スタイル変異を捉える最適の方法を求めて

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In search of an optimal approach towards stylistic variation
Eckert, Penelope and Rickford, John. (Eds.) 2001
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1. Introduction

It is widely accepted that stylistic variation is one of the central aspects in sociolinguistics. So far, a number of sociolinguistic studies have been conducted so as to describe stylistic variation in a given speech community. They resulted in creating different approaches with differing goals.

Eckert and Rickford, editors of this book, organised a two-day workshop on style at Stanford University in 1996, to discuss how sociolinguists should integrate their approaches towards stylistic variation. This book is a collection of papers by the sixteen contributors at the workshop.

The content of this book is listed as follows:
Introduction
Part I. Anthropological approaches
Part II. Attention paid to speech
Part III. Audience design and self-identification model
Part IV. Functionally motivated situational variation

This book consists of four parts. Each part is a collection of one or two thematic paper (s) along with two or three commentaries. Since editors stress the importance of expanding the definition of style (p.5), this book starts with an anthropological approach in Part I. The remaining parts are arranged by the three most influential approaches in stylistic variation in chronological order. Part II focuses on Labov’s attention paid to the speech model, Part III on Bell’s audience design and Coupland’s self-identification model, and Part IV on the functionally motivated situational variation by Finegan and Biber (henceforth called as F&B).

I feel that readers will find it easy to grasp the general flow of studies in stylistic variation in the last forty years. In addition, they will be able to find their status quo. On the other hand, this book does not have a conclusion. As mentioned above, it is a collection of papers by the contributors at the workshop. Eventually, it was inevitable that the editors did not put any conclusions at the end. However, I suspect that they could propose their conclusions based upon the discussions made at the workshop. Also, it seems that the categorisation of four parts needs to be considered here. Since this book is an attempt for those who are working on language variation to upgrade their approaches by taking the findings of anthropological studies, it is possible to re-categorise it as anthropological approach in Part I and linguistic approach in Part II, Part III and Part IV. This review, therefore, follows this categorisation and not the one that editors adopted.

This review consists of five sections. Section 2 briefly explains and evaluates the main points in each part. Section 3 locates this book in the study of stylistic variation. Section 4 considers to what extent the designs proposed in this book explain sociolinguistic variation in Japanese. Section 5 discusses how to find an integrated approach to
have a systematic account for stylistic variation. And, section 6 summarises this paper.

2. The gist and evaluation of two approaches

This section makes summaries of each approach and outlines all the comments and critiques by commentators.

(a) Anthropological approach (Part I)

The first part of this book deals with anthropological approach. It consists of two main papers; Irvine’s social semiosis of distinctiveness (Chapter 1) and Bauman’s attempt to include genre in stylistic variation (Chapter 3). Ervin-Tripp (Chapter 2) and Macaulay (Chapter 4) give comments on Irvine’s and Bauman’s papers respectively.

(a-1) Social semiosis of distinctiveness

Irvine regards style as a ‘system of distinction (p.22).’ Believing its relevance to language ideology, she suggests the social semiosis of distinctiveness: irconisation, recursiveness and erasure. She stresses their usefulness when studying style, by looking through two case studies of code-switching.

Ervin-Tripp generally agrees with Irvine in that language ideologies should be emphasised in the study of style. She also proposes that Irvine’s idea can be applied to style-shifting amongst dialects. She exemplifies it in the rhetorical shifting, which she believes has a relevance to Irvine’s approach.

(a-2) Genre in the study of stylistic variation

Bauman introduces genre as one of the potential means of understanding style and posits it as emerging, varying and changing in practice. By raising examples of verbal genre in the interaction between vendors and customers in Mexican markets, he shows that new genre in the sales pitch is emerging independently from a so-called stable genre.

Macaulay critically comments on the applicability of genre in the study of style. He agrees with Bauman in that genre could be one potential sociolinguistic variable. Macaulay, however, claims that Bauman did not make enough categorisation of genre to observe the speaker’s routinised behaviour.

(b) Linguistic approach (Part II, III, and IV)

The second part of this book collects three major approaches towards stylistic variation: attention paid to speech model (Part II), audience design and self-identification model (Part III) and functionally motivated situational variation (Part IV).

(b-1) Attention paid to speech model (Part II)

This part collects the latest version of attention paid to speech model by Labov (Chapter 5) and three commentaries by Baugh (Chapter 6), Eckert (Chapter 7) and Traugott (Chapter 8).

It is widely known that Labov’s attention paid to speech model was first introduced in his New York Study in 1966. The updated version of this model is presented in this book. This model is characterised by a ‘decision tree,’ which classifies all the utterances into either casual, or careful speech based upon the following seven categories: response, narrative, language, group, soapbox, kids and tangent. He stresses the advantages by raising instances from spontaneous speech by residents in Philadelphia.

Although Labov updated his design, some commentators still harbour doubts. Whereas Baugh generally agrees with Labov, Eckert and Traugott give a critical commentary on his design. Baugh clearly shows that the decision tree helps us to categorise either casual or formal speech. And he also recognises that his design has some problems such as the issue of literacy and experimental contexts in sociolinguistic interviews. Eckert and Traugott, on the other hand, are more critical of this. Eckert points out that Labov’s interest centred on locating the style of intra-speaker variation. She claims that the subcategories in the decision tree are mixed by various combinations of one or more stylistic parameters. Traugott also states that her stance differs from Labov and stresses that the style should be studied in relation to different linguistic functions. With a brief explanation of semantic and pragmatic differences in four specific words, she proposes a study into the strategic uses of discourse
markers as a sign of style shifting.
(b-2) Audience design and self-Identification model (Part III)

This part raises two thematic papers: Bell's audience design (Chapter 9) and Coupland's self-identification model (Chapter 11). Three commentaries are included; Yaeger-Dror's commentary for audience design (Chapter 10) and Giles and Rickford's commentaries for Coupland (Chapter 12 and 13 respectively).

(b-2-1) Audience Design

Bell's first version of audience design, which appeared in 1984, put an emphasis on a speaker's design in response to their audience. The updated design includes corrections; he now regards referee design as a complementary and co-existent dimension of style that operates simultaneously in all speech events. He also stresses the importance of qualitative analysis in referee design.

Yaeger-Dror basically agrees with Bell's designs. She emphasises the necessity to look for the primitives in style. By comparing audience design with other proposed theories, she strongly expects to find an ideal system of style and register.

(b-2-2) Self-Identification model

Coupland treats style as 'a model of human communicative purposes, practices, and achievements (p.186).’ Focusing on the strategic use of dialect style in the construction of a speaker's identity, he suggests that the speaker is the one to define situations, relations, style, and create context rather than be constrained by situational factors.

Giles and Rickford generally agree with Coupland's multidimensional approach to style. However, they have a different view towards his model. Giles casts caution that, after paying a large amount of attention to intuitions of both speakers and hearers, Coupland's approach tends to be deconstructive. Rickford also states it is not always possible to get any generalisations from his model.

(b-3) Functionally motivated situational variation (Part IV)

This part focuses on F&B's situational variation (Chapter 14). Lesley Milroy and Preston gave their comments on their design (Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 respectively). F&B's design locates style in situation or situation of use. They believe that the situational conditions designate a communication situation that may systematically affect the shape of linguistic expression in a given situation.

Milroy and Preston critically evaluate F&B's design. Milroy points out that this design deals with such a wide-ranging area that it becomes doubtful to determine whether or not a single model is desirable or feasible. Preston raises the problems of 'register axiom,' and points out that they made a mistake in adopting situation into structured stylistic variation.

3. Characteristics of this book

The characteristics of this book are summarised as follows:
(a) Important linguistic approaches to stylistic variation are raised and explained in chronological order.
(b) Contributors update their designs rather than simply present their original designs.
(c) Other commentators give a critical evaluation towards the updated designs and stimulate further discussion.

As these points show, this book covers nearly all the important designs in stylistic variation. Moreover, contributors present their latest designs with critical evaluations by other contributors. In this sense, I suggest that readers should have knowledge of the original versions of these models and also of the discussions and critiques about them. Therefore, I recommend this book as one that stimulates discussion about the studies of stylistic variation, and not as an introduction to this subject.

On the other hand, I feel it necessary to discuss the following aspects.
(d) It is still unclear why the editor decided to include the anthropological approaches by Irvine and others in Part I. A different study on an anthropological approach could have been chosen. The editors did not justify their decision to include these studies.
(e) There is no specific evidence to show how
anthropological approach specifically relates to findings in linguistic approach. The editors appeared to end up only expressing the necessity to expand the definition of style. Most contributors did not attempt to relate their models with anthropological approach.

(f) Different views towards style still exist amongst contributors; whereas other contributors generally agree with the idea that the definition of style should be expanded, Labov sticks to the definition of style as a means of observing intra-speaker variation. Readers could get confused with the many different models described in this book.

It seems that these points relate to how linguistic approach adopts anthropological approach in the study of stylistic variation. The rest of this paper shall look into this point and consider how to find an integrated approach by focusing on a typologically different language, Japanese. In what follows, specific studies in two approaches are presented to examine to what extent designs proposed in this book explain language variation in Japanese. Discussion will be made onto how sociolinguists seek to find an ideal approach to stylistic variation.

4. On the applicability of two approaches to Japanese

This section describes how both anthropological and linguistic approaches explain stylistic variation in Japanese and shows their current situation by raising some specific studies.

Firstly, anthropological approaches to stylistic variation in Japanese can be exemplified by Ide's Wakimae theory (Ide and Yoshida 1998, Ide et al. 1986). This theory aims to clarify the dynamism of the communicative competence in Japanese. Ide's study on the language behaviours of American and Japanese showed that whereas language behaviours of American are reflected by the sensitive use of different linguistic forms in different social situations, Japanese have a discrete system of the use of different linguistic forms based upon the uchi (in-group) and soto (out-group) relationship. This study shows that a different model is required to explain stylistic variation in a different language. In other words, anthropological approach tends to be culture-specific, which leads to the emergence of different theories such as social semiosis of distinctiveness (Chapter 1) and the use of genre in stylistic variation (Chapter 3).

Secondly, linguistic approaches are also adopted in explaining language variation in Japanese: studies on the models of attention paid to speech model (Hibiya 1988, 1995; Matsuda 1996, 1998) and audience design (Asahi 1999) are raised here. Both Hibiya and Matsuda analysed stylistic variation in Tokyo Japanese, following the categorisation of careful or casual speech by the use of decision trees, they observed which variants were chosen in which social constraints. The results shared similar characteristics: Hibiya's analysis on stylistic variation of velar nasal, and Matsuda's analysis of the zero-marking of variable 0 showed the style-shifting in accordance with the amount of attention paid to speech.

Asahi used audience design to examine linguistic accommodation in a dialect contact situation between Tokyo and Osaka dialect speakers. With the same survey design as Bell (Chapter 9), he observed a short-term accommodation between two dialect speakers. This study showed a style shift; the larger the distance between the speakers became, the more likely it was for the speakers to show convergence towards each other. This trend was particularly emphasised in the Osaka dialect speaker's use of Tokyo dialectal forms. In fact, the negative form -nai is more likely to be used in accordance with the distance between speakers. Different from anthropological approach, linguistic approaches support the validity of the models. That is to say, these designs are more universal in the sense that they can apply to different languages.

In this way, studies in both anthropological and linguistic approaches can explain language variation in a given speech community. At the same time whilst anthropological approach tends to be more culture-specific, linguistic approach is more universal. Problem in this difference, however, is that sociolinguists adopt different models depending on their goals. In this sense, the current situation in the analysis of stylistic variation including Japanese tells little about how to
integrate the approach towards stylistic variation.

5. Finding a place amongst models in ‘hyphenated sociolinguistics’

Previous section revealed that anthropological approach and linguistic approach became so diverse that they are treated as if they were different disciplines. In this sense, I assume that the editors could not propose their views in a way that they could integrate their approaches towards stylistic variation. However, as both approaches treat stylistic variation in the same field of linguistics, we, sociolinguists, are desired to find how these two approaches are integrated.

It has been pointed out that there exist many approaches amongst sociolinguists (Figueroa 1994, Neustupný 1979, Rickford p.221), which differ in scope and goals from one another. Generally speaking, sociolinguistics has anthropological as well as linguistic aspects and they are balanced in some ways. Therefore, ‘hyphenated’ sociolinguistics emerged with differing proportions of two approaches.

I assume that in order to find a perfect solution, it is necessary for all sociolinguists to discuss the following two aspects. Firstly, those who are on linguistic approach to stylistic variation need to define variation again. The view towards variation is not always the same amongst sociolinguists. In fact, it is obvious that some contributors such as Labov and Giles have different views. In order to integrate their approaches to stylistic variation, those who are in linguistic approach need to have an agreement on the definition of variation. At the same time, they need to overcome the issue of the definition of variation above phonology. So far, Lavandera (1978), Labov (1978), Romaine (1982), Milroy (1987), Shibuya (1993) and others discussed this issue through raising problems of referential meaning. However, they have not reached any conclusions even after more than 20 years passed. In this sense, sociolinguists also need to present the optimal definition of variation before they start taking findings from anthropological approaches.

Secondly, it is also necessary to find the definition of variation in anthropological approach. Anthropology focuses on the diversity of society and it would be difficult to find this definition. In fact, as the previous sections reveals, different models have been presented in different communities and it is getting difficult to suggest more universal models. However, if they do not find any common definition, it would be difficult for linguistic approach to determine which anthropological approach should be chosen for an account of stylistic variation in different linguistic situations. Those who are in anthropological approach also need to seek for its answer.

At any rate, it is strongly expected that sociolinguists in either anthropological or linguistic approach need to propose their definition of variation. This enables sociolinguists to start finding an optimal approach to stylistic variation. Now it is high time that all hyphenated sociolinguists recognise this situation and discuss this important facet of sociolinguistics.

6. Conclusion

This paper outlined and gave a critical evaluation to the main areas of each model in the book. I then went on to discuss the applicability of the models with reference to stylistic variation in Japanese.

It seems that this book needs more explanation and discussion on
(a) The justification of how editors adopted anthropological approaches
(b) The relationship between anthropological and linguistic approaches
(c) The way how to integrate the approach towards stylistic variation.

With an examination of each model in Japanese, it turned out that the anthropological approach tended to be more culture-specific and the linguistic approach was more generalised when explaining stylistic variation. This raises an important and realistic question on how sociolinguists integrate their approaches.

On the other hand, this book
(d) Shows nearly all the important approaches to stylistic variation
(e) Outlines the general flow of studies in this area
(f) Proposes the latest designs and critiques.
These points are the main features of this book. Although there still remain some important questions, this book is recommended as such a challenging attempt to integrate approaches to stylistic variation.

References


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