

Language Variation and Change – Australia 2 (LVC-A 2)

Organisers: Catherine Travis, Celeste Rodríguez Louro, Adam Schembri

ALS, University of Western Sydney, 9-10 December 2015

Twitter hashtag: #LVCA2

Plenary

Constraints, community, coherence: Do sociolects exist?

Greg Guy (NYU)

Contemporary sociolinguistic scholarship entertains two, somewhat contradictory, models of the social distribution of linguistic variants. The speech community model emphasizes coherence – shared norms imply that speakers vary together by style, status, etc., while the identity construction model emphasizes individual agency, and asserts that speakers do *bricolage*, assembling their social personae and social meanings out of the variables at hand, evoking distinctive indexicalities. The contrast between these two approaches raises several questions.

One issue is whether whether clusters of speakers who constitute a community coherently use a set of variants defining a sociolinguistic variety or sociolect, or alternatively, whether individuals use idiosyncratic sets of variants. For example, given that th-stopping, r-vocalization, and raised /oh/ are all socially stratified in New York City, do higher status individuals systematically use low rates of all three variants at once, or do they pick and choose among these variants?

Another issue is how internal constraints on variation are treated by individuals and communities. All linguistic variables have linguistic constraints on their places and rates of occurrence, and specific constraint patterns are often taken as defining characteristics of a dialect or sociolect: for example, the specific contexts for /æ/ tensing in New York and Philadelphia. Are these community-wide patterns adhered to by individuals who are selecting variants for a momentary social-semiotic effect? Alternatively, is the manipulation of variables for identity construction or stylistic performance limited to varying rates of use rather than contexts?

This paper presents data from several recent studies of English, Spanish, and Portuguese that address these issues by examining the covariation among multiple sociolinguistic variables – both syntactic and phonological – present in the respective communities, and the constraint effects that individuals and communities display.

Careful and Casual Speech in Matukar Panau

Danielle Barth (ANU)

Matukar Panau is a highly endangered Oceanic language spoken in Papua New Guinea. Some words have a more casual and a more careful variant. Using mixed-effects logistic regression for 801 tokens, I show that more careful variants are chosen by women and older speakers, but the strongest predictor of casual variants is the amount of Tok Pisin (a Papua New Guinea creole) mixing found in a text. Tok Pisin mixing may be a component of style construction while simultaneously a means to solve lexical access problems in the L1. Careful variant use may show attention to form, especially in a documentary context. Casual variant use by younger, less proficient speakers may show change in progress and signal less value placement on standard forms, but also may correspond with lower language proficiency. The paper will discuss the complex relationship between proficiency, style and identity in the context of an endangered language.

Language change in a changing society: a real and apparent time study of the Chilean second-person singular pre (<1973) and post Pinochet (>1990)

Matthew Callaghan (ANU)

Some varieties of Spanish use *vos* as a second person singular (2sg) familiar form; others use standard *tú* (each with corresponding verbal agreement). In Chile, *tú* and *vos* co-exist, and the two paradigms often mix.

Alongside enormous social changes in Chile in the last 50 years, a change in progress has been observed in the 2sg paradigm whereby traditionally stigmatised *voseo* verb forms have expanded to the speech of all social classes. Some have hypothesised that mixed *voseo* might one day replace *tuteo* as the ‘standard universal form of address for educated Chileans in informal and familiar situations’ (Torrejón, 1986: 682).

These claims are tested analysing two stratified corpora of conversational Chilean Spanish from the early 1970s and 2014-15 respectively. Results document a significant grammatical

change in just 40 years, and contribute to research about mechanisms of language change and the apparent time construct.

Colloquialisation in Contemporary Australian English

Peter Collins (UNSW)

This paper investigates the discourse-pragmatic process of colloquialisation in Australian English (AusE) via a multivariate corpus-based study of changes in the frequencies of colloquial grammatical features over time. Two corpora of written AusE were compiled – “AusBrown60s” and “AusBrown90s” – each comprising 240,000 words from the 1960s and 1990s (divided equally into three genre categories: press reportage, learned writing, and fiction). Along with the spoken component of ICE-AUS these corpora formed the dataset for the study. A list of 87 grammatical variables was prepared and their status as either “colloquial” or “anti-colloquial” determined via comparison of their frequencies in the written and spoken corpora. The nature and extent of the grammatical colloquialisation in late 20th century AusE are discussed. It is anticipated that the next stage of the project – an analysis of parallel subcorpora from LOB, FLOB, Brown and Frown – will better enable endonormative/exonormative developments in the evolution of AusE grammar to be explored.

Oppositional Rotation in Australian English Monophthong and Diphthong Shift

Felicity Cox (Macquarie University), Sallyanne Palethorpe (Macquarie University) and Jonathan Harrington (LMU Munich)

Diphthong shifting is an example of chain shift phenomena whereby change to vowels affects their neighbours ensuring systemic functional ecology. Chain shifts are typically described for monophthongs by not frequently for diphthongs. We examined Australian English vowels in a trend analysis to explore the relationship between monophthongs and diphthongs in change. Diphthongs in Southern Hemisphere Englishes have undergone a historical anticlockwise chain shift but it is unclear whether this shift continues in Australia. We extracted stressed vowels in word-list data from similar aged speakers in corpora from the 1990s and 2010s in a trend analysis to examine chain

shifting. Results of acoustic analyses revealed a significant clockwise chain shift for the vowels in BAIT, BITE, BEAT but anticlockwise rotation for monophthongs. These results indicate a decoupling of the monophthongs and diphthongs through the change process and reveal that the typically observed diphthong shift has reversed in the past 20 years.

Alyawarr children’s present temporal expression in two, closely-related speech varieties of Central Australia

Sally Dixon (ANU)

This paper investigates present temporal expression by Australian Aboriginal children who speak Alyawarr English (AlyE), a new Central Australian creole, as their first language, and are acquiring Standard Australian English (SAE) as a second language. Specifically, it focuses on variation between three different forms: V (e.g. *Thei luk at the ose* ‘They look at the horse’), V-bat (e.g. *Am lukbat for eplein* ‘I’m looking for an airplane’), V-ing (e.g. *Jeni lukiing rait theya* ‘Jenny is looking right there’). I compare usage in two environments, AlyE (home, Indigenous) and SAE (school, non-Indigenous), by conducting separate multivariate analyses (approx. 1000 tokens) taking into account subject person and number, object number, transitivity, lexical and sentential aspect. The results are then compared using the Comparative Variationist Method (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001; Meyerhoff 2009). This study therefore breaks new ground in both methodological terms, with the application of the Comparative Variationist Method to an Australian creole/L2 acquisition context, and in advancing our understanding of the bi-varietal pathway travelled by children in the complex language ecologies of the region.

The realisation of vowels in conversations by speakers of West AusE

Gerry Docherty, Simón Gonzalez, Nathaniel Mitchell (Griffith University)

We present findings contrasting the realisations of AusE vowels across word list and conversational material produced by young speakers from Perth. We focus on the acoustic properties of vowels produced by 20 speakers in a dyad conversational task as well as of those produced by 60 speakers in an isolated word-list

style. We conducted acoustic analysis of a full set of monophthongs and diphthongs across both speech styles. Our results unsurprisingly show differences in vowel realisation as a function of speech style, and our analysis sheds light on the nature of those differences, painting a somewhat different picture of the AusE vowel system than typically emerges from studies of /hVd/ tokens. We explore the implications of our findings for current models of variation and change which are predicated on listener sensitivity to phonetic detail but which critically depend on an understanding of the characteristics of that phonetic detail.

Do minority communities participate in surrounding language changes in progress? Gathering evidence from perception data in Western Victoria.

Debbie Loakes, John Hajek and Janet Fletcher (University of Melbourne, ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language)

Whether and how minority communities participate in surrounding language changes in progress is one of the questions posed by the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language. This is an important concern in sociolinguistic / sociophonetic research because it gives insight into whether minority groups accommodate or distance themselves from the mainstream variety. This study focuses on whether a sound change that occurs in Standard Australian English is also present in a "minority" community. Perception data for L1 Aboriginal English and L1 Standard Australian English participants from Western Victoria is compared to show that this minority community does indeed participate in the surrounding language change in progress, and in fact the change is more entrenched for the minority group. Discussion of the wider sociophonetic implications of this, including links with socioeconomic factors, will also be presented.

Glottalisation in Australian English: A change in progress

Joshua Penney, Felicity Cox, Sallyanne Palethorpe, and Kelly Miles (Macquarie University)

This paper reports on an apparent time study conducted to examine glottalisation as a cue to coda stop voicing in Australian English. We

acoustically analysed cues to voiced and voiceless codas in the speech of 67 younger and older males and females extracted from the AusTalk single-word corpus. Results from a multivariate logistic regression analysis of 2427 tokens showed a significantly greater likelihood of glottalisation preceding voiceless codas, as is common in other varieties of English. Glottalisation was also found to be significantly more likely in the speech of females and in younger compared to older speakers. The age effect leads us to hypothesise that glottalisation as a cue to coda voicing represents a change in progress in Australian English. These findings raise questions about the weighting of cues to coda voicing and how glottalisation interacts with other voicing related cues in managing the temporal characteristics of the rhyme.

'Highs, lows, and in-betweeners': A case study of formant frequency differences and children's social relationships

Ben Purser (ANU)

Despite sociophonetic research into the role of accommodation processes and reciprocal friendships in the vowel productions of adult speakers (e.g. Pardo et al., 2012), how these processes affect children's speech is unclear. Using social network analysis (SNA) as both a theoretical framework and methodological tool (Daming et al., 2008; Milroy 1987), the current study integrates quantitative acoustic-phonetic data and qualitative social data to investigate how the quality of friendships amongst a classroom group of 22 children (mean age 6;1) affects their production of 5 vowel phonemes in Australian English.

Unlike former phonetic research which divides children *a priori* according to age and sex (e.g. Busby and Plant, 1995), the current study constructed reciprocal friendships via inductive data analysis of observations and interviews with the children themselves.

Results from MANOVA analyses did not support the underlying hypothesis of smaller formant differences between children in stronger reciprocal friendships, though effects were found for specific formants and vowels. This suggests that formant patterns do not index social relationships for these young speakers, but may be a trait that emerges during development.

Another story: The impact of narrative and non-narrative discourse on *be like*

Celeste Rodríguez Louro, Sophie Richard and Sana Bharadwaj (UWA)

We analyse main clause quotative verbs (e.g. So I messaged him and I **was like**, “Are you out tonight?”) extracted from narrative and non-narrative conversational data produced by Perth-based speakers who are consistent *be like* users. The synchronic dataset consists of 1,500 quotative tokens stemming from the speech of twenty-four 18 to 34-year-olds. The narratives are analysed following Labov & Waletzky (1967). Statistical modelling confirms previous findings that the narratives of Australian youth show extensive variability between the Simple Past and the Historical Present, and that the Historical present is almost categorically encoded with *be like*. Additionally, while the 1990s-born use *be like* inside and outside narratives, the 1970s-born restrict *be like* to narrative discourse. Speakers born across the English-speaking world in the 1970s were instrumental in the rapid spread of *be like* and storytelling provided the ideal interactional medium for this popular innovation to take the world by storm.

Grammatical code blending in Australian Sign Language (Auslan)

Adam Schembri (La Trobe University), Trevor Johnston (Macquarie University), Jane van Roekel (Macquarie University)

In this paper, we will discuss a unique type of language contact: *code-blending* refers to lexical items from a spoken language being silently mouthed during the production of signs. In a recent study of mouth actions of a dataset of 17,002 signs produced by 38 deaf signers from the Australian Sign Language (Auslan) corpus, we found that 57% of all signs were accompanied by the mouthing of English words. In an Rbrul analysis, we found that some grammatical classes (such as nouns, prepositions, adjectives, and conjunctions) favoured the use of mouthing, while others (such as verbs and pronouns) disfavoured mouthing. In a follow-up study, we investigated the use of past tense mouthing in verbs and pronouns. Our analysis suggests that this subset of the data is influenced by a single social factor – signer’s age – with younger signers significantly

favouring the use of English mouthing with Auslan verbs and pronouns.

Variationist typology: using the structure of variability to compare cross-language types

Catherine Travis (ANU) and Rena Torres Cacoullos (Penn State University)

Received classifications of languages according to the expression of pronominal subjects distinguish (non-) null-subject types. Here we apply the variationist comparative method to conversational data of English—a “non-null-subject language”—and Spanish—a well-studied “null-subject language”. English has a patently lower rate of expression (approximately 4% unexpressed 1sg and 3sg human subjects vs. 60% in Spanish), reflecting a narrower envelope of variation: besides coreferential-subject verbs conjoined with a coordinating conjunction, unexpressed subjects are restricted to prosodic initial-position, a constraint that is absent in Spanish. However, within each language’s variable context, speakers’ choices are conditioned by the same probabilistic constraints. We find effects for subject continuity-linkage to preceding subject, tense/aspect-temporal sequencing and coreferential subject priming, constraints that have been reported cross-linguistically. We propose that *variationist typology*, according to which cross-linguistic types are distinguished by the structure of intra-linguistic variability, provides greater insights into language universals than do abstract classifications.

The English spoken by Māori: changes in rhythm over time.

Bianca Vowell (Victoria University Wellington), Margaret Maclagan (University of Canterbury), Jeanette King (University of Canterbury)

One of the most salient features of Māori English (ME) is a distinctively less stress-timed rhythm than is usual for New Zealand English. The assumed source is the rhythm of the Māori language, however definitive evidence for this association has not been produced to date. There is also an issue with this assumed link since this distinctive rhythm is a feature of the speech of young Māori who tend to have the least native-like fluency in the Māori language, while the older, more fluent Māori speakers are perceptibly more stress-timed.

I will present results from my study with speakers from the MAONZE (Māori and New Zealand English) and ONZE (Origins of New Zealand English) corpora, which show that the distinctively less stress-timed rhythm has indeed developed from the rhythm of the Māori language and the use of this rhythm is related to the prestige of Māori in the speakers' socialisation.

**When migrants meet the locals:
quantifying the effect of speakers'
attitudes in dialect contact in Hohhot,
China**

Xuan Wang (University of Canterbury)

This presentation reports a study designed to test the straight-forward connections between speakers' socio-psychological attitudes and their use of specific linguistic forms in dialect contact situation. Data was collected in a Chinese immigrant city called Hohhot, where the contact between local residents who speak Jin dialect, and migrants who speak Mandarin Chinese, led to the formation of a new vernacular "Hohhot Mandarin". Speakers of Hohhot Mandarin show variation in the degree to which they adopt Jin-features, therefore I ask whether this variation is conditioned by their attitudes. 67 participants' attitudes were quantitatively measured by questionnaires, and how they pronounce a set of local words was also recorded which displays variation in weak-strong or strong-weak stress pattern. More than 4000 tokens were analysed using binomial mixed effects models. The results suggest that in a sub-section of the population, speakers' attitudes were significantly correlated with their stress pattern use.



Language Variation and Change – Australia 2 (LVC-A 2)

Organisers: Catherine Travis, Celeste Rodríguez Louro, Adam Schembri

ALS, University of Western Sydney, 9-10 December 2015

Twitter hashtag: #LVCA2

Schedule

Wednesday 9 December	
Parramatta South Campus, Cnr Victoria Rd & James Ruse Drive, Rydalmere Room: EA G.19 (LT03)	
	Chair: Catherine Travis
11:00	The realisation of vowels in conversations by speakers of West AusE (Docherty, Gonzalea, Mitchell)
11:30	Oppositional Rotation in Australian English Monophthong and Diphthong shift (Cox, Palethorpe, Harrington)
12:00	'Highs, lows, and in-betweeners': A case study of formant frequency differences and children's social relationships (Purser)
12.30	Lunch
	Chair: Celeste Rodríguez Louro
2.30	Language change in a changing society: a real and apparent time study of the Chilean second-person singular pre and post Pinochet (Callaghan)
3.00	Variationist typology: using the structure of variability to compare cross-language types (Travis, Torres Cacoullos)
3.30	Afternoon tea
4.00	Plenary: Constraints, community, coherence: Do sociolects exist? (Prof Gregory Guy, NYU) EA.G.18 (LT01)
7.00	LVC-A2 Dinner for workshop participants (pay your own way) El Phoenician Restaurant (328 Church St Parramatta) http://www.el-phoenician.com.au/parramatta/

Thursday 10 December	
Parramatta City Campus, 100 George St, Parramatta, Levels 5-6 Room: Level 6 (X6.6.30-31)	
	Chair: Gerry Docherty
9:00	Do minority communities participate in surrounding language changes in progress? Gathering evidence from perception data in Western Victoria (Loakes, Hajek, Fletcher)
9:30	The English spoken by Māori: changes in rhythm over time (Vowell, Maclagan, King)
10:00	Alyawarr children's present temporal expression in two, closely-related speech varieties of Central Australia (Dixon)
10.30	Morning tea
	Chair: Adam Schembri
11:00	Careful and casual speech in Matukar Panau (Barth)
11:30	Colloquialisation in contemporary Australian English (P. Collins)
12:00	Another story: The impact of narrative and non-narrative discourse on BE LIKE (Rodríguez Louro, Richard, Bharadwaj)
12.30	Lunch
	Chair: Greg Guy
2:00	Grammatical code blending in Australian Sign Language (Auslan) (Schembri, Johnston, Roekel)
2:30	When migrants meet the locals: investigating the role of speakers' identities and attitudes in koineisation in Hohhot, China (Wang)
3:00	Glottalisation in Australian English: A change in progress (Penney, Cox, Palethorpe, Miles)
3.30	Afternoon tea