɪs]). The diphthong in GOAT shifts to a quality more like MOUTH (e.g., *goat* [gʌʊt]). The shift is preceded by a breaking or ‘opening’ of the long monophthongs in words such as FLEECE and GOOSE. These words are pronounced with the FACE vowel (e.g., *fleece* [fleɪs]) or the GOAT vowel (e.g., *goose* [gəʊs]).³

Trudgill (1983) mentions so-called /l/-vocalization as the third feature of a Southern English accent model. The consonant is pronounced like the vowel /u/; the word *milk*, for example, becomes [mɪʊk].

The following table shows how, according to Trudgill (1983: 156), American features were becoming less frequent, while the glottal stop for intervocalic /t/ was becoming more common.

TABLE 8.1 Usage of ‘American’ and ‘British’ features (percentages)

	‘American’		‘British’	
	(r)	(t)	/æ/	[ʔ]
Rolling Stones	19	46	100	0
Supertramp	7	81	–	0
Dire Straits	1	92	–	0
Stranglers	0	88	80	0
Clash	6	71	24	10
Sham ‘69	1	57	50	9
Ian Dury	0	5	0	22

Fig. 2: Use of American and British features (especially the glottal stop for intervocalic /t/) by musicians of the 1960s and 1970s in percentages (Trudgill 1983: 156).

While the Rolling Stones are still heavily influenced by the American model, especially in terms of rhoticity and pronunciation of the BATH vowel, bands like The Clash, and Sham ‘69, or the singer Ian Dury, pull away from the overseas model. Trudgill sees this as a new self-confidence among British rock and pop singers grown out of the enormous success of the Beatles. The acceptance and pop-chart success of British bands in the US, beginning with the Beatles and carried forward by the Rolling Stones and Supertramp, was also termed ‘British Invasion’ (see Harry 2004). British music had acquired an independent validity, and no longer had to hide behind the old prestige model. This also shows in language use. Moreover, during the 1970s, the punk movement developed in Great Britain, growing in part out of the political climate under the Thatcher government. The movement spoke primarily to the young urban working class and was therefore addressed to a local audience.

³ All the words in these examples are from Wells’ *lexical sets*, sets of words used to characterize vowel phonemes (see footnote 2). Wells (1982a: 306–10) discusses the ‘Cockney diphthong shift’ in detail.

However, as the table in Fig. 2 shows, the American model did not die out completely during the 1970s. What the mixture of American and Southern English features (e.g., in The Clash) represents is – according to Trudgill – a conflict between serious rock star aspirations requiring an American accent versus the call to identify with London’s working class youth (cf. Trudgill 1983: 157f.).

An exception during the 70s was the singer Ian Dury, who by then had already consciously and consistently employed his Cockney accent. He is thus one of the first British singers to be associated with punk, who does not orient his accent towards the American model. His song *Sex and Drugs and Rock'n Roll* from the album *New Boots and Panties* (1977) not only exhibits the glottal stop sound in the words *Walter Mitty* and *fit* but also Cockney shifted diphthongs in the words *clothing* and *tailor* as well as /l/-vocalization in the word *rock'n roll* (see Trudgill 1983: 157).

In his 1999 accent study, Simpson tackles a larger time frame that overlaps with the one examined by Trudgill and extends into the 1990s. Studying British bands and singers such as Dire Straits (1970s/80s), Meat Loaf (1980s) and Sade (1980s/90s), he shows that the Cockney model coexists with the American model throughout the decades of the so-called ‘era of afterpunk’ (Simpson 1999: 356), especially in singers from southern England.

Simpson observes that features of standard British pronunciation have now also found their way into singing, for example in the work of Sade, the Stranglers, or Van Morrison. The vocalists’ pronunciation now becomes increasingly variable and less strictly oriented towards a single model. Simpson likewise attributes this to the more self-confident musical tradition that developed in England in the wake of the Beatles.

3. *Wonderwall* and *Mardy Bum*: Britpop in the 1990s and Indie in the 2000s

Britpop is the generic term for a musical genre represented by bands like Suede, Blur, Oasis, or Pulp that peaked during the 1990s. These bands brought British rock into the mainstream and formed part of the political and cultural movement associated with the media buzzword ‘Cool Britannia’: it was the first legislative period of Tony Blair, who became prime minister in 1997, with his ‘New Labour’ programme; there was an economic boom in Britain; the European Football Championship in which the English national team made the semi-finals against none other than Germany was held in England in 1996; simply put: they were good times for British self-confidence (cf. Ayto 1999; Huq 2010: 95f.). Performers lived out this ‘new’ patriotism on stage: in 1997, Gerri Halliwell of the Spice Girls performed at the Brit Awards wearing a Union Jack mini dress; and an on-stage hallmark of Oasis’ Noel Gallagher was his Union Jack guitar.



Fig. 3: British patriotism on stage: Gerri Halliwell of the Spice Girls⁴

One might be tempted to assume that this public celebration of English/British identity led to British accent and dialect features becoming more prevalent in the singing of Britpop artists. But this is not necessarily the case. For instance, the vocals of Oasis adhere tightly to the American model. In their smash hit *Wonderwall* from the album (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory?* (1995), they still sing intervocalic /t/ in *gotta* and *better* as a flap and pronounce the LOT vowel in the words *gonna*, *gotta* and *anybody* with the more open American variant. Furthermore, not only does Oasis' singing contain US phonological features, but *gonna* and *gotta* can also be viewed as morphological Americanisms.

For Simpson (1999: 363), the reason behind Oasis' 'conservative' pronunciation is that they sought to identify with the Beatles. This band is thus not harkening back to American rock musicians from the 50s but rather to the heroes of the 1960s, the 'golden age' of British rock. Although the lead singer of Oasis, Liam Gallagher, is a proud Mancunian and therefore a northern Englishman as were the Beatles, his singing is devoid of Northern English accent features.⁵

London-based Blur, a competing band from the south, offers a contrast in this regard. Damon Albarn, the lead singer of Blur, clearly demonstrates Cockney features in many performances. This is exemplified by the song *Parklife* off the album *Parklife* (1994), in which precisely the same phonological markers discussed earlier in connection with Ian Dury are evident: the words

⁴ Photos: Gerri Halliwell: The Wikimedia Commons user Tabercil (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Geri_Halliwell_in_concert_cropped.jpg) under a Creative Commons CC BY 2.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>)

⁵ Harris (2004) gives further possible reasons for the American accent in Oasis' vocals. Oasis was one of the few Britpop bands to become famous in the USA and had made a concerted effort at it. The alternative music industry there at that time was dominated by grunge bands like Nirvana, who may also have been a model for Oasis.

feed, *people* and *too* exhibit clearly open or diphthongized FLEECE and GOOSE vowels; the diphthongs in the words *day*, *safe*, and *devoted* are systematically shifted; l-vocalization occurs in the words *well-being* and *people*, and any post- and intervocalic /t/ sounds are glottalized (e.g., *bit*, *heart*, *devoted*, *it*).

In the 2000s, as Britpop was supplanted by so-called Indie Rock⁶, an even greater emancipation from the American model took place. Early indie bands prototypical of this genre are for instance the Arctic Monkeys, Kaiser Chiefs, The Cooks, The Libertines or Franz Ferdinand. What is special about this style of music is that not only has the standard British accent RP become normal in singing, but regional dialect is often used, too.

In her 1999 study, Joan Beal examines the language of the Sheffield indie band, Arctic Monkeys, on their first album *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I Am Not* (2006). In their music, American pronunciation features are non-existent. Instead, the lead singer of the Arctic Monkeys, Alex Turner, displays clear North English accent markers.

First, in Northern accents the vowels in both FOOT and STRUT words are identical (missing FOOT-STRUT-split). Both word classes are sung accordingly with short /ʊ/ (for example in *mum*, *pub* or *gun*). Second, in BATH words the vowel is articulated neither with a long open /ɑ:/ (as in RP) nor with slightly closed /æ/ (as in GenAm), but instead with a short front /a/, e.g. in *dance* or *can't*. Besides these typical widespread phonological features, Alex Turner also uses dialect expressions from Sheffield. In the song *Mardy Bum*, analyzed in detail by Beal (2009: 231ff.), the only reference to the dialect of Sheffield is the title itself. A *mardy bum* (with the word *bum* sung with the FOOT vowel [ʊ]) is someone who is quickly offended⁷. The song begins with the words ‘Now then, mardy bum’, *now then* being a greeting in Sheffield with the first sound in *then* pronounced with /d/ rather than the voiced th-sound /ð/ here.

In the following song section, Beal (2009: 234) identifies other dialect expressions:

Oh, but it's *right* hard to remember that
On a day like today when you're all argumentative

⁶ According to Wikipedia, ‘Indie’ stands for *independent* in reference to the independence of the production from big record companies and the practice of marketing bands under small, no-name record labels. The term does not necessarily indicate a definite musical genre but tends to denote guitar-heavy, melodious pop music. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_music, last visited on February 20, 2019).

⁷ Broken down literally, *mardy* comes from *marred*, originally meaning ‘spoiled’ but in Sheffield it has acquired the additional meaning of ‘moody, easily irritated’; and *bum* means ‘behind’ but is also used metonymically for people who are lazy (*lazy bum*, *beach bum* etc.) (see Beal 2009): 234f.).

And you've got *the face on*

The word *right* here is pronounced with the diphthong /eɪ/, which is typical of Sheffield English, instead of the PRICE vowel /aɪ/ of the standard. The use of *right* as an intensifier is another dialectal feature, as is the expression *to have got the face on* ('looking dissatisfied, drawing a face').

As with *Blur*, there is no sign of an adjustment towards an American model. Although one might think that local accent and dialect features are also addressed to a local audience, Beal (2009: 236) argues that Trudgill's accommodation theory does not apply here either. The main consumers of the Arctic Monkeys are students (Sheffield is a popular student city) who come from all over. Besides, it is striking that not all of the linguistic features employed by Arctic Monkeys correspond to the current local norm but are traditional—if not old-fashioned and reactionary—features familiar to everyone from Sheffield but which they themselves would not use (cf. Beal 2009: 231). By using stereotypical and thus even stigmatized dialect variants, the Arctic Monkeys 'perform' their Sheffield identity through their singing. Beal (2009) is thus the first linguist to associate this linguistic behavior with the concept of enregisterment or indexicality.

An index is a sign that points or refers to another. Accordingly, linguistic features index, or act as indicators of, certain social values and thus take on new 'indexical' meaning. Alternatively, one may speak of linguistic markers becoming 'enregistered': certain features become part of a register, a speech variety which is associated with and constitutive of a particular cultural or social context (cf. Agha 2003; Johnstone et al. 2006; Silverstein 2003).

The hidden prestige, to borrow a term from Labov (1966), of the Northern English accents lies in their image of a tough yet cordial blue-collar worker as it stands in contrast to a Southern English or London white-collar worker. A Southern English accent is a sign of a lax, rich "softie" whereas the Northern English accent carries overtones of cordiality, integrity and humour.

The use of the traditional Sheffield dialect by the Arctic Monkeys, according to Beal (2009: 230f., 237), is an index for authenticity as opposed to an unnatural, faux-American accent. For the Arctic Monkeys and other indie bands, American accent features are enregistered as subordination to a conformist pop mainstream from which they are trying to escape. The Arctic Monkeys want to be perceived as independent and authentic, and they signal as much with other stunts such as not appearing at award ceremonies. Information about the band members was barely publicly available at first, and their very first songs were distributed exclusively via free download (cf. Barton 2005; Beal 2009: 224). The use of typical Sheffield features in the 2000s also let the Arctic Monkeys to convey a certain defiant pride: there is no shame in coming from a

northern English industrial city. To the contrary, the city and its dialect have become cool.

For the Arctic Monkeys, an American singing accent would be stigmatized as an invocation of the negative aspects of a pop mainstream. But a heavy US accent can become enregistered completely differently in other contexts of course. The soul and R'n'B industry, for example, continues to evoke the classic American greats such as Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles or Stevie Wonder. An American accent might also be classified as authentic ('real') for rap and hip hop.⁸

4. *LDN* and *Foundations*: Lilly Allen and Kate Nash in the 2000s

The London accent Cockney will serve once more, this time as the last example of accent enregisterment. For Trudgill (1983) and Simpson (1999), the use of the Cockney stood first and foremost for a new British musical self-confidence, a cutting-of-the-cord from the US model, a music-against-the-music industry and political establishment (punk), and possibly also for adaptation and accommodation to the punk scene's young working-class audience.

In the music of Lily Allen and Kate Nash, however, Southern English markers are enregistered somewhat otherwise than Cockney was in the 70s. Both singers use a softer form of Cockney called Estuary English which has become so popular in southern England and beyond that it is considered to be the new RP, *i.e.*, the new British standard accent. 'Estuary' refers to the Thames estuary region, a vast area around London where this accent is the default form. Estuary English is also known as a mixture 'between Cockney and the Queen' (Rosewarne 1994: 3).

The following features are typical of the Estuary accent: as in Cockney, alveolar /t/ is replaced by the glottal stop [ʔ], and /l/ is vocalized. This means, *milk* is pronounced [mɪʊk] (see section 2). The interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are pronounced as labiodental fricatives /f/ and /v/. Thus the word *think*, for example, sounds like [fɪŋk]. Diphthong shift, on the other hand, is milder (cf. Altendorf and Watt 2008: 203ff.; Wells 1994).

Both linguistically and socially, the accent is a compromise between Cockney and RP. It lets typical working class Cockney speakers sound more educated, while typical RP speakers, often considered off-beat, old-fashioned,

⁸ Localized American accents and dialect expressions are particularly common in US rap music. 'Authenticity' has traditionally been, and still is, a very significant component of meaning in this musical style. In addition, rapped language is closer to spoken language due to the lack of melody. Accent and dialect markers can therefore be realized more easily and naturally in rapped lyrics than in sung lyrics (cf. Simpson 1999: 360; Coupland 2011: 575).

and ‘posh’, come across more amicably. However, such speakers are also disparagingly called ‘mockneys’, i.e., ‘wanna-be cockneys’. The social bonus that Estuary speakers derive from the accent is thus partially offset by a lack of authenticity (cf. Betts 2015; Farndale 2013). Lily Allen and Kate Nash are from well-educated, middle-class backgrounds and accordingly their use of Estuary markers has been rated as positive, as a kind of trademark, as well as negative, e.g., as ‘posh girls slumming’ (Christgau 2008), that is, as young rich women sucking up to the lower class.

How is the use of Estuary features enregistered now? Christgau (2008) in his radio report describes Kate Nash as ‘not insipid, not mealy-mouthed, but just nice’. She comes across as an intelligent, self-confident young woman who does not mince words and tells it like it is (cf. Day 2010). The Estuary accent seems tailored to expressing female identity *a bit* rebelliously, with a charming, not too outrageous or provocative-seeming directness, and to obtaining a certain amount of street credibility. The accent is therefore suitable for a proverbial nice girl next door, who is nice in the right, and not a boring, way (see Christgau (2008) ‘‘Nice’ done right’’).

As mentioned previously, both singers are from English middle-class backgrounds, which not only suits the accent of their vocal performances but also their lyrics and the themes their songs address. In the song *LDN* (which is texting slang for ‘London’), Lily Allen sings about crime and social injustice in London, distancing herself from the glorification and hype surrounding the capital. She is out “to do some social commentary and comment on pop culture [...]”⁹. In her songs and interviews, Kate Nash also ranges from ‘homebody’ (Christgau 2008) to social themes like sexism (cf. Day 2010). Both singers avoid being pigeonholed and strive for individuality – which a (lower) middle class accent like Estuary English seems ideal for.

5. Summary and outlook indexicality research in pop music

British musicians have adhered to various accent models in their singing. The dominant model in the 1960s was American, at a time when British pop music with the Beatles succeeded internationally for the first time. The singers imitated their rock ‘n’ roll idols from the United States as a way to associate themselves with the Beatles. This model prevailed into the 1990s even in the Britpop movement which firmly identified with its country of origin. As the bands and singers were out to imitate the heroes of the 60s, above all the Beatles and the

⁹ Interview with Bob Kenner for the magazine *Complex* on 14.05.2014, available at <http://uk.complex.com/music/2014/05/lily-allen-interview-guide-to-british-accent-video> (last visited August 27, 2015).

Rolling Stones, American linguistic markers became enregistered as mainstream pop pronunciation.

With the emergence of the indie or independent music scene in the 2000s, however, the American model increasingly came to be perceived as fake and hackneyed. Instead, general British and even localized accent and dialect markers made their way into British singing. An authentic, innovative artist's identity was constructed, but it was oriented towards traditional values.

Coupland (2011) believes that while sociolinguistic analysis of pop music as a mass cultural phenomenon is fully justified, in terms of enregisterment/indexicality research, one should look beyond accent or dialect. Instead, whatever 'meaning-making options' (Coupland 2011: 573) are found, i.e., any element the musicians construct meaning with, should be taken into account (cf. also Bell and Gibson 2011). With 'place indexity', i.e., the employment of indexical references to a particular locality, considerably more factors enter in than would be the case considering only accent or dialect. Other potential indexical features according to Coupland (2011: 581) are the scenery that the lyrics evoke (e.g., the back of the car, the street, home), the place of performance, or the place where the audience is listening to the music. Even the name of the music genre itself will often convey information about the values transported within the genre (e.g. Britpop, Country etc.). The content of the lyrics, the beat, the singing style, the look of the artists: these are all factors to account for if one wishes to grasp the indexical meaning of a piece of music. Thus the sociolinguistic perspective ought to go beyond phonological markers to not only the message conveyed but the social and cultural anchors of that message. And this gets to the heart of cultural studies.

From this wider perspective, the musicians discussed above display many aspects that reinforce 'place indexity' in the sung language. According to Laing (2003), Ian Dury's use of a Cockney accent does not simply serve to confirm an implied punk standard in his songs but also helped him portray typical London characters such as Billericay Dickie, a bricklayer from the East London suburb of Billericay. The character thus evokes the accent and vice-versa. Ian Dury, of Irish descent, was familiar with the subliminal racism Irish people suffered in London society. His use of the accent was therefore also ironic, as it was the language of the enemy, so to speak. Furthermore, as argued above (cf. footnote 8), accent features are more easily articulated in Sprechgesang, a prominent feature of Dury's songs.

Lily Allen not only sings with Estuary features, but the title of the song *LDN* is also an indexical element that points to London. Something similar applies to the Britpop band Blur: according to a BBC interview, the album *Parklife* was originally supposed to be called *London*. The cover of the album shows a dog race, a prototypical English leisure activity.

Although Oasis employs neither British nor even Northern English accent features, the band's origin is evident nonetheless: according to Joan Beal (p.c. 2014), taking the stage with a Union Jack guitar, let alone "that they are two brothers from Manchester who fight", is sufficient to evoke the northern Englishman and all the associated values, authenticity, etc. The Arctic Monkeys are a similar case. Here I refer to the article by Joan Beal in this anthology: the title of the Arctic Monkeys album *Whatever people say I am, that's what I am not* is from Alan Silitoe's working class novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. The album cover shows the typical Northern English 'pubgoer'. Beal (2009: 238) promotes a multi-modal approach to analyzing pop music as well as collaboration with musicologists.

Indexicality research thus offers two new, related outlooks for sociolinguistics. One is interdisciplinarity with cultural studies or musicology. The other is that it opens up an easily accessible corpus of 'perforated' language data that was left out of earlier sociolinguistic analysis. Qualitative analysis of on-purpose dialect use in songs, films, literature, on stage and in the media thus gains significance and can complement the quantitative analyses of unintentional dialect features that have previously defined the inquiry.

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