

En[dj]uring [ʃ]unes or ma[tj]ure [dʒ]ukes? Palatalisation in eighteenth-century English: Evidence from the Eighteenth-Century English Phonology Database

Joan C. Beal & Ranjan Sen
University of Sheffield

9th Studies in the History of the English Language Conference (SHEL-9)
UBC, Vancouver, 5-7 June 2015

The evidence....

- ‘The eighteenth century produced no writers to compare either with the spelling reformers who are our main source up to 1644... or with the phoneticians who... carry us on from 1653... to 1687’ (Dobson 1957: 311)
- REALLY?
- ‘Five times as many works on elocution were published between 1760 and 1800 than prior to 1760’ (Benzie 1972: 52)
 - Pronouncing Dictionaries, e.g. Walker (1791)
 - Orthoepistic works (spelling books, works on spelling reform), e.g. Elphinston (1786/7, 1790)
 - Elocution manuals, e.g. Sheridan (1762)
 - Grammars, e.g. Ward (1765)

ECEP: Eighteenth-Century English Phonology database

- Project website: <http://hridigital.shef.ac.uk/eighteenth-century-english-phonology>
- Aims and scope
 - Resource to investigate the social, geographical, chronological, phonological, and lexical distribution of variants in 18C English
- Team
 - Joan C. Beal, Ranjan Sen, Nuria Yáñez-Bouza, Christine Wallis, Technical support: Sheffield HRI
- Data
 - Wells’ (1982) lexical sets for vocalic variation and supplementary sets for consonant variation e.g. DEUCE set, WHALE set
- Metadata on authors (e.g. dates, place, social class) and works (e.g. year, place, type, audience)

3

Online interface

The screenshot shows the ECEP online interface. At the top, there are navigation links: ECEP, Authors, Works, Lexical Sets, Download CSV, and About. A search bar is on the right. The main heading is 'Eighteenth-Century English Phonology Database'. Below that, it says 'ECEP Database :: All Lexical Sets'. There is a 'Show 10 entries' dropdown and a 'Filter:' field. The table below has columns for Lexical Category, Subset, Keywords, IPA, MetaComments, Notes, exx, Attitudes, and Labels. Two rows are visible:

Lexical Category	Subset	Keywords	IPA	MetaComments	Notes, exx	Attitudes	Labels
View Work	FORCE	FORCE_a	floor	c:	Walker quoting Sheridan re Irishisms.	Headword FLOOR. Awareness of variation: /a:/ and /ʌ:/, the latter officialised. See also paragraph 310.	Negative, Irishism,
View Work	BATH	BATH_c	caff	a:	Walker quoting Sheridan re Irishisms.	Headword CAFF. Awareness of variation: /a:/ and /ɒ:/, the latter	Negative, Irishism,

DEUCE set		SURE/FEATURE sets	
Year	Palatalisation	Year	Palatalisation
1700	...	1700	...
1710	...	1710	...
1720	...	1720	...
1730	...	1730	...
1740	...	1740	...
1750	...	1750	...
1760	...	1760	...
1770	...	1770	...
1780	...	1780	...
1790	...	1790	...
1800	...	1800	...

Postalveolar affricate/fricative arising from:

/t d s z/
+ /j/
+ /u:/

We leave aside palatalisation in /t d s z + i e/ via glide-formation, e.g. *soldier*

DEUCE set = no following /r/
SURE/FEATURE sets = with following /r/

The Starting Point

- Minkova (2014: 141-5) on palatalisations
 - Evidence for it in /sj/ from the 13th cent.
 - But in /tj dj/ only from 16th or 17th cents
 - Interestingly, from /di/, e.g. *soldier*, rather than /dju:/
- Sound change well underway by start of 18th cent.

Analysing the Data (1): Chronology and stigmatisation

- Less common → more common → less common
- Sheridan (1780; late in career) the arch-palataliser
- Walker (1791): predictable, 'rule'-based
- Even less in Jones' (1797 and 1798) *Sheridan Improved*
 - Fascinating changes from more palatalising 2nd ed. to less 3rd ed.
- Reconstructed picture of first half of 18th cent.
 - Yod-dropping in unstressed syllables before /r/
 - Variable palatalisation, mainly (i) in unstressed syllables, (ii) in /s/, (iv) before /r/

Analysing the Data (1): Chronology

- 1750-1775: only /s z/, only before /r/
 - Except Perry (*tissue*)
- Kenrick (1773: 32):

sons, but because a very general custom prevails, even among the politeſt ſpeakers, of giving the *r* alone the force of *ch* in many words, ſuch as *nature*, *creature*, &c. which are pronounced *nachure*, *creachure*, and that too *euphoniæ gratia*.

For my own part, nevertheless, I cannot diſcover the euphony; and though the contrary mode be reprobated, as vulgar, by certain mighty fine ſpeakers, I think it more conformable to the general ſcheme of Engliſh pronunciation; for though, in order to make the word

they are more quickly or ſlowly pronounced. But why the *r*, when followed by neither *i* nor *e*, is to take the form of *ch*, I cannot conceive: it is my opinion, a ſpecies of affectation that ſhould be diſcountenanced; unleſs we are to impute it to the tendency in the metropolitan pronunciation of prefacing the ſound of *n* with a *y* conſonant; or, which is the ſame thing, converting the *r* or *s* preceding into *ch* or *zh*, as in *nature*, *meſſure*, &c. Theſe

Sheridan (1780; late in career): The arch-palataliser

- Came to be stigmatised over the century
- Sheridan repeatedly singled out for criticism on precisely this issue, e.g. Anonymous 'A Caution'

C A U T I O N
TO GENTLEMEN WHO USE
SHERIDAN'S DICTIONARY.
The errors which expose his system to the censure and ridicule of the learned, I attribute to habitual influence. He was an IRISHMAN;

Nature, torture, tortuous, saturate, censure, super, sumptuously, suture

But palatalisation not one of the 'Irish' features represented in 19th-century literature (Hickey 2012)

'His dictionary... is not worth sixpence... the book may be considered rather as a national disgrace than ornament' (18-19)

Walker's (1791) rules

- Data
 - Stressed: /s/ before /r/: *sure* and related words
 - Pre-stress: derived alternation in /t s/: *maturátion, tutórial*
 - Post-stress: fricatives, and /t d/ only before hiatus or /r/
- Principles
 - 376, 450, 459-64: /t d s z/ when 'after the accent' palatalised before /i/e-initial diphthongs, 'where it must be remembered that *u* is a diphthong' (approving of Sheridan's *nature*)
 - 376: '*Duke* and *reduce*, pronounced *juke* and *re-juce*, where the accent is after the *d*, cannot be too much reprobated'
 - 454-5: *súre, súgar* are the only permitted exceptions to this 'analogy (= rule) due to 'custom'
 - 'a want of attending to this analogy has betrayed Mr. Sheridan into a series of mistakes' in *suicide, presume, resume*; 'it may be asked why is not *suit*... pronounced *shoo*'... 'Mr Sheridan's greatest fault'

Jones (1797 2nd ed., 1798 3rd ed.)

The foregoing are instances, among others, in which that celebrated Orator is inconsistent with himself: but in examples like the following, it is strongly to be presumed that he is erroneous upon principle, and his misconceptions are therefore the more carefully to be avoided: The word *convey* is marked by Mr. Sheridan *kón-vé*, as if pronounced *convee*; *hair*, as if pronounced *eere*; *reign*, *reen*; *lawfuit*, *lawfhoote*; *latitude*, *latishude*; *covetous*, *coveshoo*; *mediocrity*, *mejokriety*; *viciate*, *vishate*; *zodiac*, *zajak*; *satisty*, *fosfety*; *perfusion*, *proffusion*; *tune*, *sfoon*, &c. &c.; and this system has corrupted the pronunciation of one of the most favourite comedians of the present day, who, I observe, whenever the word *tutor* occurs in his part invariably pronounces it *issoor*. With equal propriety might Mr. S. have marked *due* to be pronounced *djood*, or *juvel*.

Jones 1798: iv, developing 1797: viii

"It must be confessed, that Mr. Sheridan's Dictionary is greatly superior to any thing that preceded it; but here sincerity obliges me to stop. Numerous instances of impropriety, inconsistency, and want of acquaintance with the analogies of the language, sufficiently show how imperfect his Dictionary is upon the whole, and what ample room was left for attempting another, that might better answer the purpose of a guide to pronunciation. His credit with the world necessarily subjects him to animadversion, because the errors of such a writer are dangerous in proportion to his reputation."

WALKER.

3rd ed. has this quotation on the page immediately following the title page. In 2nd ed. this page is blank.

Jones (1797 2nd ed., 1798 3rd ed.)

- Jones 3 eliminates palatalised:
 - Stressed syllable, e.g. [sj]uture
 - Unstressed /t/ if not before /r/ (so restricting further than Walker), e.g. *punc[tj]ual*
 - Unstressed /t/ before onset /r/, e.g. *cen[tj]ury* vs. *feature*
 - Unstressed /d/, e.g. *proce[dj]ure*
 - also: j-dropping, even when palatalised, e.g. *i[lj]ue > i[jj]ue*
 - except sporadically unstressed before /r/, e.g. *censure, future, pleasure*
- Jones 3 retains palatalised (+ yod):
 - Unstressed /s/
 - Stressed /s/ before /r/, but not onset /r/ in *assurance*
- Jones 3 adds palatalised:
 - Unstressed /z/, e.g. *casual*
 - Stressed /s/ in *supine*
 - Pre-stress /t/ alternation (like Walker), e.g. *maturation*

Analysing the Data (1): Chronology

- ‘First’ yod-dropping only in earlier sources
 - Notably in all phonemes in unstressed syllables before /r/, e.g. *century, verdure, censure, seizure, creature, procedure, treasure*
 - Mostly in Buchanan, Johnston, Kenrick, Perry
 - Spence (1775) is latest to do this
- Then ‘second’ yod-dropping in later sources
 - Any phoneme in stressed syllable
 - Sheridan (1780) is earliest, only 1 e.g. *dual*
 - Scott (1786) is arch-stressed-yod-dropper, mostly in fricatives, but variants in /d/ recognised
 - Clearly only most frequent words
 - /d/ *duke, duty*, /s z/ top half of items listed by frequency

Analysing the Data (2) : Geography

- Difficult to separate from chronology/stigmatisation
- Sheridan (of course!) Irish: most palatalisation
- Little palatalisation in Scottish sources
 - Buchanan (1757) and notably Scott (1786) have no palatalised forms whatsoever
 - Perry (1775) only in unstressed /s/, all fricatives before /r/
- Spence (1775) from Newcastle: also little
 - Only stressed /s/ + unstressed /z/ before /r/
- Recall Kenrick’s ‘metropolitan pronunciation’ with yod and/or palatalised C
 - Restitution of yod led to more palatalised variants

Analysing the Data (3): Stress

- Stressed: DEUCE_a, SURE_a
 - Palatalisation generally resisted
 - As noted by Walker
 - Exception SURE_a /s/, e.g. *sure*: see (4) Rhoticity
- Post-stress: DEUCE_b, SURE_b, FEATURE
 - Most common context, sensitive to (5) Phoneme
 - As noted by Walker
 - Also most common context for yod-dropping: see (1) Chronology
- Pre-stress: DEUCE_c, SURE_c (less data)
 - Palatalisation arguably resisted more than in _b, but see (5) Phoneme for patterns
 - Walker (+ Jones 3) stress-sensitive: [tj]útor but [ʃj]utórial, mó[dj(i)]ule but variant mo[dʒj]ulátion, ma[tj]úre but ma[ʃj]urátion

Analysing the Data (4): Rhoticity

- All sources are consistently rhotic
- Significantly more palatalisation when /r/ follows (SURE-FEATURE) than when /r/ does not (DEUCE)
 - Walker, Sheridan, Kenrick, Perry, Jones
- Especially when post-stress (SURE_b, FEATURE)
 - Even Spence /z/ (*clo[3]ure, plea[3]ure*), but not /t d s/ (*nature, procedure, pressure*)
- Palatalised forms lexicalised in PDE, e.g. *pleasure*
 - PDE-based categorisation SURE_b (full V) vs. FEATURE (schwa) seems to be frequency-based
 - e.g. maxima SURE_b: *censure* (8) vs. FEATURE: *nature* (196)
 - Some differences between them (V quality, palatalisation in /t/) discernable in 18th cent.
- Yod-dropping before /r/: see (1) Chronology

Analysing the Data (4): Rhoticity

- Especially in /s/: even when stressed (SURE_a)
 - Even Kenrick, Perry, Spence /s/: [ʃ(i)] in *sure*, *surety*
- /t d/ resisted when stressed
 - *ma[tj]ure*, [dj]ure, vs. [ʃ(j)]ure
 - Sheridan *fu[ʃj]úriti* analogical on *fú[ʃj]ure*
 - But note absence of word-initial /t/ in SURE_a
 - Context where /t/ is palatalised in DEUCE_a set
- Some resistance post-stress (SURE_c)
 - No palatalisation in /d/ (3 words)
 - Only Walker and Jones₃ in *ma[ʃj]uráti* (not Sheridan!): (despite) analogy on stressed *ma[tj]úre*
 - More common in /s/ again? Perry, Sheridan, Walker, Jones₃ in *mensuráti*

Analysing the Data (4): Rhoticity

- Why should following /r/ cause palatalisation?
- Anticipatory assimilation to post-alveolar tongue position of /r/? (cf. assimilation in *fi[dʒ]u[ʃ]iary*)
 - Perhaps even before 'clear' coda /r/ not 'dark' onset /r/
 - As in Jones₃, where palatalisation before coda only
 - Cf. opposite clear onset /l/ vs. dark coda /l/ (Carter 2003, Carter & Local 2007)
- Breaking/diphthongisation of vowel before /r/
 - Sporadic instances in 2 or 3 dictionaries (not always same ones): *Pour*, *resource*, *quart*, *quarter*, *near*, *pierce*
 - Leading to overlong triphthongal nucleus [juə]
 - Simplified by preferring palatalised C + /ʊə/
 - 'Clear' coda /r/ might explain why back /u/ breaks, as well as front /i/

Analysing the Data (5): Phoneme

DEUCE_A (STRESSED): PHONEME, POSITION, FREQUENCY

- /t/ only Sheridan, word-initially: [ʃ]une ~ a[tj]une
- /d/ resisted: Sheridan/Walker_var only in *fi[dʒ]uciary/-ial*
 - Assimilatory: -cia-? Recall rhoticity assimilation
 - j-drop variants/forms in most frequent (Scott) *duke*, *duty*, and before hiatus? (Sheridan, Jones₂) *dual*, but not *duel*
- /s/ mainly Sheridan, word-initially, less frequent words (or just not *suit-*): [s]uit ~ a[sj]ume ~ [ʃ]uicide
 - j-drop forms in most frequent (Scott) *suit*, *assume*, *suitable*, *consume*, *suitor*, *suicide*
- /z/ only Sheridan, all positions: *pre[ʒ]ume* ~ [ʒ]eugma
 - Exception *exuberant*: probably analysed prefix + stem-initial /u:/
 - Cf. Walker Principle 454 on *ex* as first syllable of *exercice* and *exért*
 - j-drop forms in most frequent (Scott) *presume*, *resume*

Analysing the Data (5): Phoneme

DEUCE_B (POST-STRESS): MORE COMMON IN /s z/ THAN /t d/

- /t/ Walker, Sheridan, Jones mainly before hiatus: *punctual*, *sanctuary*
- /d/ Walker before hiatus (*arduous*, *gradual_var*)
- Sheridan /dʒo/ in *module,-ate* (DEUCE_b), *-ation* (DEUCE_c)
 - Cf. j-drop in Kenrick [dɪ] and Buchanan [dʌ]
 - Walker emphasises [dʒi] in variant pronunciation
 - Distinguish from *model*?
 - Very low frequency; very non-palatal [back] environment, inc. dark /l/ in *module* (derived forms palatalised by analogy?)
- /s z/ near-regular palatalisation in Walker, Sheridan, Perry, Jones
 - *ca[zj]ual(ty)* in Sheridan/Jones₂, but *vi[ʒj]ual*; vice versa in Kenrick_variant
 - j-drop in Buchanan, but even Sheridan does not drop [j] (as usual) in palatalised forms *casual(ty)*

Analysing the Data (5): Phoneme

DEUCE_C (PRE-STRESS): PHONEME, POSITION

- More similar to DEUCE_a
- /t/ Sheridan word-initially: [tʃ]umultuous
- /d/ resisted (as DEUCE_a): *adulation, duplicity*
- /s/ only Sheridan (all frequencies), all e.g.s word-initial: [ʃ]uperior, [ʃ]uperb
- Little j-dropping

Analysing the Data (5): Phoneme

- Why more in /s/?
 - High tongue position of palatal /j/ shapes frication noise: post-alveolar percepts
 - /z/ arguably more resistant to misperception as post-alveolar as a result of lower intensity frication
- Why word-initial?
 - Unambiguous Cj onset with gestural blending/coarticulation
 - No 'ambisyllabicity' or pre-C perceptual cues to C-place
- Why before hiatus?
 - Glide dissimilation Cj...w > C...w
 - Cf. *sewer* tends to be pronounced 'shore' in these dict's

Analysing the Data (6): Word Frequency

- ARCHER 3.2 (2013) 1700-1999
- SURE_b vs. FEATURE in PDE
- 'Second' yod-dropping in more frequent words
- Sheridan: Initial stressed /s/ palatalisation and /d/ in *module*, etc. in least frequent words
- More data required to establish firm patterns
- But the issue has only arisen because we have so much more data than has previously been considered!

'it will remind us of the complexity of actual historical data and warn us against the temptation of accepting "neat" and all-embracing solutions for the phonological variation they provide.'

(C. Jones 1989: 269, referring to his discussion of evidence from Henry Machyn's diary for /h/ dropping/insertion in 16th-century English)

En[dj]uring [tʃ]unes or ma[tj]ure [dʒ]ukes?

Joan Beal & Ranjan Sen, University of Sheffield
j.c.beal@sheffield.ac.uk
ranjan.sen@sheffield.ac.uk