# The Sociolinguistic Constraints Affecting the Use of Certain Vocabularies and Ways of Speech

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**Abstract**
This study examines how individual variations contribute to the emergence and spread of new speech sounds, or new ways of pronouncing preexisting phonemes. The researcher examines whether these change models apply to other domains of language in the current study.
The aim of the study is to ascertain if the individual variations found can also result in alterations to the grammar of restrictions on a sociolinguistic variable at the community level. This is due to the fact that we are aware of how individual variations in language perception and production might lead to innovations that could be embraced by speech community members and result in change.
In order to explain the introduction and spread of new speech sounds, a model of change was first proposed. In this study, the model of change is extended to another component of language, namely its constraints on sociolinguistic variety. Sociolinguistic variables are not limited to phonetics/phonology; they can arise at all levels of grammar.

Key Words: Sociolinguistic, Constraints, variables. Language change, Linguistic variation

## 1. Introduction

Sound change research is becoming more and more popular. The focus of research is on whether and how individual differences affect the way things change. Four categories of individual variations are identified by Stevens & Harrington (2014: 98) as potentially triggering sound change:
(i) variations in the way speakers make sounds due to articulation;
(ii) disparities in listeners' cognitive perception of sound;
(iii) variations in the ways speakers connect production and perception and,
(iv) the degree to which people are perceptive to the variety of variations they encounter during their lives (which could be influenced by individual variances in imitation susceptibility).
This study examines how individual variations contribute to the emergence and spread of new speech sounds, or new ways of pronouncing preexisting phonemes. The researcher examines whether these change models apply to other domains of language in the current study. Investigating whether variations at the individual level could lead to different kinds of changes, i.e., Considering that community-level sound change is likely to originate from individual-level articulatory and

perceptual differences, whether the recommendations offered for sound change are generally applicable to other aspects of language.

The paper identifies two ways that people can differ from one another that haven't been discussed in previous studies. First, different people may have different mental representations of the same surface structure. Second, people's capacity for speech preparation can vary. Despite the fact that these are two quite different kinds of disparities, the study demonstrates that they are comparable in that they can both affect a person's ability to produce a sociolinguistic variable.

**2.1 Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language**

The generic name for the study of the interaction between language and society is sociolinguistics. This is a large field of study that grew out of linguistics' interactions with several other academic fields. It shares close ties with sociology by examining the function language serves in the structure of social groups and institutions, as well as with anthropology by studying language and culture. It has connections to social psychology as well, especially in terms of how attitudes and perceptions are communicated and how behaviors within and outside of groups are distinguished. When attempting to examine language from a social perspective, we make use of all these relationships. (Yule, 2010)

It has been deemed reasonable by some researchers to attempt to draw a distinction between macro- and micro-sociolinguistics and sociolinguistics (also known as the sociology of language). According to this distinction, sociolinguistics seeks to improve understanding of language and society by investigating the connections between the two. Similarly, the goal of the sociology of language is to find ways to better understand social structure through the study of language, for example, by looking at how particular linguistic traits are used to describe particular social structures.

Hudson (1996: 4) has described the difference as follows:

sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society,‘ whereas the sociology of language is _the study of society in relation to language.‘ In other words, in sociolinguistics we study language and society in order to find out as much as we can about what kind of thing language is, and in the sociology of language we reverse the direction of our interest. Using the alternative terms given above.

Coulmas (1997: 2) says that micro-sociolinguistics investigates how social structure influences the way people talk and how language varieties and patterns of use correlate with social attributes such as class, sex, and age. Macro-sociolinguistics, on the other hand, studies what societies do with their languages, that is, attitudes and attachments that account for the functional distribution of speech forms in society, language shift, maintenance, and replacement, the delimitation and interaction of speech communities.‘ The view I will take here is that both sociolinguistics and the sociology of language require a systematic study of language and society if they are to be successful. Moreover, a sociolinguistics that deliberately refrains from drawing

conclusions about society seems to be unnecessarily restrictive, just as restrictive indeed as a sociology of language that deliberately ignores discoveries about language made in the course of sociological research. So while it is possible to do either kind of work to the exclusion of the other.

**2.2 Style and Sociolinguistics**

It is difficult to assess the place of ―style‖ in sociolinguistics. On the one hand, style is everything and everywhere – to the extent that we define styles as context-related varieties, and contextually as the rationale for sociolinguistics. At this level of generalization, it would seem futile to try to theorize style, since a theory of style would be a theory of everything. On the other hand, style was operationalized as a single quantifiable dimension of sociolinguistic variation in Labovian surveys, and it is still with this focus that sociolinguists tend to address the issue of stylistic variation. From this standpoint, style may not have appeared to merit theorizing; it was ( and for many still is) a patterning principle in numerical arrays, an axis on a graph. Sociolinguists have found the consequences of stylistic mapping to be informative, but style itself has needed no more explanatory effort than, at one time, did class or sex or age, as correlates of or as supposed determinants of language variation. (Nikolas Coupland, 2001:185)

**2.3 Style and Speech Evaluation**

The relationship of style with social variation is further illuminated by the third term of the process diagrammed in Figure 2: speech evaluation. Qualitatively, a linguistic variable which shows style shift is always the subject of evaluation b members of the speech community. In studies where unconscious evaluative reactions to individual linguistic variables have been elicited, markers are evaluated, indicators are not (Labov; 1972: 314). Style shift and evaluation of a variable always Co-occur and presuppose that the variable is socially differentiated. This is not surprising, since historically, style differentiation of a variable is derived from social differentiation by way of social evaluation .However, social differentiation need not lead to evaluation and style shift. Indicators are not subject to evaluation. A variable may be differentiated between speakers without being evaluated, but as soon as speakers begin (unconsciously) to evaluate it, they apparently also begin to style-shift. Evaluation and style shift are reciprocal. They are therefore subject to reciprocal deviations. The New York lower class deviated from both style and social stratification for the (oh) variable. It was also the only class to show low evaluative response to this variable (Labov 1972: 30). The lower middle class hyper corrected (oh) and the (r) variable in its own speech and was also most sensitive to both variables in subjective reaction tests. (Allan, 2000:145)

**2.4 Male and Female Spoken Language Differences:**

Male speech and female speech have been observed to differ in their form, topic, content, and use. Early writers were largely introspective in their analyses; more recent work has begun to provide empirical evidence. Men may be more loquacious and directive; they use more nonstandard forms, talk more about sports, money, and business, and more frequently refer to time, space, quantity, destructive action,

perceptual attributes, physical movements, and objects. Women are often more supportive, polite, and expressive, talk more about home and family, and use more words implying feeling, evaluation, interpretation, and psychological state. A comprehensive theory of "genderlect" must include information about linguistic features under a multiplicity of conditions.(Haas,1979:3)

**2.5 Constraints on variation in the community**

As was first demonstrated by Labov (1963), and as has been confirmed countless times since, variability in language is not randomly distributed, but is systematically governed by a set of observable predictors. These predictors are variously termed "constraints," "conditioning factors," or "factor groups," and comprise sociodemographic features of the speaker, the situational context of the utterance, elements of the linguistic environment surrounding the varying form, and cognitive and psychological traits of the speaker (Tamminga et al. 2016: 67). These entire factors act in systematic ways to shape a speaker's choice of form, and the method of variationist sociolinguistics involves identifying these constraints and assessing how they correlate with the rates of occurrence of the varying forms.

The traditional object of investigation in variationist sociolinguistic research is the patterning of these constraints at the level of the community. A major contribution of Weinreich et al.'s (1968: 78) landmark work on language change is the demonstration of "orderly hetereogeneity": the structured variation that manifests when the linguistic productions of a body of individuals are examined in the aggregate.

**2.6 Uniformity, change, and divergence in constraints**

Weinreich et al. (1968: 173) propose that the fact of orderly heterogeneity derives from the members of a speech community sharing a variable rule of grammar and its attendant constraints. And while there may be individual-level fluctuations in the application of such a rule, "the level of fluctuation or random variability is relatively low." This leads Labov (1972: 2) to dismiss the possibility that "the linguistic community is an aggregate of individuals with an unlimited number of different systems in their heads" as an "illusion." On the contrary, Labov asserts that the process of language learning is the process of acquiring "the general pattern used in the speech community," resulting in "a high degree of uniformity in both the categorical and variable aspects of language production," such that "individual variation is reduced below the level of linguistic significance" (Labov 2012: 265).

Labov (1966: 89) demonstrates this by taking the case of variable rhoticity in the New York City English of speaker Jacob S., interviewed in 1963 as part of a speech community study of the Lower East Side. Jacob S. shows the same hierarchy of stylistic constraints on this variable as does the rest of the community: in lockstep with the other Lower East Side residents interviewed, he uses less rhoticity in spontaneous speech, more when reading a word list, and even more when producing elicited minimal pairs. Another demonstration of individual-level conformity to a group pattern is provided by Guy (1980:20). He shows that the language-internal constraints on word-final consonant cluster simplification in English are consistently replicated on an individual-speaker basis, provided that enough data has been collected from each speaker.

Recent work continues to confirm this individual-level conformity to the surrounding group. Meyerhoff & Walker (2007: 45) study speakers of a Caribbean variety of English who have spent time abroad, and find that despite their exposure to other English varieties, they persist in matching the constraints on variation present in their home communities. Forrest (2015: 400) examines the linguistic constraints on [ɪŋ]~[ɪn] variation among 109 speakers in Raleigh, North Carolina, and finds that "a reorganization of the hierarchy of internal constraints never truly occurs" in any one individual's production. Forrest further speculates that "any dramatic [reorganization] […] would actually garner some conscious notice, which helps to keep the constraint hierarchy intact" .

This individual-level conformity to a group pattern appears to start early. A growing body of research shows that children as young as three years old match not only their parents' rate of use of sociolinguistic variants, but also the constraints on those variants' occurrence ( Smith et al. 2007: 78).

Individuals will differ from one another in their overall rate of variation use even while the data to date consistently suggests that individuals match their community in the kind and ordering of the restrictions that affect their production of a variable. Therefore, although all New Yorkers in Labov's (2006:141) study displayed the same hierarchy of contextual styles influencing r-vocalization, they varied in whether or not they had a rate of r-vocalization in the most favorable context that was closer to 80% (as was found for members of the highest social class studied) or closer to 100% (as Labov found for members of the lowest social class). In fact, a prerequisite for language change is the disparate rates of inventive variation usage across community members of varying ages. Nonetheless, community-level conformance to limitations is not incompatible with this. Indeed, Labov (2006:144) links the process of community-focused learning that prepares children to conform to community-level limitations at an early age to the way young speakers sustain language change, or incrimination. According to his theory, youngsters pick up on age inequality in the community (which he refers to as "learning an age vector") and drive up the prevalence of the variations they perceive to be typical of other young people. Thus, language change is seen by Labov (2006: 344) as "incrementation within a faithfully reproduced pattern"—children are able to advance those variants that reflect age stratification in addition to learning the community-level limitations on a variable.

The field of "comparative sociolinguistics," which uses shared constraints on variation (when they cannot be attributed to universal principles) to argue for two varieties deriving from a common source, was developed as a result of the sociolinguistics community's strong assumption that the constraints on a variable will be shared among daughter varieties that have inherited that variable (Tagliamonte 2013: 98).

**2.7 The effect of some constraints on a variable**

A variable that is subject to change may also gradually lose the impact of certain limitations. Put another way, a change that initially displayed contextual disparities

may eventually be employed at the same rate in all circumstances as it moves toward completion. While it has long been known that there are instances of community-level divergence in constraints on a shared variable, their actuation has never—to my knowledge—been addressed. Why does pre-pausal position impact New York City differently than it does Philadelphia (Guy 1980: 78)? How did things get to this point? I suggest that comparative sociolinguistics try to identify the changes that have occurred to lead to different constraint patterns in varieties of a single language, just as the comparative method of historical linguistics establishes the sound changes that must have occurred to give rise to different phonologies in sister languages.

**2.8 Individual differences and the actuation of change**

Baker et al. (2011:104) provide a model that illustrates how these individual variances can result in a shift in sound. In various English dialects, Baker et al. examine the actuation of a shift toward /s/-retraction before /ɹ/, resulting, for example, in [ʃ]treet for street. The authors point to individual variations in English /ɹ/ articulation to explain why /s/-retraction, which is based on a universal process of coarticulation between /s/ and /ɹ/, has not occurred everywhere. Mielke et al. (2016: 79) go into great depth about how different tongue shapes can make the sound /ɹ/ without producing any audible clues to articulation. Speakers who have one /ɹ/ articulation that results in less coarticulation with their /s/ might come across speakers who have another articulation of /ɹ/ that results in more coarticulation with their /s/. The less-coarticulating speakers will not be able to compensate for it when they encounter it because they are not used to /s/–/ɹ/ coarticulation in their own speech and because they have no way of knowing that their interlocutors are using a different /ɹ/ production that engenders coarticulation. Rather, they will regard the coarticulated /s/ of their interlocutors as a separate production objective, which will encourage a shift toward /ʃ/. According to Baker et al., sound change will also be not common since it is uncommon for interlocutors to share these essential traits and because speakers must hold a specific social standing in the community for their pronunciations to have an impact on others (Labov 2012: 90).

**2.10 Patterning of sociolinguistic variables**

This component of the study surveys three instances where the mental representations of individual language users differ, with outcomes that can be observed in sociolinguistics. Two of these examples are limited to particular life stages: the first involves childhood, and the second involves old age. In the final instance, there are individual variances in mental representation that last a lifetime. In the Scottish town of Buckie, Smith & Holmes-Elliott (2017: 99) examine how children glottal substitute /t/ (e.g., [pɹIʔi] for [pɹIti] "pretty"). The study investigates the frequency of glottal substitution of /t/ in various phonological contexts, utilizing a community sample consisting of children, their caregivers, and unrelated adults. In every phonological setting, they discover that children closely mimic the rates of glottal replacement of both their caregivers and the population

at large, with the exception of forms where the /t/ comes before a syllabic consonant, such as in bottom, bottle, or cheating. In this context, glottal replacement is quite frequent in adults but considerably less frequent in youngsters, similar to their rate in intervocalic position (in words like lovely).

**2.11 Linguistic Variation and Change**

Variation refers to differences in pronunciation, grammar, or words within a language. It may be related regional or social class or educational background (Richards and Schmidt, 2010: 624). We are able to utilize "variety" is a term that refers to any of these: language, dialect, idiolect, or accent. Whether we consider language creation to be influenced by age, gender, area, or social class, the term "variety" is an academic term used to describe any sort of language production (Bauer:2002:4).

Linguists refer to the language of specific social groups using different terminology. For instance, the dialect of a single person is known as idiolect. Another technical term is register. French linguistics uses the term patois. Slang and jargon are typically employed lexically. Linguists use the term "variety" to refer to any typical language system. Thus, the term "variety" refers to idiolect, register, dialect, accent, language, and potentially even patois. Because it avoids making judgments about whether the two types are dialects of the same language or distinct languages, linguists prefer this word (Bauer, 2007:10).

According to Trudgill's study, the variation in /ŋ / and /n / in Norwich was associated with the formality of the situations as well as the speaker's social position. In casual speech, middle-class people employ the normal /ŋ/, while working-class people use the non-standard /n/ (Powell, 1999: 116).

In language variety, we can distinguish between two things. "Social Variation," which encompasses variances between social groups (including gender, race, religion, age, education, and social class), is distinct from "Regional Variation," which deals with differences between areas. Regional variation, according to Culpeper (2009: 337), is a type of language that uses words, grammatical structures, or phonetic qualities that are present in certain contexts but lacking in others to express information about a speaker's geographical origin.

Some changes occur either from 'above' or from 'below'. Change from above means from above the level of consciousness, when people imitate the accent of others. for example, when someone comes from an area where [h] is deleted at the beginning of words like hotel. On other hand change from below means from below the level of consciousness, as with the Martha's Vineyard change. However, whether the changes are 'from above' or 'from below', the mechanism of speech from person to person seems to be the same. Since change involves variant forms, speech variation is often a sign that a change is taking place (Aitchison, 1999: 152-3). Mesthrie et al. (2009: 112-3) explain that changes from ' above' involve new sounds introduced by the dominant social class, so it is concerned with higher prestige. ' changes from below' involve sounds that are part of the vernacular, so it is concerned lower prestige.

"A linguistic variable is the alternation of forms, or layering of forms, in language. A basic definition is two or more ways of saying the same thing". (Tagliamonte, 2012: 2). The variable features are formalized in terms of the linguistics variables are related to phoneme and allophone. Since the phoneme has allophones which are not associated with in meaning, so the variable has variants which do not affect the meaning (Kerswill, 2004: 5).

## 3. Methodology of the Study

### 3.1 Introduction:

This chapter focuses on the study methodology as well as data elicitation. It shows the procedures of obtaining casual speech from the informants; the researcher selected words from casual speech. The criterion of choosing the informants is also presented. Then, there are two sections dedicated to the social variables and linguistic ones.

### 3.2 Selection of Informants

Random sampling procedure is not applied in this study for two reasons : First, it is difficult to get a list of names; second, the main objective of this research is to gain access to the vernacular speech and any formal contact with informants definitely imposes social constraints on their Linguistic behaviour.

### 3.3 Elicitation of Data

The study and collecting of linguistic variation used naturally require an adequate data which could be in the form of good quality recordings as natural as possible. More than one method of data elicitation is employed in accordance with the objective of the research. The traditional method of an interview proves to be not useful in gaining access to the vernacular.

### 3.4 Description of the Linguistic Variables

Two linguistic variables are chosen in this study to refer to the linguistic variation. They are the most noticeable in speech community:

#### 3.4.1 The / dʒ / variable

/dʒ / is one of the linguistic variables that distinguishes the speech of urban from those of rural areas. It is a voiced alveolar affricate. However; it corresponds to /j/ which frictionless continuant. This variable has two variants which is /tʃ/ and /ʒ̲/. The /dʒ / variable in casual speech. The /ʒ̲/ variable is spoken by rural whereas /j/ variable is spoken by people Al.Hussainia rural. Educated people prefer to use / dʒ / more than educated. The uneducated people prefer to use /ʒ̲/ and /j/. As far as age, old people are more conservative on their language. Therefore, they use /ʒ̲/ and /j/. Look at the following examples:

| /dʒ/ | /j/ | /ʒ/ |
|---|---|---|
| /didʒadʒa/ | /djaja/ | /diʒaʒa/ |
| /dʒahal/ | /jahal/ | /ʒahal/ |
| /dʒiba/ | /jiba/ | /ʒiba/ |

### 3.4.2 The / k / variable

/k/ is another linguistic variable which is spoken by speech community. It has two variants: the /k/ variable is a velar, stop and voiceless. The /tʃ/ is palatal, stop and voiced. The /k/ variant is typical of the local speech in urban whereas the /tʃ/ variant is spoken in rural. Educated people prefer to use /k/ variant whereas uneducated people employ /tʃ/ variant. /k/ variant is spoken by young people /tʃ/ is spoken by old people. Look at the following examples:

| /k/ | /tʃ/ |
|---|---|
| /kəm/ | / tʃam/ |
| /kan/ | / tʃan/ |

### 3.4.3 The /i/ variable

One of the most interesting short vowels studied in our speech community is the /i/ variable. It has two variants.

1. [i] variant which is typical of the local speech in rural community.
2. [u] variant which is most widely used by urban speech community because people are effected by other community such as Baghdad.

The [u] variant is clearly pronounced by female whereas [i] variant is pronounced by male. Look at the following examples:

| /u/ | /i/ |
|---|---|
| /agula/ | /agila/ |
| /kulʃi/ | /kilʃi/ |

3.5 Analysis of Results

Regarding the variable of region, the results of this test are going to be compared according to region to investigate. The results of urban will be compared with rural.

The regional factor is another social variable. It plays an important role. It is expected that informants in urban use more of the standard variants. However, it is an amazing result to find out that people in urban use /dʒ/ more than those of people in rural. This outcome could be explained by a significant social element. In other words, the majority of informants—especially the wealthy and well-to-do—do not view their stigmatized variations as a cause for shame. On the contrary, their living imposes upon them the barrier of choosing their local variant. Therefore, their progress is very slow. On the other hand, people in rural use /3/ more than /d3/ whereas people in Al.Hussainia rural used /j/ more than /dz/. This is due to the fact that they are in a panic to be isolated in this new community since the majority in the town center considered them be less social status.

Another important variable is the / k / which has two variants /k/ and / tʃ /. /k/ is considered a standard feature of city center. /tʃ/, on the other hand, is a vernacular feature that is one of e everyone conversational use.

Certain Iraqi subdialects, especially those spoken in rural areas, can be easily identified from one another using the phonemes /i/ and /u/. Two versions of this linguistic item exist.. Urbans employ the /u/ variable and the rural speakers use the /i/ variant.

**4. Conclusion**

The main process by which the social is embedded in language is sociolinguistic variation. Understanding the nature of the social meaning that variation carries and the processes by which it acquires meaning is essential to comprehending how variation functions. In particular, we must closely study the use of variety to learn how (and to what extent) it is employed to convey highly specific, individualized meanings. In order to accomplish this, we must concentrate on the function of variation in persona construction—that is, how individuals use language to form styles.

Within the field of comparative sociolinguistics, this study has raised a question: how did two communities come to differ in the constraints affecting a single variable? The research has examined if the sound change models proposed in the works of Smith et al. and Bermúdez-Otero could provide some insight into the problem. According to these models, variations in individual speakers that listeners are unable to make up for lead to the introduction and spread of new variants throughout a speech community.

The researcher described two categories of cognitive differences that can cause an individual or a group of individuals to produce a sociolinguistic variable in a way that weakens, modifies, or eliminates community-level constraints on the variable's patterning. These individual variances so result in productions where the community grammar is "perturbed."

The mental representation of a specific surface structure that a speaker has is the first of these two categories of differences. The second is the extent and proficiency of their production planning, meaning they may arrange a speech unit for the future while completing one for the past.

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