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## **Patterns of Stylistic Variation in Sociolinguistics: Motivations and Mechanisms for Style-Shifting in Social Interaction**

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The study of the relationship between language and society by correlating extralinguistic factors with intralinguistic constituents has allowed Sociolinguistics to explain the indexical complexities of variation in language systems since the 1960s. Given the singularly central position of style in the correlation of *linguistic*, *social* and *diaphasic* elements, intra-speaker variation is undoubtedly seen as consubstantial to sociolinguistic studies now and is becoming a major focus of research within the field. While everybody would agree that stylistic variation is a phenomenon conditioned by extralinguistic factors, its presence in language production and effective social meaning has been associated with different linguistic constructs and theories trying to account for its nature and functioning.

The aim of this presentation is to explore and illustrate the main different theoretical models developed to account for the nature, motivations and mechanisms for the use and effect of style-shifting in social interaction with examples from both Historical and Contemporary Sociolinguistics: audio-monitorisation, Audience Design, Script Design and Speaker Design. Labov's mechanistically-based paradigm of the 1960s conceived style-shifting as a primarily conscious social reaction to a situation through speech self-monitorisation. Bell's ethnographic-based paradigm of the 1980s viewed stylistic variation as a fundamentally responsive reaction to the characteristics of a present or absent audience: intra-speaker variation as a response to inter-speaker variation. More recently, linguistic variation is being understood as a powerful verbal instrument for the transmission of social meaning and social positioning in public, with semiotic identificational and ideological significance: style-shifting and speaker's proactive agency as sociolinguistic mechanisms for persona management, linguistic performance, rhetorical stance and identity projection.

These theoretical models represent the current tendency towards more multidimensional, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to style phenomena in Sociolinguistics. These new tenets are now focussing on the indexical nature of language and its potential as identificational and ideological resources, where the individual voice is seen as an active agent for the transmission of sociolinguistic meaning. This epistemic evolution has meant a shift from the early deterministic and system-oriented assumptions to the recent socio-constructionist and speaker-oriented views of inter- and intra-speaker variation. Methodologically, this also conveys a shift from the treatment of language variation and change macroscopically, unidimensionally and focused on the speech community as a macro-cosmos to microscopic and multidimensional approaches that privilege individuals and their community of practice as a micro-cosmos: from the study of collectivity and inter-speaker variation to that of individuality, intra-speaker variation and authenticity.

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