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Editorial

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Editorial

Lauren Hall-Lew

It is my pleasure to present the second issue of the second volume of *Lifespans & Styles: Undergraduate Working Papers on Intraspeaker Variation*. This issue includes six papers from nine authors. The first three papers are by former undergraduate students of Dr Laurel MacKenzie's class, *Language Change Across the Lifespan*, at the University of Manchester. The fourth and fifth papers come from former students of my class, *Sociolinguistics*, at the University of Edinburgh, and the sixth paper is based on a University of Edinburgh Honours dissertation. As in the two previous issues, Volume 2, Issue 2 offers a breadth of approaches to the study of within-speaker, or intraspeaker, variation.

In the spirit of the ongoing presidential election season in the United States, we open this issue with a salute to the outgoing president, Barack Obama. Xinyun Lei and Siqi Liu have analysed two linguistic variables produced by Obama at three points in his lifespan: his 30s, 40s, and 50s. They find virtually no variation in his production of the (ING) variable, but specific changes in his pronunciation of the MOUTH vowel, which the authors attribute to particular changes in his life circumstances. Victoria Wallace's analysis of Cheryl Fernandez-Versini's speech, and Sofia Dahou and Jasmine Hamlin's investigation into that of David Beckham, similarly look at changes across the lifespan during the adult years. Wallace considers variation in the FACE and GOAT vowels across four time points in a 14-year time frame—relatively short in terms of a lifespan, but significant in terms of Cheryl Fernandez-Versini's life experiences. They find that, over time, the speaker tends to produce more RP-like realisations for both vowels, but that the trajectory and phonetic realization of the two vowels differ from one another. Dahou and Hamlin also find evidence of a kind of standardization process across the lifespan, showing how David Beckham reduces his rate of both h-dropping and t-glottaling at two points, 20 years apart. For all three cases, the authors make the point that patterns of speech production can and do change after adolescence, at least for some speakers, and that the direction and extent of those changes can often be explained with reference to major events in the speakers' biographies.

In order to tease apart the complex effects of lifespan change, these papers took their data from televised interviews that control, in so far as possible, for stylistic considerations. Jenia Yudytska's analysis of Jackie Chan takes a slightly different approach by considering lifespan change in conjunction with the possible effects of audience. In her analysis of Chan's final stop production, she finds differences at two time points, 9 years apart: at the later date, he retains more of his singleton coda stops, while also increasing his rate of consonant cluster simplification before vowels and pauses. Yudytska finds further differences between Chan's interview with a native English speaker and with a native French speaker, arguing that the differences are evidence of a non-native speaker's use of a foreigner-directed speech style.

Ruaridh Purse and Euan McGill focus specifically on the effect of audience, contrasting Glaswegian comedian Kevin Bridges's speech in an interview with a fellow Glaswegian with that of an interview with a Southern Standard British English (SSBE) speaker. Their study adds to the growing literature on rhoticity in Scottish Englishes, which is mostly focused on interspeaker differences rather than the effects of style-shifting. Theirs is also one of the only acoustic analyses of pharyngeal rhotics, and an important contribution to the canon.

This volume and issue ends with a paper by Joel Merry that brings us back to one of the earliest examples of intraspeaker variation in sociolinguistics: a study of sound change and near-merger based on a style contrast of word list, reading passage, and interview speech. Merry's analysis considers 14 speakers of Black Country English, a dialect with variably merged, near-merged, or distinct FOOT/STRUT and PRICE/CHOICE lexical sets. Based on an acoustic analysis, Merry finds that most speakers do show stylistic differences, the main generalisation being that more vowel overlap is observed in the word list condition than in the other two conditions, which he notes to be the opposite of Labov's famous "Bill Peters Effect".

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We hope you enjoy these papers.

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Editor

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