

Language shift in Canada: CCR in Japanese-Canadian English?

Junko Hibiya

International Christian University

‘Canada is as rich in varieties of English as a second language (ESL) as in first-language varieties’ (Chambers 1991: 95). However, ‘in the bilingual situations where immigrant languages and English come together, the research (...) is sparse, and most of it has been directed at the immigrant languages rather than English’ (Chambers 1991: 96). To set out to remedy this gap, the present investigation examines the tape-recorded speech of ten Japanese-Canadian (JC) individuals for the simplification of word-final consonant clusters ending in /-t, d/. The paper’s goals are to characterize the status of JC English in relation to other contact-induced varieties and to assess the changes it undergoes.

/-t, d/ deletion is a phonological process that results in the loss of a final apical stop (/t/ or /d/) when it is the last member of a consonant cluster. It has been extensively studied in a wide variety of English dialects (Fasold 1972, Guy 1980, Labov 1972, Labov et al. 1968, Neu 1980, Wolfram 1969, Wolfram and Fasold 1974) including those that have experienced language contact (Bayley 1994, Bailey and Thomas 1998, Holmes and Bell 1994, Kahn 1991, Patrick 1991, Santa Ana 1992, Schreier 2003, Torbert 2001, Wolfram and Christian 1976, Wolfram, Christian and Hatfield 1986, Wolfram, Childs and Torbert 2000).

The present study examines data recorded from nine second-generation and one third-generation adult JC English speaker (seven males and three females). They are located and recruited by means of the “friend of a friend” method (Milroy 1980). Except the third-generation speaker who has been speaking only English at home, these speakers grew up as bilinguals, speaking Japanese with their parents at home. At the time of data collection, all use English as their main home language. The data for the quantitative analyses were obtained from sociolinguistic interviews. Data entry and variable rule analysis were conducted using GOLDVARB 2001, a multivariate analysis application for Windows developed at York University.

The results indicate that the ten speakers approximate the general pattern: vowel < pause < obstruent with respect to the effect of the following phonetic environment. The effect of the morphological status of /-t, d/, however, demonstrates substantial interspeaker variation among old second-generation speakers. A large variety of individual patterns among them suggests that they possess different internal grammars that have been affected by the substratum language in varying degrees.

References

- Bailey, R. 1994. Consonant cluster reduction in Tejano English. *LVC* 3, 241-264.
- Bailey, G., and E. R. Thomas. 1998. Some aspects of African American phonology. In *African-American English: Structure, history and use*, ed. S. S. Mufwene, J. R. Rickford, G., Bailey and J. Baugh, 85-109. London: Routledge.
- Chambers, J. K. 1991. Canada. In *English around the world: Sociolinguistic perspectives*, ed. J. Cheshire, 89-107. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fasold, R. W. 1972. *Tense marking in Black English: A linguistic and social analysis*. Arlington: CAL.
- Guy, G. 1980. Variation in the group and in the individual: The case of final stop deletion. In *Locating language in time and space*, ed. W. Labov, 1-36. NY: Academic Press.
- Holmes, J. and A. Bell. 1994. Consonant cluster reduction in New Zealand English. *Wellington Working Papers in Linguistics* 6: 56-82.
- Khan, F. 1991. Final consonant cluster simplification in a variety of Indian English. In J. Cheshire (ed.), 288-298..
- Labov, W. 1972. *Language in the inner city*. Phila.: The University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov, W., P. Cohen, C. Robins & J. Lewis. 1968. *A study of the non-standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican speakers in NYC*. Phila.:U.S. Regional Survey.
- Milroy, L. 1980. *Language and social network*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Neu, H. 1980. Ranking of constraints on /-t, d/ deletion in American English: A statistical analysis. In W. Labov (ed.), 37-54.
- Patrick, P. L. 1991. Creoles at the intersection of variable processes: -t, d deletion and past-marking in the Jamaican mesolect. *LVC* 3, 171-190.
- Santa Ana, O. 1992. Chicano English evidence for the exponential hypothesis: A variable rule pervades lexical phonology. *LVC* 4, 275-289.
- Schreier, D. 2003. Convergence and language shift in New Zealand: Consonant cluster reduction in 19th century Maori English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7, 378-391.
- Tobert, B. 2001. Tracing native American language history through consonant cluster reduction: the case of Lumbee English. *American Speech* 76, 361-387.
- Wolfram, W. 1969. *A sociolinguistic description of Detroit Negro speech*. Arlington: CAL.
- Wolfram, W., and D. Christian. 1976. *Appalachia speech*. Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Wolfram, W., D. Christian and D. Hatfield. 1986. The English of adolescent and young adult Vietnamese refugees in the United States. *World Englishes* 5, 47-60.
- Wolfram, W., B. Childs and B. Torbert. 2000. Tracing language history through consonant cluster reduction: Comparative evidence from isolated dialects. *Southern Journal of Linguistics* 24, 17-40.
- Wolfram, W. and R. W. Fasold. 1974. *The study of social dialects in American English*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.