

# ACCENT AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

# language, dialect, **accent**

- small differences
- great variability
- linking the 'linguistic' to the 'socio'

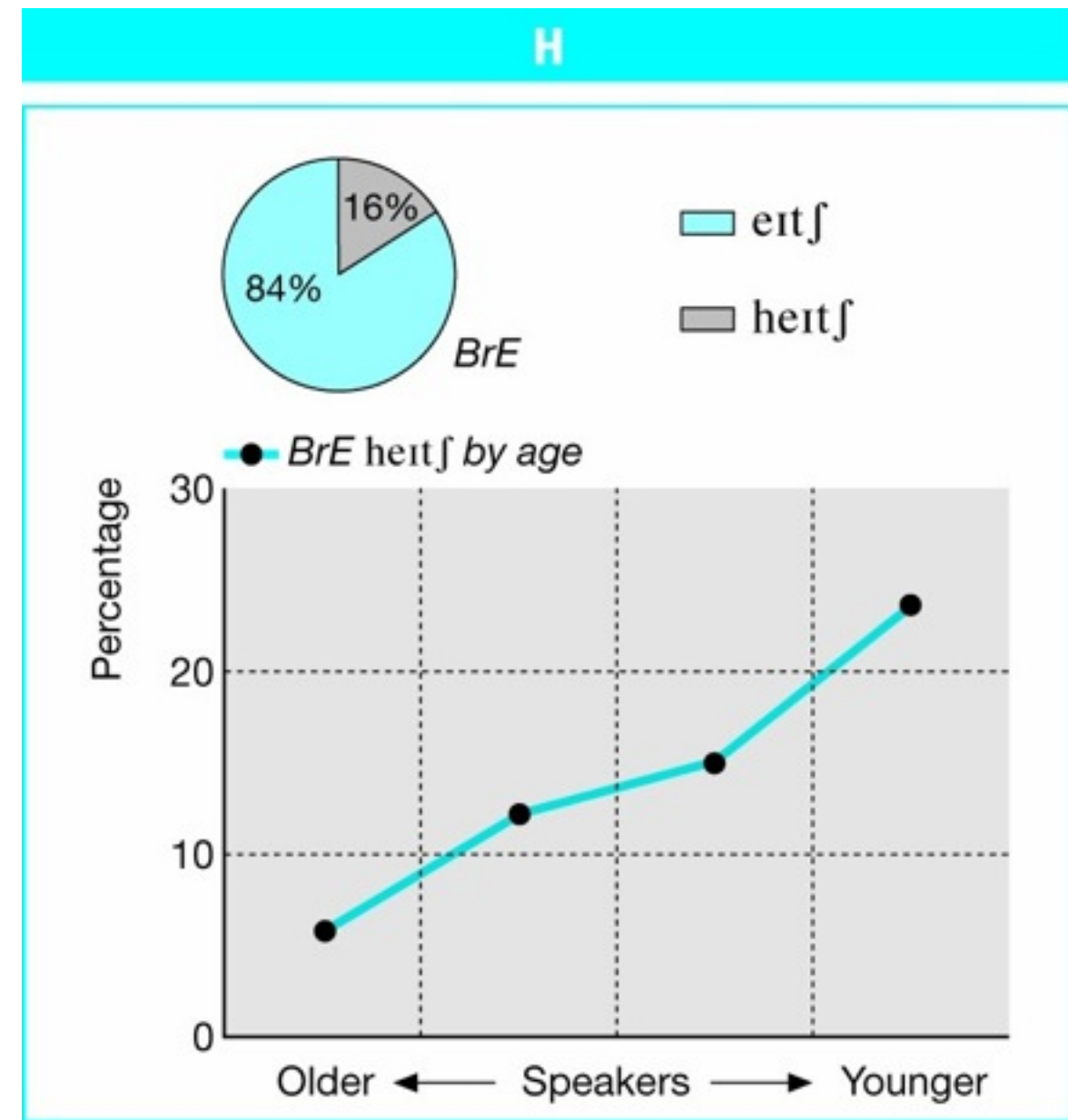


Mischievous  
says  
ate  
H

The form *heɪtʃ* is standard in Irish English,

but traditionally not in BrE or AmE.

It is, however, spreading in BrE.



John Wells's phonetic blog

Those with a **Protestant**/unionist/British identity tend to say "**aitch**",  
**while** those with a **Catholic**/nationalist/Irish identity tend to say "**haitch**".

# linguistic identity

- it is not only that 'language mirrors the society'
- the way we speak is an 'act of identity'

individuals create their linguistic systems so as

- **to resemble** those of groups they wish to be identified with
- or so as **to distinguish** themselves from those they wish to distance from

(this does not imply ‘consciousness’ or ‘rationality’)

Le Page, R. B. 1998. The evolution of a sociolinguistic theory of language. In The handbook of sociolinguistics, 15-32. Oxford: Blackwell.

# Social factors in language use: Labov (1966)

- Conclusion: New York (r) is a **marker**, not just indicator, that leads to **stereotyping**.
- On methods: Overcoming **the observer's paradox**  
if people know that their speech is being monitored, they will use higher speech levels not corresponding to natural speech

# variable (r)

- rhotic pronunciation: four<sup>r</sup>th, floor<sup>r</sup>
- non-rhotic pronunciation: fou<sup>∅</sup>th, floo<sup>∅</sup>

- New York had been mainly non-rhotic
- but it has become rhotic after WWII

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non-rhotic  
(ca~~ɹ~~ for *car*)

WWII

rhotic  
(car<sup>ɹ</sup> for *car*)





**Sacks (upper-class)**



**Macy's (middle-class)**



**S. Klein (low-price store)**

