

shift of items such as 'I think'. O's study suggests that the cross-linguistic examination of positional shift of pragmatic markers at the utterance/clause periphery itself comprises a promising project.

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SAMY ALIM. *You know my Steez: An ethnographic and sociolinguistic study of styleshifting in a Black American speech community*. Duke University Press, 2005. pp. Xi, 309. Hb \$20.00.

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Samy Alim's book is a balanced blend of hip hop linguistics, ethnography, and advocacy. There is an underlying intensity to his writing that challenges all re-

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searchers to become more active in applying their research to the benefit of the community. Most impressively, Alim puts his money where his mouth when it comes to linguistic advocacy. Paying lip service to the idea that African American English or Black Language is linguistically and socially legitimate is one thing; it is another to employ it in written form in a scholarly text. Yet Alim seamlessly shifts back and forth between a hip hop form of Black Language and Standard English, alerting the reader to his own stylistic range while serving to legitimize the language he uses. Furthermore, he does so in a style that is both lucid and transparent for readers less familiar with linguistic jargon.

Alim's approach to fieldwork is fresh and vital. He has a level of contact and trust with the speech community that really jumps off the page. By virtue of role as a teacher, the wonderful rapport he seems to have with his former students, and his pedigree as a researcher schooled by a long list of renowned scholars (see the introduction), Alim positions himself as eminently qualified to conduct this research and analyze the resulting data both as an insider and as a linguist.

One novel aspect of Alim's approach is the decision to analyze his own ability to style shift. Alim examines his rates of copula absence, third-person singular *-s* absence and possessive *-s* absence, showing how his use of these variables shifts according to whether he is enacting a teacher or a researcher role. He also documents a long list of syntactic and phonological features of Black Language (BL) in his speech including "y'all" to mark second person plural, *ain't* as preverbal negator, invariant *be*, consonant cluster reduction, stopping of interdental fricatives, and the glottalization of "th" in *nothing* among others (p. 63–64). This level of self-awareness and honesty about how the researcher's speech may affect and be affected by the speech of the "researched" makes the analysis more meaningful. However, Alim stops short of full disclosure about what his membership in "multiple communities" means (p. 61) and little details about his knowledge of Arabic and a preface written from Cairo, Egypt only heighten the reader's curiosity.

The emerging interest in stylistic variation among sociolinguists has challenged fixed conceptions of identity in interaction and has allowed analysts to explore the complexities and motivations behind variations in a speaker's style across contexts and situations. Alim takes on the notion of style in a carefully constructed set of experiments designed to measure stylistic variation in the speech of individual speakers of Black Language (BL) and how it varies according to the interlocutor. He recruited four "Sunnysidaz," two black male and two black female high school students (all affiliated with hip hop culture) from "Haven High School" and had them engage a series of forty minute "semi structured conversations" one by one with eight different students from Stanford University. The eight "Stanfordians" were categorized in terms of race, gender, and affiliation with hip hop. They included two black males, two black females, two white males, and two white females. Within each dyad, one individual was affiliated with hip hop; the other was not. The prediction is that the external variables

of race, gender, and hip hop affiliation would affect the speech of the four Sunnysidaz in line with prior research done on stylistic variation in AAVE (Baugh 1979, 1983, and Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994).

Chapter 4 provides a lengthy overview of the demographic shifts going on “Sunnyside” – a community previously dominated by African Americans. It contains a somewhat sketchy overview of demographic turning points in the development of the community, explaining how the history of settlement in Sunnyside parallels the all-familiar postwar patterns of white flight and resistance to desegregation in the US. In Sunnyside, the local high school was eventually shut down due to the unwillingness of white families to keep up the other half of the bargain and have their children bused to a black school. Sunnyside is now being encroached upon by upscale businesses that serve “Shadyside” – a neighboring wealthy white community. There has also been a large influx of Latinos over the years who now constitute nearly 60% of the population. Overall we are left with such a bleak picture of the black community in Sunnyside that it’s hard to imagine that it will survive. Some of the most dramatic images of Sunnyside come from the mouths of Alim’s students, whose words he uses to describe changes going on the community. These excerpts are rich sites for exploring ideologies of race and language, and they provide the reader with a fuller understanding of identities of the speakers in the study and their community.

In Chapters 5 and 6, Alim sets out to examine five morphosyntactic features which distinguish Black Language from other varieties of American English, including copula absence, third person singular –s absence, invariant *be*, possessive –s absence, and plural –s absence. His findings fit very nicely with previous work on intercultural style shifting. They also provide additional evidence for the claim that the race of the interviewer has a profound effect on data collected in black communities (i.e., Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001). As we might predict, the Sunnysidaz have higher rates of copula absence, and verbal –s absence with black Stanfordinians than they do with white Stanfordinians. Indeed race seems to trump gender and hip hop affiliation when it comes to predicting style shifting among the Sunnysidaz. Gender and hip hop affiliation are more complicated; black male interlocutors, regardless of hip hop affiliation, trigger higher rates of absence of the two variables among Sunnysidaz than do black female interlocutors, and white males more than white females. But there is one reversal: the white male hip hopper triggers higher rates of copula and verbal –s absence than the black female non hip hopper. When the results for each of the Sunnysidaz are examined individually, however, there are some interesting differences; the statistical analysis showed that gender achieved significance for the male Sunnysidaz alone. In other words, gender has a greater effect on style for males than it does for females. The stylistic variation for two of the remaining variables – possessive –s and plural –s – wound up being statistically insignificant.

Chapter 7 exams the use of invariant *be* and its variant, the equative copula or *be*<sub>3</sub>. The latter is a feature that has often been overlooked or misinterpreted by

previous researchers. Some have claimed that its use is on the rise, serving as a marker of identity for young African Americans (c.f. Morgan 1993, Josey 1999). Alim carefully explains how *be*<sub>3</sub> functions and gives numerous examples of its use in historical and contemporary data. Although variation analysis of this variable isn't possible since it has no equivalent counterpart in "standard White speech" (see p. 178), Alim is able to show via simple frequencies that this variable is also sensitive to race, gender and hip hop affiliation.

In Chapter 8 Alim explores a discourse feature that appears in the speech of young African American women. Emerging in ingroup peer interactions between black females, *O-kay!* indicates the establishment of a high level of agreement. It expresses a shared, common understanding, often serving as the final exclamation point to a series of agreement moves. There is also anecdotal evidence that gay men from other ethnic communities also use *O-kay!* raising questions about whether its discursive and semiotic functions parallel those of black female speakers. Alim speculates that *O-kay!* may be an index of Black female identity and strategic solidarity, but acknowledges that more work needs to be done in order to better understand what its exact references are.

The final chapter contextualizes the position of Black Language against white cultural and linguistic norms that are reified as "Standard" and "Normal." The descriptions of white teachers' ideologies towards Black Language would be funny if they weren't so tragic. White teachers seem bent on eradicating the language patterns of their black students while lacking the ability to show them how their language differs from the elusive standard or to explain to them how mastering Standard English will help them.

The primary value of this book lies in the challenge it poses to all researchers not to ignore the potential effects of their own speech style on the data they are collecting. Its varied use of language can help to validate Black Language as a viable means of intellectual expression. The analysis is an important confirmation of the addressee effect, although a more in-depth analysis of how Bell's work on audience and referee design plays out in Alim's data would be have been interesting. The book would be very useful for undergraduate and graduate level classes on African American English and language in the United States. The lengthy appendix contains pages of conversational data that could be used for analysis or discussion although the book could really use an index.

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RONALD K. S. MACAULAY. *Talk that counts: Age, gender, and social class differences in discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2005. Pp 3–225.

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In *Talk that counts: Age, gender and social class differences in discourse*, Ron Macaulay tackles two contentious but very different issues within Labovian Sociolinguistics. The first is the analysis of discourse level phenomena, specifically how to deal with ‘higher level’ variation within a quantitative paradigm. The second is Bernstein’s (1971) *restricted vs. elaborated code* and the claim that middle class speakers have access to a more complex range of discourse structures when compared to lower class speakers. His findings on both are revealing.

In Chapter 1, Macaulay sets out the different approaches to discourse analysis, particularly with reference to the ‘functional’ vs. ‘formalist’ methods. He situates his methodology within the latter, where he is more concerned with ‘structure in focus’ as opposed to ‘dynamics in focus’ (Linell 2001:121). He states that the interpretation of use comes not from the analyst’s ‘bias or misinterpretation’ (p. 11) but instead a ‘rather ascetic view’ (p. 11) that is gained from frequency correlations with the classic sociolinguistic categories age, gender and class.

Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6 deal with data and method. Chapter 2, ‘Methodology’, classifies the different types of discourse features to be studied into three main types: (1) unambiguous forms such as the adverb *very*; (2) ambiguous forms which may have two meanings, such as *you know*; (3) complex forms such as passives or quoted dialogue. Macaulay points out that with an increasing level of complexity comes increasing levels of analyst intervention in the extraction phase with regard to what to actually count. After extraction, the ‘frequencies are expressed as the number of occurrences per 1000 words’ (p. 14). Chapter 3 details ‘The Sample’. The data come from Ayr in south west Scotland and Glasgow. Both are stratified by class (lower and middle) and gender, and Glasgow also has different age groups. It is noted that the data sets were collected in different ways: in Ayr, Macaulay conducted the interviews himself but in Glasgow the speakers conversed in peer pairs with no observer present. Chapter 6, ‘Talk in Action’, addresses this point, where Macaulay uses quantitative analysis to show