

The Effects of Urbanization and Social Orientation: Locally Salient Variables as Indicators of Linguistic Change

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The influence of urbanization on language change is made clear by studies showing that both historic and innovative forms are affected by linguistic and social factors associated with urban development. Traditional rural/urban differences are levelled, and innovative features and norms emerge in the dialects of young speakers (Thomas 1997, Tillery & Bailey 2003, Durian 2006). Such changes are particularly amenable to study in Newfoundland, whose highly traditional and distinct rural economy and culture are rapidly urbanizing and interacting with mainstream norms. Sociolinguistic consequences of these changes are already evident in St. John's, the province's only major urban area (Clarke 1991, D'Arcy 2005, Boberg 2005). In the present paper, we investigate the linguistic effects of urbanization in Petty Harbour, a community near St. John's that has undergone even more drastic social and economic change, moving from an isolated and traditional fishing village to a bedroom community in a single generation. Our cross-generational study demonstrates how speakers orient themselves within a newly situated urban landscape through their use of highly salient, locally-affiliated features from two different linguistic domains.

Interdental stopping (e.g., *dis ting* for *this thing*) and non-standard verbal s-marking (e.g., *That's something I remembers*) are both stereotypes of Newfoundland English, found whenever the dialect is performed, but they also remain an active part of traditional rural speech. As such, they function as totems of Newfoundland identity. We examine these totemic variables through analysis of constraints on their use drawn from the literature on their distribution in rural Newfoundland and in varieties of English elsewhere. For interdental stopping, constraints include surrounding phonetic environment, position in the word, and community history (Bailey & Thomas 1998, Clarke 2004, Rickford 1999); for s-marking, they include aspect, clause type, phonetic environment, and type and adjacency of subject (Clarke 1997, Van Herk & Walker 2005). We also study lexical effects for both variables, as well as social factors such as age, gender and degree of identification with the community.

Our findings indicate that urbanization forefronts language stereotypes. The totemic status of these variables interacts with speaker consciousness and identity to produce new (and still emerging) constraints on their use. Although we do see a predictable pattern of dissipation for both variables from older to younger age groups, rates of decline and constraints (especially lexical effects) are distinct for each variable. Most importantly, speaker identity emerges as highly significant, with externally-affiliated young speakers diverging from their older or internally-oriented neighbours. Among young externally-oriented speakers the sociolinguistic framework surrounding use of totemic variables is highly ideologized and shows significant constraints on production. These results suggest that salient features do not disappear in the face of urbanization; rather, while all features shows some effect from the "mainstream" variety associated with urbanization, each

feature and each speech community responds differently to the urban forces at hand, through the application of both linguistic and social constraints.

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