

LING-GA 3510

Seminar in Sociolinguistics: Priming and frequency effects on variation

Fall 2017

Lecture time	Wed. 2pm–4:45pm	
Location	Socio lab (10 Washington Pl. #308)	
Instructors	Dr. Gregory Guy	Dr. Laurel MacKenzie
Contact	gregory.guy@nyu.edu	laurel.mackenzie@nyu.edu
Office	10 Washington Pl. #211	10 Washington Pl. #305
Office hour	T 4-5:30	By appointment

Course description

In this seminar, we'll ask and try to answer the following questions: What sorts of priming/persistence effects do we find in linguistic variation, and why? (How) can the literature on sociolinguistic priming/persistence and psycholinguistic priming be reconciled? What is the role of word frequency in driving linguistic change and shaping linguistic variation, and to what mechanism(s) can this be attributed? What is the role of lexical exceptionality in language variation and change, and (how) does this connect to frequency effects? Throughout the course, we'll make connections to exemplar models of mental representation, and we'll also discuss methodological issues in operationalizing priming and frequency in the study of language variation and change.

Readings

Readings that are not readily available on Google Scholar will be posted on NYU Classes.

Requirements

- **Presentations.** This is a seminar class, in which we will learn from each other through discussion of the papers we read and the issues they raise. Participants (both enrolled students and auditors) are required to lead one or two class meetings and present on the assigned paper(s).
- **Participation.** All participants are expected to do the assigned reading and to participate in the discussion of the material in class. For each paper, there will be a discussion forum on NYU Classes. Enrolled students are required, and auditors are encouraged, to post one question for each paper by the end of the day on Tuesday. (If you're presenting a paper the next day, you don't also have to post a question on it.)
- **Squibs.** Two squibs — short but elaborated responses to one or more papers from the class readings — will be assigned, one related to priming and one related to frequency. The priming squib will be due on **10/30** and the frequency squib on **11/27**. More details on topics and lengths will be given in class.
- **Project proposal.** Enrolled students are asked to propose a research project related to the course (and, ideally, prepare a pilot study or collect some preliminary data). Project proposals will be presented in class on **12/13**, and due in written form on **12/20**.

Schedule

9/6 Overview (GG, LM)

9/13 Foundational papers. (GG, LM)

Weiner, E. Judith, and William Labov. 1983. Constraints on the agentless passive. *Journal of Linguistics* 19:29–58.

Phillips, Betty S. 1984. Word frequency and the actuation of sound change. *Language* 60:320–342.

Bybee, Joan. 2002. Word frequency and context of use in the lexical diffusion of phonetically conditioned sound change. *Language Variation and Change* 14:261–290.

Priming

9/20 Morphosyntactic priming: experimental and variationist work. (LM, GG)

Bock, Kathryn. 1986. Syntactic persistence in language production. *Cognitive Psychology* 18:355–387.

Gries, Stefan Th. 2005. Syntactic priming: A corpus-based approach. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 34:365–399.

Cameron, Richard, and Nydia Flores-Ferrán. 2004. Perseveration of subject expression across regional dialects of Spanish. *Spanish in Context* 1:41–65.

9/27 Morphophonological priming: variationist work. (GG)

Poplack, Shana. 1980. Deletion and disambiguation in Puerto Rican Spanish. *Language* 56:371–385.

Scherre, Maria Marta Pereira, and Anthony J. Naro. 1991. Marking in discourse: “Birds of a feather”. *Language Variation and Change* 3:23–32.

Scherre, Maria Marta Pereira. 2001. Phrase-level parallelism effect on noun phrase number agreement. *Language Variation and Change* 13:91–107.

10/4 Priming as a diagnostic of structur(al similarity). (LM)

Branigan, Holly P., Martin J. Pickering, Simon P. Liversedge, Andrew J. Stewart, and Thomas P. Urbach. 1995. Syntactic priming: Investigating the mental representation of language. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 24:489–506.

Estival, Dominique. 1985. Syntactic priming of the passive in English. *Text* 5:7–22.

Tammings, Meredith. 2016. Persistence in phonological and morphological variation. *Language Variation and Change* 28:335–356.

(short, optional) Pickering, Martin J., and Holly P. Branigan. 1999. Syntactic priming in language production. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 3:136–141.

10/11 Cross-variable/cross-linguistic priming. Temporal decay in priming. (NPV)

Cameron, Richard. 1993. Ambiguous agreement, functional compensation, and nonspecific *tú* in the Spanish of San Juan, Puerto Rico and Madrid, Spain. *Language Variation and Change* 5:305–334.

Hartsuiker, Robert J., Martin J. Pickering, and Eline Veltkamp. 2004. Is syntax separate or shared between languages? Cross-linguistic syntactic priming in Spanish-English bilinguals. *Psychological Science* 15:409–414.

Tammings, Meredith. 2014. Persistence in cognitive perspective. Chapter 4, *Persistence in the Production of Linguistic Variation*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.

10/18 Psychological/non-linguistic basis of priming. (NL)

Chang, Franklin, Gary S. Dell, Kathryn Bock, and Zenzi M. Griffin. 2000. Structural priming as implicit learning: A comparison of models of sentence production. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 29:217–230.

Hartsuiker, Robert J., Sarah Bernolet, Sofie Schoonbaert, Sara Speybroeck, and Dieter Vanderelst. 2008. Syntactic priming persists while the lexical boost decays: Evidence from written and spoken dialogue. *Journal of Memory and Language* 58:214–238.

Frequency

10/25 Preliminaries. Issues in the analysis of lexical frequency. (GG, LM)

Guy, G.R., J. Hay and A. Walker. 2008. Phonological, lexical and frequency effects in coronal stop deletion. LabPhon Poster. (GG)

Myers, J., and G.R. Guy. 1997. Frequency effects in variable lexical phonology. *PWPL* 4:1, 215-228. (GG)

Walker, James A. 2012. Form, function, and frequency in phonological variation. *Language Variation and Change* 24:397–415. (LM)

11/1 Frequency and (morpho)phonological variation and change. (GG, LM)

Hay, Jen and Joan Bresnan. 2006. Spoken syntax: the phonetics of *giving a hand* in New Zealand English. *The Linguistic Review* 23:321–349. (GG)

Forrest, Jon. 2017. The dynamic interaction between lexical and contextual frequency: A case study of (ING). *Language Variation and Change* 29:129–156. (LM)

De Schryver, Johan, Anneke Neijt, Pol Ghesquière, and Mirjam Ernestus. 2008. Analogy, frequency, and sound change: The case of Dutch devoicing. *Journal of Germanic Linguistics* 20:159–195. (GG)

11/8 Frequency and syntactic variation. (NL)

Silveira, Agripino. 2006. Frequency effects, specialization of forms and subject expression in Brazilian Portuguese. Proceedings of the Seventh Annual High Desert Linguistics Society Conference, 7:1-18.

Kroch, Anthony, and Cathy Small. 1978. Grammatical ideology and its effect on speech. In *Linguistic Variation: Models and Methods*, ed. David Sankoff, 45–55. New York: Academic Press.

Bleaman, Isaac, Daniel Duncan, Shelley Feuer, Zachary Jagers, Matthew Stuck, and Gregory Guy. 2014. ‘She said {that/Ø} she couldn’t take a complement’: Complementizer *that* omission in American English. 43rd Annual Conference on New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWAV-43). University of Illinois, October.

11/15 What kind of frequency effect? Continuous, discrete, linear, lexical, amplifying, insignificant... (GG & LM)

Erker, Daniel, and Gregory R. Guy. 2012. The role of lexical frequency in syntactic variability: Variable subject personal pronoun expression in Spanish. *Language* 88:526–557. (GG)

Clark, Lynn and Kevin Watson. 2011. Testing claims of a usage-based phonology with Liverpool English *t-to-r*. *English Language and Linguistics* 15:523-547. (LM)

Erker, Daniel. 2008. Rethinking coda /s/ lenition in Spanish. Continuous descriptions and the explanatory value of lexical statistics. NYU Linguistics Department QP. (GG)

11/22 No class – Thanksgiving

11/29 Operationalizing frequency in psycholinguistic research. (LM)

Hay, Jennifer. 2001. Lexical frequency in morphology: Is everything relative? *Linguistics* 39:1041–1070.
Brysbaert, Marc, and Boris New. 2009. Moving beyond Kučera and Francis: A critical evaluation of current word frequency norms and the introduction of a new and improved word frequency measure for American English. *Behavior Research Methods* 41:977–990.

12/6 When frequency fails: lexical exceptions. (GG, LM)

Guy, Gregory. 2006. Lexical exceptions in variable phonology. Paper presented at NWAV 35, Ohio State University. (GG)

Hoffman, Michol. 2010. Chapter 3 from *Salvadorian Spanish in Toronto: Phonological Variation among Salvadorian Youth in a Multilectal, Multilingual Context*. Munich: Lincom Europa. (GG)

Orozco, Rafael. To appear. Chapter from *Spanish in Colombia and New York City*. (GG)

12/13 When frequency fails: acquisition. Student paper presentations.

Labov, William. 1989. The child as linguistic historian. *Language Variation and Change* 1:85–97. (LM)

Roberts, Julie. 1997. Acquisition of variable rules: A study of (-t, d) deletion in preschool children. *Journal of Child Language* 24:351–372. (LM)