

- Schieffelin, Bambi B. and Paul B. Garrett (eds), 2011. *Anthropological Linguistics (Critical Concepts in Language Studies)*, 5 vols. London: Routledge.
- Schieffelin, Bambi B., Kathryn A. Woolard and Paul V. Kroskrity (eds), 1998. *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Silverstein, Michael. 1979. 'Language structure and linguistic ideology'. In Paul R. Clyne, William F. Hanks and Carol L. Hofbauer (eds), *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistic Society. 193–247.
- Silverstein, Michael, 2003. 'Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life'. *Language & Communication* 23: 193–229.
- Strand, Thea R., 2012. 'Winning the dialect popularity contest: mass-mediated language ideologies and local responses in rural Valdres, Norway'. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 22: 23–43.
- Tagliamonte, Sali A., 2012. *Variationist Sociolinguistics: Change, Observation, Interpretation*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Trudgill, Peter, 1983. *On Dialect: Social and Geographical Perspectives*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- van Bezooijen, Renée and Vincent J. van Heuven, 2010. 'Avant-garde Dutch: a perceptual, acoustic, and evaluational study'. In Dennis R. Preston and Nancy Niedzielski (eds), *A Reader in Sociophonetics*. New York: De Gruyter Mouton. 357–78.
- Voloshinov, V.N. 1973 [1929]. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Seminar Press.
- Watts, Richard J. and Peter Trudgill (eds), 2002. *Alternative Histories of English*. London: Routledge.
- Wee, Lionel, 2006. 'The semiotics of language ideologies in Singapore'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 10: 344–61.
- Wee, Lionel, 2010. "'Burdens" and "handicaps" in Singapore's language policy: on the limits of language management'. *Language Policy* 9: 97–114.
- Wolfson, Nessa and Joan Manes (eds), 1985. *Language of Inequality*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Woolard, Kathryn A., 1998. 'Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry'. In Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard and Paul V. Kroskrity (eds), *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press. 3–47.
- Wray, Alison and Aileen Bloomer, 2012. *Projects in Linguistics and Language Studies* (3rd edn). London: Hodder Education.

STYLING LANGUAGE AND IDENTITIES

On 11 March 2011 the following news story was broadcast on 91ZM, a youth music radio station in Auckland, New Zealand:

Police in Napier are *pretty stoked* with the *haul* of *pot* they've *grabbed*. Over forty people arrested after a *sting* targeting cannabis growers seizing *around* twelve thousand plants worth *around* forty *mill*.

The content is routine news, but the way it is told is not. The string of *colloquial* lexical items sets this apart. It contrasts radically with our expectations of news style, and therefore draws attention to itself. This distinctiveness cohabits with other features – the brevity of the story, the musical beat playing underneath the newscaster's voice, the colloquial morphosyntax (Exercise 11.1). This way of telling news is different from the mainstream, and in that distinctiveness lies its style.

This chapter is about language styles and their meanings. An advance word about the nature of the chapter: because style has been central to my own work for several decades, and reciprocally my work has been central to the sociolinguistics of style, my take in this chapter differs from that in the rest of the book. It majors on my own approach to the topic (although in dialogue with other leading approaches), and a good deal of the data it presents come from my own work. I hope this will function as a plus rather than a minus.

11.1 TWO TAKES ON STYLE

Style is what speakers do with language. The basis of style is that people have choices. The sociolinguist's core question about style is this:

Why did **this speaker** say it **this way** on **this occasion**?

Exercise 11.1 News distinctives

- 1 In the example at the start of the chapter identify the three non-lexical style features (two are deletions).
- 2 Rewrite the story for broadcast on a regular news station. Do an analysis of the changes you have made.
- 3 What kind of audience does this style imply? What relationship between broadcaster and audience? What social meanings does the style index?
- 4 Locate two contrasting news media either in your local area or online from anywhere, one with a standard style and the other with a distinctive style. The British national daily newspapers, for example, exhibit wide differences, e.g. between *The Sun* and *The Daily Telegraph*.
- 5 Identify linguistic differences in these two sets of news, and seek to interpret their social meanings. Why have these choices been made, and not the alternatives?
- 6 Also attend to other aspects of the news in your chosen medium, for example the visuals if you choose television or press. How do they interact with the language?

The question implies an alternative – a **that** way that could have been chosen instead of the **this** way. It locates style in **distinction**: the ways in which people differentiate themselves from each other. Our question also implies that the sociolinguist's main interest is not just in describing style but in explaining: **why**.

This chapter relates closely to some of what we have covered in earlier chapters, especially 5 and 6. In Chapter 5.1 I introduced the notion of speaker repertoire – the range of linguistic codes they have at their disposal. That range may include different languages, or different varieties of the same language – there is no principled difference between the different kinds of codes. All can index social meaning, generated through the Indexical Cycle we discussed in the last chapter. Linguistic style is the monolingual counterpart of the bilingual's choice between languages, which we saw throughout Chapter 5. The same social meaning-making accomplished by an English monolingual's *in/ing* alternation could, for the bilingual, be indexed by code switching. My Chapter 6 discussion of situations, and speaker and audience formats, indicates that these are all strongly implicated in style, and I concentrate on the role of the audience in section 11.2. In Chapter 7.1 we encountered Labov's approach to style in New York City, which I return to (critically) here. Finally, Chapter 10's coverage of the valuing of language, of ideologies and standardization, is essential background to – and interwoven with – the nature of style.

Style as linguistic range

We can identify two main approaches to style in sociolinguistics, one macro and the other micro. The first encompasses the full range of linguistic levels, from micro-variables of pronunciation through to broad discourse or genre patterns – the many ways individual speakers may express themselves differently. It also embraces a great

diversity of social factors – such as the many situational components in Hymes's SPEAKING taxonomy (Chapter 6.2) – a range on which speakers browse for choices.

In accord with this tradition, the linguistic anthropologist Judith Irvine (2001) stresses style as difference, drawing on Bourdieu's work on distinction (1984). Ben Rampton captures nicely the fact of the 'indelible relationality of styles, of the central part that contrast and difference play in defining a style's symbolic significance' (2006: 379). Here language is seen as one semiotic resource among others – dress, music, even posture – by which persons and groups set themselves apart. Eckert's jocks and burnouts (2000) and Mendoza-Denton's Latina gang study (2008) show amply how a cluster of such practices compose an ideologically charged style – nicely encapsulated in a title of Eckert's, 'Vowel and nail polish' (2010). Similarly in the last chapter we saw how Billy T. James's vernacular and standard voices meshed with parallel contrasts in dress: singlet and shorts versus bow tie and tails. While sociolinguists may mainly focus on the language dimension of such style-making, they will also be wise to take account of the wider resources and practices. This is a 'maximalist' approach to style both linguistically and socially, wide-ranging and eclectic.

Style shift as linguistic variation

The other approach is contrastingly minimalist, that is, Labov's variationist methodology introduced in Chapter 7. This takes micro linguistic features and defines them very tightly as 'variables' with alternating variants occurring in highly specified linguistic environments. And as we have seen, variationism has tended to also constrain the social side of the equation, aiming for statistical correlations with 'objective' social factors such as class or age. Labov's conception of style shift fits into this tightly delimited approach. In Chapter 7.1 we saw how a series of tasks were designed to focus more and more of the speaker's attention on speech, with the outcomes classed as a range of styles from 'casual speech' through to word lists and minimal pairs.

Figure 11.1 is a set of social × style graphs (from Bell 1984) which show in idealized form the two main quantitative patterns found in early variationist studies, together with two infrequent and deviant patterns. Figure 11.1a shows an indicator variable, Silverstein's first-order indexical (as mapped in the Indexical Cycle in Figure 10.2). There is social differentiation here but no style shift (as Trudgill 1974 found for several variables). Figure 11.1b has regular stratification between the social classes and regular shift across styles (as in Figure 7.1 for ING). This is the typical pattern for most variables, these are the markers/second-order indexicals.

Figure 11.1c displays an exception to regular structure: the lower-middle-class (LMC) hypercorrection pattern of the kind shown in Figure 7.2 for New York /r/ (although here graphed in the opposite direction). Its social and stylistic deviance is visible in the cross-over structure of the graph. Lastly, Figure 11.1d is also a deviant pattern, one that in fact almost never occurs (see Bell 1984 for detail). It involves steep style shift with little social difference.

- Looking back to the Indexical Cycle I presented earlier in Figure 10.2, consider why the Figure 11.1d pattern is so rare – more on this later.

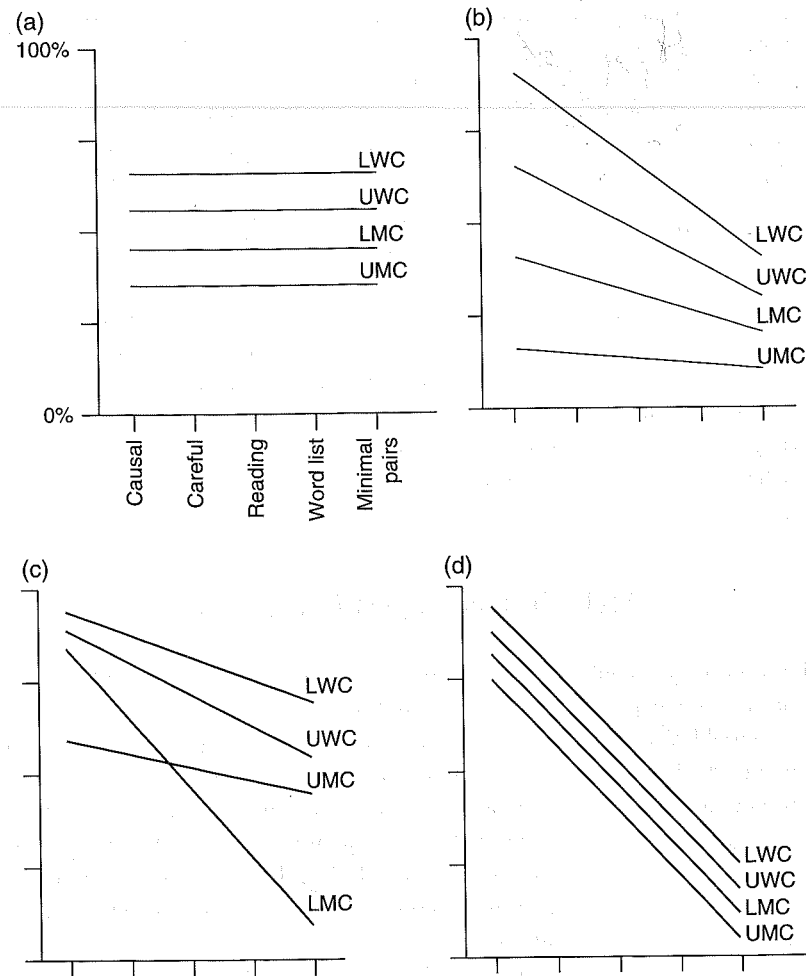


Figure 11.1 Quantitative relations of style and social variation
 LWC = lower working class; UWC = upper working class; LMC = lower middle class; UMC = upper middle class
 a Class × style stratification of an indicator/first-order index
 b Marker/second-order index
 c Lower-middle-class crossover
 d Deviant hyper-style variable
 Source: Bell (1984), figure 3

Critique and development

Labov's techniques for eliciting 'styles' within a recorded interview have been highly productive, utilized in countless studies, languages and countries, often finding similar patterns. Many of these techniques focus on eliciting casual speech by reducing the 'Observer's Paradox' – that we want to observe how speakers talk when they are not

being observed. They are however best regarded as methodological ploys for simulating a range of speech levels rather than themselves representing styles. Their relationship to speech beyond the interview remains questionable – people do not often speak in minimal pairs. Labov's attribution of graded levels of attention paid to speech as the operative factor has been widely challenged since (e.g. Bell 1984). Attention can be directed at producing all levels of linguistic alternatives not just the more prestigious – recall Kiesling's fraternity members who positioned themselves with *in* as well as with *ing* (Chapter 7.6). My Audience Design approach, to which we turn next, was developed partly in reaction to what I regarded as the mechanistic attribution of style to attention. I believed that style centred on persons not mechanisms.

Although I have distinguished two broad approaches to style in this section, in the past decade or more there has been an increasing and fruitful crossover between the two. Variationist analysis has been extended to a wide range of stylistic material, and richer social concepts have been applied to all kinds of language. When I began research on style in the 1970s, I could justifiably label it 'the neglected dimension'. Now style is at the centre of sociolinguistic theorization and method, and we turn to explore what this means.

11.2 AUDIENCE DESIGN

Genesis

Audience Design has been the central model of sociolinguistic style since being proposed in Bell (1984). In search of an explanation of the style differences I was finding in my doctoral research on the language of radio news in Auckland, I turned up a situation which proved to be tailored to spotlighting style differences. Two of the radio stations originated in the same public-broadcasting organization, using the same newscasters, in the same studios. It was in effect a natural matched guise situation – different audiences listening to the same newscaster who was switching between stations.

Working in variationist fashion, I examined a number of linguistic variables, including intervocalic /t/ voicing – the flap that makes words like *writer* sound like *rider*. In New Zealand this is a variable feature, and in the broadcast context it indexes informality and Americanness (since it is semi-categorical in American English). Figure 11.2 shows the percentage of intervocalic /t/ voicing for four newscasters that I recorded on the two stations. YA is New Zealand's 'National Radio', which has a higher status audience than the local community station ZB (see Bell 1991a for detail on the study). The graph shows that each newscaster shifts considerably and consistently between the two stations. To return to the question which opened the chapter: *Why do these speakers say it in these different ways on these occasions?* There is after all just one individual producing two divergent styles. The institution, the genre, the topic mix of the news, the studio setting and the amount of attention paid to speech are held constant in each 'guise'. Only the audience differences appear to be a plausible explanation.

Looking beyond my study, I began to see that the same regularities which were writ large in my media-originated data were also operating in face-to-face communication. Later I discovered that outside sociolinguistics this idea was not quite new when I encountered Speech Accommodation Theory – see later in section 11.2.

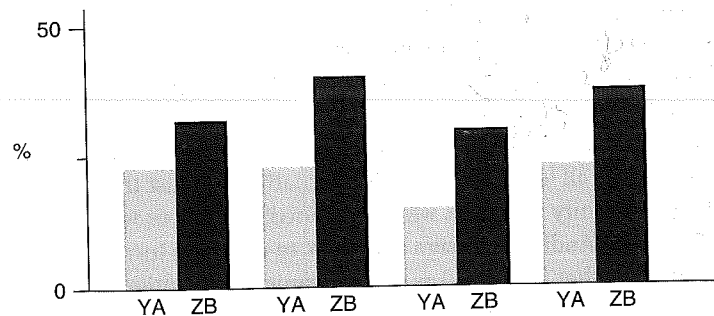


Figure 11.2 Percentage of intervocalic /t/ voicing by four newscasters on two New Zealand radio stations

Source: Bell (1984), figure 9

The model

In Bell (1997a) I summarized the Audience Design model under nine points, revised and expanded somewhat here in the light of subsequent developments:

1 *Style is what an individual speaker does with a language in relation to self and others.* The premise of Audience Design is that style focuses on people, it is essentially a social thing. Style is interactive and contrastive, marking personal identification and interpersonal relations.

2 *Style derives its meaning from the association of linguistic features with particular social groups.* As developed in the Indexical Cycle (Figure 10.2), the social evaluation of a group is projected onto the linguistic features associated with that group. Style therefore has a normative basis. That is, a particular style carries with it the flavour of its associations. Bakhtin puts it this way:

All words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. (1981: 293)

3 *Speakers design their style primarily for and in response to their audience.* This is the heart of Audience Design. I regard response to the audience as the primary mode of style shift – but it is an active responsiveness not passivity. Bakhtin again: 'Discourse ... is oriented toward an understanding that is "responsive" ... Responsive understanding is ... an *active* understanding' (1981: 280). There is nothing, he writes, more terrible than a lack of response. The audience is as crucial in interaction as the speaker (Exercise 11.2). To illustrate: Coupland (1984) recorded a travel agent in conversation with a wide social range of clients, and analysed the level of /t/ voicing in the speech of both her and her clients. The agent converged towards more /t/ voicing with lower-class clients, who were themselves using more voicing, and she used less voicing when talking to higher-class clients, who used less voicing (Figure 11.3).

4 *Audience Design applies to all codes and levels of a language repertoire.* As we saw in Chapters 5 and 6, bilinguals' language choices largely depend on who their

Exercise 11.2 Bakhtin on response

He writes:

The person to whom I respond is my addressee, from whom I, in turn expect a response (or in any case an active responsive understanding) ... After all, the utterance of the person to whom I am responding (I agree, I object, I execute, I take under advisement, and so forth) is already at hand, but his response (or responsive understanding) is still forthcoming. When constructing my utterance, I try actively to determine this response. Moreover, I try to act in accordance with the response I anticipate, so this anticipated response, in turn, exerts an active influence on my utterance (I parry objections that I foresee, I make all kinds of provisos, and so forth). When speaking I always take into account the apperceptive background of the addressee's perception of my speech ... These considerations also determine my choice of a genre for my utterance, my choice of compositional devices, and, finally, my choice of language vehicles, that is, the *style* of my utterance. (1986: 95)

- Unpack the specifics of the to-and-fro process Bakhtin describes for how speakers conduct conversations. How does this work? How conscious do you think it is?
- What implications does it have for our language style choices?
- Do you agree that this is how we operate in conversation?

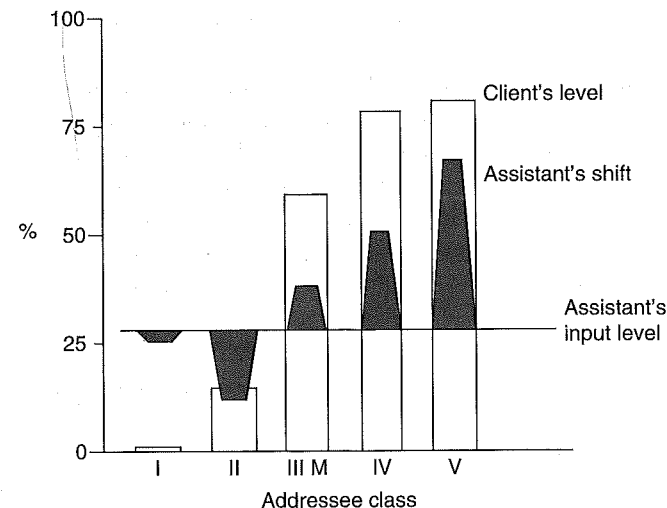


Figure 11.3 Convergence by Cardiff travel agent on intervocalic /t/ voicing to five occupational classes of clients (Class I highest, Class V lowest)

Source: Bell (1984), figure 8, derived from Coupland (1984), figure 4

audience is. The same process underlies monolingual style shifting, as argued earlier in this chapter. In addition, Audience Design applies to all levels of language not just variationist style shift. Some early sociolinguistic work took account of interlocutors. In Brown and Gilman's study (1960) of the T/V pronouns in European languages (such

as French *tu* and *vous*), the focus on the second person form necessarily prioritizes the addressee.

5 *A speaker's range of styles generally derives from and echoes the range that exists among speakers in the community.* As speakers we mainly draw on the linguistic range we hear about us as the resource for our own range of variety. While all speakers are creative, most of their creativity lies in novel use of the existing variety in their speech community rather than in creating new forms. Most of us are not innovators like Labov's Celeste and Eckert's Judy (Chapter 8). This follows directly from the Indexical Cycle, the processes by which language generates social meaning; it is the common pool of linguistic variety that speakers draw on in their styling. And that is the reason why graphs of the shape of Figure 11.1d do not (generally) occur, because they would presuppose the existence of extreme styling alongside little social variation. They imply that you can have second-order indexing without first-order, counter to the cycle shown in Figure 10.2. On the other hand, as we have seen, it is completely possible to have variables where there is difference between speakers but no style movement – those are the indicators, the first-order indexes. And as in Figure 11.1b, quantitative style shifts are normally less than the differences between social groups (what Labov 2001b: 86 terms 'Bell's principle') reinforcing the sense of the stylistic echoing the social.

6 *Speakers show a fine-grained ability to design their style for a range of different addressees, and to a lessening degree for other audience members.* In Chapter 6.4 I presented the concept of layered audience roles – the direct addressee, the unaddressed auditor, and the unratified overhearer (Table 6.4). We saw how the different audience members can affect bilinguals' language choices. By the same token monolingual speakers can subtly adjust their style to audience changes, for example when a stranger joins a group. A study by Bickerton showed a Hawaiian creole speaker shifting markedly towards standard English variants to address the researcher, but only half as much when the researcher was present just as an auditor but not being directly addressed (Bell 1984: 173).

7 *Styling according to topic or setting derives its meaning and direction from the underlying association of topics or settings with typical audience members.* This kind of association among audience, topic and setting is the foundation of Fishman's domains concept (Chapter 6.1). It is, however, one of the more tentative proposals of the Audience Design model, and there is evidence for and against it.

8 *As well as the 'Responsive' dimension of style, there is the 'Initiative' dimension where a shift in style itself initiates a change in the situation rather than resulting from such a change.*

9 *Such initiative style shifts are in essence 'Referee Design', by which the linguistic features associated with a group can be used to express affiliation with that group.*

These last two briefly-put points constitute a major dimension of style, and will be the focus of much of the rest of the chapter. Research on style necessarily investigates in depth, and therefore usually takes few speakers – often just one. In a study of style shifting by an African American teenager, Rickford and McNair-Knox explicitly set out to test some of the 'bold hypotheses and predictions' (1994: 241) of Audience Design as outlined earlier. They found a high degree of influence by audience and by topic on their informant's style. Exercise 11.3 invites you to assess and critique the theory for yourself.

Exercise 11.3 Critiquing Audience Design

Like all models, Audience Design has been challenged for its inadequacies. One of the most detailed comes in Coupland's *Style*, the best book on the subject (2007). Coupland devotes a chapter to Audience Design, and I see eight main challenges being raised:

- 1 Argument by elimination is unsatisfactory, for example in setting aside factors other than audience in the radio station data exemplified by Figure 11.2.
- 2 Style is treated as a linear scale (as in earlier variationist work), linked to a framework of static social categories such as class.
- 3 The quantification of 'social' and 'style' categories, particularly in relation to each other, is founded on questionable assumptions about community linguistic ranges.
- 4 Stylistic frequencies are assumed to be socially meaningful without theorizing how that happens, for example through indexicality.
- 5 The nature of the audience is inadequately theorized, for example the formulations of styling as both 'for and in response to' an audience conflates two different things.
- 6 The significance of 'design' needs to be unpacked, particularly in relation to what precisely 'responsiveness' means.
- 7 Audience Design over-stresses the audience aspect of verbal interaction and underplays the role of the speaker.
- 8 The approach over-stresses the constraints on speakers' styling, without adequate account of speakers' creative freedom.

Decades on, I agree with some among these criticisms, and in my exposition of the framework here have re-formulated certain things accordingly (in the early 1980s I had not come across Bakhtin, for example). Here are some ways to assess the theory and challenges to it:

- 9 Class members could take up one or more challenges from the eight above and research them.
- 10 Read Bell (1984) or (1997a) on Audience Design, and evaluate the model. See also Rickford and McNair-Knox's article (1994) which builds on it.
- 11 Read especially chapter 3 of Coupland (2007). Consider Coupland's challenges and evaluate them.
- 12 Draw your own conclusions about the different arguments. See also the chapters in Eckert and Rickford (2001) for a range of theory and data on style, including by Labov, Coupland, Giles and Bell.

Accommodation theory

While I was beginning to work up Audience Design in New Zealand, the Welsh social psychologist Howard Giles and his associates were much further advanced in devising a parallel approach, accommodation theory (Giles and Powesland 1975). Accommodation means adjusting your speech to the people you are interacting with. Initially titled Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT), it was broadened in the 1980s to encompass wider aspects of interaction as 'Communication Accommodation

Theory' (CAT). The theory goes beyond description to give social-psychological content to the processes I have described.

Accommodation commonly shows in a speaker shifting her style to be more like that of the person she is talking to – **convergence**. The convergence may be upwards or downwards depending on the relative social status of the interlocutors, symmetrical or asymmetrical depending whether the shift is unilateral or mutual. Alternatively, instead of converging, speakers may diverge from their addressee. Divergence is regarded as a tactic for differentiating oneself from others. Research examined issues like the motivations for accommodation (such as seeking approval) and how it is evaluated (Giles and Ogay 2007).

The theory became increasingly complex as it tried to cope with findings which did not sit easily with simple convergence or divergence. For example, Giles and Smith (1979) found that speakers can converge too much, causing addressees to react unfavourably to what they may feel is patronizing or ingratiating behaviour (recall the listeners' reactions to 'Valerie' in Campbell-Kibler's ING experiment, Exercise 10.6). Riders to the theory proliferated in the 1980s, and while research activity has continued apace, the theory has not advanced greatly, perhaps partly because the models had already become quite unwieldy.

To linguists, early accommodation theory's chief deficiency was its linguistic naivety, dealing largely in parameters such as speech rate or ratings of whole 'accents'. By the 1980s, some sociolinguists came to accommodation theory in search of an explanation of the patterns they were finding in their study of specific linguistic features. As well as Coupland and myself, this included Trudgill, who re-visited his Norwich interviews in order to investigate accommodation there, by comparing his own speech as interviewer with his informants'. The result for the variable of glottalization of /t/ in words like *butter* is shown in Figure 11.4. Trudgill is clearly in his own production tracking the /t/ levels of the informants, who are ordered by social class.

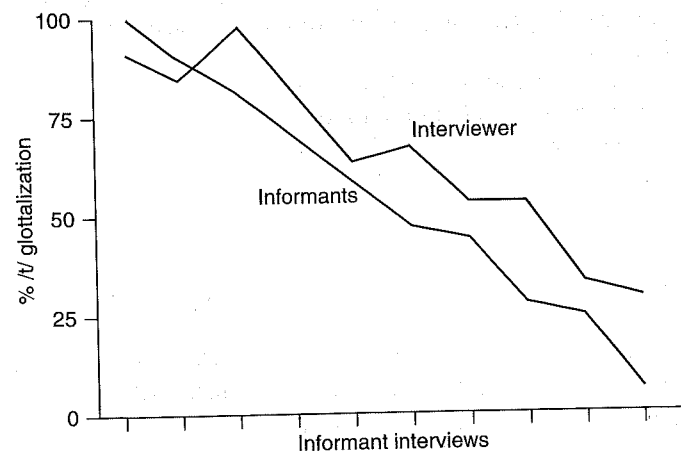


Figure 11.4 An interviewer's accommodation to 10 informants on /t/ glottalization in Norwich
Source: Bell (1984), figure 7, after Trudgill

11.3 REFEREE DESIGN

Frames for stylization

Rex O'Neal stands on a dock on the island of Ocracoke, North Carolina, performing his *hoi toide* vowels. An upper-middle-class teenager from New York uses features from African American Vernacular English. A white adolescent Londoner breaks into a phrase of Panjabi. Moroccan teenagers in Belgium take on the local Antwerp dialect usually associated with anti-immigrant racists.

These are stylizations, roughly what I have called earlier **Referee Design**. The previous section dealt with the 'responsive' dimension of style, and we now turn to the 'initiative' dimension (points 8 and 9 in the Audience Design model) where speakers intentionally stylize linguistic features in order to call up associations with particular groups or identities. There have been a series of attempts in sociolinguistics to capture how this works, listed in Table 11.1. This smorgasbord of frameworks and labellings covers socially similar phenomena with a range of linguistic outcomes, from a bilingual's switching to a monolingual's manipulation of dialects.

Here language makes reference to a group – often an outgroup, but it may also be the speaker's own group – through intentional use of its linguistic code. That is, in line with the Indexical Cycle, the language associated with a group can be used to evoke that group. These references are by their nature usually short-term, but in some circumstances, outgroup referee design can be long-term. Silverstein notes (1979) that a form may go from being 'creative' in his terms to being 'presupposing' – that is, it becomes established as a norm, taking on a new cycle of indexicality. This may even be the case for a whole linguistic code. In diglossia (Chapter 5.3) part of a speech community's repertoire is a code from a different place or time. Usually we would class this as an initiative or referee situation, but here it is normalized as part of the baseline.

The approaches in Table 11.1 differ in terminology and emphasis, but the commonalities between them are more striking than their differences. All of them assume that linguistic form has social meaning and that it is imbued and moulded by the multitude of past usages. They propose that those meanings can be intentionally applied and manipulated in speakers' performances. And they accept that there is a dialectical movement back-and-forth between the responsive and initiative dimensions, by which meanings are adapted in the very acts of being adopted.

Taking the initiative

In these frameworks, a responsive shift results from a change in the situation, and an initiative shift itself **initiates** such a change. This is the 'situational' and 'metaphorical' switching that Blom and Gumperz (1972) found in the Norwegian community they researched. In responsive style there tends to be a regular association between language and social situation, which initiative style trades on, infusing the flavour of one setting into a different context. To quote Bakhtin again:

Table 11.1 Approaches to stylization

| <i>Responsive</i> | <i>Initiative</i> | <i>Source</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Style | Stylization | Bakhtin (1981) [1934/5] |
| Situational | Metaphorical | Blom and Gumperz (1972) |
| Presupposing | Creating | Silverstein (1979) |
| Audience Design | Referee Design | Bell (1984, 2001a) |
| – | Crossing | Rampton (1995) |
| Relational | Identity | Coupland (2001a, 2007) |

- Different class members/groups can each research one of these approaches (omit Bakhtin).
- Summarize and present the framework to the class, including some of the data to which it has been applied. Assess each framework and how well it explains the example data.
- Compare the frameworks. Can you suggest an overarching approach which incorporates the best aspects of them all? What terms would you adopt?

As a result of the work done by all these stratifying forces in language, there are no 'neutral' words and forms – words and forms that can belong to 'no one'; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents ... Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life. (1981: 293)

Bakhtin's own term 'stylization' is the simplest and perhaps clearest, with its implication of the intentional re-configuring of the style resource of a community. Stylization often involves a re-orientation by speakers of their own identity in relation to their audience, hence my term Referee Design – the linguistic features associated with a group are used to refer to that group. Sometimes that will focus on an absent reference group – for example by adopting another accent – rather than the present addressee. Referee Design can involve a speaker shifting to identify more strongly with their own ingroup, or to an outgroup with which they wish to associate. It can even involve simultaneous identification with two groups at once: Yaeger-Dror (1993) found that Israeli singers could co-articulate two variants of /r/ simultaneously, thus aiming at two targets at the same time.

The force of stylization

If a particular style can be used to create a situation, the question is how does it get to carry the meaning that makes it usable for that purpose? It gets the force that can be put to work in initiative style from its routine use in response to certain kinds of situation – the Indexical Cycle. The notion that we can stylize another group's speech presupposes that their variety has some distinguishable and relatively stable linguistic features. For me to be able to 'sound American' or 'sound RP' requires that there are some forms, or clusters of forms, or frequencies of forms which are distinctive to those varieties. If analysts wishes to cut loose from all such categorization, they must provide an explanation for the pervasive if partial regularities which we find in speakers' style choices – just as those

who wish to establish generalizations must make allowance for that significant chunk of style which even their best theories refuse to account for.

The question arises then of what 'referring' to the language of a group means. Speakers' Referee Design may run the full gamut of degrees of association with the referred-to group, from simple evocation of the other's voice, through to whole-hearted identification with the group to which the code belongs. At the maximal end of association lies the possibility of **appropriation**, whereby an outgroup takes possession of another group's code. Cases where an outgroup speaker adopts African American Vernacular forms could be construed in this way, at least by African Americans themselves. In contrast, the kind of 'crossing' to Stylized Asian English that Rampton researched (1995), although relatively frequent, does not appear to be attempting appropriation or to carry the pejorative implication of that label (Example 11.1). It evokes rather than appropriates.

Critiques

The preceding section is my own account of stylization – but others would disagree. To my mind the main challenge for any theory of style, including Audience Design, is to take account of the dynamics of stylization while achieving a worthwhile level of generalization about the patterns that we can discern in style. The basic criticism of frameworks that attempt to systematize style is that they are reductionist: they minimize or discount the complexity of speakers' moment-by-moment, self-expressive use of language – of the kind Eckert's burned-out burnouts display. This is indeed an issue for Audience Design, but it is equally one that **any** style model will face, because any attempt to discern patterns or regularities in people's style will be open to the same challenge.

There is force to the challenges made by scholars such as Eckert (2000), Schilling-Estes (2004) and Coupland (2007). I think the basis of a dynamic view of style is present in my concept of Referee Design; however as originally presented in Bell (1984) it had the character of an add-on. I treated Referee Design as a secondary dimension, which could kick in when Audience Design failed. At very least, this left the problem of knowing what was the boundary between the two dimensions: where did Audience Design end, and Referee Design begin? When did speakers shift from responsive to initiative mode?

More recently I have tended to the view (Bell 2001a) that we have to acknowledge Referee Design as an ever-present part of individuals' use of language. We are always proactively positioning ourselves in relation to our own ingroup, other groups and our interlocutors. These are complementary and co-existent dimensions of style, which operate simultaneously in all speech events. Yes, we are designing our talk for our audience. But we are also concurrently designing it in relation to other factors and referee groups. The intractable fact nevertheless remains that the initiative dimension does derive from the responsive. As the Indexical Cycle shows, stylization only works because it leverages off a style with known social associations.

The responsive and initiative dimensions of style are part of a dilemma that has a long history in social theory – the relationship between **structure** and **agency**. Structure is the social scaffolding that shapes and constrains the way we live, and agency is our ability as humans to take our own actions, follow our own practices, make our own way. The social sciences have a long tradition of oscillating between the two dimensions.

Exercise 11.4 Stylizing ethnicity

Natalie Schilling-Estes (2004) analysed a single conversation between an African American and a Lumbee Indian. She found considerable evidence that these two speakers were adjusting their speech styles to accommodate each other at different stages of the conversation, sometimes converging and sometimes diverging. The speakers used the linguistic resources at their disposal to actively adopt different stances and personas, and to take the initiative in framing the encounter, their relationship and their positioning towards what they were discussing. Schilling-Estes mixed both quantitative and qualitative analysis to present a much more complete account of this interaction than has often been achieved.

- Record a conversation between two people you know who speak different ethnic varieties. Ask them to talk about ethnic relations in your country.
- Analyse their linguistic self-presentation, both across the whole interview and as the interview develops from topic to topic and the two participants position themselves in relation to each other. For example studies, see Schilling-Estes (2004) and Bell (2001a – next section).

In sociolinguistics the pendulum has currently swung very much towards agency rather than structure. This has major repercussions for our approach to style. I take the view that the swing to agency has unbalanced our view of language style. Approaches which treat speakers as untrammelled agents do not take enough account of the role of structure in interaction and life, just as approaches which treat speakers as sociodemographic correlates did not take adequate account of individual agency. I return to the social theory underlying the responsive/initiative dilemma in the next, concluding chapter.

11.4 PERFORMING SOCIOLINGUISTIC IDENTITIES

What I have called stylization or Referee Design involves speakers performing language. Now, there is a sense in which all language is performed – very obviously by speakers like Eckert's burned-out burnouts, who appear to be always 'on stage'. More commonly language performance occurs when a speaker breaks out briefly from conversation into an overt performance mode. Here a speaker puts language on display, most obviously when quoting or reporting speech. In the flow of an otherwise everyday interaction, a speaker takes on – spontaneously and fleetingly – a performing role. What differentiates this 'mundane' performance (Coupland 2007) from staged performance is that it is informal, transient, unscheduled, uninstitutionalized.

Such everyday language performance is close bound with notions of identity, as my exposition of Referee Design will have indicated. 'Identity' is one of the most used and least specified terms in sociolinguistic studies, and there is a case for avoiding it – but the notion is not easily avoidable. I take identity to include both structured and agentive dimensions. It is partly a product, a given – you cannot choose where you were born,

either socially or geographically, nor usually where or how you are brought up. But identity is also part process, something constructed over time – you can make choices as you grow up and mould what you become both overall and in specific situations.

The role of language in identities formation and presentation has been a prime interest of sociolinguists at least since Labov studied the local meaning of a single-vowel on Martha's Vineyard. An ever-increasing strand of research focuses on how speakers claim sociolinguistic identities on parameters such as gender or ethnicity, whether that identity appears 'natural' to them – males emphasizing their masculinity, as did Kiesling's fraternity members – or an apparently other identity which they are claiming: a White imitating African American vernacular. Now, performed language is arguably the most innovative, productive and intriguing sector of sociolinguistics.

Doing gender

We saw in Chapter 7 how gender has been increasingly regarded as a constructed or performed matter rather than defined by biological sex. Speakers use variables such as ING to index social meaning, in the process performing an identity such as male or female. Elinor Ochs pioneered research in linguistic indexing of social meaning, exploring gender in a comparative study of the language of Samoan and American mothering (1992). Where American mothers accommodated their speech to their children (especially through 'baby talk'), the Samoan mothers expected their children to accommodate to them. This contributes to very different positioning of women as mothers in the different cultures. The many ways in which people index gender have been researched in a wide range of situations such as:

- how accent and language choice index a range of masculinities in Barcelona (Pujolar i Cos 1997)
- how senior managers 'do femininity' in workplaces in New Zealand (Holmes 2006)
- how young American men construct heterosexual masculinity by their discourse about gays (Cameron 1997)
- how Latina, jock and burnout girls perform gender in their respective communities of practice (Mendoza-Denton 2008, Eckert 2000).

Much of the gendering of language in these studies is quite responsive in kind, although some of it breaks out into overt performance. But performed gender is most obvious when language initiates a claim to either a heightened or an alternative gender identity. Researchers such as Hall have investigated how language operates as part of cross-gender identification, for example by trans-gendered Hindi-speaking *hijras* (1997).

Pitch range is one feature often associated with gay speech. Heath is an openly gay American, recorded by Podesva (2007) in a range of social situations. In one of these – a barbecue with close friends – his frequent use of a falsetto voice stands out as higher and wider than elsewhere. Podesva argues that the falsetto indexes expressiveness and is used for surprise, evaluation, narration and quotation. More specifically it evokes a 'diva' persona and links to a gay identity – 'bitch' is a frequent description by his friends. Exercise 11.5 examines a short conversation Heath had at the barbecue.

Exercise 11.5 Performing the diva

Bold italics mark falsetto voice. The discussion is about a 'vent' feature in Eliza's clothing.

- 1 Heath Do you want me to do anything, dear?
 2 Eliza No, just to stay and be pretty.
 3 Heath <laughter>You know that's my job.
 4 **Ooh, ooh**, a little **vent** thing!
 5 Eliza Yeah.
 6 Heath **Oh cool. I like it!**
 7 I'm so **excited** about your little **vent** [thing.
 8 Eliza [I know.
 9 Isn't it awesome? It's such a cute little [outfit.
 10 Heath [It **is**,
 11 I really, I like it.

(Podesva 2007: 493)

- As well as the falsetto, identify the other features that index 'diva' or 'gay' in this exchange. How do these features work together to construct the persona?
- How do Eliza's turns contribute to constructing Heath as diva? How do the two of them jointly collaborate in the enterprise?
- How does the topic of the conversation relate to the persona?
- Re-script the exchange using lexicon and features that index a neutral persona. Analyse the changes you have made and their linguistic form, and interpret their social meanings.

Doing ethnicity

In stylization a single salient linguistic token can be enough to evoke social meaning, and researching it calls for several kinds of linguistic analysis. Overall quantifying of speakers' performance on particular linguistic variables may not be possible or productive, depending on the number of tokens. But the individual uses of each feature can be identified and tracked, and its relation to other features. This blending of quantitative, qualitative and co-occurrence analysis (Bell 2001a) represents a powerful combination of tools for understanding sociolinguistic style.

In a project of my own specifically designed to test several of the Audience Design hypotheses (Bell and Johnson 1997; Bell 2001a), a set of 4 informants were interviewed in succession by 4 interviewers, a total of 12 interviews (one set of interviews was dropped). The demographics of the informant and interviewer samples were matched by gender and ethnicity, so that each contained a Māori woman, Māori man, Pakeha (Anglo) woman and Pakeha man. We concentrate on the occurrence of

Table 11.2 Index of *eh* usage in interviews between cross-ethnic/gender-matched sample of interviewers and informants (tokens per 10,000 words), New Zealand

| | To Interviewers | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|----|----|----|
| | MM | MF | PM | PF |
| By Informants | | | | |
| MM | 46 | 26 | 19 | – |
| MF | 2 | 4 | – | 0 |
| PM | 0 | – | 0 | 1 |
| PF | – | 0 | 0 | 0 |

MM Māori Male
 MF Māori Female
 PM Pakeha Male
 PF Pakeha Female

Source: Bell (2001a), table 9.2

the discourse particle *eh*, which is a stereotype, third-order index of Māori English (recall Example 10.6 from Billy T. James).

Quantitatively Duncan, the Māori man, uses most of the tokens of *eh* that occur in the recordings, many more than the other three informants (Table 11.2). And he uses most *eh* to the Māori male interviewer, and least to the Pakeha male – clearly an audience-designed style. Qualitatively, it is noticeable that even with the other Māori man, he uses only three tokens of *eh* in the first 20 minutes. This increases once he has settled in to the interaction, and tokens tend to cluster together when he is talking about 'Māori' topics – family, his grandmother's *tangi* (funeral), Māori language and culture. When he is talking to the Pakeha man, Duncan uses few *eh* but a lot of other pragmatic markers such as *y'know*. It seems clear that *eh* is functioning to index shared Māoriness between Duncan and the other Māori man and in the topics of their talk.

As well as affirming one's ingroup ethnic identity, language can be used to voice an ethnicity to which a speaker does not naturally belong. Rampton's research on such 'crossing' among London teenagers is the benchmark study (1995). He found that his speakers would switch from their normal vernacular to an ethnic minority code, mainly 'Stylized Asian English', which often served to sanction someone for an offence by imputing diminished cultural competence to them (Example 11.1). In the US Bucholtz has investigated the ways in which European Americans reference African American Vernacular. She found a white boy using features of what she terms CRAAVE – Cross-Racial African American Vernacular English (1999b). The move laid claim to heightened masculinity by its association with stereotypical African American male culture. She found this same linguistic and social indexing in film characters played by Steve Martin and Warren Beattie (Bucholtz and Lopez 2011): such staged performances of identities form a rich field for linguistic, social and semiotic analysis which we now turn to.

Stylized Asian English

The boys are queuing to go in for dinner when they notice a pupil of Bangladeshi descent trying to push in (Rampton 1995: 143). Stylized Asian English in **BOLD CAPS**; () = pause.

- 7 Rich: OI EH EH WHERE YOU GOING (.) GET BACK OI
 8 (.)
 9 Rich: EH GET BACK (1.0) HEY WHAT **A RAAS**
 ((= approximation to Creole)) (.)
 10 Ian: EH (.) EH MISS (.) WHERE THEY GOING (.)
 11 Rich: MISS THEY'VE PUSHED IN
 12 Ian: OI (.) LOOK Baker ((a 6th former)) THESE LOT
 PUSHED IN
 13 (.) THEY JUST (OUR DINNER) THEY (BOUGHT) (.)
 14 GET BACK TO THE BACK
 15 Rich: GED OU'
 16 Anon A: ((in exaggerated Asian English::)) **OUT**:
 17 Rich: GED OU'
 18 Anon A [M]: ((slowly in stylised Asian English:)) **GE:T OU:T**
 19 Anon B [M]: ((slow:)): **OUT BOY OUT**
 20 Anon A ((slow:)): **GE:T OU:T**
 21 Rich: (those others) pushed in

- What do you make of this usage of Stylized Asian English – its setting and social meaning, its positioning of the participants, its effect on the interaction?

11.5 THE CASE OF MARLENE DIETRICH

If she had nothing more than her voice she could break your heart with it. (Ernest Hemingway, *Life* magazine, 1952)

It is July 1930. A steamer is approaching the coast of Morocco through fog. As a woman crosses the crowded deck to the rail, her suitcase falls open. An urbane fellow-passenger picks up the contents for her and offers further assistance. 'I won't need any help', she replies.

At least, that is what Marlene Dietrich is scripted to say. But what has come out is a non-native disyllable, an epenthetic vowel creating 'hellubh', as director Josef von Sternberg will transcribe it later (1966: 249). What is to be done? He believes that much more than a single word is at stake for his leading lady in her first American film,

Morocco. A stage parody of Germanic English will negate the charm and mystique of her appearance. But take follows unsuccessful take, until von Sternberg eventually suggests: pronounce *help* as if all four letters were German. She immediately gets it, and nearly 50 attempts later, the director has his usable footage.

The incident was pivotal in the making of Dietrich as a star. The film's final soundtrack reveals that Dietrich has produced an accent that is enigmatic because listeners hear something different but cannot specify quite what it is or means. It sets the pattern for Dietrich's future performed English and the mysterious edge of linguistic otherness which will be part of her persona. Her star has risen with language as a core component.

The non-native performer

The spread of English has produced a century of performers who are not native speakers, but whose performances are mainly enacted and recorded in English – Greta Garbo, Maurice Chevalier, Arnold Schwarzenegger, ABBA, Björk. Marlene Dietrich was arguably the most stellar and iconic of these. Her career spanned 50 years and made her a cult figure. This case study analyses the linguistic character of Dietrich's English, mainly in repeat performances of 'Falling in love again'. It examines the nature of Dietrich's celebrity and persona, and the role that her voice quality and non-native English played in this. And it uses the case of Marlene to address wider issues of the place of language in staged and mediated performance, particularly in the creation, establishment and iconization of a celebrity performer. It draws on my detailed study in Bell (2011a).

'Falling in love again': 1930

Dietrich came to stardom in the 1930 film, *The Blue Angel*, after being 'discovered' on the Berlin stage by von Sternberg and cast as the seductive cabaret singer, Lola Lola. The film was shot simultaneously in German and English and provided her career-long signature tune, 'Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß/Falling in love again'. The music and German lyrics were by Friedrich Holländer, a leading Berlin composer and musician, although in English the chorus 'falling in love again' conveys more or less the opposite sense to the German original (Example 11.2). Holländer and Dietrich are both said to have detested the sweetened English version.

The film is set in the Blue Angel, a raucous, chaotic beer hall. Lola wears a top hat, sits on a beer barrel, leans back with her legs crooked, lifts and grasps one knee and sings directly and seductively to the repressed schoolmaster Emmanuel Rath: the pose will become a classic (see still photograph at <http://www.imdb.com/media/rm407214080/tt0020697>). Rath preens himself, hopelessly enraptured. As a performance Dietrich's deserves the iconic status it will achieve (URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaZDiKRT1is>).

At the start of filming *The Blue Angel* in Berlin, Dietrich could scarcely be described as a speaker of English, and analysis of her pronunciation in the film shows her accent as markedly non-native. Table 11.3 presents the features that I hear as non-native – consonantal,

'Falling in love again' lyrics

| English version | German original | Translation of German |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Falling in love again | Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß | From head to foot |
| Never wanted to | Auf Liebe eingestellt, | I am set for love |
| What's a girl to do?* | Denn das ist meine Welt | For that is my world |
| Can't help it. | Und sonst gar nichts. | And nothing else besides. |
| Love's always been my game | Das ist, was soll ich machen, | What am I to do – |
| Play it how I may | Meine Natur, | That is my nature, |
| I was made that way | Ich kann halt lieben nur | All I can do is love |
| Can't help it. | Und sonst gar nichts. | And nothing else besides. |

* In later performances:
'What am I to do?'

- Undertake your own project comparing for example other performances of 'Falling in love again' by Dietrich, or performances by any of the many other singers who have recorded it, or other recordings by Dietrich. Or other non-native performers. Access the material through YouTube.

Table 11.3 Count of non-nativisms in Marlene Dietrich's performance of 'Falling in love again' in *The Blue Angel*, 1930 (tokens in parentheses are intermediate)

| | Feature | Example | N |
|------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Vowels | Full vowel for schwa | to, wanted | 10 |
| | Monophthongization of /uu/, /ei/ | do, to, always, flame | 12 |
| | Vowel shortening | been, moth | 2 |
| | Unrounding/lowering to [a] | burn | 3 |
| Consonants | Mis-aspiration | to, wanted | 5 |
| | Fortis /d/ | around | 1 |
| | Affrication | their | 1 |
| | /w/ unrounded/labiodental | what, wanted | 3 (+1) |
| | Hyper-clear postvocalic /l/ | help | (+2) |
| Prosody | Over-even rhythm | I just can't help it | 4 |
| TOTAL | | | 41 (44) |

vocalic and prosodic – most of which are L1 transfer effects. Most prevalent are issues with the vowels. Diphthongs are monophthongized in words like 'way' and 'do'. Some unstressed vowels retain full value rather than being reduced to schwa, triggered by a non-native prosody. The overall result is that Dietrich produces a pronunciation of this song which is hearably marked as non-native for the English-speaking listener.

Referee Design

Dietrich's performance can be theorized as Referee Design:

- **Ingroup/outgroup.** Performing in a language (English) other than her own (German) represents a self-evident instance of outgroup referee design.
- **Short/long term.** Dietrich's initial performance of English was short term – produced in Germany for a film made in English. But when she subsequently moved to and was based in the US, the dynamic became longer term.
- **Accurate versus inaccurate.** Her 'inaccurate' non-nativeness was hearable to English audiences, but they could understand her and evaluated it as positive.
- **Successful versus unsuccessful.** Dietrich is strictly unsuccessful in the linguistics of her referee design – that is, her lifelong pronunciation remains identifiably non-native. But her accent, according to Lawrence (2007: 84), 'functions as a marker of difference, a guarantee of her "otherness"'. It was a linguistic resource on which she drew to highlight her difference, rather than a failure to sound native.

From 1930 Dietrich made six films with von Sternberg in Hollywood, the first of them *Morocco*. In these he crafted her persona as the femme fatale (Hanson and O'Rawe 2010), enregistering her non-native accent and baritone quality as the first voice of the femme fatale in sound films. That voice had to be Other, exotic, non-native. Dietrich established and carried forward the femme fatale image through the 1930s, and then on into her stage acts during the Second World War. She was both the original and the enduring voice of the femme fatale, a 'characterological figure' in Agha's terms (2003) – an icon.

'Falling in love again': 1964

For three decades from the 1940s Dietrich toured a live show renowned for her stunning costumes (photo at <http://www.imdb.com/media/rm1699059712/nm0000017>). A triumphant London season in 1964 produced a recording on its closing night (URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYI5GaSKZcw>). Comparison reveals her English as much more native than 35 years earlier but still retaining a hearably different accent, which is now valorized as her distinctive voice. Table 11.4 displays the non-nativisms in Dietrich's performance of 'Falling in love again' during this 1964 show. Several non-native features present in 1930 have disappeared altogether. The features that still show in 1964 are at much lower levels than 35 years before, and are much less phonetically extreme or obvious. By now Marlene has lived and worked in an English-speaking milieu for decades. She is still distinctive – but not too distinctive.

Table 11.4 Count of non-nativisms in Dietrich's performance of 'Falling in love again', Queen's Theatre, London, 1964 (tokens in parentheses are intermediate)

| | Feature | Example | N |
|------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| Vowels | Full vowel for schwa | falling, wanted | 2 (+1) |
| | Monophthongization of /ei/ (no /ou/) | blame, flame | (3) |
| | Vowel shortening | not | 1 |
| | Unrounding/lowering to [a] | - | 0 |
| Consonants | Mis-aspiration | can't help | (2) |
| | Fortis /d/ | - | 0 |
| | Th affrication | - | 0 |
| | /w/ unrounded/labiodental | - | 0 |
| | Hyper-clear postvocalic /l/ | help | (2) |
| Prosody | Over-even rhythm | - | 0 |
| TOTAL | | | 3 (11) |

Iconization and enregisterment

As a celebrity of the past, but one whose iconicity remains in active circulation and cultural dialogue with the present, the case of Marlene Dietrich offers an enlightening perspective on the sociolinguistics of contemporary performance. Dietrich's decades of repeated performances established her as an icon, and her appearance and pronunciation were widely circulated, referenced, imitated, and occasionally parodied. The engine of enregisterment as one of Agha's 'characterological figures' is repetition of salient features through a succession of cognate performances. Such repetition is the requirement and the bane of the successful live performer. In addition the icon must be refracted and circulated in the referencing it receives in the wider culture. Dietrich's appearance (especially dress) was constantly referenced and imitated, sometimes parodied. As well as non-native, Dietrich's voice was distinctively low register. From the thirties it trended towards increasingly baritone quality: the low register became a trademark.

Living the *femme fatale* persona in her own life, and cultivating her image with extreme reflexivity, Marlene Dietrich achieved the ultimate ingroup identification. She devoted immense attention and labour to maintaining her established persona on all fronts. This may be interpreted as a particular and extreme case of ingroup referee design in which a speaker's target becomes a heightened version of her own individual linguistic production. From the 1930s to the end of her career 40 years later, we may say that Marlene Dietrich's referee was, in fact, **herself**.

11.6 RESEARCH ACTIVITY A PERFORMANCE LANGUAGE PROJECT

This research activity offers the opportunity to conduct a project on language performance. The staged performance of language which has burgeoned as an area of interest in recent sociolinguistics covers frequently fascinating, multi-layered data where stylization of linguistic resources is rife. It invites us to theorize about the nature of language in society on

the basis of analytically challenging and rewarding 'texts' which open up some of the most significant contemporary social issues such as globalization.

Staged performance

First, a definition: staged performance is the overt, scheduled identification and elevation (usually literally) of one or more people to perform, typically on a stage, or in a stage-like area such as the space in front of a camera or microphone. It normally involves a clearly demarcated distinction between performer and audience. Prototypically, staged performance occurs through genres such as a play, concert or religious service, and in venues dedicated to such presentations – a theatre, concert hall or place of worship. Here it also includes performances disseminated through the media or internet.

Several factors are central to staged performance and its sociolinguistics (Bell and Gibson 2011):

- Identities – performance is commonly focused on the projection of identities, and involves referencing target groups at a range of levels from evocation to appropriation.
- Reflexivity – performance self-consciously displays language forms for delight and critique.
- Audience – as Coupland notes (2007), performances are not just **to** audiences but **for** them, and audience response moulds the performance itself. The audience is also layered (as in my framework of roles, Chapter 6.4).
- Authenticity – there are differential expectations. In folk music, audiences will expect an 'authentic' self to be projected, but drag involves strategic inauthenticity (Coupland 2011b).
- Genre – the particular manner and import of a performance is specific to the genre, for example differences between jazz and rock performances.
- Modalities – non-language dimensions can be crucial. As we saw with Dietrich, the visuals of appearance, movement and stage/film setting cue a reading of the language. And when singing is involved, the music is as central as the words.

The sociolinguistics of performance

Performance assumes the operation of agentive action, of intentional representation of language in the service of social meaning. But it also assumes a backdrop of existing meanings and forms against which the performance is enacted and from which it draws meanings. In performance, there is a tension between a genre's tradition and the individual talent. Performers are both innovating originals and bearers of traditions – often simultaneously.

Staged performances tend to be linguistically stylized, pushing the limits of language creativity, rehearsed, self-aware, stagey, and at times hyperbolic (Coupland 2007). The phonology of performance is selective in the features it realizes. It mis-realizes some, on occasions undershooting the target (as in Dietrich's non-native English), at other times overshooting it – for example, in renditions of African American Vernacular (Bucholtz and Lopez 2011).

Sample performance projects

By way of example, the following studies were conducted as part of a *Hauptseminar* (graduate-level course) I taught at a German university on Performing Englishes. The students each created and designed their own project. Most students are apprehensive about their ability to do this, but almost all succeed, sometimes brilliantly.

- Subversive gender performance in the film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*
- Analysis of the song 'We belong dead' by the death metal band Impaled
- Comparison of the British and American versions of the television comedy *The Office*
- Comparison of the 1938 and 1964 films of *Pygmalion/My Fair Lady*
- Cockney Rhyming Slang in *The Bible in Cockney*
- Ewan McGregor's film performances in Scottish English – or not
- Vicky Pollard's 'chavspeak' in the television comedy *Little Britain*
- The linguistic personas of Sacha Baron Cohen
- Social and linguistic differences in obituaries
- New York dialect as social marker in the sitcom *The King of Queens*.

Example 11.3

Finally, media performances have the potential to trigger wider sociolinguistic effects. They circulate novel forms and may contribute to language change. They associate linguistic resources with characterological figures, such as Catherine Tate and 'chav' in the UK, focused in her catchline 'Am I bovvered?'. Performance 'packages up stylistic and socio-semantic complexes and makes them transportable' (Coupland 2007: 155).

Doing a performance project

Such a project follows the nine steps outlined in Chapters 3, 7 and 10. Your data can come from any of the many genres accessible through media or live performance. Example 11.3 shows the kind of projects that can be done. YouTube and other websites offer a vast array of material which has originated in other media such as music videos, newspaper text, DVDs.

For analysis, locate a specific stretch of language that you believe contains interesting linguistic features, casts light on the language or variety that is being performed or referred to, and carries social meanings for you to interpret. Select a relatively short 'text' – in some cases, e.g. a television commercial, it could be as short as 1 minute long. In other cases, e.g. a film or video excerpt, perhaps as much as 10 minutes. For written material, up to 2 pages long. Don't try to cover too much.

Look for linguistic features of all kinds and at all levels of language – phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse. Concentrate especially on those features which carry marked social meaning, for example in evoking particular regional, ethnic or age identities. Take account of other, multimodal aspects of your data such as visuals and music.

Interpret the social meaning of the linguistic features of your chosen data excerpt. To do this, you must background the social situation, cultural genre, etc. from which the data comes (e.g. the singer, television comedy, magazine, musical genre, etc.) and the language situations that it comes from or refers to (region, ethnic group, etc.). Exercise 11.6 outlines a way of approaching sociolinguistic performance analysis.

Exercise 11.6 Analysing performance language

These are some pointers to analysis of performed language under six main headings (which I call the 'Sociolinguistics of Voice'):

Physicality

- What is the physicality of the medium, technology – and its reception?
- And of the text (e.g. the set, layout)?

Locality

- What is the locality?
- Is the content only – or differently – locally interpretable?
- Is there a global reflex of the local?

Variety

- Where is this situated among language or variety choices?
- Are there evidences of centrifugal or centripetal linguistic pressures?
- Are there contrasting voices?
- Is there a transposition between cultures?

Performativity

- How intentional or knowing is the performance?
- What are the sociocultural resonances?
- What language resources does the performance draw on?
- Are there reference groups for this performance?
- Is the performance 'natural' to this audience?
- What is the keying of the performance? How does it relate to authenticity?
- What skill or expertise is involved? Has there been rehearsal?

Dialogicality

- Are there evidences here of the dialogical nature of language? – is there collaboration, or exchange, or competition?
- What kind of audience or audience layers are likely for this performance? How would the audience engage with the performance (laughter, silence, etc.)?

Identity

- What voices are there in the performance? Whose voices are they?
- What is their social meaning?
- Is there 'othering'? Is there appropriation?

11.7 SUMMARY

- Style is what individual speakers do with language. Sociolinguists ask why a speaker made specific style choices and not their alternatives, thus locating style in distinction. The first main approach to style in sociolinguistics is maximalist, encompassing a full range of linguistic levels and a diversity of social factors.
- The second, variationist approach is contrastingly minimalist. It tightly delimits linguistic variables and correlates them with styles defined by interview tasks through which Labov aimed to focus increasing amounts of a speaker's attention on speech. However, his attribution of attention as the operative factor in style has been widely challenged.
- Audience Design was proposed as a model by Bell (1984) in which speakers design their style primarily in response to their audience. In my research on radio news language, only audience differences plausibly explained style differences. The same processes appear to operate in face-to-face communication. Audience Design has been distilled under nine headings, summarized and italicized in section 11.2.
- Giles's accommodation approach is a social psychological theory parallel to Audience Design. It asks why speakers adjust their speech to the people they are interacting with, especially by converging to them.
- Several approaches have attempted to capture the relation of response and initiative – style and stylization. A responsive shift results from a change in the situation, and an initiative shift triggers such a change. In terms of Referee Design, this means that speakers are re-orienting their own identity in relation to their audience, either focusing on a reference outgroup or enhancing identification with their ingroup.
- The responsive and initiative dimensions of style reflect social theory's oscillation between the roles of structure and of agency in society. However the swing to agency in sociolinguistics has unbalanced our view of language style. We need to regain the sense that structure is what provides the resource speakers draw on in their styling.
- Referee Design involves speakers performing language, breaking out briefly from everyday conversational mode into overt performance. Such performance is close bound to identity, which includes both structured and agentive dimensions, part product, part process.
- Speakers can use language to claim identities that may not appear 'natural' to them. Gender is increasingly regarded as a constructed or performed matter rather than defined by biological sex. Language can be used to initiate a claim to a heightened or alternative gender identity, for example as part of cross-gender identification.
- Style research calls for a blend of quantitative, qualitative and co-occurrence analysis. In a project focusing on styling of ethnic and gender identities, I found that a Māori man used many more tokens of the ethnic marker *eh* to a Māori interviewer than to a Pakeha, and *eh* clustered when the topic was on Māori matters.
- Marlene Dietrich came to stardom in the 1930 German-made film, *The Blue Angel*, which provided her career-long signature tune 'Falling in love again'. Her pronunciation was markedly non-native, which can be theorized as Referee Design. Her subsequent Hollywood films enregistered her non-native accent as the first and lasting voice of the femme fatale.

- Comparison with a 1964 stage performance of 'Falling in love again' reveals Dietrich's English had become much more native after 35 years but retained an accent that was now valorized as her distinctive voice. After decades of repeated performances, circulation of her vocal style and appearance, and living out the femme fatale persona, Dietrich had become her own referee.

11.8 FURTHER READING

On language style overall Coupland (2011a) offers an excellent summary and overview. His *Style* (2007) is the best book to date, including an exposition and critique of Audience Design. There is a clutch of chapters in Coupland and Jaworski's one-volume reader (2009b). Eckert and Rickford's comprehensive collection (2001) came from a symposium which brought together many of the leading scholars and the main theoretical alternatives. It includes response pieces.

Several chapters of Labov (1972a) major on style. For critiques of Labov's approach, especially attention to speech, see Bell (1984) and a chapter in Coupland (2007). Labov (2001b) mainly reaffirms his earlier positions.

My original long paper in *Language in Society* (1984) laid out Audience Design and remains foundational reading on sociolinguistic style. The condensed version (1997a, republished several times) distills that into nine main points more fully than has been presented here. Bell (2001a) 'Back in style' revised and extended the model. Rickford and McNair-Knox is a major article testing some of Audience Design's hypotheses (1994).

Bell (1984) offers detail on Referee Design and its parameters, expanded in Bell (1999, 2001a). See Table 11.1 for reading on the other parallel frameworks. For Rampton's Crossing construct, see his 1995 book, also his more recent work on 'posh' versus Cockney (2006).

Giles and Powesland (1975) is the foundation text of accommodation theory, followed by many articles and collections co-authored or edited by Giles. Giles, Coupland and Coupland (1991) was the last of the major developments of the theory. Trudgill (1981) was sociolinguistics' first encounter with accommodation. Meyerhoff (1998) applies and evaluates its relevance for our field. Shepard, Giles and Le Poire (2001) and Giles and Ogay (2007) review more recent work. The *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* published much of the work in the 1980s/90s.

Elinor Ochs pioneered research on linguistic indexing of gender (1992). For work on the doing of masculinity and femininity, see publications by Holmes, Cameron, Kiesling and Pujolar. On gay and cross-gender languaging, Kulick, Levon, Cameron, Podesva and Barrett. For ethnicity, Schilling-Estes, Rampton, Rickford, Bucholtz, Bell and many others. There are numerous publications in the two main journals, plus the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* and *Gender and Language*.

On Marlene Dietrich, see the paper from which this case study is drawn (Bell 2011a) and the references it contains, especially Gemünden and Desjardins (2007) on *Dietrich Icon*. My other work on style in staged performance covers television advertisements (1992), 'styling the other' in a Māori song (1999), nationalistic New Zealand commercials (2001b), and the Pasifika animated comedy *bro'town* (Gibson and Bell 2010). Bell and Gibson (2011) and Gibson and Bell (2012) contain the most recent theoretical developments.

For 'the sociolinguistics of performance', consult the 2011 theme issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, edited by Bell and Gibson, especially the Introduction for its theorization and overview. Also a theme issue of the *Journal of English Linguistics* (2009) edited by Ruth King, Hernández-Campoy and Cutillas-Espinosa (2012) is an excellent collection on stylization in the media. Beyond these, see many articles by Coupland, Bauman, Johnstone, Bucholtz, Hernández-Campoy and Joanna Thornborrow.

REFERENCES

- Agha, Asif, 2003. 'The social life of cultural value'. *Language & Communication* 23: 23–73.
- Bakhtin, M.M., 1981 [1935]. 'Discourse in the novel'. In M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. 259–422.
- Bakhtin, M.M. 1986 [1953]. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bell, Allan, 1984. 'Language style as audience design'. *Language in Society* 13: 145–204.
- Bell, Allan, 1991a. 'Audience accommodation in the mass media'. In Howard Giles, Nikolas Coupland and Justine Coupland (eds), *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 69–102.
- Bell, Allan, 1992. 'Hit and miss: referee design in the dialects of New Zealand television advertisements'. *Language & Communication* 12: 1–14.
- Bell, Allan, 1997a. 'Style as audience design'. In Nikolas Coupland and Adam Jaworski (eds), *Sociolinguistics: A Reader and Coursebook*. London: Macmillan. 240–50.
- Bell, Allan, 1999. 'Styling the other to define the self: a study in New Zealand identity making'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3: 523–41.
- Bell, Allan, 2001a. 'Back in style: re-working audience design'. In Penelope Eckert and John R. Rickford (eds), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 139–69.
- Bell, Allan, 2001b. "'Bugger!" Media language, identity and post-modernity in Aotearoa/New Zealand'. *New Zealand Sociology* 16: 128–50.
- Bell, Allan, 2011a. 'Falling in love again and again: Marlene Dietrich and the iconization of non-native English'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15: 627–56.
- Bell, Allan and Andy Gibson, 2011. 'Staging language: an introduction to the sociolinguistics of performance'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15: 555–72.
- Bell, Allan and Gary Johnson, 1997. 'Towards a sociolinguistics of style'. *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics* 4: 1–21.
- Blom, Jan-Petter and John J. Gumperz, 1972. 'Social meaning in linguistic structure: code-switching in Norway'. In John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes (eds), *Directions in Sociolinguistics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 407–34.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, Roger and Albert Gilman, 1960. 'The pronouns of power and solidarity'. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 253–76.
- Bucholtz, Mary, 1999. 'You da man: narrating the racial other in the production of white masculinity'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3: 443–60.
- Bucholtz, Mary and Qiuana Lopez, 2011. 'Performing blackness, forming whiteness: linguistic minstrelsy in Hollywood film'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15: 680–706.
- Cameron, Deborah, 1997. 'Performing gender identity: young men's talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity'. In Sally Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof (eds), *Language and Masculinity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers. 47–64.
- Coupland, Nikolas, 1984. 'Accommodation at work: some phonological data and their implications'. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 46: 49–70.
- Coupland, Nikolas, 2001a. 'Age in social and sociolinguistic theory'. In Nikolas Coupland, Srikant Sarangi and Christopher N. Candlin (eds), *Sociolinguistics and Social Theory*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education. 185–211.
- Coupland, Nikolas, 2007. *Style: Language Variation and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coupland, Nikolas, 2011a. 'The sociolinguistics of style'. In Rajend Mesthrie (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 138–56.
- Coupland, Nikolas, 2011b. 'Voice, place and genre in popular song performance'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15: 573–602.
- Coupland, Nikolas and Adam Jaworski (eds), 2009a. *The New Sociolinguistics Reader* (2nd edn). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eckert, Penelope, 2000. *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice: The Linguistic Construction of Identity in Belten High*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Eckert, Penelope, 2010. 'Vowels and nail polish: the emergence of linguistic style in the preadolescent heterosexual marketplace'. In Miriam Meyerhoff and Erik Schleeff (eds), *The Routledge Sociolinguistics Reader*. London: Routledge. 441–7.
- Eckert, Penelope and John R. Rickford (eds), 2001. *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gemünden, Gerd and Mary R. Desjardins (eds), 2007. *Dietrich Icon*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Gibson, Andy and Allan Bell, 2010. 'Performing Pasifika English in New Zealand: the case of bro'Town'. *English World-Wide* 31: 231–51.
- Gibson, Andy and Allan Bell, 2012. 'Popular music singing as referee design'. In Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and Juan Antonio Cutillas-Espinosa (eds), *Style-shifting in Public: New Perspectives on Stylistic Variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 139–64.
- Giles, Howard, Justine Coupland and Nikolas Coupland (eds), 1991. *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Giles, Howard and Tania Ogay, 2007. 'Communication Accommodation Theory'. In Bryan B. Whaley and Wendy Samter (eds), *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 293–310.
- Giles, Howard and Peter F. Powesland, 1975. *Speech Style and Social Evaluation*. London: Academic Press.
- Giles, Howard and Philip Smith, 1979. 'Accommodation theory: optimal levels of convergence'. In Howard Giles and Robert N. St Clair (eds), *Language and Social Psychology*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell. 45–65.
- Hall, Kira, 1997. "'Go suck your husband's sugarcane!": Hijras and the use of sexual insult'. In Anna Livia and Kira Hall (eds), *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press. 430–60.
- Hanson, Helen and Catherine O'Rawe (eds), 2010. *The Femme Fatale: Images, Histories, Contexts*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hernández-Campoy, Juan Manuel and Juan Antonio Cutillas-Espinosa (eds), 2012. *Style-shifting in Public: New Perspectives on Stylistic Variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Holmes, Janet, 2006. *Gendered Talk at Work: Constructing Gender Identity through Workplace Discourse*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Irvine, Judith T., 2001. "'Style" as distinctiveness: the culture and ideology of linguistic differentiation'. In Penelope Eckert and John R. Rickford (eds), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 21–43.

- Labov, William, 1972a. *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov, William, 2001b. 'The anatomy of style-shifting'. In Penelope Eckert and John R. Rickford (eds), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 85–108.
- Lawrence, Amy, 2007. 'The voice as mask'. In Gerd Gemünden and Mary R. Desjardins (eds), *Dietrich Icon*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 79–99.
- Mendoza-Denton, Norma, 2008. *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice among Latina Youth Gangs*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Meyerhoff, Miriam, 1998. 'Accommodating your data: the use and misuse of accommodation theory in sociolinguistics'. *Language & Communication* 18: 205–25.
- Ochs, Elinor, 1992. 'Indexing gender'. In Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin (eds), *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 335–58.
- Podesva, Robert J., 2007. 'Phonation type as a stylistic variable: the use of falsetto in constructing a persona'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 11: 478–504.
- Pujolar i Cos, Joan, 1997. 'Masculinities in a multilingual setting'. In Sally Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof (eds), *Language and Masculinity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers. 86–106.
- Rampton, Ben, 2006. *Language in Late Modernity: Interaction in an Urban School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rickford, John R. and Faye McNair-Knox, 1994. 'Addressee- and topic-influenced style shift: a quantitative sociolinguistic study'. In Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan (eds), *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Register*. New York: Oxford University Press. 235–76.
- Rampton, Ben, 1995. *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*. London: Longman.
- Rampton, Ben, 2006. *Language in Late Modernity: Interaction in an Urban School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schilling-Estes, Natalie, 2004. 'Constructing ethnicity in interaction'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8: 163–95.
- Shepard, Carolyn A., Howard Giles and Beth A. Le Poire, 2001. 'Communication Accommodation Theory'. In W. Peter Robinson and Howard Giles (eds), *The New Handbook of Language and Social Psychology*. Chichester, UK: Wiley. 33–56.
- Silverstein, Michael, 1979. 'Language structure and linguistic ideology'. In Paul R. Clyne, William F. Hanks and Carol L. Hofbauer (eds), *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistic Society. 193–247.
- Trudgill, Peter, 1974. *The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Trudgill, Peter, 1981. 'Linguistic accommodation: sociolinguistic observations on a sociopsychological theory'. In C.S. Masek, R.A. Hendrick and M.F. Miller (eds), *Papers from the Parasession on Language and Behavior*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistic Society. 218–37.
- von Sternberg, Josef, 1966. *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*. London: Secker & Warburg.
- Yaeger-Dror, Malcah, 1993. 'Linguistic analysis of dialect "correction" and its interaction with cognitive salience'. *Language Variation and Change* 5: 189–224.

THEORY AND ENGAGEMENT

This final, short chapter rounds off the matter of this book. It confronts directly some core issues of sociolinguistic theory which we have only circled around earlier. Then I will turn briefly to the application of sociolinguistics to real-world problems, and finally consider the shape of the socially constituted discipline that I introduced in the opening chapter. That will enable us to reflect back on the path that we have taken through sociolinguistics in the course of this book, especially in the light of the aims I laid out in Chapter 1. These included a grasp of the shape of sociolinguistics, understanding of its research and hands-on experience of doing it, together with two further goals:

- to present you with the opportunity to reflect on your own sociolinguistic situation – the profusion of languages and voices which are part of your life
- to offer you the chance to engage with how language affects and constitutes society, in particular where that produces inequity.

The core chapters of the book have threaded through areas such as multilingualisms, code switching, language change and styles, and have invited consideration of your own experience of these. In the process they have raised broad questions about the role of language in society, and its political and ideological positioning, which press for our engagement and which we consider briefly in this chapter.

12.1 THE PLACE OF THE SOCIAL IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

In opening this book I asked 'What is language?', noting that this question is not raised often enough by sociolinguists. But I did not put the parallel question that our field's name invites: 'What is society?' That we have asked even less frequently. Because most of us are