

The Role of Mutual Engagement in Sociophonetic Uniformity

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1. My Research

- a) Non-metropolitan Canada
- b) Speakers of Canadian English in their social contexts
- c) Sociolinguistic variation and change over time and space

2. Vowels and Non-Metropolitan Canada

Is the Canadian Vowel Shift solely a sociolinguistic feature of Canadian cities?
Who are the people that show signs of the Canadian Vowel Shift?

3. Some Peer Networks in Parktown

5 (predominantly) female peer groups

Smart Kids (N=4): graduating students who are at the top of their class academically and are highly involved in school activities

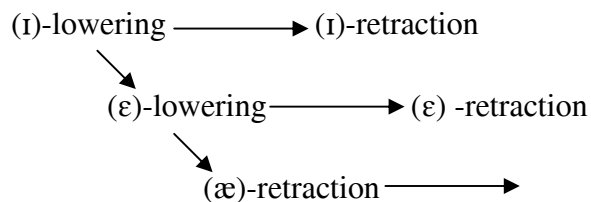
The Clown Posse (N=3): members of a youth arts program who dress up as clowns for town events

Christians in Action (N=4): peer-youth workers who organize and run activities for "street kids" at the local drop-in center

The Downtown Kids (N=3): a group of friends who hang out together at the drop-in center.

OACs (N=4): also in their graduating year and are primarily integrated into school life via athletic clubs (OAC refers to "Ontario Academic Credit")

4. Acoustic Analysis



ANOVA, HSD Post-hoc tests:

Dependent Variables: mean difference between each of the 5 variables and [a] (i.e. degree of lowering and retraction within each individual system).

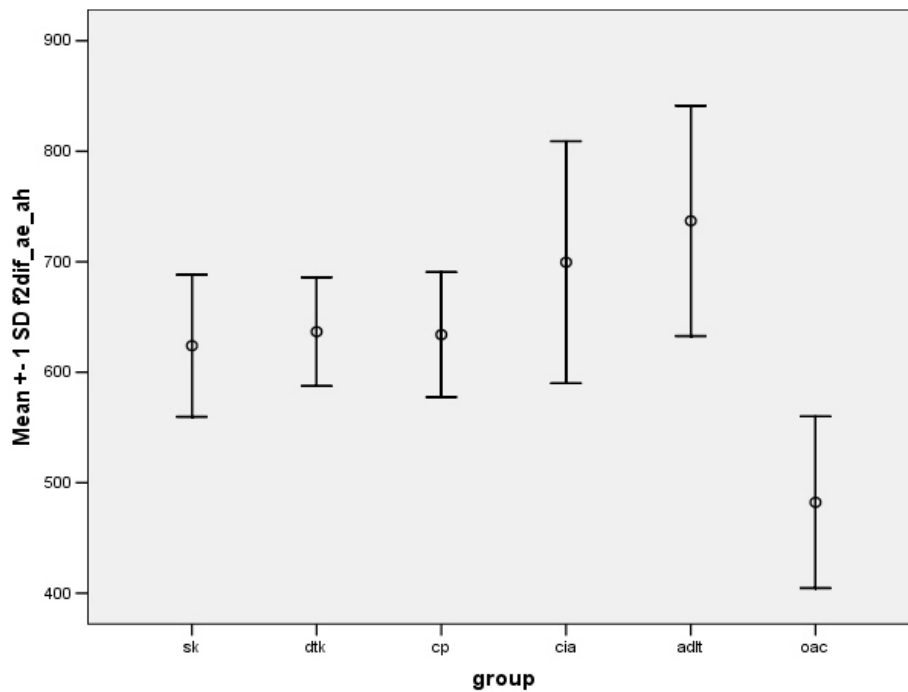
Factors: 5 peer groups, 1 sample of older adult females (55-75 years of age, N=5)

5. Findings

ANOVA results:

Average F2 differences between the productions of /æ / and /a/ (i.e. (æ)-retraction) were significantly different among peer groups ($F(5,17)=4.543, p<.05$). Peer groups also exhibited statistically significant differences with respect to average F2 differences between productions of /E/ and /a/ (i.e. (ε)-retraction) ($F(5,17)=4.027, p<.05$). HSD post-hoc tests are reported below:

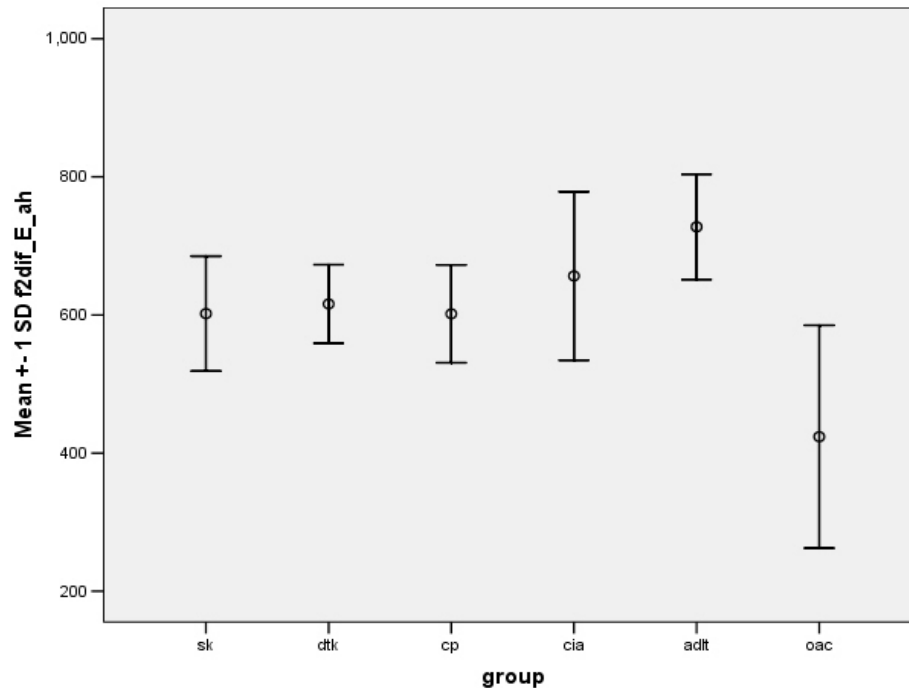
Figure 1. Average F2 Differences between [æ] and [a] by Peer group



Adults (M=737Hz, SD=104Hz)
vs. OACs (M=482Hz, SD=78Hz): difference of 255 Hz ($p<.005$)

CIA (M=700Hz , SD=110HZ)
vs. OACs (M=482Hz, SD=78Hz): difference of 218 Hz ($p<.05$)

Figure 2. Average F2 Differences between [ε] and [a] by Peer group



Adults (M=728Hz, SD=76Hz)
 vs. OACs (M=424Hz, SD=161Hz): difference of 304 Hz (p=.05)

What accounts for the statistically significant differences between the OAC and the CIA groups?

6. Network Analysis: a synopsis of weak ties with adults

All (but 1) of these peer groups are highly involved in after-school or community-service clubs.

The level of integration into the local community is quite similar.

What distinguishes these groups is **how** they are integrated with the community. I will focus here on their ties with adults who provide social capital in different ways.

OAC

- ties with mainly teachers and coaches
- provide instruction in academics and athletics
- ties reflect teacher and student relationship

CIA

- socialize with adults in "free-time", outside of school
- unite community members through an OUTREACH group
- weak superior/subordinate dynamic

7. The Future

- longitudinal study of phonetic change in Canadian English
- many of my initial participants have moved away from Parktown to attend college or university in a larger city somewhere else in Canada
- major transitional period in their lives
- this particular age and life-stage is not highly studied in sociolinguistics
- what has changed/stayed the same, both in terms of language and social identities/network ties

8. References

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- Eckert, Penelope. 2000 *Linguistic variation as social practice*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Labov, William. 1963. The social motivation of a sound change. *Word* 19, 273-309.