Gender variation online: Analyzing online dating ads

Research into gendered language variation has a long history. Less attention, however, has been paid to gender differentiation in written interactions, which are increasingly common for instance in web-based communication. Additionally, traditional research has been criticized for a simplistic conception of gender, such as the conflation of natural sex and social gender and the reliance on a binary gender conception.

This study investigates language use in online dating ads. The dataset consists of xxx ads from craigslist.com, labeled for the gender of author and addressee, and thus the author’s sexual orientation.

A clustering algorithm is used to explore linguistic differentiation in the data withour resorting to pre-conceived author categories. Clustering the data by the xzx most used words yields groupings that do coincide with gender categories to some extent.

Understanding the ads to be acts of linguistic self-representation, the features emerging as distinctive in the cluster analysis do reflect, among others, linguistic gender ideologies.

Address issue with sex vs gender, non-binary gender, coding of large corpora

Reflect gender idology

Cf bamman, lillis

Biber?

This study invetigaes linguistic gender differentiation online.

The corpus consists of personal ads from craigslist.org.

Fluid, gradual, continuum

This study inveiagedthe understidued variation in writing. It shows how ctechniques from computational linguistics such as cluster anhyays can be employed to address two main issues of language and gender studies: the coding for gender and the gender binary. But see Bamman 2014.

It In a corpus of 600,000 personal ads from craigslist.org (70 million words), the study shows that the use of variables such as words are correlated with gender of the author; in addition to that, it illustrates how the gender of the addressee also influences word choice. The results show that highly gender-correlated words can be seen to reflect how gender ideologies shape linguistic expression of and accomodiation by writers in online dating ads.

Self-presentation

\*       identification of a variable;  
\*       consideration of the context of variation;  
\*       accountability, analysis of a form of interest but also consideration of the alternate variants;  
\*       a viable statistical method, so that observations are not just due to chance, but evaluated for statistically significance;  
\*       an interpretation and explanation that makes reference to sociolinguistic theory, principles of linguistic change, grammaticalization, diffusion/transmission, Third Wave studies, or other substantive theoretically driven idea(s) current in the field.  
  
Further, highly rated abstracts should also have the following attributes:  
  
•       originality, addressing a urgent issue in the field;  
•       research with results, rather than a promissory note;  
•       information about the data and method(s) of analysis.

ibilants and ethnic diversity: A sociophonetic study of palatalized /s/ in STR clusters among Hispanic, White, and African-American speakers of Texas English Many varieties of English are seeing variation in the phonetic realization of /str/. Extant work describes the variable as undergoing change, with a backed, or palatalized, variant of the cluster’s initial sibilant being most common among younger speakers (Bass 2009; Durian 2007). While awareness of the feature among native speakers is limited, and discussions of it are infrequent, some discussants in popular media contexts have suggested that the feature is indexically linked to white male identities, specifically: working class, heteromasculine identities. This hypothesis has never been confirmed: even though the proposed indexicality of STR backing has a racial component, extant sociolinguistic work on the feature typically studies sets of speakers from the same ethnic group. Therefore, we present a study of STR backing in a sample of 39 native speakers of American English from Central Texas self-identifying as Hispanic, African-American, or white. The sample was balanced for gender and age. Sociolinguistic interviews (free conversations and wordlist readings) were conducted with all speakers. Interview transcripts were forced-aligned with audio files of the interviews using FAVE (Rosenfelder et al. 2011). Since it is known that palatalization affects /s/ in other consonant clusters as well, prevocalic clusters of /s/ before /k, p, t/ were also included. All tokens of the target forms STR, SK, SP, and ST before vowel were automatically identified (N = 2,271); baseline tokens of pre-stressed, prevocalic /s/ and /ʃ/ were additionally measured for each speaker. Center-of-gravity (CoG) measurements (Renwick & Cassidy 2015) were logged at the midpoint of the sibilant’s duration (data extraction performed in Praat, Boersma & Weenink 2012). Measurements were normalized by proportionally converting each speaker’s range of variation between baseline /s/ and /ʃ/ to a scale from 0 to 10,000. Mixed-effects linear regression models were fitted to the CoG observations. While age emerged as a significant predictor of backing, confirming that the variable is currently undergoing change, gender did not. By contrast, ethnicity is a strong predictor, with younger African-American and white speakers favoring STR backing. Our interviews ended in a question eliciting metalinguistic commentary on STR. Speakers showed little awareness of the process (whether commenters were users or non-users of palatalization made no difference). Less than two-thirds acknowledged that they had themselves encountered the backed variant. Moreover, only one-tenth identified as users of backed STR. Questions targeting social evaluation did not identify a coherent set of indexical values associated with the feature, although a tendency to classify it as Southern emerged, as well as some mildly dismissive commentary among some informants who viewed backing as non-standard or as transfer errors in non-native speakers. This gap between production and awareness suggests that the change progresses, for the most part, below the level of conscious awareness. Overall, our study reveals young white and AfricanAmerican speakers as standing together in an unexpected alliance in favor of STR backing. Among Latinos, the feature is used less consistently, and is more strongly constrained to the idiolects of some speakers. There was no evidence of the feature being restricted to younger white males. References Boersma, Paul & David Weenink. 2012. Praat: Doing phonetics by computer. V. 5.3.23. Amsterdam. http://www.praat.org. Durian, David. 2007. Getting [ʃ]tronger every day?: More on urbanization and the socio-geographic diffusion of (str) in Columbus, OH. University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics 13(2). 6. Renwick, Margaret E. & Caitlin N. Cassidy. 2015. Detecting palatalization in spontaneous spoken English. The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America 137(4). 2267–2267. Rosenfelder, Ingrid, Joel Fruehwald, Keelan Evanini & Jiahong Yuan. 2011. FAVE (Forced Alignment and Vowel Extraction) Program Suite. Philadelphia. http://fave.ling.upenn.edu. Bass, Michael. 2009. Street or Shtreet? Investigating (str-) palatalization in Colchester English. Estro: Essex Student Research Online 1(1). 10–21.