They style you up, your mum and dad: from preschool to preadolescence in the acquisition of sociolinguistic norms

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- Linguistic variation is transmitted to children as stylistic differentiation on the formal/informal dimension...
- ...Formal speech variants are associated by children with instruction and punishment, informal speech with intimacy and fun'
- (Labov 2001:437)

Buckie

- 29 caregiver/child pairs
- 2;10-4;2
- recorded in everyday interaction

ESRC RES-000-22-0447

- Caregiver, Community and Child in the Acquisition of Variable Dialect Features
Lucy 3;3 years old

I’m gan in here. Dinna go in the washin’ machine. How? How? How? Eh fit you mean how? How? How can I nae go in the washin’ machine? Cos I’ll maybe go- get switch on. And then you’ll be stuck in it. And you’ll droon! Fit? You’ll droon. I’ll go awa’, won’t I? You’ll be lookin’ for your- your Lois is at, won’t you? Uhh. And you winna ken far to get to my clothes, will you? No I’ll be giealin’. I’ll be giealin’ an’ a’. Bet you. If you got stuck in ’ere. That wouldn’a be very nice, would it? Uhh. I’d be missin’ Liam and Amy and Nicola. Wouldn’t I? Uhh. Missin’ a’ your friends. Was you havin’ fun ower at Nicola’s the day? But I could phone the bobbies.

Could ya? I could phone the bobbies. Oh. Kick the bobbies- kick the washin’ machine, so they can get me oot. Aye. That’s a good idea. It is. They can kick ‘at bit and ‘at bit. And they can get me oot!

Caregiver, community & variable

Caregiver speech

- Smith, Durham & Fortune 2007
- Smith, Durham & Fortune 2009
- Smith, Durham & Richards 2013

- lexical variables
- lexically conditioned phonological variables
- morphosyntactic variables
- socially salient variables
Preschool ~ preadolescent

5-way comparison
- Community ~ community
- Caregiver ~ child
- Child ~ caregiver
- Preadolescent ~ insider
- Preadolescent ~ outsider

ESRC ES/K000861/1

One speaker, two dialects: bidialectalism across the generations in a Scottish community

16 preadolescents

- Girls:
  - Lucy
  - Becky
  - Marie
  - Jade
  - Elizabeth
  - Ginny
  - Kerry
  - Jennifer

- Boys:
  - Jake
  - Oliver
  - Kevin
  - Gareth
  - Max
  - Luke
  - Dan
  - Ricky
Lucy 12 years old

I like to like experiment and I’ve– she like makes me follow a thing that I’ve got to do and a’thin’. Oh right. Like I like to change things, no like the normal way. Aye. See like even finn I’m with my pals and a’thins– like I like doing a’thins’ different like– see in this photo– wait here ’til I’ll get rid of a’ this messages so you can see it. Like they’re a’ wearin’ the leggings and the disco pants and the crop tops and that and then I’m wearin’ a skirt– Aye. And my hair’s different frae all them and a’thing and I’m wearin’ heels and they’re all wearin’ trainins’ Aye. Trainers. Like I like to be different frae abode else bu– That’s good though, you’re a individual. Aye. Mm mm. I dinna like copying folk. No. You just like to do it yourself. Aye.

Gillian (12 years old) with insider

She aieways gives me easter eggs every year and she kens finn kind of easter egg I like, like I like a One Direction air with like a mug and a’thing. Mhmm and then. Fann I finally opened it on easter I noticed inside she’d put like a loom band actually inside the chocolate so she’d like smashed a hole in the chocolate put it back in then like wrapped it back up in tin foil and then I phoned my cousin, I was like “Abby is– is this yours? Did you drop it in the chocolate or somethin’?” she was like “No it’s for you” and I was like “Oh thank you” ’cause like I’d aieways wanted a loom bracelet and then I finally got a’.

Gillian with outsider

Em fann me and Gemma like went to school today, I walked in em like to the library to her sittin’ on the chair with black boots on, black leggings on, she had no glasses on but she needs glasses but she can see without them she had her hood up like a little bit so her fringe was still showing and then she had like black mascara on, black eyeliner, black eye shadow, black lipstick and I was just like “Gemma what is wrong with you?” and she was just like “I’m acting like a goth, don’t judge” and I was just like “I’m going to judge”

Analysis

- lexical
- phonological
- morphosyntactic

Vernacular versus standard
ken vs know

- *Ken* fit *ken* means "it’s like *know*." (Jill, 12)

Ken/know: across both corpora

Phonological: hoose vs house

- We got knocked *of* it in the second *of* in *nd*. (Ricky, 13)

Lexical item

- house
- down
- town
- out
- outside
- hour
- about
- now (adverb)
- Thousand
- round
- around
- ...

HOOSE: across both corpora

Morphosyntactic: plural existentials

- *There are* clouds outside... *there’s* ghosts in there (Dillon, 3)
- *There’s* nae a lot of quines my age go. (Beverley, 12)
Existentals: across both corpora

Morphosyntactic: was/were

- Aye. A heap of folk was out there. We were meeting folk awaie. (Kit, 82)
- well some of my pals was thinking about doing it in art and all (Dillon, 13)
- and these two crocodile tamers, obviously they were professionals (Griff, 12)
- I can na mind ifit the other ains were, Tunnock’s teacake and shortbread (Lisa, 12)

Was/were: across both corpora

Preadolescents: subject type & style

Overall: preadolescents

Community, caregiver, preadolescents
'Children begin their language development with the pattern transmitted to them by their female caretakers, and any further changes are built on or added to that pattern.' (Labov 2001:437)

"At some stage of socialization...children learn that variants favoured in informal speech are associated with lower social status in the wider community" (Labov 2001:437)

The sociolinguistic monitor
- "members of the speech community evaluate the surface form of language but not more abstract structural features".

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