coding for social situation

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accommodation

• context of dialects in contact - well established that speakers may adapt speech in response to varieties spoken by interlocutors

• widely believed that accommodation processes are (or should be) central in explanation of language variation and change (Niedzielski & Giles, 1996)

• how do we know when accommodation has taken place? (especially in one-shot interviews)
‘vernacular’ speech

• suggestions of phonological convergence or divergence in interaction carry with them assumption that speaker is moving away from set of default production patterns – ascertaining what these are is neither a self-evident nor a trivial task

• is the ‘vernacular’ an abstraction?

• given the amount of intra-speaker variation we know speakers to exhibit, is there an envelope of variation we can allow for?
the context

four Border communities:

- Gretna (2,700)
- Carlisle (101,000)
- Eyemouth (3,400)
- Berwick (26,000)

- two studies:
  1. effect of interviewer on interviewee (Llamas, Watt & Johnson 2009)
  2. effect of interviewee on interviewer (Watt, Llamas & Johnson 2010)
the interviewer effect

• ‘the idea that the researcher’s identity and ideological positioning vis-a-vis the interviewee crucially contribute to the patterning of data deserves more systematic exploration’ (Mendoza-Denton, 2002: 479)
the interviewer effect

• 5 speakers in 3 separate interview contexts
• all participants native speakers of BwE
• 4 female (19, 38, 43, and 78), 1 male (17)
• all interviewers female (20s or 30s)
• IvS (South East of Scotland), IvE (North East of England), IvA non-native (Austrian)
• IvA - neither of relevant ingroup/out-group associations that varieties of other two interviewers might evoke. Also paired interviews with IvA – constitutes a ‘control’ (closer to default production patterns)
• interviews highlighted intergroup dimension where possible in order to influence informants’ definitions of situation as high in intergroup prominence
clear interviewer effect in read speech – monitoring of speech prompts convergence (attention to speech and audience design)
lettER - two of the five interviewees showed clear interviewer effect

F1 of the lettER-class words over and border(s), in conversation with IvE (+) or IvS (×) for interviewees F38 and M17 (black markers indicate mean scores)

reaction to the perceived identity/varietiy of the interviewer – not her actual linguistic behaviour
the interviewer effect

• all speakers aware of upward convergence in certain situations

• 3 speakers claimed would speak in a more ‘Scottish’ way to speakers of Scottish English (F38, F78, and M17)

• only F38 and M17 (speakers who appeared to accommodate toward IvE) stated might alter speech with interlocutor NE of England
the interviewee effect

- accommodatory strategies of female Scottish English-speaking fieldworker (25) in interactions with younger and older male speakers from localities on either side of the border
- phonological, discoursal and lexical levels
- Eyemouth iveses (2 older, 4 younger – all male)
- Carlisle iveses (2 older, 4 younger – all male)
Frequencies (%) of tapped onset /r/, coda /r/, vocalized /l/, mouth monophthonging, and [e] in both-class words in the speech of the Scottish English-speaking interviewer and four informant groups in Eyemouth and Carlisle. The size of data points represents sample size.
Frequencies (%) of \( f(r)ae \) ‘from,’ ken as a main verb, and ken in discourse marker constructions in the speech of the Scottish English-speaking interviewer and four informant groups in Eyemouth and Carlisle.

The size of data points represents sample size.
the interviewee effect

• evidence for ‘overshoot’, maintenance and convergence
• if forms stable and near categorical, then accommodation is unlikely
• if forms unstable in community, then accommodation appears likely
additional factors to code for?

• should (could) the interviewer record his/her conscious awareness of convergence toward the interviewee? (after listening back to recordings?)

• should (could) the interviewee indicate what accent s/he perceives the interviewer to have?

• should we indicate whether we think the interviewee was using the ‘vernacular’? How would we decide?