

Lexical Sociolinguistics and Social Networks

This first chapter is about social network theory, which was borrowed from the disciplines of psychology and anthropology and adapted for linguists by James Milroy and Lesley Milroy (1978) and L. Milroy (1980). Social networks – the kinds of relationships speakers have with other speakers – operate as conduits for language change, and in this chapter, two historical social networks are recreated and resultant vocabulary examined.

1.1. Introduction to Social Network Theory

Social networks, the number of other people a person routinely talks to, are divided into two sorts, weak-tie and strong-tie. Weak-tie social networks are where members are only loosely linked, such as the relationship between a shop assistant and their customers where language exchanges with strangers are numerous, fleeting, and one-off. Speaking to someone in one social capacity only like this is known as a ‘uniplex’ relationship. By contrast, strong-tie networks exist when speakers know each other well and are closely connected. If they repeatedly meet in more than one capacity, such as when a pair of speakers are simultaneously workmates, cousins, and members of the same church congregation, it is known as a ‘multiplex’ relationship. As a rule, weak-tie uniplex networks facilitate language change and strong-tie multiplex networks facilitate language maintenance (Milroy 1992). Establishing the social networks between speakers – that is, how they know each other, in what kind of social capacity, how often they meet, and under what circumstances – is now an accepted part of sociolinguists’ interview methodology but historical linguists rarely have direct information about a historical person’s social relationships. Nevertheless, social network theory can be used to make some hypotheses, and in this chapter, I examine the hypothesis that where a multiplex strong-tie network can be demonstrated, language maintenance is likely to have been operative. People who know each other well police each other, commenting on anything new in behaviour and comportment. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that in historic strong-tie networks

the predominant force would have been conservative, maintaining speechways among the members of a social network, preserving its cohesion.

1.2. Previous Scholarship

Social network theory has been one of the dominant sociolinguistic approaches over the last 40 years and there have been many present-day studies where the researcher proceeded by first identifying members of a social network and then investigating their language – usually components of their phonological or morphological systems. In order to gain access to a social network in Belfast to which she was an outsider, Lesley Milroy (1980) devised the ‘friend of a friend’ method of introduction. This has been widely adopted by other sociolinguists including those investigating present-day vocabulary, such as Mari C. Jones’s investigation into Jersey Norman French (Jones 2001: 47). By means of asking her initial informants if they knew of other Jèrriais-speaking adults, Jones succeeded in locating 50 native speakers of this dying variety who were willing to answer her questionnaire about Jèrriais words for the body, the household, animals, clothing, and other semantic fields. As an outsider, Jones would not otherwise have found it easy to locate and gain the cooperation of these informants. Historical sociolinguists have attempted to do something similar: first, piecing together a social network by asking the question who wrote to whom, and then scrutinising their texts for linguistic features. For example, Helena Raumolin-Brunberg (1996) analysed the presence of closed-class function words *you* versus *ye* (amongst other variables) progressing generationally in the correspondence of 18 fifteenth- and sixteenth-century London male wool merchants, finding that ‘On the whole, the wool merchant community seemed to have a number of strong ties in their social networks, which manifested themselves in intermarriage and business partnership within a family. On the other hand, merchants travelled a great deal meeting different people, and both cities, London and Calais, were places where loose and uniplex social ties flourished’ (Raumolin-Brunberg 1996: 96). Thus, she identified forces both for change and for stasis, reflected in the non-straightforward distribution of *you* and *ye* across the age groups.

Minna Nevala (2009) analysed 1492 letters written between 1763 and 1803 by and pertaining to three founder members of the Lunar Society of Birmingham: Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802, Charles Darwin’s grandfather), James Watt (1736–1819, inventor of steam engines), and Matthew Boulton (1728–1809, partner and financier to Watt), who formed a close-knit social group. The name referred to the fact that they met monthly at times of full moon in order to make journeying home easier – they referred to themselves as Lunatics – and their purpose was the pursuit of science, improvement of the lot of ordinary people, and abolishment of slavery and corruption (Nevala 2009: 81). Nevala was interested in discovering social deixis following Levinson’s (1992) concept of social deixis (see Section 4.2 for words conveying a socially proximal/distal relationship), as expressed by person-referential terms such as *Mr B*, *your worthy friend*, *poor Mr Boulton*, and the cline of formality expressed by *Messrs Boulton & Watt* – *B&W* – *Jamy Watt*. She found that in this social network of Lunar Society founders, bare surnames and *our friend* indicated social proximity and in-group membership, but that there was a change in the use of the term *friend* over time, from consolidating social equality prior to the eighteenth century, to use as a strategic tool in the eighteenth ‘when the writer has something to gain from it, whether it be an actual favour, a reciprocal act of solidarity, or an access to the

addressee's and/or the referent's in-group' (Nevala 2009: 96). Nevala thus found that *friend* shifted over time in this social network from having a proximal social force to a more distal one.

Terttu Nevalainen (2009) investigated the concept of seventeenth-century childhood by analysing 43 letters written by Lady Katherine Paston, who wrote more or less weekly to her son William who was studying at Cambridge over the years 1624–1627 when he was aged 14–17. Here, the social network consisted of just two people in a strong-tie relationship. Nevalainen contrasted the words Lady Katherine wrote to her son with those she wrote to her adult brother-in-law Sir John Heveningham. In letters to her son, Lady Katherine used the proximal pronoun *thou* (*thy*, *thine*) over 400 times as opposed to distal *you*, and lexemes *son*, *child*, *bless*, *pray*, *good*, *loving*, *dearest*, *glad*, *kindly*, *home*, *health*, *write*, which all scored highly when compared to a reference corpus of letters of similar date (Nevalainen 2009: 154). These words did not overlap in Lady Katherine's correspondence with her brother-in-law, where high-frequency items were modal and auxiliary verbs and lexemes *purchased*, *estates*, *penny*, nor in Sir John's to her, where high-frequency terms were auxiliaries and lexemes *money*, *farm*, and *accounts*. This may not sound like a surprising distribution, but Nevalainen's purpose was to discover whether parenthood was a concept in Early Modern England, as it has been questioned. Her lexical analysis reveals an intimate portrait of caring parenthood.

The research question for this chapter is: in a historical social network, can multiplex strong-ties be identified, causing language maintenance?

1.3. SWISS WAITER

Today the phrase *Swiss waiter* simply denotes a Swiss person employed as a waiter, but from the mid-nineteenth century to the interwar period, it had a more specific meaning as certain Swiss clans dominated the London and south-coast hotel and catering trade to the extent that the Swiss waiter became a stock character in fiction. Authors took it for granted that the readership or audience knew what a Swiss waiter in England was and how they were meant to react to him. For example, the cast-list of Arnold Bennett's play *The Honeymoon* which was performed in London in 1911 includes Gaston, a Swiss waiter, aged 23: 'There are scores of Gastons in the hotels and restaurants of the West End. He does not differ from the type' (Bennett 1911: 6). The character of the Swiss waiter was a caricature rather than a portrait, and the audience was expected to know the caricature rather than the reality. Bennett gives Gaston speeches that lightly indicate someone who has learnt English in adulthood, such as 'I suppose you stay here long time?', where a native English speaker would be more likely to mark the verb for tense and aspect with 'I suppose you will be staying here' or 'I suppose you are going to be staying here', and would use a fuller prepositional phrase such as 'for a long time' or a vaguer one like 'for a while'. In 1947, the great detective novelist Raymond Chandler wrote to the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* complaining about the changing of his punctuation:

By the way, would you convey my compliments to the purist who reads your proofs and tell him or her that I write in a sort of broken-down patois which is something like the way a Swiss waiter talks, and that when I split an infinitive, God damn it, I split it so it will stay split, and when I interrupt the velvety smoothness of my more or less literate syntax with a few sudden words of barroom vernacular, this is done with the eyes wide open and the mind relaxed but attentive.

(MacShane 1981: 85–86)

Chandler would have known how a Swiss waiter in England talked as he grew up in London from the age of 7–24, and he also acquired French and German in his late teens in Paris and Munich.

So how did a Swiss waiter come to be a stock character and how did a Swiss waiter in England talk? Or to pose the question in a linguistic manner, how did SWISS WAITER become *lexified* (turned into a two-word lexeme) and *enregistered* (enregisterment is explained in Chapter 7, it means ‘become instantly recognisable of a specific property or quality’, which in this case was humour)? To discover what lay behind the caricature and what it was that audiences were expected to recognise and find funny, I investigate the social networks of the Swiss dynasties which dominated the London catering scene from the mid-nineteenth century to the beginning of the Second World War. This approach is known to historians as *prosopography*: the comparison of biographies in order to gain an overall understanding of their commonalities and interactions.

The two main families were the Gattis and the Monicos. Carlo Gatti (1817–1878) migrated to England in 1847 from the Val di Blenio in the Canton of Ticino in Switzerland and although he may not have been the first Swiss to set up business in the London catering trade, he was the most prominent. When he first arrived in London, he sold *gofers* in Battersea Fields and Hatton Wall in the Italian quarter of Clerkenwell. A definition from 1876 describes *gofers* as ‘tea-cakes of the muffin sort, square, and stamped like net-work with the ‘gauferring-irons’; also described as a ‘vanish-into-nothing sort of pastry’ (*OED* *gofer*, *n.* 1). *Gofer* is from the Central French word *gaufre*, the Northern French form being *maufre*, giving English *wafer* and related to *waffle*, pastries with a honeycomb-network stamped impression. Gatti’s *gofers* became famous: *Lloyd’s Illustrated Newspaper* (17 January 1858) bemoaning the lack of things to eat at the Crystal Palace Exhibition protested: ‘until some good dining arrangements are made, the Crystal Palace will be under a cloud. [...] we would suggest a vigorous laying on of roasted chestnuts and Parisian *gaufres*. Signor Gatti, of St. Martin’s-court, might be trusted with the arrangements’.

Within a short period, Carlo Gatti opened his first French-style café in Hungerford Market at Charing Cross, followed by a café at 129 Holborn Hill, then a chocolate factory in 1849. In the 1850s, Gatti moved into selling ice cream to the masses – it had been an expensive delicacy, but in 1857, Gatti mass-marketed the penny ice cream, importing ice from Norway and becoming the largest ice-importation business in the country. In 1858, a music licence was granted to Carlo Gatti, his brother Giovanni Gatti, and their fellow countryman Giuseppi Monico for the Music and Refreshment Hall, Hungerford Market (*Daily News*, 12 October 1858). Gatti’s cafés were successful partly because they were comfortable: large mirrors on the walls, marble-topped tables, palms in pots, red velvet seating, and small orchestras. Yet, these were not top-end places; the food was relatively cheap.

Carlo Gatti opened further cafés and brought in a Swiss workforce from neighbouring villages including partners Battista Bolla and Giuseppe Monico, his cousin Agostino Gatti, as well as his brothers Giuseppe and Giovanni. In 1862, Hungerford Market was demolished to build Charing Cross Station and the brothers and cousins received compensation. They opened up a restaurant opposite the station in the Strand which was so successful that they were initially refused a music licence due to ‘the large number of persons that congregated in the premises on the Sunday, causing annoyance to the inhabitants going to and returning from the parish church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields’ (*Daily News*, 11 October 1862). ‘It would become what was called a “free-and-easy,” at which young girls collected’ (*The Standard*, 10 October 1863; see Newnham-Davies (1899: 69–72) for a description). In 1864, the Gatti relatives opened a music hall in Westminster

Bridge Road called Gatti's Palace of Varieties, known informally as Gatti's over the Water because it was on the other side of the River Thames and also as Gatti's in the Road (as opposed to Gatti's in the Strand). In 1866, Carlo opened Gatti's under the Arches under Charing Cross railway line in Villiers Street, consisting of billiard rooms, a music hall, and restaurant. Music licences were granted, but not spirit licences: at the Surrey Sessions, Carlo Gatti said that:

He daily supplied chops and steaks to bank clerks and others in the neighbourhood, and most of them asked for spirits. He did a good business, but he did not know what profit he got. He engaged the great Vance and other eminent vocalists, but he had not ballets to show their legs (Laugh).

(*The Era*, 4 July 1869)

As well as other businesses, Carlo Gatti and his brothers bought into a syndicate of music halls and staged nightly performances throughout the late 1800s. When Carlo Gatti (*Il Gatton*, 'Boss Cat') died in 1878, his principal heir was his eldest daughter Rosa (1845–1927), who married her cousin Giuseppe's son, heir to his father's London concerns. The second generation was led by Agostino (1841–1897) and Stefano Gatti (1844–1906), who were the sons of Carlo's brother Giovanni Gatti and his first wife Maria, whose maiden name was also Gatti (this was an especially tightly woven social network!). Agostino and Stefano worked in their teens as waiters in the Hungerford Market caf  s, taking over Gatti's in the Strand together with a neighbour from their village, Giacomo Monico, enlarging their Strand restaurant and employing around 200 Swiss waiters and 40 chefs.

Swiss waiters who went on to open their own premises included brothers Giacomo and Battista Monico in 1877 at no. 15 Tichborne Street, Luigi Reggiori in 1879 at 1–3, Euston Road, and Pietro Reggiori in 1883 in the Edgware Road. In 1877, Tichborne Street was a small backstreet and the Monico brothers' caf   there was not particularly notable, but in 1886, the Metropolitan Board of Works demolished numbers 1–11 and the houses opposite number 15 in order to extend Shaftesbury Avenue. The knocking down of houses at the southern end of Tichborne Street caused the Caf   Monico to now front onto Piccadilly Circus, and it became supremely successful, with Giacomo's two sons continuing the business. Caf   Monico attracted people from both ends of the social scale. In 1885, Police Constable Clouser attested in court that the 3 men on the stand and about 50 others had to be ejected from Caf   Monico for shouting, clapping their hands, and making a great noise, and when in the street taking hold of each other's arms, shouting 'University boys to the front' and driving everybody else off the pavement – university students were upper-class males from wealthy families at that date (*The Illustrated Police News*, 7 March 1885). In 1899, the First and Second Secretaries to the Norwegian and Swedish Consul-General were charged with being drunk and disorderly outside the Caf   Monico, slinging their sticks about, walking up and down, forcing people into the roadway, refusing to go quietly, and remembering nothing about it next day in court (*The Standard*, 15 August 1899). At the other end of the social scale, the newspapers report not a few criminals having their collars felt in Caf   Monico (*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 17 September 1877, t18770917-730; *The Standard*, 31 October 1890; *The Times*, 23 August 1901, 5 April 1907), and Swiss members of the network themselves suffered setbacks and committed crimes: Michael Zino was put on trial for stealing chocolate and cigars from Mr Gatti's shop (*Morning Post*, 31 January 1859); Luigi Monico, who had opened his own caf  , went bankrupt in 1899; Innocent Monico, fishmonger of Camden Town, was charged with receiving stolen goods in 1901

(*Morning Post*, 9 December 1899; *The Times*, 24 January 1901). At the Annual Dinner of the City Swiss Club of 1899 held at the Café Monico, it was reported that the Swiss Colony in London alone numbered 8000–10 000 persons (*The Standard*, 9 December 1899), and by 1900, Swiss-owned café-restaurants had spread to other parts of the kingdom.

So the Swiss waiter network in England became established as the result of a few dominant personalities and establishments – Gatti's in the Strand, Café Monico at Piccadilly Circus – and many more smaller ones. As well as linguists, epidemiologists are interested in social networks. In 1892, there was an outbreak of smallpox in London, and an epidemiologist named Dr Sykes tracked and traced the Swiss waiter network:

107, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. – On January 6th, 1892, H. J., female, aged 23 years, an English servant, left 107 Charlotte Street, a Swiss Waiters' Club, to go to a home in Paddington [...].

On January 12th, 1892, F. B., male, aged 19 years, a Swiss waiter, was certified to be suffering from small-pox. He had come to 107, Charlotte Street, on January 7th, 1892, falling ill the same day. He left a situation in Upper Woburn Place on December 29th, and whilst there, on Christmas night went to a dinner with his countrymen at the club, 107, Charlotte Street.

Enquiry into the probable origin of these cases elicited the fact that three persons had been ill in the house during the preceding two months.

G. A., male, aged 26 years, a Swiss waiter, came to 107, Charlotte Street on October 24th, 1891, from a large London hotel, where he had been long engaged, and was in good health at the time. On November 9th he fell ill with an eruption of the skin, and was in bed about a fortnight [...].

J. H., male, aged about 30 years, a Swiss waiter, was ill about the third week in November, and was treated for measles by the steward's wife for three or four days, until the medical attendant visited and pronounced it very mild chicken-pox on November 22nd, and on November 25th he had recovered, with no visible spots about him. He had been, and is employed at a London club.

A. S., male, age 23 years, a Swiss waiter, was removed from a foreign hotel, where he had been engaged some time, to a foreign hospital, suffering from an eruption. He was only detained four days in the hospital, and left for 107, Charlotte Street on December 3rd; he still had 'buttons' on his face, and he said he was suffering from measles.

(Sykes 1892: 177–178)

Dr Sykes detailed five more people:

J. F., male, aged 24 years, a Swiss waiter who slept at 109 Charlotte Street but dined and lived during the day at no. 107;

J. M., male, an English waiter who lived at 90, Charlotte Street, almost opposite no. 107;

D. M., female, aged 27 years, a Swiss restaurateur, living at 35, Oxford Street, who held a party there on Christmas Day;

E., female, a Swiss servant, who slept for several nights at 107, Charlotte Street;

H. G., male, aged 31 years, married, a Swiss waiter, living at 33, Gresse Street, Tottenham Court Road and working at a restaurant in High Road, Kilburn. H. G. started working there on December 23rd, 1891; the day before, he visited a restaurant in Church Street, Soho, and spent a long time in a public-house in Old Compton Street, where nearly all foreigners were present. On Christmas Day he went to the Church Street restaurant and stayed very late at the Italian Club Umberto, in Old Compton Street.

Dr Sykes concluded that smallpox had been imported to London from Switzerland and spread about there via this social network 'but the erratic movements of foreign waiters render its exact course of diffusion difficult to trace'. The variables Dr Sykes plotted were

patients' names, age, gender and occupation, their symptoms, their whereabouts, and the dates of their geographical movements. He found that the socially and geographically salient hub in the network was the Swiss Waiters' Club at 107, Charlotte Street. His careful network plotting shows that Swiss waiters in London not only shared family and neighbourly ties from their home villages and worked together in restaurants, hotels, clubs, and private houses, they also socialised together after hours in specific clubs and pubs, and although it was predominantly a young male network, he also traced two Swiss females. The London Unione Ticinese club founded in 1874 by Stefano Gatti only accepted male members but Ticinese females worked as maids, shop assistants, and manageresses in London too. This set of Swiss migrants maintained a support community extending over several generations with constant influx of young multilingual Swiss, who would have spoken their local dialects of Italian, French, and German. It was strong-tie and multiplex, but it was not closed as newcomers were constantly brought over from Switzerland to supply the demand for a workforce:

Want Places

Footman, or In-door Servant in an English family, Swiss, age 22, Good references. Can speak French and Italian – K. F., Gatti and Monico's, Adelaide-street, Strand.

(*The Times*, 19 June 1872)

Valet, Waiter, or Footman, – Wanted, a Situation by a young man (Swiss), speaking three languages, and well educated. Good appearance. Can furnish highest references as to respectability. Address C. B., care of Monico and Branchelli, 23, Aldgate.

(*The Times*, 12 July 1878)

Footman, or thorough In-door Servant. Swiss, age 18. Speaks a little English. Good personal character. – A. M., Café Monico, 15, Tichborne-street, Piccadilly-circus, W.

(*The Times*, 8 July 1880)

my husband was a most methodical man – as far as I know, I have been in his complete confidence all our married life – he spoke five language; his nationality was Swiss; he spoke German, French, English, Spanish, and Italian, which he learnt later – he was visited from time to time by foreigners of different nationalities – he used to help them to get work, and would give them money until they got work – he had done so all our married life, and I understood it had been so for many years before – he belonged to the Swiss Society for illness, which gave aid in case of illness

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 21 October 1901, t19011021-764)

The Swiss waiters were simultaneously workmates, countrymen, family members, and neighbours, sharing leisure time together in Swiss clubs and pubs and lodging with each other, often sharing bedrooms, and intermarrying. At the same time, they participated in uniplex weak-tie networks with the local English-speaking community they settled and married into. Their strong-tie multiplex network (a force for conservation) would have caused them to maintain the Swiss-dialect speechways common to the network, and their weak-tie uniplex networks (a force for language change) would have caused them to pick up English from the host community in which they settled.

So what do we know about the way a Swiss waiter talked? He (and also she, but Swiss females did not become stock fictional characters) would have been multilingual, not just in their home dialect and London English, but also in the other languages they came into contact with via the Swiss waiters' network, which would have been mainly dialects of French, Italian, and German. A Swiss waiter might never have spoken Standard English/Italian/French/German; rather he would have had a working knowledge of whatever dialects of

those languages predominated in his various places of employment. He may not have spoken monolingually anywhere, other than with fellow compatriots speaking his home dialect. His working-life and his leisure time would have been spent codeswitching with other members of the network, and *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online* reveal that unlike the experiences of the wealthy Gattis and Monicos, life for a Swiss immigrant in London could be harsh. He had to try to make ends meet and stay out of trouble:

Juste Masson. (*Through an interpreter*.) I live at 11, Arundel-place – in April, 1861, I lived at 48, Haymarket, and on 15th or 16th April, I deposited some money in the Provident Institution – this is my signature in the book – in May, 1861, I went to live at the Café Grec – the prisoner was one of the proprietors of that house – I had no position in the establishment at that time, I was merely lodging there – I went into the prisoner's service at, I think, the end of June – we were both lodging at the Café, and we slept in the same room [...] I was friendly with him, just as a waiter is friendly with his master – I had no salary; I was paid by fees by the customers [...] I do not understand English well [...]

Louis Thos Duroy. (*Through an interpreter*.) I know the prisoner by sight – I met him at the bar of the Swiss Tavern, Old Compton-street

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 18 August 1862, t18620818-857)

Philip Bettino. (*Through an Interpreter*). [...] towards the end of September, Giovanni asked me to lend him a hand in loading a van after the man was in possession – *Chin Chin* Maroni was present, and O'Connor and Pedrolli – some chairs, a sofa, a chest of drawers, and two small sacks, the contents of which I do not know, were placed in the van – I do not know who put them in – I was inside the house drinking my tea – [...] – we all helped to unload – a few nights afterwards Giovanni asked me to help load a sack – I refused – I did not say why – Giovanni went away – when he came back I told him I did not wish to go to prison for another person.

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 24 June 1878, t18780624-635)

In this long court case trying the Moriggia brothers for hiding their property from the bankruptcy court, witnesses testified:

'I know Giovanni pretty well – he speaks very good English for a foreigner – I can always understand what he says' [...]

A neighbour of Giovanni Moriggia reported 'I am an oil and colourman, of 171, Newington Butts, next door to Giovanni – Pedrolli called upon me in August, 1876 – I had a conversation with him – I knew him as Frizzy – he said he had left the Moriggia's and gone round the corner and was doing A1.'

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 24 June 1878, t18780624-635)

This is an indirect report of Frizzy Pedrolli's words but nevertheless 'doing A1' is indicative of the sort of colloquial lexis that foreigners would have heard from the locals they mixed with (*OED* A1, *adj.* 2. Chiefly *colloquial*. First-class, outstanding. First attested 1837, Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*).

Martial Faugeron. About six weeks ago I was standing in front of the Café Suisse, near Piccadilly. I had been out of work for a few days then, and I met there a woman whose acquaintance I had made in France. While I was speaking to her another man, who happened to be acquainted with her, joined in the conversation. The man with whom I was left took me for a walk for about half an hour, and then we came back together to the Café Suisse, where we had a drink. I told him

I had just lost my situation at the Café Monico, and I should like to find some work. He said, 'What do you want to work for? You can live in London without work; I can take you to a house, where three of us are in the habit of going, and which we are in the habit of calling "God's House." There you will find everything you may possibly want, provided only that you promise its owner to do as he directs.' [...] The deceased then went towards the door, to close it, and in the meantime he armed himself with a piece of iron in the form of an anchor. He then said that he was quite old enough to kill somebody, considering that his children were grown up and were working for their living. He thereupon threw the piece of iron towards me, and while dodging the blow I slipped on something and fell under the counter. When I was on the ground he came threateningly towards me, and it was then that I pulled out my knife with my left hand, opened it with my teeth, and gave the blow. When he was approaching me the second time he said, 'A good many others like you have done me before, you rascal,' and these were the last words he spoke. I say that I committed the crime, and I plead guilty to it, but I add that when I committed the crime I was on my legitimate defence; I never intended to kill him.

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 21 October 1901, t19011021-764)

As well as expressing themselves in their native languages and the colloquial English they picked up, members of the Swiss network used Pidgin English. Here is the Pidgin English construction *me no comprehend* in the reported speech of Carlo Antonio Grimaldi, found guilty of coining offences in 1852:

I sent an officer after Le Guardia, and I took Grimaldi – I told him I was an officer – he said, 'Me no comprehend'

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 5 April 1852, t18520405-373)

Here is the same pidgin construction in the reported speech of convicted murderer Giovanni Lani as he attempted escape on board *The Pride of the Thames* in 1858:

He made no opposition to the officers' searching his cabin, but when they told him he must go on shore, he said, 'Me no comprehend', and it was not until they threatened that force would be used, that he consented to go quietly.

(*Daily News*, 9 March 1858)

Montigni Alexander, found guilty of unlawfully wounding and breaking the peace, reportedly used the same pidgin construction in 1865:

I took the prisoner, and told him he was charged with stabbing a seaman – he said, 'Me no comprehend English' – I received this knife at the station.

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 11 January 1865, t18650111-172)

The Swiss-German suspect Charles Travis reportedly responded *me no comprehend* in 1882:

Patrick Keane (Policeman Y R 44). On 26th July, a little before 2 a.m., I was on duty, and saw Jacque standing at the corner of Station Road – I passed him, met another constable, came back, and followed Jacque and Travis, who was carrying two portmanteaus, a walking-stick, an umbrella, and a waterproof; and Jacque had a basket on his shoulder and a small bag in his hand – he had nothing when I first saw him – I said 'Where did you get those things from?' – Travis said 'They belong to me' – I said 'Where did you get them?' – he said 'From a friend' – I said 'Where does your friend live?' – he said 'Me no comprehend English' –

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 11 September 1882, t18820911-857)

Pidgin Englishes have their own internal linguistic system and history. There were two late Latin verbs meaning 'to know', *comprehendere* and *sapere*, giving rise to verbs *comprehend* and *savvy*. Here is the speech of sailor Ackumsha Allumsha, reported by the Second Engineer whilst on board a British ship where he had committed murder whilst insane:

I asked prisoner who had struck deceased and he said 'I no savvy'

(*Old Bailey Proceedings*, 17 July 1911, t19110717-34)

The probable route of entry of *savvy* is from Portuguese or Spanish *saber* into early West African pidgin (OED *savvy*, *v.*), known of in other pidgin varieties since the seventeenth century (Wright 2013: 250), and the route of *comprehend* is also likely to have been via Portuguese or Spanish. So, Pidgin English can be added to the Swiss waiters' linguistic repertoire of German/Italian/French dialects, and all of these would have been spoken in the Swiss waiter multiplex strong-tie network. The kind of English a Swiss waiter would have picked up from his weak-tie uniplex network once he had settled in England would have reflected the English he heard, and if he was mixing with criminals, then he would have learnt the words they used. Raymond Chandler's analogy of his fictional dialogue to that of the speech of a Swiss waiter evokes all of these capacities: multilingualism in three or more languages, knowledge of pidgin varieties, and familiarity with the words of local criminals. This is how Chandler wrote dialogue, not in the non-standard English/German/French/Italian/pidgin mix of the Swiss waiters of his London youth but in the Mexican Spanish/African American English/lower-class Los Angeleno American mix of his Californian adulthood.

SWISS WAITER occurred in literature from the late nineteenth century until the uncredited 'The Case of the Swiss Waiter', a short story in the detective-fiction magazine *Dixon Hawke's Case Book* of Autumn 1938. Here are some examples; notice the pervasive context of humour and laughter:

Irate Counter-Jumper – Say, garson, there is a hair in the entray!

Swiss Waiter – Mossieu, Thees is the 50-cent table d'hote. At the 75-cent you are entitled to a comb.

(*The Evening World*, 20 November 1888)

'Here's that confounded waiter again'.

Beatrice felt inclined to laugh hysterically at Berrington's sudden change of tone. The dark-eyed Swiss waiter was bending over the girl's chair again with a supplicating suggestion that she should try a little wine of some sort. He had a clean list in his hand, and even Berrington's severest military frown did not suffice to scare him away.

'Ver' excellent wine', he murmured. 'A little claret, a liqueur. No. 74 is what – will madame kindly look? Madame will look for one little moment?'

(White 1904: 13)

Little Love Scenes. The Honeymooners. There were just three people in the vast, dreary writing room of the Royal Celtic hotel, that old fashioned hostelry near the Strand. One was a pale, sad Swiss waiter; the other two were Mr and Mrs John Cogbill. [...]

Suddenly the clock struck five. The Swiss waiter started, blushed, and cinematographed out of the room. Mr Cogbill, puffing out his cheeks, stared through the window at the falling rain. [...]

The Swiss waiter returned, disarranged a chair, rearranged it, and struck a

Napoleonic attitude. [...]

'Yezzir?'

'How far would it be to the Crystal Palace, my lad'
 'Crysdal Ballees? Ah, I do not know, I ask the 'ead waiter'.

(*Supplement to the Poverty Bay Herald*, 17 February 1906,
 syndicated from the *Daily Mail*)

Earned His Dismissal The landlord of a certain hotel had invited three or four intimate friends to stay after closing-time and partake of supper. The subsequent proceedings were of a distinctly lively character, terminating about two o'clock.

Before allowing his guests to depart, mine host called his newly-imported Swiss waiter into the room, and said:

'Andre, just walk to the corner of the road, and see if there's a policeman anywhere near'.

At the expiration of some five minutes, Andre returned, and, with a majestic wave of the hand, ushered into the bar-parlour a grim-looking inspector of police, and said:- 'Excuse, sare, ze police vos not at ze corner, so I run to ze station and fetch ze superiaire'.

(*The Teesdale Mercury*, 14 July 1909)

A week after the liner 'Atlantic' had docked at Southampton Sam Marlowe might have been observed – and was observed by various of the residents – sitting on a bench on the esplanade of that rising watering-place, Bingley-on-the-Sea, in Sussex. All watering-places on the south coast of England are blots on the landscape, but though I am aware that by saying it I shall offend the civic pride of some of the others – none are so peculiarly foul as Bingley-on-the-Sea. The asphalte on the Bingley esplanade is several degrees more depressing than the asphalte on other esplanades. The Swiss waiters at the Hotel Magnificent, where Sam was stopping, are in a class of bungling incompetence by themselves, the envy and despair of all the other Swiss waiters at all the other Hotels Magnificent along the coast.

(Wodehouse 1921: 19)

As a literary stock character, SWISS WAITER was known around the globe by means of syndicated newspaper short stories and squibs. A *squib*, a sixteenth-century word for a firework, was used metaphorically for a short entertaining paragraph, part of the popular culture of the day (*OED* squib, *n.* 3. 'a short composition of a satirical and witty character'). Syndication meant that squibs were published globally by other members of the newspaper syndicate (Raymond Chandler had been a contributor to periodicals himself in his London days, Hiney 1997: 25–30). Funny foreigners speaking funny English were a hack writer's stock-in-trade and rendition of Swiss waiters' English formed part of the entertainment. SWISS WAITER in a short story or squib performed the same function as the laughter track on TV comedy shows, priming the audience: this is funny.

Here is SWISS WAITER in the writing of Virginia Woolf. She was an innovative author of the modernist movement, and she did something rather different with him:

Her tumbler of pinkish sweet stuff was set down by the waiter; and she sucked, through a straw, her eyes on the looking-glass, on the door, now soothed by the sweet taste. When Nick Bramham came in it was plain, even to the young Swiss waiter, that there was a bargain between them. Nick hitched his clothes together clumsily; ran his fingers through his hair; sat down, to an ordeal, nervously. She looked at him; and set off laughing; laughed-laughed-laughed. The young Swiss waiter, standing with crossed legs by the pillar, laughed too.

The door opened; in came the roar of Regent Street, the roar of traffic, impersonal, unpitying; and sunshine grained with dirt. The Swiss waiter must see to the newcomers. Bramham lifted his glass.

(Woolf 1922: 168)

This is a reuse of the same concept from a short story she wrote before 1919, although it was not published until 20 years or more later:

And she laughed and laughed; and he laughed too, so that the maiden ladies and the fishing man and the Swiss waiter in his greasy black jacket all guessed right; they were very happy.

(Woolf 1939: 90)

SWISS WAITER still collocates with laughter in her fiction but the reader is not invited to laugh *at* the Swiss waiter. He is not a figure of fun; his purpose is not to prime the audience for humour. Virginia Woolf presents SWISS WAITER and laughter together but uncoupled, just as modernist artist Picasso uncoupled the features from a face.

The answer to the research question as to whether multiplex strong-ties can be identified in a social network resulting in language maintenance is that the London Swiss waiter network consisted of multiplex ties so strong that intra-network non-standard mixed French/German/Italian/pidgin + English colloquial lexis speechways were maintained over generations, rather than the first-generation learning English and subsequent Swiss migrants swiftly following suit. As a result, SWISS WAITER came to stand for ‘a character who speaks funny English, a figure of fun’ because there were numerous Swiss waiters in London and South Coast resorts addressing diners in this mix, and before the days of cheap travel, they were the only multilingual speakers that monolingual English people were likely to have come across.

1.4. SOSISON VO LAND

Sociolinguists assemble informants’ social networks in order to track language spreading along it. In Section 1.4, I assemble another historic strong-tie multiplex social network in order to track the social development of some eighteenth-century pyrotechnical words. This was a network of London pyrotechnists, or fireworkers as they were known at the time, of Italian, French, German, and English origin. French and Italian-derived firework names were introduced to the English language via the translated publications of the influential French pyrotechnist Amédée François Frezier, and transmitted in person by Gaetano Ruggieri and Giuseppi Sarti. The fireworking Ruggieri brothers of Bologna had been brought to Versailles by Louis XV, and Ruggieri and Sarti subsequently came to London in 1749 to create a famous firework display at Green Park for which Handel wrote his *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. Along with their pyrotechnic skill, they brought their fireworking vocabulary, and they published a description of their Green Park display using many of Frezier’s firework terms, which were uptaken and passed on by London fireworkers of various nationalities.

Prosopography, establishing who the fireworkers were, where they worked and how they interacted, is the first step. In Wright (2011), I identified 20 eighteenth-century fireworkers and their households who advertised their displays in London newspapers. They were the Angelo family, the Brock family of Islington, Mr Brunn the Saxon, the Cabanel family of Lambeth, François/Francis Caillot, the Clanfield family of West Smithfield, the Clitherow

family of Moorfields (Benjamin Clitherow's wife and three children were blown up in 1791), William Crowder, Carlo Genovini of Westminster, Mr Goodship of Chancery Lane (blown up in 1722), the Hengler family of Lambeth (Charles Hengler's wife Sarah died in 1845 when fireworks ignited and she got stuck in a window trying to escape), the Invetto family (Antonio Invetto's wife and son were blown up in 1789 and his second wife was also blown up in 1810), J. T. Maccloud, Pietro Martinelli, Mr Masteaus, Joseph Neale, Joseph Rossi, Giovanni Battista/Jean-Baptiste/Morel Torr , Anthony A. Le Texier/Tessier, Mr Worman/Warman and his servant Moses Patence. Fireworking was a family business. Today, British pyrotechnists still band together as they sail on charter-visits to Chinese factories where they order up quantities of *pre-made pyro*, as they call it, as fireworks are no longer made in Britain and there are strict controls on importation. But if in the eighteenth century fireworkers wanted it to go bang, they had to make their own, and so they needed wives and children and in-laws and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, apprentices and servants to source chemicals, design, sift, weigh, test, pack, carry, set up, and fire. Creating and firing the fireworks for artistic displays at London pleasure-gardens was seasonal and fireworkers often collaborated, coming together to form temporary partnerships which would be dissolved when the season finished and new ones formed the following year. Pleasure-grounds such as Marylebone and Ranelagh would hire several partnerships interleaving on different nights. Partnerships reported in newspaper advertisements are listed in Table 1.1.

These partnerships demonstrate the multiplex nature of the social network, where members talked to each other in more than one capacity. In several cases (Angelo, Brock, Cabanel, Clanfield, Clitherow, Hengler, Invetto, and Worman) there is evidence that wives, widows, children, and servants also worked in the family firm, so members spoke to each other in the capacities of co-workers, household servants, and kinsfolk. In newspaper advertisements, Caillot was the main node, working with six other houses, Torr  with five, Clitherow with four, and Clanfield with three, but this is certainly an underestimation of the network as the Islington Brock family, for example, did not advertise in any newspapers that have been digitised to date and so are under-represented.

When advertising upcoming firework displays in newspapers, a common technique was to list the names of types of fireworks in their order of firing, meaning that these names appeared repeatedly before the general public. Individuals from each household carried these words to the newspaper office, either written down or memorised, where they were typeset in multiple variant spellings. For example, the firework lexeme *pot d'aigrettes* meaning either 'pot of spangles' (*aiglet*, from French *aiguillette*, diminutive of *aiguille* 'needle') or 'pot of plumes'

Table 1.1 London pyrotechnists' seasonal partnerships as advertised in newspapers 1745–1800.

Caillot	with Clitherow 1772, Martinelli and Mackcloud 1796, interleaved with Torr� 1773, interleaved with Rossi and Tessier 1791
Torr�	interleaved with Clanfield and Clitherow 1772, interleaved with Caillot 1773, with Masteaus <i>a.</i> 1776, with Brock ?1770s
Clitherow	with Clanfield 1745, with Angelo 1764 and 1769, with Caillot 1772, interleaved with Clanfield and Torr� 1772
Clanfield	with Clitherow 1745, with Rossi <i>c.</i> 1769, interleaved with Torr� 1772
Rossi	with Clanfield <i>c.</i> 1769, with Tessier 1787–1800
Hengler	with Maccloud 1796
Masteaus	with Torr� <i>a.</i> 1776

Source: Based on Wright (2011).

(*aigrette* ‘type of heron’, Kosanke et al. 2019: 491) had at least 24 variants, including *po’s dair greets*, *pots dargrettes*, and *pots daignettes*. The firework lexemes were transmitted by members of the network to the press, passing through two or more languages *en route*. Spellings like *pow de grate* for *pot d’aigrettes* and *pow de bran* for *pot de brins* ‘fireworks fired from a plank’ imply French words delivered by someone either speaking French or speaking English with a French accent to someone – in another household, or a messenger, or the typesetter – who did not understand French and who wrote down what he or she heard. At the typesetting end, anglicised spellings *flurious wheels*, *air greets*, and *tour balloons* made English phonological and orthographic, although not semantic, sense. English fireworkers did not necessarily know the translations; for example, Clitherow senior’s tradecard says ‘Pots de Gerisali, or twisted Serpents’, where underlying Italian *girasoli* translates as sunflowers rather than snakes. There is no evidence that the newspaper-reading public knew what these words meant either as they were not uptaken in popular prose, verse, or song, and had no extended or metaphorical usage. Certain variants can be plotted passing along the network from specific houses (with the caveat that there would have been others in the network whose variants have not survived and whose usage is not visible):

Airgreet: Clitherow advertised *pots de airgreet* in September 1755 and Angelo advertised *pots d’air greets* and *po’s dair greets* in 1766. No other house used the *airgreet* variant (with the caveats above). Clitherow and Angelo collaborated in 1764 and 1769, so the inference is that Clitherow passed this variant to Angelo.

Caducher: Clanfield senior and Clitherow senior and junior’s trade-cards alone use the term *caducher* rather than *caduceus* rocket, from the Greek term for a herald’s wand, which in Greek mythology was entwined with serpents. The trade-cards are not dated so who used it first and passed it to the other – or whether it stemmed from the same master – is uncertain. The Clanfield and Clitherow houses partnered at the New Spring Garden, Hoxton, in 1745, and interleaved at Marylebone in 1766, 1772 and 1773 (at least), so the variant was passed between them and from the first generation to the second.

Jerbes: As introduced by the works of Frezier (1706: 208), and Ruggieri and Sarti (1749: 9–15) and used by other houses, the French word *gerbe* ‘wheatshaf’ was spelt with a *g*-. However Angelo and Clitherow, Clitherow Senior and Clitherow Junior spelt it with a *j*-, passing from the first generation to the second.

Sosison Vo Land: introduced by Frezier (1706: 167) as *saucissons* ‘sausages’, the term became widespread but only Macklound and Hengler interleaving at Ranelagh in the 1798 season added the word *voland* ‘flying’, sometimes split at the syllable boundary. Macklound advertised it a month before Hengler did.

Tourballoons: Introduced as *tourbillon* ‘whirlwind’ by Frezier (1747: 495) and Ruggieri and Sarti (1749: 16), anglicised to *tourbillions* by the 1760s and still in use as such, only Clitherow and Clanfield used the *-oons* variant. Clitherow’s advertisement for *tourbillions* in 1751 is the earliest dated attestation although *tour balloons* appears on both Benjamin Clitherow and Samuel Clanfield’s undated trade-cards.

These words could have been translated. Newspaper readers, the target customers, could have been presented with orders of firing that read ‘sunflowers’, ‘spangles’ (or ‘plumes’), ‘snake-wands’, ‘wheatshaves’, ‘flying sausages’, and ‘whirlwinds’, but they never were. A scramble like *SOSISON VO LAND* was preferable, not in order to indicate the funny speech of funny foreigners but rather the fancy speech of fancy foreigners – for this is the language of a fashionable leisure pursuit, and the head fireworker was advertised with a glamorising title such as *Engineer, Director, Signor, Monsieur*. Just as restaurants to this day present the

customer with menus in foreign languages, where the customer is not expected to know what the literal translation of a Vietnamese dish might be, not having a literal understanding of the names of the component parts of the display was neither here nor there. Foreign fireworking terms – which were irrelevant to the pleasure-garden visitor, displays could have been advertised without them – added cachet: their function was social, not semantic. Long, and thus expensive, orders of firing continued to feature in advertisements well into the nineteenth century, demonstrating the persuasive power of social information.

1.5. Summary

An examination of the London Swiss waiter social network in the second half of the nineteenth century reveals a multiplex strong-tie network causing multilingual, pidgin, and non-standard speechways to be maintained over the generations, to the extent that the term SWISS WAITER came to function in literature of the earlier twentieth century as shorthand for ‘funny foreigner speaking funny English’, and continued to be used in this capacity for decades after the decline of the original Swiss dynasties. At the same time, Swiss waiters’ weak-tie networks with members of the host community led to the uptake of the words they heard spoken around them. If in 1878 the neighbours in Newington Butts were telling each other that they were *doing A-one*, then that is what Chin Chin Maroni and Frizzy Pedrolli learnt to tell them too. An examination of eighteenth-century orders of firing reveals certain fireworking households using certain words, or specific or unique spellings of words, so that lexical variants can be traced from house to house and father to son. The social networks acted as language pathways, and in both cases the networks were multilingual, multiplex, and strong-tie, so the force was towards preservation. Although the concept of the Swiss waiter in Britain is no longer familiar, to this day the terms *maroon*, *gerb*, and *tourbillion* are still used by British pyrotechnists, and ‘as late as the 1980s an Australian manufacturer of fireworks called his cylindrical mines, made for firing from mortars, *saucision shells*’ (Sturman 2020).

References

- Bennett, A. (1911). *The Honeymoon. A Comedy in Three Acts*. London: Methuen.
- Frezier, A.F. (1706) (2nd ed. 1747)). *Traité des Feux d'Artifice pour le Spectacle*. Paris: Charles-Antoine Jombert.
- Hiney, T. (1997). *Raymond Chandler A Biography*. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Jones, M.C. (2001). *Jersey Norman French: a Linguistic Study of an Obsolescent Dialect*, The Philological Society (34). Oxford: Blackwells.
- Kosanke, K.L., Kosanke, B.J., Sturman, B.T. et al. (eds.) (2019). *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Pyrotechnics (and Related Subjects)*. www.fireworks-mag.org (accessed 10 November 2021).
- Levinson, S.C. (1992). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacShane, F. (ed.) (1981). *Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler*. New York: Dell Publishing Co.
- Milroy, L. (1980). *Language and Social Networks*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Milroy, J. (1992). *Linguistic Variation and Change: on the Historical Sociolinguistics of English*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Milroy, J. and Milroy, L.M. (1978). Belfast: change and variation in an urban vernacular. In: *Sociolinguistic patterns in British English* (ed. P. Trudgill), 19–36. London: E. Arnold.

- Nevala, M. (2009). Referential terms and expressions in eighteenth-century letters: a case study on the Lunar men of Birmingham. In: *The Language of Daily Life in England (1400–1800)*, Pragmatics and Beyond New Series, vol. 183 (ed. A. Nurmi, M. Nevala and M. Palander-Collin), 75–106. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Nevalainen, T. (2009). Grasshoppers and blind beetles: caregiver language in Early Modern English correspondence. In: *The Language of Daily Life in England (1400–1800)* (ed. A. Nurmi, M. Nevala and M. Palander-Collin), 137–164. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Newnham-Davies, N. (1899). *Dinners and Diners: Where and How to Dine in London*. London: Grant Richards.
- Oxford English Dictionary*. www.oed.com (accessed 10 November 2021).
- Raumolin-Brunberg, H. (1996). Apparent time. In: *Sociolinguistics and Language History: Studies based on the Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (ed. T. Nevalainen and H. Raumolin-Brunberg), 93–110. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Ruggieri, G. and Sarti, J. (1749). *A Description of the Machine for the Fireworks, with All Its Ornaments, and A Detail of the Manner in Which They Are to be Exhibited in St. James's Park, Thursday, April 27, 1749, on Account of the General Peace signed at Aix-la-Chapelle, October 7, 1748*. London: His Majesty's Board of Ordnance.
- Sturman, B. (2020). *Fireworks Magazine* 63. www.fireworks-mag.org (accessed 10 November 2021).
- Sykes, D. (1892). The spread of small-pox. *Public Health* 4 (6): 177–178.
- The Old Bailey Proceedings Online*. www.oldbaileyonline.org (accessed 10 November 2021).
- White, F.M. (1904). *The Slave of Silence*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.
- Wodehouse, P.G. (1921). Three men and a maid. *Woman's Home Companion* 48 (11, November): 17–21.
- Woolf, V. (1922). *Jacob's Room*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Woolf, V. (April 1939). Lappin and Lapinova. *Harper's Bazaar* 73 (1): 90–101.
- Wright, L. (2011). The nomenclature of some French and Italian fireworks in eighteenth-century London. *The London Journal* 36 (2): 109–139.
- Wright, L. (2013). The language of slaves on St Helena, South Atlantic, 1682–1724. In: *Touching the Past. Studies in the Historical Sociolinguistics of Ego-Documents* (ed. M.J. van der Wal and G. Rutten), 243–276. Amsterdam: Benjamins.