

**American Dialect Society Annual Meeting 2009
San Francisco, January 8–10**

At the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America

ABSTRACTS

Robert Bayley (University of California, Davis) ADS Session 5

Ceil Lucas (Gallaudet University)

Carolyn McCaskill (Gallaudet University)

Joseph Hill (Gallaudet University)

Roxanne Dummett (Gallaudet University)

Variation in Black ASL: 2 hands or one, high or low?

There are numerous anecdotal reports as to the existence of a variety of American Sign Language (ASL) known as Black ASL, “a Black way of signing used by Black deaf people in their own cultural milieu- among families and friends, in social gatherings, and in deaf clubs (Hairston and Smith 1983:55). Based on conversations and interview data from approximately 90 Deaf African Americans, this presentation explores the preference of African American signers for 2-handed signs (as opposed to 1-handed versions) and signs produced at the forehead level (as opposed to lowered versions). These analyses are part of a large on-going study of Black ASL.

Douglas S. Bigham (University of Texas at Austin) ADS Session 3

Northern California vowels in Southern Illinois

The vowel system of speakers from Southern Illinois is more similar to that of Northern California than it is to Midland, Southern, Inland Northern, or any other surrounding (or geographically near) vowel system. Data from 41 emerging adult speakers are presented to evaluate why and how this Southern Illinois ~ Northern California link has developed. Suggestions include: (a) that the "Northern California Vowel Shift" originated in the South Midlands, (b) that geographically-determined variation is no longer applicable to younger speakers, and (c) that these shifts are a case of convergent evolution of the vowel systems, as in linguistic drift.

Jennifer Bloomquist (Gettysburg College) ADS Session 5

James Braxton Peterson (Bucknell University)

Word of mouth: the rise of hip hop’s “third coast” and its influence on African American English

Contemporary AAE influences on mainstream language have originated from varieties spoken in the northeast and on the west coast which have evolved independently of one another over the past forty years, and which vary from southern AAE; however, the most popular linguistic styles of hip hop culture have shifted recently as artists from various regions have put their speech communities on the map. As southern rappers have become more dominant in the popular music scene they have had a significant impact on the AAE spoken by hip hop’s insiders, and they have influenced the language of mainstream speakers as well.

Charles Boberg (McGill University) ADS Session 1

Divergent and convergent patterns in the phonetics of Canadian English

This paper presents new data on phonetic changes in Canadian English. The Canadian Shift is in progress across the country, but lowering of /æ/ is no longer an active process: it now shows a sex difference, with lower /æ/ associated with women. Canadian Raising is also stable, contrary to previous reports of recession: the only change is fronting of raised /ay/, led by women. By contrast, the fronting of /uw/, /ow/ and /aw/ shows a complex set of regional and social correlations and represents convergence with American varieties, contrary to the divergent Canadian Shift.

Nathalie Dajko (Tulane University) ADS session 1

Linguistic variation and ethnic identity: the case of Native American French in Louisiana

This paper presents the findings of a comparative study of a long-ignored linguistic community, the Native Americans of the Lafourche basin, focusing on three features of their speech. Results show an association between Native American migration and interaction patterns in the lower Lafourche and the occurrence of these features. Though absent from the speech of Louisiana Cajuns, the features also appear in the speech of African American francophones and Creolophones, though these groups are not present in the region. This paper explores possible explanations for this phenomenon, and highlights the importance of continued research on Native American French in Louisiana.

Derek Denis (University of Toronto) ADS Session 7

So eh is still Canadian, you know?: A sociolinguistic investigation of discourse particles in Canadian English

The Canadian English shibboleth *eh* has received much attention by both linguists and laymen due to its perception as a marker of Canadian identity. Survey data suggests that *eh* continues to increase, functioning in multiple discourse-pragmatic contexts (Gold & Tremblay 2006). However, there are many ways of ending sentences in Canadian English, including *you know*, *right*, and *whatever* (Tagliamonte 2006). To date however, no study has considered their distribution in the speech community. This paper provides the first sociolinguistic analysis of the full inventory of sentence ending discourse particles in Canadian English.

Maeve Eberhardt (University of Pittsburgh) ADS Session 2

Monophthongal /aw/ in Pittsburgh: On the social meanings of “Pittsburghese” in the local African American community

This paper examines the highly salient monophthongal /aw/ in African American speech in Pittsburgh, the phonological feature most closely associated with ‘Pittsburghese’ in the region. I discuss the results of an acoustic analysis of the variable among 34 native African Americans in the city. Findings show that monophthongal /aw/ is absent in Pittsburgh AAE. In discussing these results, I rely on social factors garnered through ethnographic data obtained in sociolinguistic interviews, arguing that a confluence of a host of social variables—ethnic identity, place identity, dialect awareness, and ideologies about local speech—best explains these speakers’ linguistic choices.

Sarah Hamilton (West Virginia University) ADS Session 7

Kirk Hazen (West Virginia University)

Not just ‘one of them things’: Demonstrative them in Appalachia

The English demonstrative pronoun paradigm distinguishes between number (e.g. *this~these*) and proximity (e.g. *these~those*). Varieties of English in Appalachia, however, maintain an additional demonstrative plural pronoun: *them* (Montgomery

2004). Observations of this feature have been made (Wolfram and Christian 1976), but no quantitative study has been conducted. Here, we employ multivariate analysis with the data from 67 native Appalachians. We find that the use of demonstrative *them* is rapidly diminishing for younger generations, that the linguistic conditioning of demonstrative *them* operate in a nested hierarchy of importance, and finally that demonstratives *them* and *those* share a similar constraint hierarchy.

Kirk Hazen (West Virginia University) ADS Session 6
Was Leveling: An ancient feature in modern Appalachia

In Appalachia, *was* leveling continues to be part of the sociolinguistic profile; however, its role has changed. In a study of 67 West Virginia speakers, the rates were found to be aligned with previous studies of the area (Wolfram and Christian 1976; Christian 1978), and mark this region as vernacular. Yet the divisions between the age groups are substantial, so is this precipitous drop equally shared in the community? The data examined here indicates that the social explanation rests in the interactions of gender and social class, while linguistically, the drop in frequency corresponds to a change in linguistic conditioning.

Brian José (Indiana University) ADS Session 3
A preliminary analysis of final /z/ devoicing in Northwest Indiana

This paper analyzes the variable devoicing of syllable-final /z/ in a speech community located in extreme northwestern Indiana, just outside of Chicago, Illinois. Approximately 15 tokens per speaker were extracted from interviews with 44 community members (12 men and 8 women recorded around 1986, and 15 men and 9 women recorded around 2006) and were auditorily coded as either 'voiced' or 'devoiced'. A Varbrul analysis of the data focuses primarily on within-sample apparent-time differences and between-sample real-time differences in an effort to determine whether final /z/ devoicing is a stable variable or a change in progress in this community.

Eden Kaiser (University of Minnesota) ADS Session 1
Bartłomiej Plichta (University of Minnesota)
Influence of nasalization on vowel perception

This study investigates the influence of nasalization in non-nasal contexts (e.g. "bad") on the vowel category mapping process in American English dialects. Contrary to standard accounts of the Northern Cities Chain Shift (Labov, 1994), Plichta (2005) provided acoustic-phonetic evidence that the so-called /æ/-raising is realized in production among talkers influenced by the Northern Cities Chain Shift primarily by a significant change in the degree of velopharyngeal opening (i.e. nasalization), rather than the lowering of F1. This paper reports on a perceptual category mapping experiment involving the American English vowels /æ/ and /E/ as in "bad" and "bed." We hypothesize that nasalization influences the perception of the /æ/ – /E/ category boundary differently for speakers of different dialects.

Mary Elizabeth Kohn (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) ADS Session 8
Janneke Van Hofwegen (North Carolina State University)
The diversity and stability of vocalic variation among bidialectal and bilingual children

This paper examines vowel trajectories in studies of two different populations, exploring accommodation to majority European American norms in their respective locales as well as stylistic and dialectal variation. The studies acoustically analyze variation for the

vowels corresponding to BIT, BET, and BITE/BIDE within the speech of children of minority ethnic communities in the American South. The study compares longitudinal data for four bidialectal African American youth with the regional variation for four bilingual Hispanic youth, revealing a range individual diversity among speakers. Some children show stability in their vocalic repertoires while other children employ broad stylistic repertoires.

Andrea Kortenhoven (Stanford University) ADS Session 8

. . . and testifying: an analysis of women's linguistic performance in a Black church community

In this paper, I examine testifying in a small Sanctified church in Northern California. Testifying is a well-known and important discursive practice in the African American community. In African American church communities, testifying is given particular prominence, playing an integral role in religious practice and ideology. Although testifying is formally open to all, in practice, these brief, spontaneous 'praise reports' are performed predominately by women. Analyzing testimony performances and interviews with church women, I find that in both testimonies and talk about church and testifying, speakers employ 'preacher' discourse strategies and stylized prosodic features that compose a Sanctified Black Woman style.

Stefanie Kuzmack (University of Chicago) ADS Session 4

Rod Edwards (University of Chicago)

Plural all in wh + all constructions

Some authors (Hopper & Traugott 2003, Hymes 2004) have claimed that *all*'s use as a plural marker is limited to *you all/y'all*, and is not paradigmatic, since it is not used with other personal pronouns. However, *all* is also productively used with *wh*-words (e.g. *who all, what all...*), constructions which have never been closely examined. Indeed, not only does the use of plural *all* extend to *wh + all* constructions, but these constructions occur in the northern U.S. dialects as well as in the South, and side-by-side with the plural *you guys*.

Lisa Cohen Minnick (Western Michigan University) ADS Session 2

Patricia S. Bills (Michigan State University)

Language attitudes and pre-service teacher preferences

Forty-three undergraduate education majors listened to the recorded speech of African American, European American, and Mexican American fourth-graders and evaluated linguistic ability, intelligence, and likeability on the basis of each child's speech sample. Children with higher frequencies of features associated with African American and Latina/o speech received lower scores for intelligence and linguistic ability (but not for likeability) than speakers with lower frequencies. Our paper considers the impacts that these perceptions might have on educational outcomes for children who speak non-mainstream varieties of English and discusses ways that education coursework can address the linguistic preconceptions of pre-service teachers.

Kathryn Remlinger (Grand Valley State University) ADS Session 4

Nisu, sisu, and sauna: The enregisteration of an ethnic dialect

This paper investigates linguistic practices at Finnish-American festivals to demonstrate how features enregister (Agha 2003) dialect with speakers and a region. The paper

examines how linguistic features represent Finnish-American identity in the Upper Midwest and how these features link identity with place. Relying on the language-ideological approach (Silverstein 2003; Milroy 2000, 2004) to account for the recognition of features as unique to Finnish-Americans, I argue that notions of an ethnic dialect emerge through orders of indexicality, where the articulation of linguistic norms and practices with ethnic identity and geographic region codify what the dialect is and who speaks it.

Kevin J. Rottet (Indiana University) ADS Session 4
On the origins of preposition stranding in Louisiana French

“Orphan prepositions” in Colloquial European French have been claimed not to be true preposition stranding. Some North American French (NAF) varieties permit “true” p-stranding; is this grammatical borrowing from English? In King’s analysis of PEI Acadian, she argues that p-stranding emerged when PEI borrowed English prepositions along with their grammar, which was subsequently extended to other PEI prepositions. It turns out that Louisiana French also has “true” p-stranding, but no English-origin prepositions. I will argue that contact with English served as a catalyst for reanalysis of a French pattern, which was then extended to other contexts.

Michael Shepherd (University of Southern California) ADS Session 6
The effect of perceived ethnicity on evaluations of students’ spoken responses

Three studies in the 1970s found that when teachers heard equally good work presented orally by Black and White students, they evaluated the Black students’ work significantly less favorably. To test the effect of ethnicity on evaluation nearly four decades later, we asked 59 experienced teachers to evaluate responses spoken by Black, White, and Latino second- and third-grade boys and girls. The results show that the same responses were evaluated significantly less favorably when spoken by minority students or White boys than when spoken by White girls. Possible implications of this new stigmatized status of White boys are explored.

Cara Shousterman (New York University) ADS Session 3
Diachrony and AAE: sound change outside of the mainstream

This is a diachronic study of what is known as the ‘urr’ variable, whereby in some African American communities front vowels centralize when followed by /r/. For example, the words *here* and *hair* can merge with *her*, and are spelled in popular references as “hurr” or “herre”. Results indicate that the ‘urr’ variable is a fairly recent innovation in AAE spoken in DC, Maryland, St. Louis, and Memphis. This shows that not only are there regional differences in AAE, but also that African Americans are participating in sound changes separate from those found in “mainstream” European American dialects.

Susan Tamasi (Emory University) ADS Session 8
The misinterpretation of AAE in medical examinations

In this paper, I investigate the use of three features of AAE in the context of a medical examination. I show that in cross-dialectal interactions, patients’ statements are often not fully understood by the physician, thus affecting the patients’ overall health care. I first analyze the use and frequency of habitual *be*, remote past *BEEN*, and completive *done* in clinic visits of eighty-four patients at a public hospital located in the urban South. Using

individual interactions, I then show that patients often give more detailed information in their medical history than the health practitioner recognizes.

Janneke Van Hofwegen (North Carolina State University) ADS Session 2
On the ethnic marking of /l/ in Chicano English: A generational study

This study examines acoustically the word-initial lateral /l/ across three generations of Mexican-American speakers from a predominantly Mexican-American community in Southwest Texas. It further provides comparisons with both native Mexican Spanish and comparable regional European-American varieties. The results show that a relatively light /l/ predominates in this community, no doubt influenced by Spanish substrate. The three generations of speakers, however, exhibit a v-shaped pattern, with the lightest /l/s occurring in the first and third generations. Women of all generations showed significantly lighter /l/s than men. These results suggest that light /l/ may be an emerging, ethnically- and gender-marked variable.

Cathleen Waters (University of Toronto) ADS Session 7
The case of actually in North American English

While many pragmatic studies of the adverb *actually* have been undertaken, I present a sociolinguistic analysis, using a 1.2 million word corpus of spoken North American English, stratified by sex and age. Results demonstrate that the use of *actually* is dependent on age, with younger speakers showing a (statistically significant) greater use. Furthermore, as *actually* progresses along its path of grammaticalization, it is interacting with its most common variant, *really*, as each continues to specialize both in function and the syntactic constraints that govern use.