



**HAL**  
open science

# Acquiring Sociolinguistic Variation in a First Language: Toward a Socialization-Based Framework, Routledge Handbook of Variationist Sociolinguistics (to appear)

Jean-Pierre Chevrot

► **To cite this version:**

Jean-Pierre Chevrot. Acquiring Sociolinguistic Variation in a First Language: Toward a Socialization-Based Framework, Routledge Handbook of Variationist Sociolinguistics (to appear). 2024. hal-04377247

**HAL Id: hal-04377247**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04377247>**

Preprint submitted on 7 Jan 2024

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Chevrot, J.-P. (forthcoming). Acquiring Sociolinguistic Variation in a First Language:

Toward a Socialization-Based Framework, Routledge Handbook of Variationist

Sociolinguistics, Yoshiyuki Asahi, Alexandra D'Arcy and Paul Kerswill (Eds.)

**Abstract** - When children or adult learners begin to acquire one or more languages, they are immediately confronted with the varieties of those languages. Based on the state of the art in a rapidly expanding field, the chapter focuses on early bidialectal acquisition by reviewing descriptive benchmarks of what children can do with varieties at a given age. These benchmarks are then updated by developing two themes: the construction of sociolinguistic gender identities and the learning of stylistic skills and indexicality. By bringing together the available results, a developmental scenario is outlined based on the successive situations in which children are socialized.

## **1. Introduction**

When children or adults begin acquiring one or more languages, they are immediately confronted with varieties of these languages that are associated with different social groups (e.g., regional or ethnic communities, social classes, age groups) or contexts of use (e.g., within the family, at school). Multilingual situations are even more complex, as learners are confronted with varieties of several languages. Different modes of socialization account for why learners come into contact with different varieties of languages from the earliest stages of acquisition. Children, for example, do not live solely within the family nucleus; they attend daycare, school, and play with their peers.

In this chapter, I first explain how communities of researchers gradually began to link the linguistic, cognitive, and social aspects of language by observing four contexts where sociolinguistic variation is acquired: first bidialectal acquisition, first bilingual acquisition, the acquisition of the dialectal varieties of a second language, second dialect acquisition (Section 1). I then focus on the area of early bidialectal acquisition by reviewing established descriptive benchmarks of what children can do with different varieties of the same language at a given age. I update these benchmarks by elaborating on two themes that illustrate how sociolinguistic knowledge is gradually structured: the construction of sociolinguistic gender

identities and the learning of stylistic skills and indexicality (Section 2). Finally, by bringing together the available results, I sketch a developmental scenario based on the idea that taking into account the successive situations in which children are socialized is the key to understanding how sociolinguistic variation is acquired (Section 3).

### *1.1 The linguistic, the cognitive, and the social*

After pioneering work that paved the way for subsequent research (Roberts & Labov 1995; Kerswill 1996; Kerswill & Williams 2000), it was not until the second decade of the twenty-first century that communities of researchers began to structure themselves around the organization of scientific events or the production of books and journal issues devoted to the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. One reason this field took so long to emerge is because it requires bringing together theoretical questions and methodological tools from two research traditions: work on language acquisition, which is rooted in psycholinguistics and cognitive science, and the study of language varieties, which is anchored in sociolinguistics and social science. These bidisciplinary origins allow researchers in this field to address theoretical issues relating to the linguistic, the cognitive, and the social (Chevrot, Drager & Foulkes, 2018).

First, studying sociolinguistic acquisition corrects what Levinson (2012:397) called the “original sin of cognitive science,” that is, “the myth of ‘the human mind’ [...] idealized away from all the ‘noise’ of individual variation or systematic cultural diversity”. Whereas research on language acquisition seeks to discover general principles and developmental benchmarks shared by the world’s languages, studies of sociolinguistic acquisition take into consideration the norms, usages, and values of the specific community where the acquisition process takes place. Second, studying the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation requires a better

understanding of sociolinguistic cognition. The aim is not only to describe what learners do at each stage, but also to understand the cognitive mechanisms that allow learners to transition from one stage to the next. Third, research into the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation inevitably leads to questions about how social and linguistic knowledge interact. Simply put, two developmental scenarios can be contrasted in the child (de Vogelaer, Chevrot, Katerbow & Nardy, 2017). In the first scenario, children at an early age construct an abstract language system whose outputs later interact with the social cognition they have developed in parallel. Hence, children are able to extract linguistic information from their environment by eliminating accompanying social information. In the second scenario, linguistic knowledge is linked to other knowledge systems, including social cognition, from the beginning of acquisition. Far from being noise to be eliminated, language-related social information helps young speakers to structure the linguistic variability of their environment (Docherty & Foulkes, 2014).

### *1.2 Four contexts for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation*

The three theoretical issues described in the preceding section have been documented by studies of situations characterized by the coexistence of several language varieties. These situations may involve several languages and dialects, bearing in mind that distinctions between languages and dialects are often unclear and driven by ideology (Chevrot & Ghimenton, 2018). As Poplack, Zentz, and Dion (2012) noted, the variationist approach concerns all situations in which bilingual or bidialectal speakers have to choose between alternatives carrying similar referential meaning, basing their choices on contextual factors. If sociolinguistic variation is defined as the possibility of making socially conditioned choices between or within languages, it is possible to distinguish four types of situations in which variation is acquired (Chevrot & Ghimenton, 2018).

The first type of situation—first bidialectal acquisition—concerns children who grow up in contexts where several varieties of what is identified as one language are spoken. Children acquire several varieties of this language from an early age, but not necessarily simultaneously. This general definition includes children who are in contact, via their family, with a non-standard variety associated with their social, regional, or ethnic group, and who also encounter standard varieties outside the family circle. It also includes children who encounter several varieties of the same language within their family circle. For example, their parents may come from different social or regional backgrounds, or they may have daily contact with older peers who use the typical adolescent variety. The second type of situation—first bilingual acquisition—concerns children who live in bilingual communities where they are simultaneously or successively exposed to varieties of what are considered different languages. These situations are superimposed on those of the first type. For example, children who acquire a regional variety of a heritage language within their family may come into contact with other varieties of that language and with different varieties of the majority language of the country where they live. The third type of situation—acquisition of the dialectal varieties of a second language—concerns learners of a second language who are in contact with different varieties of that language. Study abroad or migratory experiences are typical of this context. Even when learners acquire a second language in their home country with a non-native teacher, they may be exposed to deliberate or unintentional stylistic changes in the teacher's speech or encounter other varieties of the second language in the media. The fourth type of situation—second dialect acquisition—results from the possibility of successively learning several varieties of the same language. The acquisition of a second or third dialect occurs as a result of geographic or social mobility (e.g., move to another region, change of profession, access to a prestigious school). It also concerns more specific events:

for example, the fall of the Berlin Wall brought Berliners in contact with new varieties of German (Auer, Barden & Grosskopf, 2000).

This typology of situations makes it necessary to define the pivotal age separating early acquisition of several dialects and early acquisition of a second dialect. The present chapter adopts the solution developed by Chevrot and Ghimenton (2018), who proposed using the same criterion as that used to distinguish between bilingual first language acquisition and early second language acquisition. According to Ortega (2018), second language acquisition refers to the acquisition of another language after the age of six or after the start of formal literacy instruction. Therefore, first bidialectal acquisition can be defined as acquisition that occurs when a child begins learning (successively or simultaneously) two varieties of the same language before the age of six or before formal literacy. If acquisition of one of the varieties of the same language begins after this threshold, it can be considered acquisition of a second dialect.

The present chapter focuses on research into first bidialectal acquisition, as defined above, a field that has grown rapidly since the turn of the century and involved crossover with research in the fields of social cognition and psycholinguistics. After reviewing the available research, we will conclude by suggesting a general outline for the process of acquiring sociolinguistic variation until preadolescence.

## **2. First bidialectal acquisition**

Research on sociolinguistic acquisition has three objectives, presented here from the least to the most ambitious in terms of providing explanations for the dynamics of development.

These objectives are: to describe how children produce, perceive, and evaluate sociolinguistic

variables at different ages; to understand how factors such as input, maturation, and socialization influence and drive developmental changes; and to model sociolinguistic knowledge and its interaction with social knowledge at different stages of development (Chevrot & Foulkes, 2013).

For over fifty years, studies have established how children, most of whom speaking English, French, or Spanish, produce or evaluate sociolinguistic variation at various ages. In the following section, I first review these developmental benchmarks (Section 2.1). From a cumulative perspective, I then present more recent studies on a wider variety of languages that document two themes: the emergence of sociolinguistic differences associated with gender identities (Section 2.2.) and the learning of stylistic skills in connection with awareness of indexical values (Section 2.3). In doing so, I assess whether the descriptive benchmarks are challenged. I then integrate the benchmarks into explanatory scenarios that account for how sociolinguistic knowledge is gradually structured in relation to children's social identities and socialization.

### *2.1 What children can do with sociolinguistic variation*

Nardy, Chevrot, and Barbu (2013) reviewed thirty-nine studies on the acquisition of phonological variables in children aged two to eleven years, published between 1958 and 2013. Their first conclusion was that studies that took into account social backgrounds consistently showed that, from the age of three years, children from higher socioeconomic status families produce more standard variants than those from lower socioeconomic status families (seven studies; three languages: English, French, Spanish; children aged three to eleven years). For example, Chevrot, Nardy, and Barbu (2011) examined the production of variable liaison during a picture naming task in 185 French children aged 2 to 6 years from two contrasting social backgrounds defined by the occupation of both parents. As in adults,

the standard production of realized liaison is more frequent in upper-class children than in lower-class ones. Moreover, the difference progressively increases with age. Similar consistency can be seen in results pertaining to stylistic ability. According to all but one of the studies to examine this issue, children use standard variants more frequently in formal contexts than in informal settings (ten studies; English, French, Spanish; children aged three to twelve). Comparisons of several types of adult-child interaction in family settings have found that stylistic ability manifests from the age of three years (Smith, Durham & Richards, 2013).

Despite a paucity of studies, there also appears to be a degree of consensus on the general evolution of the production of standard and non-standard variants. Although results for children under the age of six years are contradictory (three studies; English, French; children aged two to four years), studies of children above the age of six years (three studies; English, French; six to twelve years) have consistently reported an increase in the production of standard variants with age. For example, Patterson (1992) observed the production of the variable *-ing* in forty-eight middle-class children in Albuquerque. She found an increase in the production of the standard variant, which starts between ages 4 and 6 and continues until age 8. In contrast, results pertaining to differences between genders vary greatly between studies (eleven studies; English, French; ages two to ten years), with seven studies (ages two to nine) reporting no differences between boys and girls, two studies (ages six to ten) reporting more standard variants in girls, and two studies (ages three to seven) reporting more standard variants in boys. There are a number of possible explanations for these contradictory results. Early differences could be due to caregivers addressing more standard speech to girls (Foulkes, Docherty & Watt, 2005). Conversely, the absence of early differences may be due to both boys and girls being exposed mainly to maternal input (Docherty, Foulkes, Tillotson, & Watt, 2006). The heterogeneity of the results should serve as a caveat when interpreting

trends. Faced with this complexity, the priority should be to increase the empirical base, rather than adding interpretations to a topic already laden with stereotypes.

Research on evaluation of sociolinguistic varieties (four studies, two to twelve years, English, French) suggests that children are able to produce snap judgements (e.g., “well-spoken” or “badly-spoken”) of short utterances including standard and non-standard variants from the age of five. However, it is only during the pre-adolescent years that they begin to justify their evaluation based on criteria related to the social value of the linguistic forms. Lafontaine (1986) conducted a survey of 123 pupils and students in the Liege area (Belgium), divided into four age groups (8, 12, 14 and 18 years old), with the aim of examining attitudes towards regiolectal and sociolectal features of French. While the judgments of the youngest children are based on the truth value of utterances or politeness, it is only at the age of twelve that the first justifications based on prestige and correctness are produced.

In short, current benchmarks for what children are able to do with variation can be categorized into five tendencies. Differences related to social status are transmitted early from the age of three onward through parent-child interaction. The early stages of speech style appear from the age of three within the family, due to the diversity of exchanges between parents and children. Children tend to produce standard variants more frequently from the age of six years. There is no clear pattern of differences between boys and girls. With regard to the evaluation of variants, the benchmarks concern children’s ability to differentiate between standard and non-standard variants from the age of five, and their ability to verbalize sociolinguistic norms from pre-adolescent years. More recent studies organized into two topics shed light on these reference points and partially expand as yet unanswered questions. I group them into two themes: the construction of a gendered sociolinguistic identity and the joint acquisition of stylistic competence and socio-indexical knowledge.

## *2.2 The construction of sociolinguistic gender identities*

In their comprehensive review, Perry, Pauletti, and Cooper (2019) point out that gender identity is multidimensional. Three between-gender dimensions come into play during the preschool years: gender contentedness, felt pressure for gender differentiation, and intergroup bias. They lead children to exaggerate differences, give preferential treatment to the in-group, and devalue and homogenize the out-group. They exert a normative pressure on preschoolers, especially through peer group interactions, and promote gender segregation in older children. The importance of these three dimensions tends to decrease over the school years, except gender contentedness, which remains high. In the case of the within-gender dimensions, felt same-gender typicality (i.e. how individuals perceive their own similarity to their peers of the same gender) tends to increase through preadolescence, but other-gender typicality does not follow any clear trend. Moreover, the development of gender identity is rooted in the early emergence of stereotypes through association and categorization processes (e.g., associating types of faces or voices with a gender) and continues through adolescence and beyond. It is characterized by significant inter-individual variations.

Another point that must be kept in mind is how adults use sociolinguistic variation. Labov (1990) divided the way men and women use sociolinguistic variation into three principles: women more frequently use standard variants for stable sociolinguistic variables; women tend to favor new, prestigious forms in the case of changes from above, which are generally conscious; and women tend to use higher frequencies of innovative forms in changes from below, which are generally unconscious. Cheshire (2013) reviewed the criticisms that have been leveled at these generalizations, which nevertheless favor comparisons between large surveys. She compares the large-scale studies with small-scale ethnographic studies within specific communities, which do not perceive sociolinguistic gender as the association of

variants to the binary labels ‘man’ and ‘woman’, but instead as a dynamic construction arising from social practices. Given the debate in adult sociolinguistics and the complexity of gender identity development, the emergence of gender patterns in children’s sociolinguistics should be viewed as a long-term construction that is not necessarily a linear progression to an end result in which women’s speech is more standard.

More recent research highlights two trends in children, depending on the age range in question. First, all but one study found no difference between boys and girls below the age of six. The follow-up study of thirty-two African American children from Chapel Hill (North Carolina, United States), aged between four and fifteen years, found no gender differences for three variables: *-ing* fronting, copula absence, and third person singular *-s* absence (Hofwegen & Wolfram, 2010). Similarly, Smith and Durham (2019) did not find any differences in the use of eighteen local variables from different language levels (such as the *-ing* variable, the Scottish lexical variant *bairn* for *child* or *kid*, the local Scots realisations *dona* or *na* of the standard negative form *don’t* or *do not*) among twenty-nine children aged two to four years living in a Scottish community. The authors noted the absence of gender differences in this community’s adults with respect to these variables, so there are no differences to transmit to children. However, even in the case of glottal replacement (the variable replacement of /t/ by a glottal stop in certain contexts), where there were gender differences in the adults’ speech, no such differences were found in the children. Roberts (2016) reported a similar lack of gender differences for glottal replacement in thirty-six children aged between two and five years who speak a rural variety in Vermont (United States). Finally, Kushartanti’s (2014) study of sixty-three Indonesian children aged between three and four years did not reveal any gender differences in the use of prefixes and verb forms in two varieties of Indonesian (formal Bahasa Indonesian and colloquial Jakarta Indonesian). Thus, results from diverse communities suggest that gendered sociolinguistic patterns do not manifest themselves at the

preschool age. The only exception to this rule is provided by a study of eighty-five Danish children aged between four and eight years in which boys used more non-standard morphological forms of the past tense than girls (Ladegaard & Bleses, 2003). According to the authors, Danish children acquire gender roles early due to the fact that they attend full-day daycare and are therefore exposed to peer group influence, often from their first year of life.

Several studies have reported gendered sociolinguistic patterns in older children. Jacewicz and Fox (2019) conducted an acoustic and perceptual (listener judgment) analysis of the monophthongization of /ai/ in nineteen children aged nine to ten years, born and raised in an Appalachian community in western North Carolina. The monophthong variant, instead of the mainstream diphthong, is a stereotypical local feature and identity marker for older generations. Children position themselves “in between” by using a slightly diphthongized variant. Although both genders produced more intermediate variants in careful speech, acoustic and perceptual analyses revealed that vowels produced by girls when reading aloud were more diphthongized than those produced by boys. The result is consistent with the idea that women favor new valorized variants (Labov 1990), whereas men are more likely to maintain local dialects in rural communities (Holmquist 1985).

Barbu, Martin, and Chevrot’s study (2014) points in the same direction. Thirteen target children born and raised in the same rural area of the French Alps were recorded during dyadic interaction with thirty-nine same-sex friends selected according to their place of birth (native to the area or not) and the length of their friendship with the targets. Usage of the local variant of the third-person singular object clitic pronoun *y* /i/ rather than *le* ‘him/it’, *la* ‘her/it’ or *les* ‘them’ (e.g., *Comment tu y sais?* instead of *Comment tu le sais?* ‘How do you know’), a stereotypical feature remnant from the Franco-Provençal language, was twice as frequent in

boys than in girls, but only within dyadic interactions with natives. This pattern did not occur in the case of supralocal sociolinguistic variables.

Habib's work (2014) explored the hypothesized relationship between the local or supralocal social meaning of variants, children's socialization, and gender identities by analyzing the use of four vocalic variables ((o), (o:), (e), and (e:)), which oppose an urban variant to several rural variants in the variety of Arabic spoken by fifty children and adolescents, aged between six and eighteen years, in a Syrian village. The village's sociolinguistic situation provides a test case, as the children learn the urban variants at an early age from their 'out-of-town' mother. In the first age group, at six to eight years, the use of rural variants by both genders was very low. By age nine to eleven years, the boys' scores had increased greatly, whereas the girls' scores remained constant. The boys' scores continued to increase in subsequent age groups, but at a lower rate, and they remained higher than the girls' scores, which did not change with age. An ethnographic survey showed that the urban variants were associated with stereotypical feminine characteristics, such as appealing, soft, and refined, whereas the rural forms were associated with stereotypical masculine cues, such as roughness and toughness. Moreover, due to traditions of inheritance, marriage, and care for aging parents, the community's women are expected to leave the village but the men are expected to stay. The separation of boys' and girls' sociolinguistic uses at age nine to ten is not due to a change in the input to which they are exposed, but to the acquisition of gendered roles in a context in which differences between local and supralocal are linked to masculinity and femininity.

In a later study, Habib (2016) looked more closely at ethnographic factors in order to better understand the identities and ideologies circulating in the village. This study involved seventy-two participants in two age groups: six to eighteen years and twenty-nine to fifty-seven years. The author, who is a member of the community, spent a year in the village. She noted that the way in which the production of the rural [q] and urban [ʔ] variants of the

consonant variable (q) changes with age is even clearer than that of the vowels in the previous study: boys' scores for the rural variants increased from three percent to sixty-six percent between ages six to eight and twelve to fourteen, whereas girls' use of the urban variant remained near-categorical from age six to eighteen. Habib's ethnographic findings suggested that boys and girls construct their sociolinguistic uses and gendered identities in separate communities of practice through a desire to align with their friends. Finally, the opinions, attitudes, and ideologies expressed by the children showed that children as young as six or eight years were aware of the attitudes and ideologies toward language that circulate within the local community and within the wider area.

In summary, recent studies suggest that differences between boys' and girls' productions of sociolinguistic variants emerge through peer group interaction, typically at around eight to nine years of age, or even earlier if institutional conditions favor early peer socialization. Sociolinguistic gender identity is intertwined with whether interests are local or supralocal, with local interests being greater in boys than in girls. The link between the emergence of sociolinguistic gender differences, peer socialization, and ideologies weakens the hypothesis that boys and girls speak differently because parents address more standard variants to girls. The description of gender identity development at the beginning of this section emphasizes that the dimension that develops in preadolescents is felt same-gender typicality, referring to children's self-perceived similarity to peers of their own gender (Perry et al., 2019). Its development involves children comparing themselves to each other and forming a representation of a typical person of their gender, which requires contact with several peers; the cognitive ability to generalize; and access to ideologies and stereotypes circulating within the community.

### 2.3 Stylistic skill and indexicality: from the private sphere to the community

One of the most ground-breaking results provided by developmental sociolinguistics is the understanding that stylistic skills appear much earlier in a child's life than previously assumed, due to the diversity of parental roles during family interaction. Smith and Durham (2019) strengthened Smith, Durham, and Richards' (2013) initial findings relating to parent-child interactions in a small Scottish fishing town by increasing the number of sociolinguistic variables studied. For most of these variables, the eighteen oldest children in the sample (aged from three years one month to four years two months) produced local variants more frequently during teaching and discipline interactions (a formal context) than during play and routine interactions (an informal context). In contrast, the only variable for which a similar trend was observed in the eleven youngest children (from two years ten months to three years one month) was glottal replacement. Caregivers, notably, mirrored the children's behavior. Miller (2013) reported similar results in a study of s-deletion in the speech of ten Spanish-speaking Chilean children aged two to five and their caregivers. In response to this finding, Labov (2013:249) asked: "*When a lower middle class boy learns that working class speakers use a higher frequency of [m] for (ing) than he does, how does this affect his interpretation of the fact that his mother uses more [m] when she is warm and intimate with him than when she is scolding him?*", a question that opens up a new avenue of research into the connection between the acquisition of style and socio-indexical meaning.

Approaches to style in adult sociolinguistics have evolved from reactive conceptions—speakers adapting to situations—to agentive conceptions—speakers using intra-individual variation to produce social meanings related to their identity, intentions, and ongoing interactions (Schilling 2013:327-328). Whichever approach is taken, the acquisition of style involves children creating connections between linguistic forms and contextual information

about settings and speakers. Once memorized, connections can be generalized, updated, creatively modified, combined, and reused to adapt to a given situation, to act on the ongoing interaction, or to index identities and intentions. It is for this reason that acquisition of style is inseparable from acquisition of socio-indexical knowledge. Although research still raises more questions than it answers, Foulkes and Hay (2015) identified some landmarks in the understanding of socio-indexical acquisition. They emphasize that humans acquire socio-indexical knowledge prior to linguistic knowledge, because gestating babies assimilate the characteristics of their mother's voice *in utero*. From the first days of life, babies differentiate between individuals' voices and quickly generalize the contrast between male and female voices. As noted above, experiencing family interactions allows young children to associate ways of speaking with topics, activities, and caregivers' mental states. Moreover, adults and older children provide a clear example of styles by addressing child-directed speech to younger children.

The difficulty that has to be overcome—and this is at the heart of Labov's question—is to find a way of determining how children shift from stylistic skills based on their experiences of family interactions to a general stylistic capacity based on collective norms, values, and social categories such as class, gender, geographical area, and race; and how they use this generalization to implement style. According to recent research on social cognition, American children as young as three years and five months use race (black versus white) and gender (female versus male) to specify social status in terms of wealth (in the case of race) and power (in the case of gender), but they do not apply these criteria to their own social position (Mandalaywala, Tai, & Rhodes, 2020). Indeed, children have a rather abstract understanding of society at an early age, which is a prerequisite for associating linguistic forms with social categories. While the studies reviewed by Nardy et al. (2013) attest to the early and robust trend for children to produce standard variants in formal situation, my focus here is on

explanatory approaches. I begin by presenting work on production and then move on to work on perception and awareness.

#### Style-shifting in Bahasa Indonesian

Kushartanti (2014) reported style-shifting between formal Bahasa Indonesian (BI) and colloquial Jakarta Indonesian (CIJ) in the speech of sixty-three children aged between three years and four years and five months at the first observation period. She examined two contrasted situations by increasing the number of cues indexing formal and informal settings. The first setting involved an interview with an older female who always spoke BI. Interviews took place in the classroom, library, laboratory, or prayer room. The second setting involved an interview with a younger female who always spoke CIJ. These interviews took place in the playground, playroom, corridors, or playhouse. All the children in this experiment, including the youngest, tended to use more BI in the formal setting and more CIJ in the informal setting. Interestingly, this tendency was stronger at the second observation period, six months later.

#### African American children

In their longitudinal study of sixty-seven African American children over the first two decades of life, Kohn, Wolfram, Farrington, Renn, and Hofwegen (2020) observed style-shifting associated with two settings, broadly defined as formal and informal, at three points in time: first grade (age six), sixth grade (age eleven), eighth grade (age thirteen). Using a composite index to summarize several sociolinguistic variables (dialect density measure), they found that style-shifting begins between the ages of six and eleven years. Girls tend to shift style more than boys (Jacewicz & Fox, 2019, reported a similar tendency for girls to shift style more than boys at age nine to ten years; see also Kerwill & Williams, 2000:104-105). Additionally, the authors noted that the raw data revealed statistically non-significant trends that require further investigation. In particular, they found that children with fewer African

American classmates shifted style less because they used mainstream American English in all situations. An exploratory study by Buson (2017) involving eight French girls aged between ten and eleven years and raised in working-class families supported these findings. The four girls who attended a socially mixed school (49% of pupils were from lower-class families) used fewer discourse markers when speaking with an adult than with other children. Among the four girls attending a socially non-mixed school (88% of pupils were from lower-class families), the frequency of discourse markers did not vary according to the addressee. Buson concluded that the diversity of language experience at school could play a role in the construction of broader stylistic repertoires.

#### Accommodation in the French Alps and in North Carolina

Studies have also evidenced another type of socially motivated intra-individual variation in children: dyadic accommodation, that is, the temporary convergence of two speakers' sociolinguistic scores during interactions. In the study of Barbu, Martin, and Chevrot (2014), native boys aged ten to eleven from a rural area of the French Alps addressed more local variants to native friends of the same gender than to non-natives, but this was not the case when addressing girls or for the use of non-local sociolinguistic variables. In addition, a case study based on recordings of a similarly aged boy from the same area interacting with friends and family found the same convergence of local variants when he interacted with his parents (Martin, Chevrot, & Barbu, 2010). Although his sociolinguistic score changed according to the nature of the addressee (parent, native friend, non-native friend), a correlational study showed that his score did not become aligned with the value of each interlocutor's score. Thus, the authors attributed the convergence to the desire to express a local identity by using characteristic variants, rather than to an automatic and mimetic alignment on the interlocutor's linguistic behavior. Kohn, Wolfram, Farrington, Renn, and Hofwegen (2020) also found complex patterns of convergence within peer pairs among African American

children and adolescents observed between the ages of eleven and fifteen years. From age eleven, boys generally accommodated more to peers they knew, while girls accommodated to the same degree to all peers and used more salient ethnolinguistic variants with peers they did not know. Moreover, boys with more highly developed social skills also accommodated to unknown peers from the community, and those with more African American contacts did so by using more ethnolinguistic variants. A common trend in the rural area of the French Alps and the African American community in North Carolina is that male preadolescents accommodate in addressing more local variants to familiar peers. The comparison however cannot be taken further because all participants in the Alps study are friends with each other and their social skills are not assessed. However, it is worth noting that the North Carolina study boys are not a homogeneous group, their accommodation behavior depending on their social skills. This finding is consistent with the heterogeneity of gender identity development (Perry, Pauletti & Cooper, 2019).

#### Awareness of norms and values

Studies of perceptions of style provide evidence that style-shifting in children results from the awareness of norms and values, and not solely from behavioral adjustments to situational cues (e.g., addressee's language, location, topic). Buson and Billiez (2013) asked 196 children aged nine to eleven years living in greater Grenoble (South-East France) to comment on three simulated answering machine messages displaying three stylistic levels from informal to formal and including phonetic, syntactic, lexical, and pragmatic cues. When answering the open questions 'What did you notice?' and 'What do you think of it?' more than sixty percent of the children spontaneously referred to social constraints: "You wouldn't say that to your neighbor", "I talk like that to my friends," etc. The authors also noticed that the children's comments were based on lexical items. Moreover, they included sociolinguistic restoration, as some children reported variants that were not present in the messages but that were consistent

with the style of the message. Combining these results with those of Buson (2009:171-172) shows how comments based on interaction evolve with age: from zero percent in sixty-six children aged between five and seven years, to 16.6 percent in sixty-three children aged between seven and nine years, and 60 percent in children aged ten to eleven years.

Additionally, Buson (2009) asked the children to name their best friend. At age seven to nine years, but not earlier, children who had formed a mixed friendship pair with a peer from a different social background referred more to interaction by commenting on the messages. At age eleven, children from non-privileged backgrounds belonging to mixed friendship pairs referred to interaction as often as children from privileged backgrounds, whereas those belonging to non-mixed pairs made fewer references. Hence, awareness of the characteristics of interactions that underlie style-shifting appears to develop rapidly during the elementary school years through contact with social diversity in the peer group.

#### Linguistic and social cues facilitating style learning

Wagner, Vega-Mendoza, and Van Horn (2014) highlighted other factors that facilitate style learning by showing children aged either three years or five years pictures of two people and asking them to identify which of the two was the appropriate addressee for utterances typical of three styles: informal speech, formal speech, and infant directed speech. The first experiment contrasted children acquiring English and Spanish: Spanish provides consistent cues to style due to the difference between formal and informal variants of the second person pronoun. Spanish-speaking children outperformed English-speaking children at both ages for identifying informal style. In a second experiment, however, the authors asked whether style identification benefitted from more consistent cues to the interaction's social meaning. The authors repeated this task with thirty-six English-speaking children aged three to five years, but highlighted the formal status of the adult addressee and facilitated awareness that the speaker was a similar age to the participants (e.g., by having the utterances recorded by an

eight-year-old girl). English-speaking children performed better under these conditions than they did in the first experiment. More precisely they scored above chance at both ages with respect to informal style. The authors concluded that preschoolers understand that people modify their speech to indicate their social status (e.g., child, adult, person representing an institution), but that they need strong linguistic or social cues in order to access this knowledge.

### Schooling and style acquisition

Based on these developmental trends, it can be hypothesized that, in many societies, attending school plays a particularly role in style acquisition. Schooling gives children the opportunity to repeatedly experience clear and diverse associations between sociolinguistic variation and social cues characterizing speakers and context. As Clark (2016) noted, local varieties typically contrast with varieties valued in the school system, “so that the major contrast is school versus elsewhere (home, street, stores, playgrounds).” Schooling, however, is a twofold experience in which children are exposed both to a wider variety of social contacts than they were in the home, notably through peer socialization, and to the legitimacy of standard varieties through exposure to teachers’ speech, literacy, and explicit or implicit judgments of children’s speech. Already at preschool, children who interact the most with their peers progressively lead the whole class group towards more non-standard usage through mimetic and automatic influences. At the same time the teacher’s speech provides a much more formal model (Nardy, Chevrot & Barbu, 2014). For this reason, young children may begin to associate formal speech with academic competence, institutions, and authority, and non-formal speech with the warmth of peer exchange. However, children need many years’ exposure to associations between different ways of speaking and social contexts before they acquire a general ability to adapt their speaking style to all variables and all types of situation, even those in which the degree of formality is more difficult to discern. At the same time,

encounters with social diversity, which are often more marked at school than in the neighborhood, foster convergence and accommodation processes based on complex combinations of social categories (e.g., a native male friend, a friend from another region) and refine socio-indexical knowledge.

#### Scenario for the development of style acquisition

In summary, the available data indicate the following scenario for the development of style acquisition. Preschoolers aged three to four can modify their production of sociolinguistic variants according to the type of interaction with their caretakers. They are able to generalize this ability to situations outside the family if these situations provide strong linguistic or social cues indicating an appropriate style. In general situations in which cues distinguishing formal and the informal dimensions are less clear, the ability to vary style accordingly emerges between the ages of six and ten years, during the elementary school period, which is when children become aware of the social constraints on interactions. From the age of ten, children develop the capacity to accommodate to peers' speech by interpreting a complex combination of cues relating to social identity (nativeness, gender, friendship). During preadolescence, girls accommodate and use style-shifting more than boys. Finally, there is consistent evidence showing the importance of social diversity within the school peer group with respect to developing awareness and implementation of style. This aspect of style deserves further investigation.

### **3. First bidialectal acquisition: drawing together current knowledge**

Because structured research on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variations began only recently, studies have not yet addressed every aspect of all periods of the acquisition process. Consequently, it is not yet possible to draw up comprehensive models of the acquisition

process that include the relevant factors and mechanisms. Nevertheless, research into first bidialectal acquisition has advanced far enough for us to formulate a general framework. The studies reviewed above highlight the importance of child socialization in the acquisition of sociolinguistic variations in a variety of settings: within the family, at nursery school, at elementary school, and with a peer group. By examining these socialization contexts in chronological order, it is possible to suggest a general outline for the sociolinguistic variation acquisition process.

### Family setting

Within family settings, children learn the dialectal variety around them at an early age, as is shown by the fact that by the age of three years children produce sociolinguistic differences according to their social background or home region. These differences are transmitted from parent to child, together with the material that forms the basis of linguistic development, whose semantic, lexical, morphosyntactic, and gestural dimensions also vary according to the social environment. The existence of clear and systematic correlations between children's sociolinguistic scores and those of their caretakers (Smith & Durham, 2019) support the hypothesis that parental input impacts the early acquisition of sociolinguistic variants.

Children's ability to identify statistical regularities allows them to associate standard and non-standard sociolinguistic variants with different types of family interactions, characterized by the degree of distance or complicity with caretakers. One of the first dimensions of socio-indexical knowledge would be therefore the ability to associate linguistic forms with the degree of warmth between speakers. Finally, two results whose impact on acquisition has not been clarified deserve further investigation. First, parents address more standard variants to children between the ages of two and four years than they do to adults in the community and children tend to mimic their parents in this regard (Andreassen, 2013; Smith & Durham, 2019). This tendency has been found to be identical in mothers and in fathers, is not

dependent on speech rate, and decreases as the child gets older (Liégeois, 2021). Second, caregivers tend to address more standard variants to girls than to boys, and this is the case from the earliest months of a child's life (Dilley, Millett, Mcauley & Bergeson, 2014), but it is not known if or how this early input is related to the long-term construction of gendered sociolinguistic identity.

### Two processes at kindergarten

Two processes occur when children enter kindergarten: standard usage becomes legitimized and peer socialization intensifies. Hence, children are exposed to their teachers' formal utterances and, at the same time, their sociolinguistic usages are reoriented towards non-standard forms by peer group influences. Recent work shows that, much like the parents of young children, teachers as well as classroom assistants (although to a lesser extent) address more standard variants to preschoolers than to other adults in the school (Buson & Nardy, 2020; Buson, Nardy, Rousset & Zhang, to appear). Consequently, children experience two types of situation: teaching situations, characterized by exchanges with an adult who is in a position of authority within the school and uses a more formal register; and exchanges within the peer group, characterized by warmth and an informal register. These divergent situations help children further develop the stylistic skills they learnt during family interactions, so it is in kindergarten that children begin gaining awareness of the weight of social norms on interactions and constituting a means of classifying speech situations according to their relationship to institutions. However, at this age style can only be implemented in social settings characterized by typical cues and through linguistic features whose socio-indexical value is transparent. This nascent understanding of interaction norms and the social meaning of situations is not accompanied by awareness of the social value of varieties. Thus, five-to seven-year-old Hungarian children were able to show a preference for a teacher who spoke a standard variety of Hungarian, but were unable to justify this preference by the prestige

accorded to varieties (Fehér 2020). Finally, no studies with kindergarten-aged children have observed accommodation phenomena, the presence of which would demonstrate children's ability to differentiate between specific social categories of interlocutor (a non-native boy, a same-gender friend, etc.). This absence of accommodation supports the idea that children's use of styles is based on a broad classification of situations and typical linguistic features.

### Elementary school

Elementary school presents children with new sociolinguistic issues due to the greater focus on academic success, attaining literacy, and developing socio-cognitive abilities. Longitudinal studies of speakers of African American English over the first two decades of their lives (Hofwegen & Wolfram, 2010; Kohn et al., 2020) support the hypothesis that the use of standard variants increases during elementary school, leading to a concomitant decrease in the use of non-standard variants. Despite the variations between individual trajectories, they observe that the use of African American features drops sharply during the elementary school years (i.e., between the ages of six and ten). This observation, based on several dozen children, is consistent with the findings reported by Nardy et al. (2013) and is a stable trend in societies with widespread schooling. Elementary school is also associated with a growing capacity for stylistic flexibility (Buson & Billiez, 2013), characterized by an awareness of the social stakes of interactions and the use of style in more deliberate ways. This flexibility is evinced through the appearance of accommodation phenomena based on the complex combination of traits defining social identity (e.g., native boys converge with native boys) and suggests a reorganization of socio-indexical knowledge. The broad distinctions made at an earlier age (warmth versus competence, formal versus informal, adult versus child) are now accompanied by more detailed categorization based on more specific aspects of identity and interaction. I hypothesize that this reorganization is facilitated by exposure to social diversity in the peer group. In addition, gendered sociolinguistic patterns in production emerge by the

age of eight to nine, with boys preferring local varieties and girls preferring standard and supra-local varieties. According to psychological research, the intensification of gender identity at this age reinforces the feeling of similarity with individuals of the same gender. The elaboration of this similarity implies the capacity to implement socio-cognitive processes: comparing individuals with each other and generalizing types within the framework of the community's norms and values. It can therefore be hypothesized that the significant changes in sociolinguistic patterns and socio-indexical knowledge that occur during primary schooling result from the emergence of socio-cognitive abilities that allow children to take advantage of peer diversity to form categories. Finally, it is also during this pivotal period that a hierarchy of variety prestige, similar to that of adults, gradually emerges, as has been noted for Austrian German (Kaiser & Kasberger, 2021), American English (Kinzler & DeJesus, 2013), and Flemish (De Vogelaer & Toye, 2017).

#### Sociolinguistic acquisition and linguistic constraints

This discussion of sociolinguistic acquisition must take into account the linguistic constraints on variation (e.g., the sensitivity of glottal replacement to the phonological and grammatical environment). Although there appears to be a consensus that linguistic constraints are acquired earlier than social constraints, it is unclear whether the two processes are sequential or parallel (Johnson & White, 2020). The underlying debate is whether or not children build a linguistic system from abstract categories, such as those forming linguistic constraints (e.g., consonant, glide, past tense). However, the difference between sequential and parallel does not account for the complexity of acquisition processes. On the one hand, social constraints may be based on simple skills in place from early childhood and may take different forms with age and evolve over time. On the other hand, the order in which linguistic constraints are acquired is sensitive to many factors: frequency effects, the effect of the complexity of the configurations involved in the constraints, and functional and cognitive effects (e.g., the

disambiguation of communication) (Shin, 2016). As Shin and Miller (2021) note, the presence of frequency effects means it is impossible to rule out the possibility that the linguistic constraints themselves result from generalizations made from the memorization of concrete sequences of lexical items.

#### Final remarks

Although research into the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation has only recently become more structured, it has already provided insights into the link between the learning of sociolinguistic patterns, the construction of indexical meaning, input, and the socialization process. It is as if children extract and memorize, from the usage events in which they participate, chunks of experience that are inseparably social and linguistic. Because the socialization process exposes children to increasingly diverse situations, and because their socio-cognitive capacities evolve, they modify, reorganize and refine this flexible system of associations between linguistic knowledge and social knowledge. Testing this concept requires extending the interdisciplinary program inherent in sociolinguistics by putting the process by which linguistic forms are acquired in perspective with the development of social cognition, sociality, and identity.

#### References

- Andreassen, Helene N. 2013. Schwa distribution and acquisition in light of Swiss French data. University of Tromsø PhD dissertation
- Auer, Peter, Barden, Birgit & Beate Großkopf. 2000. Long-term linguistic accommodation and its sociolinguistic interpretation : evidence from the inner-German migration after the Wende. In Klaus J. Mattheier (ed.), *Dialect and Migration in a Changing Europe*, 79-98. New York: Peter Lang.

- Barbu, Stéphanie, Nathael, Martin & Jean-Pierre Chevrot. 2014. The maintenance of regional dialects: a matter of gender? Boys, but not girls, use local varieties in relation to their friends' nativeness and local identity. *Frontiers in Psychology, Language Sciences* 5.1251.
- Buson, Laurence. 2009. Variation stylistique entre 5 et 11 ans et réseaux de socialisation scolaire : usages, représentations, acquisition et prise en compte éducative. Université Grenoble Alpes PhD dissertation.
- Buson, Laurence. 2017. How do social networks influence children's stylistic practices? Social mixing, macro/micro analysis and methodological questions. In Gunther de Vogelaer & Matthias Katerbow (eds.). *Acquiring Sociolinguistic Variation*, 65-89, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Buson, Laurence & Jacqueline Billiez. 2013. Representations of Stylistic Variation in 9- to 11-Year-Olds: Cognitive Processes and Salience. *Linguistics* 51(2).325-354.
- Buson, Laurence & Aurélie Nardy. 2020. Le(s) français scolaire(s) à l'école maternelle. Pratiques langagières d'enseignant.e.s et d'élèves. *Le français aujourd'hui* 208(1). 93-103.
- Buson, Laurence, Nardy, Aurélie, Rousset, Isabelle & Chenxi Zhang. to appear. Style in a school community - 'Ne' deletion in French preschool, *Journal of sociolinguistics*.
- Cheshire, Jenny. 2013. Sex and Gender in Variationist Research. In Jack K. Chambers & Natalie Schilling (eds.). *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. 423-443. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

- Chevrot, Jean-Pierre, Aurélie Nardy & Stéphanie Barbu. 2011. Developmental dynamics of SES-related differences in children's production of obligatory and variable phonological alternations. *Language Sciences* 33(1). 180–191.
- Chevrot, Jean-Pierre & Paul Foulkes. 2013. Introduction: Language acquisition and sociolinguistic variation. *Linguistics* 51(2). 251-254.
- Chevrot, Jean-Pierre & Anna Ghimenton. 2018. Bilingualism and bidialectalism. In Annick De Houwer & Lourdes Ortega. *The Cambridge Handbook of Bilingualism*, 510-523. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, Eve V. 2016. *First Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- De Vogelaer, Gunther, Jean-Pierre Chevrot, Matthias Katerbow & Aurélie Nardy. 2017. Bridging the Gap between Language Acquisition and Sociolinguistics, Introduction to an Interdisciplinary Topic. In Gunther de Vogelaer & Matthias Katerbow (eds.). *Acquiring Sociolinguistic Variation*, 1-41, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Dilley, Laura C., Amanda L. Millett, J. Devin Mcauley & Tonya R. Bergeson. 2014. Phonetic Variation in Consonants in Infant-Directed and Adult-Directed Speech: The Case of Regressive Place Assimilation in Word-Final Alveolar Stops. *Journal of Child Language* 41(1).155-175.
- Docherty, Gerard J. & Paul Foulkes. 2014. An Evaluation of Usage-Based Approaches to the Modelling of Sociophonetic Variability. *Lingua* 142. 42-56.
- Docherty, Gerard J., Paul Foulkes, Jenny Tillotson & Dominic Watt. 2006. On the Scope of Phonological Learning: Issues Arising from Socially-Structured Variation. In Louis

- Goldstein, Douglas. H. Whalen & Catherine T. Best., *Laboratory Phonology 8: Varieties of Phonological Competence*, 393-421. New York: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Fehér, Krisztina. 2020. Status-based preference of varieties in bidialectal kindergarteners: an experimental study. *ARGUMENTUM* 16. 147-172.
- Foulkes, Paul, Gerard Docherty & Dominic Watt. 2005. Phonological Variation in Child-Directed Speech. *Language* 81(1). 177-206.
- Foulkes, Paul & Jennifer B. Hay. 2015. The Emergence of Sociophonetic Structure. In Brian MacWhinney & William O'Grady, *The Handbook of Language Emergence*, 292-313. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Habib, Rania. 2014. Vowel Variation and Reverse Acquisition in Rural Syrian Child and Adolescent Language. *Language Variation and Change* 26(1). 45-75.
- Habib, Rania. 2016. Identity, Ideology, and Attitude in Syrian Rural Child and Adolescent Speech. *Linguistic Variation* 16(1). 34-67.
- Hofwegen, Janneke Van & Walt Wolfram. 2010. Coming of Age in African American English: A Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 14(4). 427-455.
- Holmquist, Jonathan. 1985. Social correlates of a linguistic variable: A study in a Spanish village. *Language in Society* 14(2), 191-203.
- Jacewicz, Ewa & Robert A. Fox. 2019. The Old, the New, and the in-between: Preadolescents' Use of Stylistic Variation in Speech in Projecting Their Own Identity in a Culturally Changing Environment. *Developmental Science* 22(1). e12722.

- Johnson, Elizabeth K. & Katherine S. White. 2020. Developmental Sociolinguistics: Children's Acquisition of Language Variation. *WIREs Cognitive Science* 11(1). e1515.
- Kaiser, Irmtraud & Gudrun Kasberger. 2021. Children's sociolinguistic preferences: the acquisition of language attitudes within the Austrian standard-dialect-continuum. In Anna Ghimenton, Aurélie Nardy & Jean-Pierre Chevrot, *Sociolinguistic variation and language acquisition across the lifespan*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Kerswill, Paul. 1996. Children, adolescents and language change. *Language Variation and Change* 8(2). 177–202.
- Kerswill, Paul & Ann Williams. 2000. Creating a new town koine: children and language change in Milton Keynes. *Language in Society* 29 (1). 65–115.
- Kinzler, Katherine D. & Jasmine M. DeJesus. 2013. Northern = Smart and Southern = Nice: The Development of Accent Attitudes in the United States. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 66(6). 1146-1158.
- Kohn, Mary, Walt Wolfram, Charlie Farrington, Jennifer Renn & Janneke Van Hofwegen. 2020. *African American Language: Language development from Infancy to Adulthood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kushartanti, Bernadette. 2014. The acquisition of stylistic variation by Jakarta Indonesian Children. Utrecht University PhD dissertation.
- Labov, William. 1990. The Intersection of Sex and Social Class in the Course of Linguistic Change. *Language Variation and Change* 2(2). 205-254.
- Labov, William. 2013. Preface: The acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. *Linguistics* 51(2). 247-250.

- Ladegaard, Hans J. & Dorthe Bleses. 2003. Gender Differences in Young Children's Speech: The Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Competence. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2). 222-233.
- Lafontaine, Dominique. 1986. *Le parti pris des mots*. Brussels: Mardaga.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 2012. The Original Sin of Cognitive Science. *Topics in Cognitive Science* 4(3). 396-403.
- Mandalaywala, Tara M., Christine Tai & Marjorie Rhodes. 2020. Children's Use of Race and Gender as Cues to Social Status. *PLOS ONE* 15(6). e0234398.
- Martin, Nathaël, Jean-Pierre Chevrot & Stéphanie Barbu. 2010. Stylistic Variations in the Social Network of a 10-Year-Old Child: Pragmatic Adjustments or Automatic Alignment? *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 14(5). 678-692.
- Miller, Karen. 2013. Acquisition of Variable Rules: /s/-lenition in the Speech of Chilean Spanish-Speaking Children and Their Caregivers. *Language Variation and Change* 25(3). 311-340.
- Nardy, Aurélie, Jean-Pierre Chevrot & Stéphanie Barbu. 2013. The acquisition of sociolinguistic variation: Looking back and thinking ahead. *Linguistics* 51(2). 255-284.
- Nardy, Aurélie, Jean-Pierre Chevrot & Stéphanie Barbu. 2014. Sociolinguistic Convergence and Social Interactions within a Group of Preschoolers: A Longitudinal Study. *Language Variation and Change* 26(03). 273-301.

- Ortega, Lourdes. 2013. SLA for the 21st Century: Disciplinary Progress, Transdisciplinary Relevance, and the Bi/Multilingual Turn. *Language Learning* 63. 1-24.
- Patterson, J. L. (1992). The development of sociolinguistic phonological variation patterns for (ing) in young children. University of New Mexico PhD dissertation.
- Perry, David G., Rachel E. Pauletti & Patrick J. Cooper. 2019. Gender Identity in Childhood: A Review of the Literature. *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 43(4). 289-304.
- Poplack, Shana, Lauren Zentz & Nathalie Dion. 2012. Phrase-Final Prepositions in Quebec French: An Empirical Study of Contact, Code-Switching and Resistance to Convergence. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 15(02). 203-225.
- Roberts, Julie. 2016. Acquisition of a Rural Variety: Glottalization in Vermont. *Linguistic Variation* 16(1). 12-33.
- Roberts, Julie. & William Labov. 1995. Learning to talk Philadelphian: Acquisition of short *a* by preschool children. *Language Variation & Change* 7(1), 101-112.
- Schilling, Natalie. 2013. Investigating Stylistic Variation. In Jack K. Chambers & Natalie Schilling (eds.). *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. 327-349. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Shin, Naomi Lapidus. 2016. Acquiring Constraints on Morphosyntactic Variation: Children's Spanish Subject Pronoun Expression. *Journal of Child Language* 43(4). 914-947.
- Shin, Naomi Lapidus & Karen Miller. 2021. Children's acquisition of morphosyntactic variation. *Language Learning and Development*.

- Smith, Jennifer & Mercedes Durham. 2019. *Sociolinguistic Variation in Children's Language: Acquiring Community Norms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Jennifer, Mercedes Durham & Hazel Richards. 2013. The Social and Linguistic in the Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Norms: Caregivers, Children, and Variation. *Linguistics* 51(2). 285-324.
- Vogelaer, Gunther De & Jolien Toye. 2017. Acquiring Attitudes towards Varieties of Dutch: A Quantitative Perspective. In Gunther de Vogelaer & Matthias Katerbow (eds.), *Acquiring Sociolinguistic Variation*. 117-154. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Wagner, Laura, Mariana Vega-Mendoza & Suzanne Van Horn. 2014. Social and Linguistic Cues Facilitate Children's Register Comprehension. *First Language* 34(4). 299-314