Is Sociolinguistics Lacking in Style?

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For those who dance in the capitals; for those who handle a saw;
for those who discuss the problem of style...
O Cat with the Fiddle, Lar us
W.H. Auden (1977:54)

ABSTRACT

Although the study of stylistic variation has been a feature of much sociolinguistic investigation since the 1960's, there is little agreement about the nature of this variation and the extent to which it can (or should) be investigated systematically. There are at least three problems: i) a tendency to treat stylistic variation as unidimensional; ii) lack of clarity about the influence of the written language; and iii) a failure to examine the role of all the participants in interviews. Preoccupation with a narrow view of stylistic variation may have constrained sociolinguistic investigation and rendered it less useful than it might have been.

One of tlze most impressive features of Labov's pioneering work in New York (Labov 1966) was its extended description of the methodology he employed, which has proiided tlze model for much of the subsequent sociolinguistic investigation of urban speech. However, as O'Connell (1988) pointed out with respect to the history of psychology, there is a tendency for tlze subtleties and limitations of earlier studies to he obscured in later citations. This paper is an examination of some of the evidence that has been used in support of various approaches to the collection of sociolinguistic data. Inevitably, this involves critically re-examining some studies that have been frequently cited in the literature but I believe there is a value in looking closely again at the evidence and the assumptions in these works so that future studies may be based on sound methodology. (Keywords: stylistic variation. sociolinguistic methodology, written language. speech accomrnodation. scottish dialect).

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RESUMEN

A pesar de que el estudio de la variación estilística ha sido objeto de considerable investigación sociolingüística desde los años sesenta, hay poco consenso sobre la naturaleza de esta variación y el grado hasta el que puede (o debería) ser investigada de manera sistemática. Hay, al menos, tres objecciones: i) una tendencia a tratar la variación estilística como unidimensional; ii) una falta de claridad en lo referente a la influencia de la lengua escrita; y iii) una iricapacidad para estudiar la función de los participantes en las entrevistas. La obsesión por una perspectiva restringida de la variación estilística puede haber limitado la investigación sociolingüística y haber contribuido a hacerla menos útil de lo que podría haber resultado.

Una de las cualidades más impactantes del trabajo pionero de Labov en Nueva York (Labov 1966) fue su descripción pormenorizada de la metodología que empleó, lo que ha supuesto un modelo para mucha de la investigación sociolingüística posterior sobre el habla urbana. Sin embargo, como indicó O'Connell (1988) con respecto a la historia de la psicología, hay una tendencia a que las sutilezas y limitaciones de estudios anteriores se oculten en citas posteriores. El presente artículo examina algunos argumentos y presupuestos propios de varias aproximaciones desarrolladas para la recogida de datos sociolingüísticos. Inevitablemente, esto implica volver a examinar de modo crítico algunos estudios que frecuentemente se han citado en la literatura, pero que considero indispensable hacer con objeto de que estudios futuros puedan basarse en una metodología más sólida. (Palabras Clave: variación estilística. metodología sociolingüística, lengua escrita, acomodación al habla. dialecto escocés).

Focus on the importance of studying stylistic variation in sociolinguistic investigations followed Labov's pioneering work in New York (Labov 1966). I was so convinced of this that when I reviewed Wolfram's 1969 Detroit study. I accused him of "throwing out the baby with the hathwater" because he had ignored stylistic variation (Macaulay 1970: 772). By the time I came to carry out my own study in Glasgow in 1973 (Macaulay and Trevelyan 1973. Macaulay 1977), I had decided not even to put the baby in the bath. For this, 1 was in turn castigated by J. Milroy because of the "absence of a systematic account of style-shifting" and a "failure to reach the 'vernacular'" (1979: 91), a complaint to which I finally responded in Macaulay (1988a).

Since then I have become concerned that attempts to achieve objective measures of stylistic variation may have had unfortunate consequences for sociolinguistic investigation by concentrating attention on this phenomenon at the expense of other aspects of language. At the same time, I believe that there are three major problems with present approaches to the study of stylistic variation:

1) Attempts to treat stylistic variation as unidimensional are unrealistic because any suggested explanation for the variation may be vitiated by factors that have deliberately been ignored.
2) There seems to be a reluctance to consider the significance of the written language in relation to the notions of prestige form and standard language.

2) Concentrating on what one interlocutor does without paying equal attention to what the other participant(s) rnay be doing cannot provide a coherent explanation of the speaker's behaviour.

In a recent article, Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) review the studies of stylistic variation in quantitative sociolinguists. They suggest that the notion of **attention paid to speech** ernployed by Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1974) has not been followed by sorne investigators (e.g., Wolfrarn 1969: Macaulay 1977) because of the "rnethodological and theoretical difficulties with this approach" (1994: 235). The major methodological problem is distinguishing between **casual speech** and **careful speech** (Trudgill uses the term **formal speech).** Labov identified five contextual situations for casual speech: 1) Speech outside the formal interview: 2) Speech with a third person: 3) Speech not in direct response to a question; 4) Childhood rhymes and custorns; and 5) "Danger of Death" narratives. These five criteria combine the effect of addressee and of topic. Labov used paralinguistic cues to identify casual speech in these contexts. Wolfram (1969) and Macaulay (1977) found it difficult to use these cues in any objective and reliable way. so that they did not ernploy the distinction between casual and careful speech in their analysis.

Labov's focus on the attention paid to speech follows from his notion of the **vernacular,** which he defines as "that mode of speech that is acquired in pre-adolescent years". in which "the minirnurn attention is paid to speech," and which he clairns "provides the rnost systematic data for linguistic analysis" (Labov 1981: 3). There are problems with this definition of the vernacular (Macaulay, 1988a: Reah 1982; Romaine 1984) and concentrating on this kind of speech may have constrained sociolinguistic investigation more narrowly than might have been the case. **As** Johnstone and Bean observe:

> ... we suggest that a full understanding of variation needs to be based on an understanding of public, relatively self-conscious speech, as well as more private, vernacular forms [...] speech addressed to a wider audience than one's friends and intirnates. speech that is is at least in part 'performance' (Bauman 1977). speech that is often relatively planned and relatively self-conscious provides. we claim, the best source of evidence about the full range of a speaker's linguistic cornpetence.
>
> Johnstone & Bean (1997: 241)

For this reason. Johnstone and Bean suggest the need to look at more heterogeneous situations. but for systematic sociolinguistic surveys the dyadic interview will probably continue to be a basic source of data.

One of the theoretical problerns with the **attention to speech** approach concems the use of materials to be read out loud as representing increasing attention to speech. As several investigators (e.g., Milroy 1980: Romaine. 1980: Macaulay 1997) have pointed out, there are prohlems in treating speech and reading aloud as a continuum. Milroy and Milroy (1977) showed that deletion of (th) was alrnost non-existent in word list style in Belfast even in those speakers who showed extremely high rates of deletion in spontaneous speech. They argued that the occurrence of (th) in the word list style was probably the result of the influence of the orthographic form. The evidence from reading in Labov's study would be rnuch stronger if the written form contradicted the prestige pronunciation (e.g., r-lessness in RP). If the prestige

form in New York had been *r*-lessness (as in London) and if the speakers had **increased** their deletion in the reading exercises, this would have been a more convincing demonstration that the results were not an artifact of the orthographic form. The fact that the results for the three consonantal variables (r). (th). and (dh) are all consistent with the written form makes the influence of orthography highly plausible. The evidence from the vowel variables is less clear. but even there the influence of the written form cannot be ruled out. As Chambers observes in a study of the acquisition of British speech forms by six Canadian children: "In the early stage of dialect acquisition, features which are orthographically transparent progress faster than features which are orthographically opaque" (1988: 662).

The intluence of alphabetic literacy on phonological perception is still unclear but there is enough evidence to suggest that the relationship is problematic (see the discussion in Vihman 1996: 174-82; Mann 1986). Yet there has been little general recognition that. for example. the most frequently cited evidence for "hypercorrection" in Labov's class stratification of (r) (1966: 240) comes largely from the assumption that reading aloud styles are part of a continuum with speech, and even thirty years later differences between speaking and reading aloud are still cited as evidence for different "speech styles" (e.g., Dailey-O'Cain 1997).

The second approach to the quantification of stylistic variation that Rickford and McNair-Knox discuss is the **audience design** theory of Bell (1984). They list 23 studies that examined stylistic variation that seemed to depend on difference in the person addressed. Rickford and McNair-Knox express their surprise that Bell's model had received so little attention in quantitative linguistics since "Bell (1984) strikes us as one of the most theoretically interesting works to emerge in the study of style-shifting -and in sociolinguistics more generally- since the work of Labov in the early 1960s" (1994: 241).

Rickford and McNair. using an innovative approach to the analysis of style (see below). illustrate the effect of change of addressee by contrasting the use of language by Foxy, an African-American teenager. in two very different interviews. In interview 111 Foxy was intewiewed in her home by a forty-one-year-old African American woman (McNair-Knox) and her sixteen-year-old daughter. Roberta. In interview IV Foxy was interviewed by a twenty-five-year-old European American woman who was a graduate student. In a wide range of measures of African American Vernacular English. Foxy used significantly more of them in interview 111 than she did in interview IV. Rickford and McNair-Knox interpreted this stylistic shift as supporting Bell's notion of audience design. However. a major problem with Bell's model is that it minimizes the role of the addressee. This is not surprising since what Bell himself calls "the most striking case" (1984: 171) is the stylistic shift he recorded for four newscasters on two New Zealand radio stations. In this case, it is quite reasonable to attribute the variation literally to audience design, since the broadcasters are presumably trying to reach out to their likely audience'. However, this audience is totally passive. There is no immediate feedback to the speakers and there can be no "accommodation" to changes that occur in the course of the speech event. In face-to-face encounters the course of the interaction is mutually negotiated by the participants. A failure to understand this fully underlies the views of those (e.g., Wolfson 1976. Milroy and Milroy 1977) who adversely criticized the quality of speech obtained through dyadic interviews (for an argument in defence of interview data. see Macaulay 1984. 1990. 1991).

When Rickford and McNair-Knox contrast Foxy's use of language in interview III and in interview IV, they seem to assume that the two speech events are equivalent. From an examination of the two situations this assumption is unjustified. In interview III Foxy

participated in a three-way conversation with two people she knew, one of them her own age. In Interview IV Foxy participated in a dyadic exchange with a stranger. ten years older of very different background and education. It is clear from what Rickford and McNair-Knox say that the use of language by **all three participants** in Interview III was very different from that of hoth in Interview IV. and that Foxy was much more at her ease in Interview III. To call these equivalent speech events just because they come under the name "interview" is misleading. To say that the the only difference between these two speech events lies in the nature of the addressee is to ignore what Bakhtin, Goffman. Gumperz, Hymes, and others have said about speech events.

However, Rickford and McNair-Knox also divide up the interviews according to topics discussed and calculate the number variants used in each topic section (1994: pp. 259-60). This micro-analysis shows that there is one section of Interview IV where Foxy responded differently from how she did in the rest of the interview. That is the 12% of the transcript devoted what Rickford and McNair-Knox call the topic "wives, slamming partners". a topic that also takes up 12% of Interview III. lf we treat these two sections as equivalent (instead of treating the interviews as a whole as the basis for comparison), then there is no style-shifting and no addressee effect. Contrary to supporting Bell's thesis. it is a counter-example. Foxy uses the same kind of language (in terms of the features tabulated by Rickford and McNair-Knox) in speaking to a complete stranger of different race as she does in speaking to Faye and Roherta.

However. it would be unwise to attribute the stylistic change solely to topic shift. A topic shift may coincide with a change in the dynamics of the interaction and lead to style shifting. as it apparently did in the case of "wives. slamming partners" for Foxy. but change of topic may have little or no effect, as illustrated by several of the other eleven topics identified by Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994: pp. 259-60). The importance of topic (or genre) was recognized by Labov from the start. In addition to extending the stylistic dimension in the direction of greater formality through reading tasks. Labov (1966: 107) had sought to increase the amount of "casual speech" by encouraging the speaker to recall childhood rhymes and customs. and by the "Danger of death" question. Trudgill (1974), Macaulay (1977). and L. Milroy (1980), for very different reasons. found the latter to he a less successful question than Labov had experienced. In later interviews (Macaulay 1991). 1 found that while it sometimes provoked good narratives, these narratives were no different in style than those stimulated by. for example. questions about first job or meeting one's spouse. Gal (1979) points out that emotion-laden narratives (such as those elicited by the danger-of-death question) did not necessarily lead to the use of more dialect features in her interviews:

> We can hypothesize that from an Oberwarter's point of view. dialect features, when used to a standard speaker, primarily convey the speaker's peasant status and not his or her involvement in the narrative. It might even be supposed that. to impress a standard-speaking stranger with the importance of an emotion-laden incident. the Oberwarter would strain toward the standard to maximize intelligibility and convey seriousness in the listener's own terms; that is, in the linguistic variety most likely to be meaningful for the stranger.
>
> Gal (1979: 94)

What this comment underlines is that neither topic alone nor the status of the addressee

determines stylistic choices but rather how the interlocutors perceive and categorize the situation and their awareness of the norms that apply to this situation. As Brown and Fraser point out

> ... a doctor consulting a lawyer on a legal question might well express deference in formulating his query. whereas the lawyer when consulting the doctor about his heart condition would be the one to express deference [...] So an understanding of the nature of the scene. **as viewed by the participants.** is essential in order to detect and interpret many of the markers that appear in their speech.
>
> Brown and Fraser (1979: 54. emphasis added)

Bell's theory of style as audience design is a more subtle form of **speech accommodation theory** (e.g., Giles and Powesland 1975: Thakerar. Giles. & Cheshire 1982). Accornmodation theory describes the conditions under which the speaker's form of speech will "converge on" or "diverge from" the form of speech used by the addressee (or assumed to be used by the addressee). Bell takes this further by considering the effect not only of the addressee but also of auditors. overhearers. and eavesdroppers. Bell emphasizes that most speech is positively responsive to the audience (i.e., convergent) but. under certain circumstances. a speaker may initiate a different style (i.e., divergent). Bell supports his argument with examples taken from studies by Douglas-Cowie (1978) and Coupland (1980. 1988).

Douglas-Cowie tape-recorded ten inhabitants of a small village in Northern Ireland under two sets of conditions. The first was talking together in pairs (and with Douglas-Cowie herself); the second condition was talking one-to-one with an English outsider. Douglas-Cowie was able to show that the speakers tended to use more "standard" forms when speaking to the English outsider: however. this switch was less obvious in the second half of the sessions. Moreover. some speakers showed little or no change in certain variables, and a greater difference among the speakers was shown by their position on a Social Ambition scale. So. although Douglas-Cowie's results support Bell's position on audience design. they do so only weakly.

Coupland tape-recorded 51 clients in conversation with a woman assistant in a travel agency in Cardiff, Wales. Coupland identified four situations in which to observe the assistant's speech: (1) talking with a friend about non-work topics: (2) talking with a friend about work-related topics; (3) talking with a client; and (4) talking with other agents and tour-operators on the telephone. Coupland argues that the assistant "operates with three broadly distinguishable styles: a casual style for general conversations with colleagues. a rather less casual style for discussing work matters (again with colleagues) and a formal style for use with clients and with other travel agents on the telephone" (1988: 88). More significantly, in terms of audience design, the assistant varies her speech according to the occupational status of the clients she is addressing.

Coupland's findings offer stronger support for Bell's view. but convergence of this kind is hardly surprising in such service encounters. if the assistant is trying to be helpful. However. it is not always the case that assistants are accornmodating. or even polite. The assistant in this study presumably knew that she was being recorded and apparently did not have to deal with recalcitrant or aggressive clients. Duncan and Fiske (1985: pp. 6-12) point

out the problems involved in using "confederates" in interactional research, partly because of the impossibility of controlling the variance. A follow-up study with surreptitious recording of several assistants in a wider range of encounters would provide a stronger basis for the claims. if similar results were obtained. Nevertheless. the fact that the assistant was able to modify her speech in the direction of convergence shows that audience design **can** be a factor in style shifting: it does not prove that it is the sole cause in this or other situations.

Jones-Sargent (1983) points out problems with the notions of "convergence" and "divergence" in audience design:

> ... speakers do not move towards or away from each other linguistically in any simple fashion. I have observed a Liverpudlian in conversation with a localised Tynesider shift towards a more localised Liverpudlian. which was as different from the Tyneside speech as the less localised variety used by the Liverpudlian at the start of the interaction. This could have been an instance of convergence along some abstract RP-to-undefined dimension, or divergence signalling identification with another region. or both at once.
>
> Jones-Sargent (1983: 14)

She also observes that Labov assumes "social ambitiousness to be the central cause of variation" (1983: 15) although there is no attempt to establish the validity of social ambition as the sole motivating force. All versions of the accornmodation model. including Bell's. assume that these aspects are unproblematic.

Bell (1984: 186) also discusses what he calls "referee design": "Referees are persons not physically present at an interaction. but possessing such salience for a speaker that they influence speech even in their absence". Bell chooses to emphasize that referees are persons because he wishes to bring all stylistic variation under the general rubric of audience design but it is clear froin his examples (e.g., RP as a model for prestige broadcasting in New Zealand) that he is actually talking about abstract norms. The problem with audience design as the sole explanation of stylistic variation can be seen in a query Bell himself raises:

> If the basis of style shift is addressee design. then the question of shift by upper-class speakers becomes an issue. Everyone else is shifting towards them. but who can they be said to be shifting towards in formal speech?
>
> Bell (1984: 199)

The answer seems obvious enough. The upper-class. like many other speakers (but not all), shift in the direction of the standard language. i.e., the written norm[2]. This is the probable explanation for the lack of low level phonetic processes in upper-class speech (Kroch 1978). as much as for the difference between spoken styles and reading styles in Labov's New York study. Because consonant deletion and elision are seldom indicated in written language. it appears to many people as self-evident that the "correct" form of spoken language does not include such processes'.

Bell's notion of style as audience design is an advance on accommodation theory because it takes more aspects of the speech event into account but it still oversimplifies the situation by trying to make stylistic variation unidimensional. Bell accepts the "universality of a formal-informal continuum subsuming diverse factors" (1984: 181) but one of his examples

shows the difficulty of using it objectively. Bell comments on a study of differential language use in three doniains:

> Hindle (1971) analysed one person's speech in the three settings of honie. office. and a ganie of bridge. The different settings were often associated with different values of the vowel variables. hut did not order on the **obvious** formal-informal hierarchy. The Home and Game settings were regularly at opposite ends. with the supposedly most formal Office setting in between.
>
> Bell (1984: 179. emphasis added)

Taken literally. this would suggest (incorrectly. in fact) that Bell has had limited experience of working in an office. since in niany cases there is a wide range of speech used. frorn very polite and deferential to abusive and obscene . Also, it is not universally the case that only informal speech occurs in the home (Dorian 1994).

The attempts to quantify stylistic variation have largely been motivated by Labov's preoccupation with linguistic change. While this has clearly led to a greater understanding of the processes of linguistic change. it has not necessarily been beneficial for sociolinguistics as a whole. Since rnost features of language do not change quickly. if at all (Macaulay 1988c. 1991). the concentration on linguistic change in sociolinguistic investigation has probably been counter-productive in some respects. The attempt to ohtain quantifiable examples of stylistic variation has constrained data-collecting unnecessarily. It has also downgraded the notion of style by treating it as unidimensional (Traugott and Romaine 1985). To adapt Bakhtin's (1981: 263) metaphor the richness of full orchestration has been transposed to a theme played hy a pennywhistle. The speakers of too niany sociolinguistic studies live in Flatland. as shown in Figure 1:

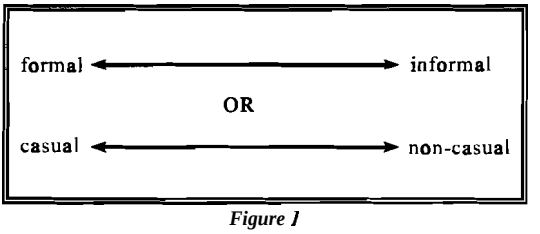

Figure 1

Bell's implicational diagram (1984: 160) in similar fashion is unidimensional

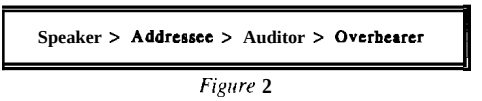

Figure 2

The implicational arrows indicate decreasing effect on stylistic variation. This correctly implies that the most irnportant participant is the speaker. Both **attention-to-speech** models and **audience design** models focus their attention on the speaker and examine changes in the speaker's behaviour hut treat what the addressee **does** as irrelevant. This is a major probleni.

as the example of Foxy. discussed above, shows. It may in certain kinds of polling interviews he reasonable to assume that the effect of the interviewer is negligible, though even in scripted polling interviews. there can be individual variation. as Johnstone (1996) has shown. In most interactions. however. the hehaviour and attitudes of all participants are important[5].

The prohlem is also methodological. The usual practice in sociolinguistic investigation has been to tabulate tokens extracted from their context and treat them without reference to that context. This is changing (e.g., Eckert. forthcoming; Rickford and McNair-Knox,1994; Schilling-Estes 1998) and it is to be hoped that future sociolinguistic studies will pay more attention to the speech events from which the evidence is taken[6]. For example. Schilling-Estes (1998) analyses an interview between a Lumhee Native American and an African American fieldworker in Robeson County, North Carolina. They are both students at the same university where they met a couple of years before the interview and are good friends. Schilling-Estes divides the interview into ten sections according to topics. such as Race Relations. the Civil War, and Friends and Family. She is able to show that key features. such as r-lessness. third person singular *-s* absence, and regularization of past tense ***he,*** all vary according to the topic. For example. r-lessness varies from 14.1% to 60.7% for the interviewee and from 16.7% to 55.2% for the interviewer. and sometimes their usage converges and at other times it diverges. They are closest together when talking about family and friends and furthest apart when talking ahout race relations in Robeson County. The analysis clearly shows the importance of looking not only at topic hut also at the role of hoth participants in the speech event.

I will use a few examples from own work to illustrate other kinds of questions that may emerge when the broader context is taken into consideration. They are examples of stylistic variation that would he hard to explain solely in terms of formality. attention to speech. or audience design.

The first is the use of the (au) variable descrihed my Ayr study (Macaulay 1991: pp. 41-44). In Middle English and Old Scots there was a high back rounded vowel /u/. In most English varieties this has become a wide rising diphthong /au/, but in northern dialects, including lowland Scottish dialects. a high rounded monophthong has survived. In both the diphthong and the monophthong there is considerable variation in the actual phonetic quality. so that this variation can he treated as a continuum (Macaulay 1977). For the purposes of the present discussion. however. phonetic quality is not the issue. and the variants can be classed as either diphthongal or monophthongal.

In the Ayr sample, there is a clear division between the middle-class speakers. who always use a diphthongal form. and the lower-class speakers. who frequently use a monophthong.' It is not the case. however. that any of the lower-class speakers always uses a monophthong. All the lower-class speakers use some diphthongal forms but the frequency varies greatly. with three of the speakers using less than 50% monophthongs and the others with a frequency of more than 80% monophthongs. It is possible that the first group differs to this extent from the second group in their use of the variable (au) in their normal everyday life, despite the fact that with one exception they all live in the same district and know each other: in regional and social identification they belong to the same category. It is also possihle, however. that the difference hetween the two groups reflects a difference in sensitivity to the interview situation with an interviewer who used only diphthongal forms. Some support for this view can be found in the fact that for four of the speakers there is a clear increase in the use of monophthongal forms as the interview progresses. This suggests a degree of relaxation as the interview proceeds and that their use of diphthongal forms is at least partly a response

to the interview situation. Two are women who had been in domestic service. while one of the men had spent some time away from Ayr in the Merchant Navy in his youth. and the other was frequently asked to speak at public functions. All four thus would have had occasion to modify their speech in dealing with middle-class speakers. so it is hardly surprising that they should accomrnodate to me as an interviewer in the earlier stages of the interview. However. there is evidence for another factor that can be clearly seen in two of these interviews. In the first half of both interviews there is a narrative section dealing with an early experience and in telling of these experiences the speakers rnake a much higher use of monophthonpal forms. Since these narratives occur relatively early in the interviews. it is clear that what is affecting the frequency of monophthongal forms here is genre and not adaptation to the interview situation.

However. more puzzling was a **decrease** in the use of monophthongal forms in the interviews the two most consistent lower-class speakers. A factor that affects the frequency in the second half of the interviews with these is that certain words seem to be either categorically diphthongal or have a greater likelihood of being diphthongal. For example. *shout* is invariably diphthongal. perhaps to avoid homonymity with *shoot*. *How* is frequently. but not cateporically, diphthongal perhaps because of a possible confusion with interrogative *who*. There is also a tendency for *now* as a discourse marker (see Macaulay 1991:168-69) to be diphthongal in contrast to *now* as a temporal adverb where it is frequently monophthongal. Less common words are also more likely to be diphthongal and it is the relatively high proportion of these rarer words in the second half of the interviews with these two speakers that accounts for the slight increase in diphthongal forms there. It is clear that monophthongal forms are normal for these two speakers in common words but even in such items a diphthong is available for stylistic emphasis or rhetorical purposes. For example. in one speaker's interview *out* is alrnost categorically monophthongal *oot*. but in describing an accident down the mine. he uses diphthongal forms twice in quick succession:

WL897	and yin came up
898	and hit him just on the side of the heid
899	[psssst] **out** like a light
900	**out** like a light

Similarly, for this speaker *down* is regularly monophthongal *doon* but in talking about the minister who was opposed to gambling he twice uses the diphthongal form:

WL2895	on the one hand he was **down**
2896	on gambling
2897	but he wasnae **down** on drink
2898	because I ken that
2899	I poured it oot for him

Here it is as if the rnetaphorical use of *down* has made it into a different item. This example occurs very nearly at the end of the interview and cannot be a matter of accommodating to the interviewer. A similar example occurs late in the interview with another speaker. Throughout the interview *out* is categorically monophthongal *oot*. except for one instance when he was describing the unavailability of seats on the train:

HG1451 so I went back to Euston
1452 to hook saits back to Glesca
1453 oh they're **out**

A parallel exarnple is found in a group session I recorded in Aberdeen. One speaker in the middle of the session produced this remark:

2257 aa the **down and outers**
2258 that you spick aboot here onywey

All the variables show localized variants (*aa* = 'all'; *spick* = 'speak': *aboot* = 'about': *onywey* = 'anyway') except for the expression *down and outers* which must be a fixed phrase (or perhaps he believes that it is the way that people who use such an expression would say it).

The materials that I have collected are not extensive enough to show whether the idomatic or metaphoric use of (au) forms is widespread but this is a question that could be investigated by a future researcher. It is not the kind of question that could have arisen frorn my analysis of the (au) variable in Glasgow (Macaulay 1977) where I was solely interested in the phonetic quality of the isolated tokens. The examination of the use of the variable (au) in the Ayr interviews illustrates the effect of a number of factors on the choice of form and shows quite clearly that the variation does not depend on a single stylistic dimension. Measuring the variation on a single dimension would distort the reality, and a failure to look at the context in which exceptional tokens are used would not have uncovered the possible metaphoric or rhetorical use of (au). As Ferguson (1994) has pointed out. it is important not to assume that the factors (such as dialect. register. and genre) underlying linguistic variation are completely independent.

The second example comes from an interview recorded with Bella K. a 65-year-old woman. as part of the Dundee Oral History Project. The interview was recorded in two sessions. the first lasting over two and a half hours and the second approximately one and a half hours. The interviewer is a much younger woman (known to BK) whose speech is also a local variety. There are no obvious differences between the two sessions as far as the language is concerned. BK tells stories, makes jokes, and expresses her opinions freely. with only the slightest prompting from the interviewer. She seems perfectly at ease in the situation. She speaks with apparent frankness about such intimate and potentially embarrassing subjects as bed-wetting. menstruation. illegitimacy. and marital fidelity. She uses taboo expressions several times and not only when citing the speech of others (Goffman 1974: 539: Macaulay 1987b). Her language varies in a number of ways along the continuum from lower-class speech to middle-class speech. sometimes using a variant from one end of the spectrum and sornetimes one from the polar opposite.

The variable I will deal with here is the verbal negative clitic. In urban Scottish English there are two possibilities *-n't* and *-nae*. The latter is used variably but never categorically by lower-class speakers. while middle-class speakers almost always use *-n't*. although they are familiar with *-nae* and may use it for comic or other rhetorical purposes.[8] BK uses both forms about equally frequently but with some auxiliaries there is a preference for one form or the other. Table 1 shows the forms that favor *-nae*.

Table 1

Clitic Negatives in BK's Interview			
cannae	9	can't	17
couldnae	18	couldn't	18
didnae	51	didn't	42
dinna	16	don't	39
doesnae	8	doesn't	1
hadnae	1	hadn't	5
havenae	7	haven't	3
shouldnae	3	shouldn't	0
wasnae	45	wasn't	23
werenae	12	weren't	4
wouldnae	16	wouldn't	6
TOTALS	186 (54%)	TOTALS	158 (46%)

The kind of explanation that a formality/attention to speech theory would suggest for this variation is that BK's basic form is *-nae* but that when she is being careful or accommodating to a middle-class speaker she uses *-n't*, since this is the prestige form. Some support for this view comes from my own interview with BK. In this interview there are 154 clitic negatives, of which only 46 (30%) are *-nae* and 108 (70%) are *-n't*. Since *-nae/-n't* is a socially sensitive variable, BK is presumahly accommodating to me as a middle-class speaker (and there are other indications in the interview). It is much harder to explain the variation in the oral history interview as a form of accommodation. Since both forms occur throughout the interview BK would have to be making a constant effort to use the prestige form *-n't* but continually failing. Nothing in the interview supports such an interpretation: far from appearing to be anxious BK sounds very relaxed and comfortahle in the situation, right from the start. The interviewer's form of speech is not very different from BK's: she has only two clitic negatives. *wasnae* near the beginning of the first session and *wouldn't* near the end of the same session. It is hard to believe that BK's use of *-n't* was an attempt to accommodate to the speech of the interviewer.

Looking at the interview as a whole, it is possible to see some pattern in the distribution of the clitics. Lexical collocation has some influence. All the examples with *remember* and 87% of those with *know* take *-n't*. Genre is also important as shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Distribution of Clitic Negatives in BK's Interview		
clauses	*% -n't*	*% -nae*
Opinion clauses	53	47
Explanation clauses	51	49
Narrative clauses	22	78

This helps to explain the choice of clitic within a single episode:

1599 because at the weaving you seemed
1600 to get everybody's bad work
1601 it was

1602	if the-- if the cops **werenae** bad	←
1603	it was the weft **wasnae-- wasnae** good	←
1604	and if the weft was good	
1605	the bloody dressing was wrang	
1606	you got everybody's trouble	
1607	cause it was piece work	
1608	and if you **didn't** make a penny	←
1609	you **didn't** get a penny	←
1610	although I was em a heavy heavy worker	
1611	eh manual work was no bother to me	
1612	it really **wasnae**	←
1613	I was a physically strong woman	

The uses of *werenae* (1.1602) and *wasnae* (11.1603. 1612) are part of the narrative. whereas the use of *didn't* (11.1608. 1609) is for a comment or explanation that is outside the narrative line. An other example is:

1776	and really the-- the foreman there he **didnae** want a lassie	←
1777	he was embarrassed	
1778	the man was embarrassed	
1779	he was-- he **wasn't** married	←
1780	he'd be about thirty-eight	
1781	he was a great dancer	
1782	and lived with his mother	
1783	and eh he just **didnae** know	←
1784	how to speak to me	
1785	he-- he really **didn't**	←

The use of *didnae* (1.1776. 1.1783) occurs when BK is talking about her situation but the use of *wasn't* (1.1779) is a piece of background information. The occurrence of didn*'t* in 1.1785 is perhaps because it is an emphatic repetition (there is another example elsewhere in the interview of really didn*'t* emphasizing a previous didnae).

Within the narratives there is also an important difference in the use of negative clitics:

Table 3

	% -n't	*% -nae*
Quoted speech to or by middle-class speakers	85	15
Quoted speech to or by lower-class speakers	24	76

Again this is variation that unlikely to be affected by attention to speech or audience design. A more plausible explanation in both cases is that BK is making stylistic choices. similar to those found by Yaeger-Dror (1997) for contraction of negatives. As Dittmar (1988: xi) points out: "language lets us choose". In general. it seems as if BK uses the *-n't* clitics as the marked form. particularly in giving an explanation or her opinion where she wants to emphasize a serious point. Rather than assuming that BK is simply a passive conduit for external forces that

cause her to make the choice between the two forms (Garfinkel's 1967 "cultural dope"). it would be more plausible to give her credit for making use of a contrast that is available to her in her speech variety. There is plenty of evidence throughout the interview that BK uses language not only effectively but even eloquently[9]. lnstead of seeing this kind of variation as a failure to maintain a consistent form, there may be benefits from examining the possibility of a rhetorical function for this and other variation in the interview.

ln dealing with interview data. it is not enough to consider only the speaker who is being interviewed. As in the Foxy example above. it is not just the identity of the interviewer that matters. as an audience design model requires. but also how the interviewer is perceived by the speaker and equally important how the interviewer behaves. In the Dundee Oral History Project Bella K.'s brother Len M. was interviewed by the same interviewer as Bella. Their interviews make an interesting contrast (Macaulay 1996).

The interviewer is a younger local woman from a similar background. Both interviews are extensive. and contain numerous descriptions of life in Dundee and frequent narratives of personal experience. They are, however. different in many ways. Bella seems very comfortahle in the interview situation. at ease with the interviewer; they share laughter about many situations. and the interviewer seems to be enjoying herself as much as Bella. Bella's voice varies frequently in pitch. volume. and tempo. She needs little prompting to speak at length. and there are very few short question and answer sequences. In an interview of 35.000 words. the interviewer asks only about 70 questions. In contrast. Len is more restrained and the interviewer does not seem as much in tune with him as she is with Bella. Len speaks in a more monotonous tone with less variation in pitch. volume. and tempo than Bella. In his interview of 20,000 words the interviewer asks about 170 questions. However. rather surprisingly. 150 of these occur in the second half of the interview when Len frequently does not take advantage of the questions to volunteer information. Thus. although the interviewer is the same. the interviews are very different kinds of speech event.

There are numerous factors that could affect the nature of the language in these interviews. First. there is an age difference. Len is only three years older than Bella but his memory may be less good on some kinds of details. Second. the relationship between the interviewer and each respondent is different. The interviewer clearly got on very well with Bella. There is a lot of mutual laughter. The relationship between the interviewer and Len is much more restrained. Third, there is the gender difference. Len admitted to being shy about women as a young man and while he seems to be relatively at ease with the interviewer, it is possible that he might have reacted differently to a male interviewer. Bella clearly enjoyed talking with other women and she shows it in the interview. Fourth. there is the interviewer's own interests. She prompts many of Bella's stories by her (apparently genuine) interest in topics such as childbirth, weddings, household arrangements. and the situation of a woman working in a man's world. She is less effective in her interview with Len. She makes little response to Len's extended narrative ahout his wartime experiences in North Africa. She allows him to tell his story at great length but she does not probe with helpful questions when his narrative meanders. Nor does she seem excited when Len tells her about his visit to Russia in the 1930's as one of two youthful representatives on a Scottish delegation, where he met Lenin's widow but nobody told her he had been named after her husband. It is a story that calls out for greater detail than Len gives but the interviewer does not intervene. It is a situation that most interviewers will recognize, an occasion missed by a failure to take advantage of an opening, but it also is a reminder of the variability of interview data in this respect. To use

interview data without treatinp the whole interview as a speech event calls into question the comparability of evidence (Macaulay 1988b).

I have dealt with the next example in detail elsewhere (Macaulay 1995) but I will summarize the findings briefly here because it concems a kind of variation that I have not seen discussed before. In the Ayr study I had put all the interviews on floppy disk and so with the help of a concordance program I was able to produce a frequency list for both lower-class and middle-class speakers."' The concordances revealed a very interesting difference between the Iower-class interviews and the middle-class interviews. This was that the middle-class speakers used adverbs in *-ly* more frequently than the lower-class speakers. The figures for four subcategories of adverbs and *really* (which is a special case) are given in Table 4:

Table 4

Adverbs in *-ly*

	Lower-class w/o AS		AS		Middle-class	
	#	Freq.	#	Freq.	#	Freq.
Manner	8	0.16	14	0.66	82	1.61
Timer/Freq.	20	0.41	18	0.85	70	1.38
Degree	27	0.56	18	0.85	121	2.38
Senierice	43	0.88	33	1.56	174	3.42
really	26	0.53	29	1.37	106	3.08
TOTALS	124	2.55	112	5.28	553	10.86

[Freq. = instances per 1,000 words]

It can be seen from Table 4 that the middle-class speakers use adverbs in *-ly* more than four times as frequently as five out of the six lower-class speakers. The most striking difference is in the use of manner adverbs. which the middle-class speakers use ten times as frequently. The figures for the sixth lower-class speaker (AS), which are given separately, fall between those of the other lower-class speakers and those of the middle-class speakers. This pattern is consistent with other features of his interview and confirms rather than weakens the claim that in general the lower-class speakers do not use manner adverbs very frequently. This is not a difference in register (Finegan and Biber 1994) since it is not a difference in the words available to the speakers or of the topics discussed but rather an avoidance of a feature that is common in the interviews with the middle-class speakers.

I also found that the middle-class speakers used evaluative adjectives almost ten times as frequently as the lower-class speakers and this is reflected in the greater number of judgmental comments in the middle-class interviews (see Macaulay 1995 for a fuller discussion of this phenomenon). I suggested that this possibly represented a more tolerant attitude on the part of the lower-class speakers. On the other hand. the difference might have arisen as a consequence of the middle-class speakers' accommodation to me as an academic interviewer. They may have felt freer to express categorical judgements in the context of the interview than the lower-class speakers did. However. this is a very different kind of audience desipn from any based on the frequency of prestige variants.

Table 5

Summary of Social Class Differences in the Ayr Interviews

Section	Items	Lower-class	Middle-class
I.	Monophrhongal (au)	very common	absent
	Variable (e)	common	absent
	Variable (a)	common	absent
	-ed devoicing	common	absent
	Homorganic stop deletion	common	absent
	Vocalisation of /l/	common	very rare
	Glottal stops	more	fewer
	Velar fricatives	more	fewer
II.	Clitic -nae	very coninon	absent
	neg. operator no	very common	absent
	Subj/verb non-agreeinent	common	absent
	Multiple neg. concord	rare	ahsrnt
	WH-relative markers	very rare	very comnion
III.	Nonrestrictive relative clauses	rare	common
	Subordinate clauses	fewer	more
	Noun clauses	fewer	more
	Subordinair clauses of reason, condition, concession, & embedded questions	fewer	more
	Subordinate clauses of comparison, place, and time	more	fewer
	Infinitives	fewrr	more
	Gerunds	slightly fewer	slightly more
IV.	Highlighting devices	more	fewer
	Adverbs	fewer	more
	Discourse markers	more	fewer

The differences in the use of adverbs were only one of the findings from the comparison of the middle-class and lower-class interviews. Other differences are sumrnarized in Table 5. The items in sections I and II are relatively "robust," in that they distinguish the speech of the two groups regardless of topic, style, or genre. These are the kind of features that Coupland (forthcoming) might include as aspects of "dialect-style," characteristic of social class or other community identification. The items in III and IV are much more "fragile" in that their frequency depends more on topic. genre, or individual stylistic preferences (e.g., in the use of discourse markers such as *(you)* ***ken).*** The Ayr study is based on a small sample. the makeup of which was the result of chance rather than design, so any claims based on the analysis will require further investigation to validate them. But there will be no confirmation or challenge to these results unless sociolinguists are willing to look at a much wider range of features than has generally been the case.

One of my frustrations in looking at this variation was the lack of any kind of comparable data. With rare exceptions (e.g., Feagin. 1979: Macafee. 1994: Torres 1997) sociolinguists have seldom investigated variation other than phonological or morphological variables. The variation in the use of adverhs in the Ayr interviews is style in the sense of Bourdieu's (1991: 38) "different **ways of saying**, distinctive manners of speaking" (emphasis in original). For Bourdieu "what circulates on the linguistic market is not 'language' as such, but rather discourses that are stylistically marked" (1991: 39). This notion of style is the kind

that has been investigated. for example. in anthropological studies of the Malagasay (Keenan 1974). the Ilongot (Rosaldo 1973). the Quakers (Bauman 1983). the Wolof (Irvine 1979. 1990). and the Israeli Sabras (Katriel 1986). These are studies of "ways of speaking" (Hymes 1974b) that can be the subject of overt discussion in the community and judged as to their appropriateness in a particular situation. Research on this kind of style. however, tends to be qualitative rather than quantitative and usually carried out through ethnographic methods. Qualitative research alone may provide valuable information ahout the nature of speech events within a community. hut can supply only limited information on the language itself[11].

What is needed in sociolinguistic investigation is an approach that is flexible enough to analyze samples of speech that can provide a wider range of language use than has generally been the case up till now. Bell's paper at the Stanford workshop (Bell. forthcoming) argues for a three-layered approach to stylistic analysis:

i) Quantification of particular stylistic features
ii) Qualitative analysis of the individual tokens of stylistic features
iii) Analysis of the co-occurrence of these features in stretches of language

This is a step in the right direction, but it does not go far enough. What is needed is a broader notion of style. such as that formulated by Dittmar (1995: pp. 155-60), though it is not easy to see how his model could he translated into an unambiguous set of operational procedures. The advantage of Labov's approach is that it can consistently be employed across a range of interviews. The trade-off is that a major source of variation is deliberately ignored. The problem with mechanical operational procedures for measuring stylistic variation is that they presuppose that speakers are automata whose behaviour can be predicted in terms of external forces. and that cannot be totally true. As Johnstone & Bean (1997: 236) point out:

> Class. sex. region. the nature of the linguistic task. and the makeup of the audience all have an irnportant bearing on how people sound: but they do not DETERMINE how people sound.

Like so much of what happens elsewhere in linguistics, sociolinguistic studies have tended to concentrate on form and ignore function or nieaning. How important is this for sociolinguistic investigation? Much will depend upon how successful you believe the field to have been in the past thirty years (Macaulay 1988b). Like Rickford (1997), in an article examining the "unequal partnership" between sociolinguistics and the African American speech community. I had at one time thought that sociolinguistic studies would have provided more benefit to the comniunities in which the research was carried out. In the Glasgow study, 1 collected a limited arnount of information on language use because I was also concerned to investigate attitudes towards Glasgow speech among teachers and employers[12]. It was my hope that the report would prove useful to those involved in the education of children in Glasow and though it received some attention. I have not heard that it affected the situation significantly. I had expected that there would be many similar studies but as Rickford (1997: 165) comments:

> Conrrary to what one might think. the number of full-fledged SOCIAL CLASS studies within sociolinguistics -especially those based on random samples- is rather small. and they date primarily from the 1960's.

It would be unfair to attribute this lack solely to the preoccupation with stylistic variation in relation to linguistic change. but trends in research tend to be self-fertilizing. A more comprehensive notion of the variety of language in a community might have provided more useful results for the community.

If Preston (1991, forthcoming) is correct that stylistic variation reflects social variation and social variation reflects overall linguistic variation. then we need to know more about linguistic variation in the community before attempting to make claims based on stylistic variation. This can be investigated in a variety of ways: 1) by looking at a wider variety of linguistic features (as in Macaulay 1991); 2) by examining the role of all participants in the interaction (as in Bell and Johnson 1997: Kiesling and Schilling-Estes 1998): 3) by looking at the use of variables in a wide range of contexts (as in Eckert. forthcoming): 4) by looking at a variety of different speech events (as in Coupland. forthcoming; Johnstone 1996. Johnstone and Bean 1997: Macaulay 1987a); 5) by looking at the linguistic context in which key variables are used to determine the extent to which they have rhetorical force (as in Eckert 1996: Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994; Schilling-Estes 1998). There is plenty of evidence available. if we are prepared to look beyond the rather narrow focus that has tended to dominate sociolinguistics until now.

NOTES

1. Paradoxically. the listening audieiice would seem to fit Bell's notion of referee (1983:186) hetter than audieiice. since referees are third persons riot physically preserit at aii interaction. hui whose importance is so great that they influence speech at a distaiice.

2. On the relationship between the written foriii aiid tlie standard laiiguage. see Joseph (1987: 37). Romaine (1989: 577). and Macaulay (1997: 31).

3. Sociolinguists seem to have been relatively uninterested iii tlie phenomenon of "allegro speech" (Zwicky 1972). altliough this may be an important type of variatioii.

4. This comment is iiot intended as a criticism of Hindle's study. but only of Bell's interpretation of tlie formality of the settings.

5. Iii the Copenhagen sociolinguistic study tlie tieldworkers were eiicouraged to participate fully iii tlie coiiversatioii to create as natural an atniospliere as possible "because all of tlie participaiits must take an active part in tlie conversation to keep up a psychological balance in tiie sessioii tliat allows for spontaneity" (Gregersen aiid Pederseii 1991: 97).

6. Kiesling and Schilling-Estes (1998) critically review various iiiodels of style shifting beforc presentiiig tlieir version of a Footing and Framing Model which eniphasizes tlie positions iiiterlocutors adopt iii tlie course of a spcech event.

7. Tlie sample, thougli small, is fully polarized. There are six lower-class speakers aiid six middle-class speakers. See Macaulay 1991 for details.

8. In tlie lower-class iiiterviews in the Ayr study oiily 10% of thc negative clitics arc *-n't*, aiid tlie majority of tlie instances are *don't* wliich is categorical for all tiie speakers. since *dinnae/dinna*, tlie equivalent fouiid in other regions, does iiot occur in the iiiterviews. Without *don't* tlie proponioii of *-n't* is only 4% (Macaulay 1991: 51). In two group interviews I reeorded in Aherdeeii thc proportiori of *-n't* is 28% aiid 31%.

9. See Macaulay (1997: pp. 144-49) and Macaulay (forthcoming)

10. The figures are given iii Macaulay (1991: pp. 112-13).

11. David Sankoff has been quoted as claiming tliat Qualitative Aiialysis is a euphemism for "not enough data." but a possible response is that Quantitative Aiialysis may sometimes be a disguise for "not good eiiougli data".

12. It is somewhat discouraging to find the same issues beiiig discussed witli no apparent signs of progress twerity years later (Millar 1997).

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