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20th SLX

Department of
Language and
Linguistics
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
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Twentieth Essex Sociolinguistics
Conference



Thursday 9th of June 2016

Room: 4.722
Time: 09:00 to 17:00

**SUPPORTED
BY**



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SociolinguistEssex 20th Postgraduate Conference Programme

This year, we are delighted to celebrate our SLX 20th anniversary. We are honoured to have Professor Peter Trudgill as our plenary speaker.

	Author & Title
9:00-9:30	REGISTRATION AND OPENING
9:30-10:00	Salah Adam <i>Domains as a sign of language shift (workplace): the case of Libyan Tuareg</i>
10:00-10:30	Deema Alammar <i>Lenition of the feminine plural suffix (a:t) in the dialect of Ha'il : a variationist sociolinguistic analysis</i>
10:30-11:00	COFFEE BREAK
11:00-11:30	Alyaa Al-Timimi <i>The formation of the Broken Plural by bilingual Iraqi-English children from a sociolinguistic perspective</i>
11:30-12:00	Kosin Panyaatisin <i>The relationship between the ego-centred network trajectory and the local phonological variation in a Northern Thai industrial estate</i>
12:00-1:00	LUNCH BREAK
1:00-2:00	Professor Peter Trudgill Phonetic erosion and grammaticalisation in the dialects of East Anglia [including Essex!]
2:00-2:30	Moayyad Al Bohnayyah <i>Variation between [a:] and [ɔ:]: The Case of Al-Ahsa in Saudi Arabia</i>
2:30-3:00	Hind Alaodini <i>The case of the Dawaser in Dammam city in Saudi Arabia: Variation between [dʒ] and [j]</i>
3:00-3:30	Abeer Hussain <i>Variation in the use of Jim in Bedouin Medini Arabic</i>
3:30-4:00	COFFEE BREAK
4:00-4:30	Robert Potter <i>"Are you Australian?" Uncovering attitudes towards Suffolk English, the enregisterment of a peripheral British dialect, and otherness</i>
4:30-5:00	Berta Badia Barrera <i>T-glottalling Revisited: Variation and Change in Young RP</i>
5:00-5:30	Wangchuk Rinzin <i>Politeness in Dzongkha, National Language of Bhutan</i>
5:30-5:45	CLOSING
	SOCIAL EVENT
	This year's social event is taking place at Dr Enam Al Wer's place. To confirm your attendance please email: ammalh@essex.ac.uk or text 07574419332 in advance. Address: The Elms Brightlingsea Road CO7 8JL

ABSTRACTS

Domains as a sign of language shift (workplace): the case of Libyan Tuareg

Salah Adam

This paper examines the linguistic behaviours of Tuareg people within the work domain. It shows how language choice between Targia, Standard Arabic and Libyan Arabic can be influenced by identity of interlocutors, role-relations and settings.

Domains of language behaviour are essential components in the study of language maintenance and shift (Fishman 1966: 428). "Domain is a socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication" (Fishman 1965: 75). Boxer (2002: 4) defines the domain as the field in which the interactions happen, verbally or non-verbally. Fishman shows that a domain of language use can be implemented as a macro-level locator of language shift (1991: 68).

Libyan Tuareg live concentrated in the extreme southwest of Libya, in the towns of Oubari, Ghat and El-Berket. Tuareg speak their heritage language (Targia, a South Berber dialect) but they also speak vernacular Libyan Arabic, the predominant language in the country. There is no previous study exploring the linguistic status of Tuareg language in Libya, and only a few anthropological studies, conducted during the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century (Dupree: 1958, Kohl: 2014)

Like all non-Arab ethnic minority languages in Libya, the use of Targia has been negatively influenced by the comprehensive policy of Arabization implemented by the previous regime since 1969 coup. Arabic has been recognized as the sole official language used in official and public institutions and as a result of this policy, multiple levels of Targia use including inter- and intra-generational transmission, language competence, and domains have been negatively affected.

The data were obtained from a field study conducted on two Tuareg communities. Ghat is a multi-ethnic town while El-Berket is a village composed of only Tuareg. The sample is comprised of 221 participants, 114 from El-Berket and 107 from Ghat, balanced by gender and divided into three age groups. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (interviews, participant observation and survey questionnaires) was employed for data collection.

The preliminary outcomes suggest a clear language shift towards the use of Arabic (standard or Libyan Arabic) in the work sphere, despite the claim of using Targia in this domain.

Lenition of the feminine plural suffix (a:t) in the dialect of Ha'il : a variationist sociolinguistic analysis

Deema Alammar

This paper is based on empirical research on the dialect of Ha'il, a dialect that belongs to the Najdi type of dialects in the Arabian Peninsula. Among the salient features of the traditional Ha'ili dialect is the lenition of the feminine plural suffix (a:t). /t/ can be lenited to [h] or even to [j]. Thus, (a:t), as a linguistic variable, has three variants: [a:t],[a:h] and [a:j] as in: [bana:t], [bana:h] and [bana:j] bana:t 'girls'. According to the ancient grammarians (e.g. Qut'rub), the change from [t] to [h] is one of the features of Ṭay' tribe dialect.

The process of lenition, in the case of this variable, is conditioned in the following environment:

- (t) can be lenited prepausally as in:
tegel s'abba:ba:j# 'as waitresses'
ra:jħa:h# 'they were gone'

- (t) can be lenited when the following word begins with a consonant, for example:
waħdeh min amdarsa:j tugu:l 'one of the teachers said'
džneha:h s'fu:di 'saudi pounds'
(Abboud, 1964 and Ingham, 2009)

The data were obtained through sociolinguistic interviews with 47 adult native speakers. Variation in the use of this feature was investigated through social factors (age (young, adult, old), gender (male, female) and levels of contact (high, low), as well as linguistic factors (preceding sound (before /a:/), following sound, stress, number of syllables and variant position (coda/onset). The data were analysed using multivariate statistical software (Rbrul).

The results show that there is a tendency to use the non-lenited variant [t] in the speech of various groups. Rbrul returned age, gender, level of contact, following environment and number of syllables as significant factors. With respect to age, the youngest speakers appear to use the innovative variant [t] almost all the time (98%) followed by adults (74%), while the old speakers use it (52%) of the times, which in turn is a strong indication of change in progress in this dialect. Concerning gender, men appear to lead the change by using [t] (90%) while women use it only (59%) of the times. The results of level of contact show that high-contact speakers favour the innovative variant more than low-contact speakers, (FW 0.77, 89%) and (FW0.22, 61%), respectively.

Regarding the linguistic constrains, [t] is favoured when is followed by a vowel sound (FW0.75, 91%), while it is disfavoured in pausal position (FW0.36, 68%) and before a consonant (FW0.37, 69%). Such results agree with the conditions mentioned in the literature (see above). Additionally, polysyllabic words favour the non-lenited variant [t] (FW0.56, 76%) compared with disyllabic words (FW0.43, 64%). These results are interpreted with reference to the influence of a supra-local variety in the central region of Saudi Arabia, in which no lenition is found in this variable.

The formation of the Broken Plural by bilingual Iraqi-English children from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Alyaa Al-Timimi

This paper investigates the acquisition of a most intriguing system of nominal plurality in Arabic, the Broken Plural (BP), in the speech of bilingual Iraqi-English children. BP is an irregular plural form, derived by altering the consonant and vowel patterns inside the singular noun/adjective. There is no fixed suffix to be added, or a general rule to derive it. Monolinguals acquire it from their environment; they learn it spontaneously as they grow up and expand their vocabulary.

The study includes 11 bilingual children living in the UK and ‘control groups’: 9 bilingual female adults living in the UK, 9 monolingual female adults and 18 monolingual children living in Baghdad. Data collection combined quantitative and qualitative techniques. The research as a whole addresses the issues of how reduced Vernacular Iraqi Arabic (VIA) input can affect the formation of BP, the range of strategies that the bilingual children use to recoup their lack of knowledge and the correlation between these strategies and social variables, viz. parents’ level of education, language used at home (input), contacts, and attitudes.

The data were analyzed into correct and incorrect responses based on monolingual female adults performance. The incorrect responses (repair strategies) were classified into various categories including: overgeneralization (used more frequently by bilinguals as a default form but was least favoured by the monolingual children); and the employment of ‘rudimentary semantic strategies’ rather than morphological markers (e.g. repetition/singular, new words (Aljenaie, et.al.2010)).

The findings show a strong correlation between the social factors and the repair strategies. Bilingual children’s attitudes towards English positively correlate with their low proficiency in VIA; parents’ attitudes towards VIA, religion and identity as core values; and parents’ command of English were also found to play a crucial role in nurturing or impairing the use of VIA, which in turn affects acquisition of BP.

The relationship between the ego-centred network trajectory and the local phonological variation in a Northern Thai industrial estate

Kosin Panyaatisin.

This research has attempted to analyze the linguistic variation of rhotic onset (r) in the Northern Thai dialect (NT) by specifically analyzing the glottal fricative variant [h]. [h] is the local form in NT but does not exist in Bangkok Thai (BKK)/ the standard dialect.

NT dialect, in Lamphun province, possesses a cultural heritage more than 700 years old, consisting of a unique orthography and grammar which is distinct from that of the BKK Thai dialect. It is regarded as one of the strongest cultural and dialectal preservation provinces (Premrirat, 2000).

The influx of internal immigrants, to meet the demands caused by the emergence of the Northern Region Industrial Estate (NTIE) in this highly mobile community, contributed to the radical change of an agricultural based community into an industrial province, within 3 decades. Not surprisingly in sociolinguistics, a high rate of use of BKK Thai features, was produced by the local NT speakers. It was stated (Fasold, 1984; Fishman, 1977) that an urbanized area and an industrialized area are extremely vulnerable to linguistic change, because of the immigrants' mobility and the impact of economic dynamics.

However, a non-predictive pattern of certain linguistic features was also found, especially the [h] variant, by conducting a logistic regression (Bailey 2002; Tagliamonte, 2006; Johnson, 2009). Even though the [h] frequency was not in the majority, in the model it was found that the middle-class female was the main linguistic preserver. A social network (strength) factor (L. Milroy 1980; Mitchell 1969; Wellman, 1979; Labov 1973; Cheshire, 1982; Bortoni-Ricardo, 1985; Lippi-Green, 1989; Fox, Kerswill, and Torgersen 2008; Hirano, 2013) with adjusted technique showed the dynamic result, that certain groups of people with ethnicity homogeneity resisted conforming to BKK Thai pressure. Thus, the [h] variant may receive a social meaning as a covert prestige form (Labov, 2006; Trudgill, 1972) rather than a stigmatized form in this dialect competition.

Also, the finding revealed that this variationist study was predominantly motivated by social factors, especially speech style, rather than phonological predictors. Typologically, this might be a unique characteristic of the Tai-Kadai language family's variation that shows the reverse trend (Preston, 1991; Chand 2010), that internal linguistic factors do not primarily dominate dialect variation

Variation between [a:] and [ɔ:]: The Case of Al-Ahsa in Saudi Arabia

Moayyad Al Bohnayyah

This paper is based on empirical research on the dialect of Al-Ahsa, a dialect that belongs to the Najdi type of dialects in the Arabian Peninsula. Rounding of /a:/ in word medial position is one of the most salient features of the traditional dialect of Al-Ahsa. It is defined as: rounding and raising of back long vowel [a:] to [ɔ:]. Unrounding of the /a:/ in word medial position is the innovative form. Linguistically, the variable was found to be affected by the preceding sound environment. On the contrary, we find the unrounded form is the norm in most dialects of Arabic.

/a:/ Rounding in Al-Ahsa dialect occurs in all linguistic environments, including when preceded by back sounds. This contrasts with the case of Arabic dialects that round this vowel conditionally (see Al-Wer, 2007).

The aim of this paper is to investigate variation in the use of the traditional feature (unconditioned /a:/ rounding) in relation to linguistic and social factors. Data were collected through sociolinguistic interviews with 36 adult native speakers, distributed over two age groups and with almost equal representation from both genders. Variation in the use of this feature is also measured in relation to the speakers' sectarian affiliation (see Al-Wer et al 2015). Data were analyzed using (Rbrul). The results show that the traditional rounding is undergoing a change in the speech of Al-Ahsa people, and that there is a tendency to unround this vowel in their speech in general. Rbrul returned age, gender, preceding sound and sect as significant factors.

With respect to age, the youngest speakers are the most innovative group (67%), while the oldest group disfavours unrounding at factor weight (FW) 0.273, which is a strong indication that change is taking place.

Regarding gender, males favour unrounding at FW 0.642. Sunnis lead the change at FW 0.554.

With respect to linguistic constrains, there seems to be a tendency to use the rounded variant in the environment of back, coronal, dental and bilabial sounds, while the vicinity of emphatic sounds favours rounding least. On the other hand, unrounding is favoured after emphatic sounds.

These results are interpreted with reference to the pressure applied by the emergence of a supra-local variety in the central region of Saudi Arabia, in which no rounding is found.

The case of the Dawaser in Dammam city in Saudi Arabia: Variation between [dʒ] and [j]

Hind Alaodini

Variation between [dʒ] and [j] as variants of /dʒ/ characterizes some of the Eastern Arabia dialects such as the Gulf dialects (Johnstone, 1976). The context of the current study is the city of Dammam in eastern Saudi Arabia, and in particular the dialect of the Dosari Tribe. In this dialect there is variation between [dʒ] and [j] as in majlas/ maʒlis ‘sitting room’, jab/ dʒab ‘to bring’.

In dialects involving the same variants, this feature was previously analysed by Holes (1986), Mustafawi (2006), AL-Qouz (2009) and Taqi (2010), among others. Mustafawi (2006) investigated the feature from a phonological perspective in Qatar, whereas Holes and AL-Qouz studied it from a sectarian perspective in Bahrain. Taqi (2010) investigated this feature in Kuwait between two ethnicities (Najdis and Ajamis). To my knowledge no previous study investigated this feature in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia.

The analysis presented in this paper comes from research conducted in the city of Dammam. Dammam is a city that lies on the Arabian Gulf. It is the capital of the Eastern province and it is 400 km from Riyadh the capital city. A total of 39 speakers (19 males and 20 females) from the Dossari family were interviewed. Rbrul was used to analyze the data. The data were coded for social factors (Age, Gender and Social Networks) and linguistic factors. Regarding the linguistic factors the data were coded for: Preceding and following environment, syllable position, syllable structure, Number of syllables, Gemination, part of speech, stressed and unstressed syllable.

The results of the statistical analysis can be summed up as follows: with respect to the social variables, ‘gender’ was returned as the most significant factor statistically, with male speakers leading the female speakers in using the innovative/non-traditional variant [dʒ]. Age was found to be significant with the young age group being the most advanced users (FW 0.77) of [dʒ], thus indicating change in progress. Social Networks were also returned as significant; the use of [dʒ] was found to be more advanced among participants whose Social Networks are loose.

Regarding the linguistic factors, Rbrul returned the following linguistic factors to be significant: syllable position (Onset or Coda), syllable structure (light, heavy, super heavy), and preceding sound.

In this paper I shall discuss these results and attempt an explanation based on the group dynamics, including gender roles, the status of the variant [dʒ] as a supra-local feature, and the phonology of /dʒ/ in general.

Key Words: dialect, variation, gender.

“Are you Australian?” Uncovering attitudes towards Suffolk English, the enregisterment of a peripheral British dialect, and otherness

Robert Potter

This paper is based on data collected as part of an ongoing investigation into three features of the Suffolk dialect. The study is a work in progress, and as such this paper will focus on a qualitative analysis of the interview data – in particular the attitudes and ideologies elicited from participants towards the Suffolk dialect, other dialects and general language matters.

The paper is split into three sections. The first is a report of the different attitudes towards Suffolk speech elicited from participants, as an attempt to understand how Suffolk people view their own dialect, and how they perceive others to view it. The second section will deal with one ideology in particular, which was reported on numerous occasions by participants from different backgrounds – that Suffolk speakers are often mistaken for speakers of Australian English outside of East Anglia. In discussing this claim, the paper will present and attempt to debunk a popular theory on why this might be – namely that East Anglian English varieties played a vital role in the origins of Australian English, as many residents of the area were exiled to Australia as punishment for crimes committed in the 19th century (Haylock, 2008). In addition, the investigation of Haylock’s work will allow for a discussion of the enregisterment of dialects (Johnstone et al., 2006), and a comparison to the case of a stereotyped collection of linguistic forms in Britain, known popularly as ‘Chav speak’ (Bennett, 2012).

The final section of the paper will focus on another ideology which was detected during data collection – the ideology of nativeness and otherness (Shuck, 2004). Several participants complained of being unable to understand speakers of Scottish English, while another speaker in his early 30s reported problems in understanding the speech of young people in London (where he works) – describing it as ‘like a different language’. These claims will be investigated in an attempt to unearth the factors at play in the maintenance of common ideologies.

Variation in the use of *Jim* in Bedouin Medini Arabic

Abeer Hussain

Last year I gave a paper on the use of *Jim* by the urban community of Al-Medina. This time, data from the Bedouin community will be presented and then results from both communities will be compared.

For both communities, the traditional variant is [dʒ] whilst the new form is the fricative [ʒ]. The Bedouin informants who were interviewed come from Al-Hinakiyya, about 100 km to the east of Al-Medina on the route to Al-Qasim and Riyadh and thus this area is known as the gateway to Najd. They are from the clan of Banu Masruh of the Harb tribe.

Data in the form of sociolinguistic interviews was collected from 60 speakers classified into four age groups, gender and community. Variation of *Jim* was investigated with respect to these extra-linguistic factors plus intra-linguistic factors: preceding and following sound, number of syllables, syllable structure, stress and variant position (onset or coda).

The results of the Bedouin community were more or less the same to those of the urban community in that the youngest speakers are the ones who use the innovative variant [ʒ] the most. In contrast, the two oldest Bedouin groups disfavour the application of [ʒ]. Since age was returned the most significant factor in the prediction of *Jim*, there is a possibility of a change in progress towards the new variant. Gender differences in the Bedouin community were shown to be statistically significant whereas in the urban community it was not. Indeed, the youngest Bedouin female speakers showed a dramatic increase in the use of [ʒ] with a usage of 84% as opposed to 7% by the oldest Bedouin female group.

The pattern of change could be explained either linguistically or socially and do not contradict each other. Linguistically, it could be seen as a phonological development from affrication to lenition. Socially, it reflects the influence of the most 'prestigious' urban regional dialect of Al-Hijaz spoken in Jeddah on the formation of a koineised Medini Arabic. These findings are in line with other sociolinguistic studies outside the Arab world, for example, certain linguistic features of London and the South-East, are diffusing outwards (see (Kerswill & William 2000; Trudgill 1986 among others).

Berta Badia Barrera. T-glottalling Revisited: Variation and Change in Young RP
T-glottalling Revisited: Variation and Change in Young RP

Berta Badia Barrera

Received Pronunciation (RP) has been widely described linguistically (Wells 1982, 1991, 1997), although little sociolinguistic research has been carried out on it (Fabricius 2000). Over the last few years, a new trend has been observed in young RP speakers to incorporate non-standard features in their accent, such as T-glottalling (Fabricius 2000).

This quantitative sociophonetic study analyses to what extent T-glottalling is present in the speech of young RP speakers and which are the linguistic and social constraints that affect its variability. The data is based on sociolinguistic interviews of 20 teenagers, aged between 13 and 17, from three different types of schools in the South of England: a major boarding public school, a non-boarding private school and an outstanding rated comprehensive school in a wealthy rural area. This data is compared to 15 older speakers, aged 27, who are alumni of the schools under study. The quantitative data is analysed through multivariate analysis.

The study aims at re-visiting t-glottalling, a widely researched linguistic variable, from an innovative perspective, by splitting the dataset into word-medial and word-final and by analysing a wide range of linguistic factors, which have often been overlooked in previous studies of t-glottalling in British accents. The linguistic constraints analysed in the study are: preceding and following phonological environment (with types of consonants and types of vowels), style, grammatical category, stress, number of syllables and lexical frequency. As for the social constraints, they include type of school (used as a proxy for social class), age and gender.

Results show that t-glottalling in RP is a well-established feature in word-final contexts and change is in progress in the word-final pre-pausal and pre-vocalic (back vowels) environments. Language change in RP in word-final contexts is being influenced by a set of commonly occurring phrases in informal speech, which contain high frequency monosyllabic words. However, in word-medial contexts, RP speakers remain conservative and change is not visible. (t) Tokens in word-medial contexts mostly belong to low frequency words, therefore possibly contributing to the slow progression of t-glottalling in these environments. Type of school and age are crucial factors in explaining the variability of the glottal stop in RP, with teenage speakers belonging to the most elitist private boarding schools considerably resisting the adoption of t-glottalling and with teenage speakers from the private non-boarding and comprehensive schools leading the changes in word-final contexts.

This study examines how different RP is in middle and middle-upper class youth today, as well as analysing the state of RP in the current generation, to see if there are any changes in progress. Two other variants have been found in the analysis, which have shown a new and interesting development in young RP: taps and TH-fronting. This may suggest that new non-standard features might be making their way into young RP speech.

Politeness in Dzongkha, National Language of Bhutan

Wangchuk Rinzin

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of linguistic and non-linguistic (kinesic expressions) politeness strategies in Dzongkha (the official language of Bhutan) by adapting the theory and principle of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Thus this paper attempts to study whether, in the absence of its complex honorific system, Dzongkha can convey politeness (both negative and positive politeness).

Both naturally occurring speeches and closed role-play data (dramatised video tape) have been employed for this particular investigation. Naturally occurring data like the speech of H. M. the King is used with the help of a Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) T/V programme. Moreover, self-spoken expressions (by myself, the author) have been used to investigate Dzongkha polite speech. The closed role-play research data is utilised with dramatised video tape played by the native speakers of Dzongkha and trainees of the Royal Institute of Management (RIM), Bhutan.

The application of the politeness theories to the discussion of the naturally occurring data and closed role-play records revealed that Dzongkha is often considered to be a language of honorific politeness or negative politeness. Thus, it is required to employ its complex honorific terms and expressions in order to result in and be attuned to the politeness phenomenon. Hence, there is some apparently universality in the usage of politeness strategies, but it differs from culture to culture and requires more research to affirm the complete appropriateness of universal principles of linguistic politeness.