



**UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO**

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**División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades**

**The use of translation techniques in the text “Child  
Language Variation”**

**TRABAJO MONOGRÁFICO  
En la modalidad de Traducción**

**Para obtener el grado de  
Licenciada en Lengua Inglesa**

**Presenta  
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**Chetumal, Quintana Roo, noviembre de 2012.**

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# Table of contents

	Página
<b>I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Justification.....	5
1.2 Objectives.....	6
1.3 Methodology.....	7
<b>II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Restsker and Shveivetser's strategies.....	10
2.1.1 Translation as analogy.....	10
2.1.2 Translation as adequacy.....	11
2.2 Malone's strategies.....	12
2.2.1 Matching: Substitution and Equation.....	12
2.2.2 Zigzagging: Divergence and Convergent.....	13
2.2.3 Recrescence: Amplification and Reduction.....	13
2.2.4 Repackaging: Diffusion and Condensation.....	14
2.2.5 Reordering.....	14
2.3 Vinay and Darbelnet's strategies.....	14
2.3.1 Direct translation.....	15
2.3.1.1 Borrowing.....	15
2.3.1.2 Calque.....	16
2.3.1.3 Literal translation.....	16
2.3.2 Oblique translation.....	17
2.3.2.1 Transposition.....	17
2.3.2.2 Modulation.....	18

2.3.2.3	Adaptation.....	18
2.3.2.4	Equivalence.....	19
<b>III.</b>	<b>TRANSLATED CHAPTER.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>RERERENCES .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>APPENDIX (Original text).....</b>	<b>76</b>

## I. INTRODUCTION

For centuries translation has played an important role as a means of communication among nations in the world. Translation is an art that has communicative functions. Thanks to translation, people who do not understand a language or even the culture in which the texts are written can have access to those texts. Thus, translation becomes a powerful tool of communication that acts as a bridge that connects languages, cultures, and people.

A translator plays an important role in the field of communication since he/she should be able to convey written information in another language preserving the original meaning of the author and at the same time to make it understandable.

During the translation process, the translator has to take into account important aspects such as the lexicon, the grammatical structures of both languages, and the cultural context of the source language text. He/she has to analyze the source text in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstruct this same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structures which are appropriate in the target language and its cultural context.

The main aim of this monographic work is to translate the thirteen chapter of the book titled “*The handbook of Language Variation and Change*” edited by J. K. Chambers, Peter, Trudgill, and Natalie Schilling-Estes (2005). The title of the chapter is *Child Language Variation* and it was written by Julie Roberts, one of the contributing authors of this book. In general, this book provides essential knowledge of linguistic variation in the diverse contexts that give it meaning and significance, across generations, social strata, and domains of interaction. It also contains methodologies employed by linguists working on linguistic variation and change.

In particular, the chapter thirteen contains a review of the more recent interest in child language variation. Besides, it provides interesting information about the history of Child Language Variation as well as the recent work on the acquisition of variable features by young children.

The author of the chapter thirteen is Julie Roberts, a professor of Linguistics. She is particularly interested in dialects and how children learn them. She has done several interesting studies in the field of linguistics. For instance, some of her recent publications are: “*Glottalization in Vermont* (2006), *Acquisition of sociolinguistic variation* (2005), *New England Dialects* (2004) and *Review of Style and Sociolinguistic Variation* (2008)”. This kind of information is very important for those people who do not understand the English language but are interested in knowing and understanding how children learn a language, or the history of child language variation.

## **1.1 Justification**

Due to the importance of the topic in this research paper, this monographic work will be really useful for linguists, researchers of child language, students, and in general for those people who are interested in knowing about child language variation. For example, this translated text could be really useful for linguists and researchers of the Department of Humanities at the University of Quintana Roo, to support classes in the Bachelors' program as well as in the Master's in Spanish.

Moreover, this translation work can be a great help for those students who are interested in knowing about the child language variation but do not understand the English language or they can not translate from English into Spanish. Then, the translation of this paper in their mother tongue can be very significant for them.

However, this translation work is not only useful for a specific group of persons; it can also be useful for those people working as translators or students interested in becoming translators since through the analysis of the problems encountered when translating and their solution by the use of the different translation techniques, they could gain some insights.

Undoubtedly, this paper can help many Spanish speakers to broaden and update their knowledge in the linguistics field since this paper is a recent work. Unfortunately, this type of papers written in English are not translated into Spanish or they take a long time to be translated and as consequence many people do not know them, so to translate this text is a good opportunity to spread knowledge.

## **1.2 Objectives**

The goal of this monographic work is to carry out an appropriate and faithful translation from English into Spanish of the document *Child Language Variation*, which will convey the original idea of the writer in a translation which will be understandable and easy to read.

A second objective is to analyze the problems and difficulties encountered when translating the text, and to offer suggestions about possible solutions.

### **1.3 Methodology**

There are two main steps that must be followed in order to have a good translation. The first one consists of understanding the source text and the second one consists of expressing the message into the target language without changing the original meaning of the source language.

In order to carry out this translation work, first it was necessary to read the paper in order to have a general view about what the topic is. Then, it was necessary to read it again in order to identify the type of text and its genre. After that, another reading was done with the purpose of understanding the original text very well and the way in which the author wants to express the message. This step is really useful to express the message into the target language with the same sense of the original language.

Apart from the steps mentioned before, there is one that was really important to take into account and this was to read articles about the topic with the purpose of getting more knowledge about it and understanding key terms used in this paper.

Moreover, to carry out this translation was necessary to use different materials (bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, online dictionaries, and linguistics dictionaries), literature about language variation, as well as feedback by specialists in the field of linguistics and translation.

During the translation process, the translator faced some problems, so they were solved by taking into account the seven techniques proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (Fawcett 1997) from the Canadian school, and by asking specialists in the field of linguistics and

translation. All the possible problems and their solutions were registered during the translation process.

Once finished the first draft of this translation work, it was given to the supervisors of this project who are specialists in translation and linguistics, so that they could identify some possible problems and make some notes. After this first draft, another version was done correcting the problems found in the previous one.

Undoubtedly, all the corrections made by the supervisors were taken into account and after each revision of my drafts, and changes to the translation were carried out when necessary and the reasons for those changes were stated.

Finally, the analysis of the most common problems faced in the translation process was included in the final paper, as well as the conclusions and recommendations.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Translation is a powerful tool that makes communication possible in a world where a wide variety of languages exist. In this way, translation acts as a bridge that communicates people from different parts of the world.

According to Venuti (1995), translation is a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation (p. 17). In order to understand this definition, it is important to define key concepts such as source text (ST)- source language (SL)- target language(TL) and target text(TT). The first one refers to the text to be translated and it is written in the source language (SL). The language that is to be translated into is called the target language and the final product is called the target text (TT) (Venuti, 2000).

Valentín (1997) also gives an important definition about what a translation is. He states that “traducir es enunciar en otra lengua (o lengua meta) lo que ha sido enunciado en una lengua fuente (lengua original), conservando las equivalencias semánticas y estilísticas” (p.32).

Both definitions mentioned above are really important, but Reiss and Vermeer (1996) mentioned one important aspect related to translation in their book, which is culture. According to them, the source text represents its own culture and the translator has to have a broad knowledge about both languages so that he or she can interpret and translate the source text without changing its essence.

All the definitions mentioned previously make reference to important aspects that are essential when translating. Taking into account the three definitions, I can say that translation is an art in which written texts are translated into another language within a cultural and linguistic system, considering the interpretation that the translator gives to the source text without changing or losing the sense of it. In this way, translators play an important role in the evolution of languages and cultures. This project is based on this last definition since it covers important elements which are all essential in order to obtain a faithful translation.

In the field of translation there are three schools, which are widely recognized: the Russian school headed by Restster and Shveivetser, the American school headed by Malone and the Canadian school headed by Vinay and Darbelnet (Fawcett, 1997, 27). Each one of these authors suggests some translation methods that can be applied when translating a text.

## **2.1 Restsker and Shveivetser's strategies**

The Russian school is headed by the theorists Retsker and Shveivetser (Fawcett, 1997, p. 28). They outline two translation categories: translation as analogy and translation as adequacy.

### **2.1.1 Translation as analogy**

According to Retsker and Shveivetser, this category covers the situation of one-to-many correspondences between languages and where the translation will depend on the context and text function. In some cases, the context will reduce the solutions available to just one-to-one equivalence.

For example, the one - to many correspondences of *necesidad* could be *necessity*, *need*, *poverty* and so on and the appropriate translation of the word will depend on the context or the text function.

### **2.1.2 Translation as adequacy**

This category covers cases where there is no one-to-one equivalence and no readily definable contextual correspondence in the form of a collocation. In these cases, the translator departs from the wording of the original, and from the dictionary offerings, to use one or four translation techniques which are; concretization, logical derivation, antonymic translation and compensation.

**Concretization:** This technique is useful when the translator wants to achieve a more concrete and differentiated translation. For example, the French term *fumerolle* might be translated in more concrete way as *volcanic smoke*. Obviously, this type of technique requires a world knowledge, reader expectation, text type, desired effect and so on.

**Logical derivation:** This translation technique focuses on looking for a logical connection between the source language and the target language that might supply a more appropriate translation. For example the most appropriate translation for the phrase *to go for a sail* is *ir de paseo en barco*.

**Antonymic translation:** Antonymic translation is translation by the opposite. This technique is commonly used to achieve more natural translation in the target language. For example, the phrase *it is not difficult to do* might be translated as *it is easy to do*.

**Compensation:** This translation technique is used when some languages use linguistic devices for emphasis that are not available in other languages. For example: *What's your address?* ¿*Cúal es la dirección de usted?* or ¿*Cuál es tu dirección?* In the English language the word *your* could indicate degrees of formality (tú-usted). So, this technique is used to translate nuances on formality that could be formal or informal.

## 2.2 Malone's strategies

The American School is headed by Joseph L. Malone (Fawcett, 1997, p. 41). He suggests a list of translation processes which are described by three terms: the generic term and two specific terms.

**2.2.1 Matching: Substitution and Equation.** This technique makes reference to the techniques described by Vinay and Darbelnet. Equation is the same as literal translation because little change is made to the order of the source text structure when translating and Substitution is the same as adaptation and equivalence. And when it is not possible Equation or substitution, then Borrowing, Calque, prefabricated matching and *faux amis* might take place.

Examples:

Equation: I have never gone to the United States.

*Nunca he ido a los Estados Unidos.*

Substitution: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

*Más vale pájaro en mano que cien volando.*

In the first example little change is made to the order of the source text structure when translating into the target language while the second sentence is a clear example of an exact equivalent of a saying.

**2.2.2 Zigzagging: Divergence and Convergence:** Divergence is when the translator finds terms that are ambiguous or have several meanings: one- to- many equivalence. In this case the translator has to choose the appropriate meaning that fits better in the target language. Convergence is the opposite of divergence. It happens when there are many terms in the source language for just one term in the target language.

Example:

Divergence: Descansar = *to rest, to take a break, to take a five, etc.*

Convergence: Chiquilla, niña, nena, chica = *girl*

**2.2.3 Recrescence: Amplification and Reduction.** Amplification provides enough information to the target audience so that they can understand the text. For example:

On Christmas, Mexican people usually drink ponche con piquete.

*Los Mexicanos usualmente toman ponche con piquete (ponche con piquete is a traditional drink made of fruits, pieces of cinnamon and a little of tequila) en Navidad.*

In this case it was necessary to explain what ponche con piquete is because the original sentence does not explain it. This information is necessary for foreign readers who do not know about this traditional drink.

And the opposite of amplification is Reduction. It is the omission of information considered to be unnecessary, of little importance, or unlikely to make sense to the target language reader. For example: Atole, which is a hot beverage, thickened with *masa* and flavored with cinnamon and brown sugar, is a typical drink in Mexico...

*El atole es una bebida típica en México....*

Here we notice the reduction of the information that would be unnecessary to mention if the text is targeted to Mexican readers.

**2.2.4 Repackaging: Diffusion and Condensation.** This technique occurs when the translator expresses the same information in a shorter or longer form. Specifically, Diffusion happens when a meaning that consisted of one word has to be expanded into more so that the meaning can be completed. While condensation is the opposite, it occurs when the original meaning consists of several words but the translator wants to express the meaning into the target language using just one word. For example:

Diffusion: Caretaker = *Persona que está al cuidado del niño.*

Condensation: To have breakfast = *desayunar*

**2.2.5 Reordering:** This technique consists of reordering the word structures in order to have a better comprehension or because the source and target language have different narrative or stylistic structures. For example: small house = *casa pequeña*

### **2.3 Vinay and Darbelnet's strategies**

The Canadian School is headed by Jean- Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet. They suggest seven translation techniques which are divided into two groups of translation; the direct

translation and the oblique translation. The first group includes three styles of translation, Calque, Borrowing and Literal. The second group includes four styles of translation, Transposition, Equivalence, Adaptation, and Modulation (Valentín, 1997).

The three schools are important in the translation field; however, the Canadian method is the most accepted by the professional translators, because it is easier to apply and in practice the techniques may be used either on their own or combined with one or more of the others. For these reasons, the chapter in this monographic work was translated with the seven techniques proposed by Jean- Paul and Jean Darbelnet. Next, the seven techniques are described and examples of my own are provided.

### **2.3.1 Direct translation**

#### **2.3.1.1 Borrowing**

This technique is one of the simplest techniques in the translation area. This means taking words straight into another language without translating them. This technique is used when there is a concept in the source language that does not exist in the target language. Borrowed terms often pass into general usage. For example, in the fields of technology we can find the terms “software” and culture “punk”. This technique is used to create a stylistic effect.

Examples:

**Marta bought tortillas yesterday.**

*Ayer Marta compró tortillas.*

**Mole is a traditional Mexican food.**

*El mole es una comida tradicional mexicana.*

### **2.3.1.2 Calque**

Calque is a literal translation of a lexical item of the source language, with an adaptation to the morphology of the target language. The phrase is borrowed from the source language, and its elements are translated literally. There are two types of calque: lexical and structural. The first one follows the syntactic structure of the target language and the second one introduces a new construction into the language.

Examples:

**Quality assurance**

*Aseguramiento de calidad*

**Skyscraper**

*Rascacielos*

**Science fiction**

*Ciencia ficción*

**Kindergarten**

*Jardín de niños*

**Weekend**

*Fin de semana*

### **2.3.1.3 Literal translation**

This type of translation is also called word for word translation. This type of translation matches each word in the source language to a word in the target language.

Examples:

**The team is working to finish the report.**

*El equipo está trabajando para acabar el informe.*

**Karla is working in a bank.**

*Karla está trabajando en un banco.*

### **2.3.2 Oblique translation**

#### **2.3.2.1 Transposition**

This technique involves replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message. There are two types of transposition, obligatory and optional.

Examples:

**After she left.**

*Tras su partida.*

**The car is out of order.**

*El carro no funciona.*

### **2.3.2.2 Modulation**

It is a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view. This technique requires extensive knowledge of the target language. There are two types of modulation, optional or free modulation and fixed or obligatory modulation.

Examples:

**The straw that broke the camel's back.**

*La gota que derramó el vaso.*

**It is not difficult to show.**

*Es fácil de demostrar.*

**We must do what we are told.**

*Debemos hacer lo que nos ordenan.*

**To kill two birds with one stone.**

*Matar dos pájaros de un tiro.*

### **2.3.2.3 Adaptation**

It is used when there is no common equivalent for a given expression, or when a situation in the source culture does not exist in the target culture. In such situations, translators have to create a new situation that can be considered as being equivalent. So, adaptation can be considered as a kind of equivalence.

Examples:

**Enjoy your meal.**

*Buen provecho.*

**He kissed his daughter on the mouth.**

*Abrazó tiernamente a su hija.*

#### **2.3.2.4 Equivalence**

It is defined as the translation of idioms when two languages refer to the same situation in totally different ways. The process is creative, but not always easy.

Examples:

**Right of way.**

*Prohibido el paso.*

**You are welcome.**

*De nada.*

**Never judge a book by its cover.**

*Las apariencias engañan.*

As it was seen in the examples above, translators require the linguistic and cultural knowledge of both languages, among other aspects in order to have a faithfully translation and moreover it can be accurate as to meaning and natural as to the target language forms used.

It is important to mention that during the translation process, a translator can face many problems. The first one is the comprehension ability of the source language as well as the interpretation of it. Another problem could be related to the linguistic aspect of both languages, as well as a translator often runs into those painful not found terms for which not even the best dictionary or experts in the topic of the source language can provide in order to obtain an accurate meaning.

In short, whatever difficulty in translation process, the translator should be able to solve it through his or her knowledge, skills, training, cultural background and expertise. So, the quality of translation will depend on the quality of the translator.

### **III. TRANSLATED CHAPTER**

## **13 VARIACIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA EN EL NIÑO**

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### **JULIE ROBERTS**

La variación lingüística en el niño es un área relativamente nueva en el campo de la sociolingüística. Sin lugar a dudas, los niños han sido ocasionalmente incluidos en estudios de variación, comenzando con la investigación innovadora de la variación (ing) en niños en edad escolar realizada por Fischer in 1958. Sin embargo, por razones teóricas y metodológicas este trabajo no se enfoca en niños que se encuentran en la etapa de la pre-adolescencia. El propósito de este capítulo es analizar brevemente el trabajo de investigación que encabeza el reciente interés sobre la variación lingüística en niños. También se pretende discutir las posibles razones del relativo olvido que se ha hecho históricamente a este grupo etario. Y, finalmente, examinar el trabajo reciente que se concentra en la adquisición de rasgos variables en niños de temprana edad y las proyecciones posibles para futuras investigaciones.

### **1. Historia de la variación lingüística en el niño**

Existen muchas razones del por qué los primeros trabajos sobre variación y cambio lingüístico no se enfocaron en el habla de niños de temprana edad. Por un lado, el campo en sí mismo tiene sólo 40 años aproximadamente. Parece razonable que en un campo nuevo de estudio lingüístico, particularmente, uno basado en la dialectología – que es una disciplina notablemente enfocada al hablante adulto — los datos se recojan de los hablantes que se suponen controlan el dialecto particular en cuestión y sus variaciones.

Por otro lado, a los niños se les consideró principalmente como aprendices de la lengua vernácula de una comunidad de habla, no necesariamente como colaboradores para su mantenimiento y cambio. Efectivamente, Labov (1964) observó que aunque los rasgos dialectales se aprenden durante la infancia, es durante la adolescencia cuando la variación socialmente significativa se hace más evidente. Además, por ejemplo, con su primer trabajo (1963,1966), Labov inició el estudio de variación y cambio lingüístico utilizando datos sincrónicos para conocer los patrones y cambios lingüísticos del pasado, así como para también predecir cambios a futuro. Esta práctica depende crucialmente de la suposición de que los patrones dialectales, una vez alcanzados en la etapa adulta, no cambian significativamente lo que resta de vida. Aunque esta suposición aún es tema de discusión dentro de la literatura, es la fuente de mucho trabajo sincrónico y fomenta un enfoque en el habla de los adultos, ya que el habla de los niños, quienes están adquiriendo un sistema lingüístico, no sería útil, por principio, en el estudio de los procesos históricos.

Además de la investigación enfocada en el adulto, las investigaciones sobre el habla de los adolescentes también han sido muy fructíferas. Existe mucha evidencia que apoya contundentemente la lengua vernácula, producto de un grupo de adolescentes y no será discutida en este capítulo. Más bien, se sugiere que el adolescente no surge de la nada sin un dialecto consigo (Roberts 1999, Eckert 2000). Las bases para los patrones del habla de los adolescentes y adultos se establecen en la infancia durante el proceso temprano de adquisición del lenguaje y parecerá útil observar los dialectos de los niños para encontrar respuestas a algunas de las interrogantes de variación y cambio lingüístico.

Como se observó anteriormente, en algunos de los primeros trabajos sobre variación se incluyó a niños como participantes. Muy en particular, Fisher (1958) descubrió variación

social en niños de tres a diez años, y variación estilística en un niño de diez años de edad. Sin embargo, en su análisis él no separó a los niños por edad, por lo que no es posible afirmar si los niños de edades muy tempranas compartían o no el patrón documentado en sus resultados generales.

Otros también estudiaron la variación en hablantes de temprana edad, pero generalmente se concentraron en los de edad escolar más que en los de preescolar. Por ejemplo, Romaine (1978) continuó la investigación de variación social y estilística en niños de seis, ocho y diez años de edad, enfocándose en la producción de (r) a final de palabra en inglés escocés y encontró variación relacionada con la edad, género y estilo. Sus conclusiones fueron muy importantes no solamente porque documentó la adquisición de variación social en hablantes de temprana edad, sino también porque llegó a la conclusión de que los niños eran participantes del cambio lingüístico. Es decir, las chicas participaban en un cambio por encima del nivel de conciencia favoreciendo una variante de prestigio, y los chicos participaban en un cambio por debajo del nivel de conciencia favoreciendo una variante de menor prestigio o quizás de prestigio encubierto. De forma similar, en Edinburgh, Scotland, Reid (1978) examinó la producción de la oclusiva glotal y la alternancia de (ing) y encontró variación estilística en niños de 11 años de edad.

Purcell (1984) registró que la variación social y estilística funcionaba con diferentes variables producidas por hablantes del inglés hawaiano y del inglés americano “general” de entre cinco y doce años de edad. Al igual que Fischer, ella no separó los resultados con base en la edad, lo que hace imposible determinar la contribución de sus hablantes de muy temprana edad. Sin embargo, los resultados son alentadores al demostrar sensibilidad hacia los factores sociales y estilísticos en la etapa previa a la adolescencia.

Uno de los primeros estudios en observar la variación en los niños de etapa preescolar fue también uno de los primeros en examinar las restricciones lingüísticas de la variación en niños de cualquier otra edad. Kovac y Adamson (1981) estudiaron la supresión de la forma finita *be* (ser o estar) en niños afroamericanos y euro americanos de tres- cinco y siete años de edad. Éste es un rasgo muy bien documentado del inglés afro americano (Wolfram 1969, Labov 1969, 1972, Baugh 1986, Rickford et al. 1991, entre otros). Como ha sido el caso con otros rasgos dialectales a través de la historia de estudios variacionistas, *be* es suprimido sistemáticamente por hablantes adultos y es muy probable que sea suprimido más en algunos contextos lingüísticos y sociales que en otros. Por ejemplo, Labov (1969) demostró la relación entre la contracción de *be* en dialectos del inglés euro americano y la supresión de *be* en el inglés afroamericano. Descubrió que la contracción y supresión de *be* se favorecían por la presencia de un pronombre precedente más que de un sustantivo precedente, y por la presencia del auxiliar *be* más que la cópula *be*, y particularmente por el contexto de *be + gonna*.

También se ha descubierto que el contexto fonológico previo afecta la contracción y supresión de *be*. Mediante el uso de esta variable y siguiendo el análisis de Labov (1969), los autores consideraron una cuestión que aún continúa siendo tema de discusión en este campo—y esto se refiere a la variación relacionada con el desarrollo natural del niño contra la variación dialectal de su lenguaje. Los autores descubrieron que en el caso de los niños euro americanos la falta del verbo finito *be* pareció ser cuestión de desarrollo. Sin embargo, para los niños afroamericanos los resultados cambiaron según la clase socio-económica. Los niños afroamericanos de la clase trabajadora adquirieron la regla de la

**Nota del traductor:** *gonna* es la contracción del *going to*, el cual forma parte de la perífrasis *to be going to*, que se traduce como *ir a*.

supresión antes que los niños de la clase media, mientras que para los niños de la clase media la contracción precedió a la supresión.

Las restricciones de la supresión fueron aún más difíciles de adquirir que la regla en sí misma. Aunque tanto las restricciones gramaticales como las fonológicas de la contracción fueron adquiridas por ambos grupos de niños afroamericanos a los tres años, las restricciones de la supresión típicas de los hablantes adultos no fueron completamente adquiridas a los siete años.

Guy y Boyd (1990) examinaron las restricciones gramaticales, con hablantes de entre 4 a 65 años, acerca del uso de la supresión de *(-t, d)* en los verbos semi débiles o ambiguos del inglés en el pasado simple como *son*, *lost* (perdió), *told* (dijo), y *slept* (durmió). Así como la contracción y supresión de *be*, la supresión de *(-t, d)* es un fenómeno ampliamente estudiado en dialectos del inglés (Labov et al. 1968, Wolfram 1969, Fasold 1972, Guy 1980, Neu 1980). Se trata de una forma de reducción de grupos consonánticos que incluye a grupos a final de palabra que contienen /t/ o /d/ y es influenciado tanto por la forma gramatical de la palabra que contiene el rasgo (t/d), así como las restricciones fonológicas, particularmente, el segmento fonológico posterior al grupo y los rasgos sociales como *son*, género, clase social, y etnicidad (Guy 1980).

Guy y Boyd concluyeron que la adquisición de la supresión *(t/d)* en verbos semi débiles era un proceso potencialmente largo ya que los hablantes de temprana edad no produjeron los segmentos oclusivos en absoluto, lo que llevó a los autores a concluir que dichos segmentos no estaban presentes en las representaciones subyacentes de las formas verbales. Un grupo de hablantes adultos suprimió *(-t, d)* en grupos consonánticos finales de los

verbos semi débiles en un grado intermedio, esto es entre las palabras monomorfémicas y los verbos en el tiempo pasado. Con esto se demostró en su estudio que se trataba de una clase morfológicamente separada.

Sin embargo, parece ser que en un grupo de nivel medio que comprende a niños de edad tardía y algunos adultos, se analizaron los verbos semi débiles esencialmente como palabras monomorfémicas e.g *mist* (neblina o bruma), *cent* (centavo) y se suprimió el segmento final por consiguiente, demostrando que el uso de los verbos semi débiles como una clase morfológica separada, es incompleto aún con hablantes adultos.

Finalmente, Labov (1989) estudió la variación estilística y lingüística de la supresión (t/d) y la apicalización de (ing) en una pequeña muestra de niños y sus padres en las afueras de Filadelfia. Encontró que un niño de siete años reproducía los patrones de variación estilística y lingüística de sus padres en la supresión de (t /d), con la excepción del uso idéntico de los verbos semi débiles como palabras monomorfémicas.

Este niño también había dominado las restricciones tanto lingüísticas como estilísticas de la alternancia de (ing), un niño de seis años había dominado solamente la variación estilística y uno de cuatro años no mostró ninguna señal de haber adquirido las restricciones de alternancia de (ing).

## **2. Situaciones actuales en el estudio de la variación lingüística en el niño.**

Los primeros estudios que incluyeron a niños como participantes sugieren que éstos adquieren patrones variables influenciados socialmente antes de la adolescencia y pueden

incluso participar en el proceso de cambio lingüístico. Sin embargo, ha sido difícil responder algunas preguntas importantes que han surgido debido a los desafíos metodológicos. Por ejemplo, los estudios de variación, para que sean útiles, generalmente necesitan grandes cantidades de datos por hablante, registrados ya sea estadísticamente o mediante gráficas de los sistemas vocálicos. De hecho, Roberts (1996) reportó que la duración de la entrevista de un niño que se necesitó para recolectar datos sobre la supresión de (-t, d) fue de entre 8 y 14 horas aproximadamente, en comparación con la información recolectada con adultos cuya entrevista duró de entre 1 a 2 horas. Esta cantidad de datos puede ser difícil de obtener en niños de muy temprana edad. Los primeros estudios que se abordaron anteriormente resuelven este dilema, ya sea utilizando muestras muy pequeñas (uno o dos niños) o combinando los datos de los niños de muy temprana edad con el de los niños más grandes, particularmente si se debe recolectar en un periodo de tiempo corto para minimizar el efecto de la maduración. Aunque estos métodos tuvieron como resultado indicaciones claras de la adquisición de la variación, se necesitan análisis más precisos para resolver las interrogantes que resulten.

Otro reto en la exploración de la variación en el niño, es la dificultad para distinguir la variación que es motivada socialmente y la que está relacionada con el desarrollo natural del niño. Este problema se complica, en particular por el hecho de que como los niños van creciendo, éstos se van enfocando más en sus compañeros como influencia dialectal principal y menos en sus padres u otros adultos miembros de la comunidad de habla (Labov 1972, Eckert 2000). Eckert, en particular, observa la importancia de enfatizar que el sistema sociolingüístico del niño a cualquier edad no es simplemente una “manifestación de un esfuerzo por desarrollar una lenguaje real, sino una forma lingüística completamente

madura para esa etapa de su lenguaje” (2000: 10). Aunque el enfoque sobre la adquisición del lenguaje que se centra en el niño no es reciente en la investigación psicolingüística (véase, por ejemplo, Bloom y Lahey 1978), de hecho la variación en el niño recibe menos apoyo de este campo de investigación del que se puede esperar. Una de las razones se debe a que el enfoque principal de investigación sobre la adquisición del lenguaje del niño se ha dado en rasgos categóricos del lenguaje.

Aunque la variación individual es reconocida, con frecuencia se le ve como una diferencia en el estilo del aprendizaje- considerando que todos los estilos llevan a un mismo fin, la adquisición de un sistema lingüístico adulto y algunas diferencias restantes que indican distorsiones comunicativas o cognitivas en potencia (Nelson 1973, 1975). En gran parte, se ha hecho una exanimación minuciosa al dato lingüístico del niño debido a consistencias estructurales en las expresiones de los hablantes (Menyuk 1977). A nivel fonológico, en el cual la mayoría de los estudios variacionistas se han enfocado, particularmente, los estudios de variación en el niño, también se ha puesto énfasis sobre consistencia y categoricidad. La variación intra-hablante se caracteriza en términos de sus diferencias de las formas adultas. Como Ingram (1986:223) afirma, “conforme el niño deja atrás las peculiaridades de su reducido lenguaje individual, su habla se hace más regular y en muchos casos el lingüista puede ver las razones de las distorsiones de palabras normales”. La investigación lingüística del niño más contemporánea que sigue la teoría de la lingüística generativa, se centra en las restricciones de producción, en oposición a las reglas y procesos, pero aún se mantiene un énfasis en la “sistematicidad emergente” (Vihman 1996).

Otra razón del porque la literatura lingüística del niño es de ayuda limitada al abordar la cuestión de la variación socialmente significativa, se relaciona con los retos metodológicos

planteados previamente. Los primeros estudios lingüísticos del niño fueron a menudo estudios de diarios, primero con investigadores (con frecuencia también los padres) quienes escribían producciones de interés, más tarde se grababan (véase por ejemplo, Bloom 1973, Brown 1973, Labov y Labov 1976). Estos estudios incluían grupos muy pequeños de participantes--- con frecuencia un niño solamente. Éstos también tendían a ser de carácter longitudinal naturalmente, de esta manera aunque el total de datos podían ser bastante amplios, las muestras individuales por cada edad eran a menudo más pequeñas. Conforme los sociolingüistas examinan las muestras de datos lingüísticos del niño buscando variación sistemática localizada en el lenguaje mismo (como Weinreich et al. 1968 observaron), es obvio que se requiere gran cantidad de datos por cada hablante. Desde la década pasada los estudios han reflejado estas inquietudes al intentar recabar grandes cantidades de datos de hablantes de temprana edad. Un constante desafío es que cuanto más joven es un niño, más rasgos de su lenguaje, como son la inteligibilidad limitada y el habla telegráfica, incrementan considerablemente el tiempo necesario para recolectar una suficiente cantidad de datos. Al mismo tiempo el investigador debe recolectar muestras del habla eficientemente para minimizar el impacto de la maduración durante el periodo de recolección de datos.

A pesar de estas dificultades, la investigación actual en etapas muy tempranas de la adquisición del lenguaje, ha incluido tanto a niños que están en sus primeras etapas de adquisición, así como a niños mayores. La siguiente sección trata sobre este tipo de trabajos y sus implicaciones en el lenguaje del niño y la literatura variacionista.

### **3. La variable output: Producción del lenguaje en el niño**

Si bien no en todos, pero sí en la mayoría del trabajo discutido previamente, se tomó en cuenta a niños como el rango de edad más bajo en un estudio de hablantes de diversas edades, recientemente el enfoque de investigación de la variación lingüística en el niño se ha dirigido específicamente a estos hablantes de temprana edad.

Los estudios obtenidos se han caracterizado generalmente por un mayor número de datos y por grupos de niños divididos en rangos de edades más cerrados. Los adultos, a menudo los padres de los niños, han servido más como datos de comparación y, en trabajos posteriores, como proveedores del input lingüístico en el niño, así como también han participado en estudios de adquisición del primer lenguaje.

Labov (1998) observó que como el input lingüístico en el niño es variable, como se demostró en la amplia investigación de la variación adulta, es lógico suponer que el output del niño también lo sea. Sin embargo, esta afirmación, por más razonable que parezca, está lejos de demostrar la conexión entre el input lingüístico y el sistema lingüístico que el niño obtiene finalmente. Precisamente, esta conexión ha sido enérgicamente discutida durante años por psicolingüistas y lingüistas interesados en explorar el factor naturaleza versus crianza en el desarrollo del niño. La función del input lingüístico en la variación lingüística del niño se aborda en la siguiente sección, pero en general no hay necesidad de que los expertos en variación se concentren en este debate para discutir el modelo y la adquisición de rasgos lingüísticos que son claramente regulados socialmente y por un dialecto en específico. Por lo tanto, el primero de estos estudios muy específicos tomó como un supuesto importante que el primer input que los niños reciben, es verdaderamente variable y

examinó, en cambio, la cuestión de que si los niños de muy temprana edad reproducían o no estos rasgos dialectales por sí mismos y a qué edad.

Por ejemplo, Roberts (1996, 1997a) examinó la supresión de la variable (t/d) más estudiada del idioma inglés, en niños de Filadelfia de tres y cuatro años. Como se mencionó anteriormente, se encontró que en hablantes adultos del inglés todas las restricciones sociales, gramaticales y fonológicas funcionan con el fenómeno de supresión (t/d).

Mientras que Guy and Boyd (1990) observaron, entre otras cosas, que los niños de muy temprana edad no incluían estas oclusivas a final de palabra en sus representaciones léxicas de las formas verbales semi débiles, como se observó anteriormente, su estudio se caracterizó por una muestra bastante pequeña de niños con diferentes grupos etarios cubriendo edades avanzadas. El propósito del estudio de Roberts fue analizar este mismo fenómeno con una muestra más grande de hablantes relacionados a edades cercanas. 16 niños participaron en este estudio, la cual comprendió 146 horas de grabación. Las observaciones de posibles puntos de supresión (t/d) oscilaron en un rango que va del 44 en niños que son especialmente tranquilos hasta en un 250 en niños más parlanchines. Se encontró que los niños están en camino de adquirir las restricciones fonológicas y morfológicas de la supresión (t/d) encontradas en muchos estudios de hablantes adultos.

Los niños mostraron una adquisición de restricción del segmento posterior que es muy cercana a la de los adultos, incluyendo el efecto inhibitor de la pausa posterior en la supresión que Guy (1980) descubrió que es típico in Filadelfia pero no en Nueva York. Este hallazgo, en particular, sugirió firmemente que los niños realmente estaban aprendiendo

rasgos socialmente significativos, sin responder a una restricción universal de reducción de un grupo consonántico.

Además, los niños mostraron el patrón de los segmentos de supresión (t/ d) de los adultos, más frecuente en palabras monomorfémicas que en verbos regulares en el tiempo pasado. Sin embargo, con los verbos semi débiles, la similitud con el habla de los adultos se interrumpió ya que los niños hacían uso de los verbos débiles como palabras monomorfémicas constantemente (i.e. alta probabilidad de supresión pero no supresión categórica, como encontró Guy and Boyd) y los adultos hacían uso de los verbos débiles como verbos regulares en el tiempo pasado (i.e baja probabilidad de supresión).

Además, el análisis de los datos reveló que conforme los niños producían un gran número de formas gramaticales muy sofisticadas, como los participios, ellos mostraban una supresión parecida a la de los adultos, sugiriendo que la variación se aprende mediante la relación de las formas gramaticales y léxicas de manera simultánea. El argumento por consiguiente, fue que los niños estaban realmente interesados en la variación sistemática, a menudo muy similar a la de sus padres en estructura, y parecían incluir las oclusivas finales (t/d) en sus representaciones subyacentes de los verbos débiles.

Los resultados sugirieron firmemente que los niños estaban creando reglas, no aprendiendo patrones de forma separada y demostraron patrones de supresión como el de los adultos sólo cuando compartían un análisis estructural parecido al de éstos.

Finalmente, hubo indicaciones del surgimiento de las primeras diferencias de género, ya que las niñas suprimieron (t/d) más frecuentemente que los niños, un resultado contrastante con la mayoría de los estudios de la misma variable en hablantes adultos.

Sin embargo, en el estudio se investigó solamente la adquisición de la variación estable en los niños. Éste no se dirigió a la adquisición de cambios de sonido en desarrollo, ni exploró la cuestión de que si los niños eran capaces o no de ir más allá de la adquisición y participar en los patrones de variación y cambio de la comunidad de habla de la cual ellos formaban parte.

Roberts y Labov (1995) examinaron estas cuestiones en un estudio de adquisición del patrón corto de la vocal *a* en Filadelfia (como en *cat*) con algunos de los mismos niños en edad preescolar que participaron en el estudio de Roberts (1996, 1997a). El patrón vocálico en cuestión, es uno de los más complejos y conlleva un condicionamiento léxico, fonológico y gramatical. Por ejemplo, la producción de la *a* corta que precede a /f/, /θ/, /s/, /m/ y /n/ es creciente y tensa, mientras que en el contexto de /p/, /b/, /d/, /k/, etc., la producción de la *a* es baja y laxa. Sin embargo, existen excepciones léxicas a este condicionamiento fonológico en las palabras *mad* (loco/a), *bad* (malo/a), y *glad* (contento/a) en el cual la *a* se supondría que sería laxa, de hecho es tensa.

A pesar de la complejidad de este patrón, los niños mostraron un aprendizaje significativo de la vocal corta *a* de Filadelfia. Algunas de las restricciones más directas y estables como es la producción tensa antes de las nasales y en las palabras *mad* (loco/a), *bad* (malo/a), y *glad* (contento/a) fueron producidas constantemente. Sin embargo, se ha demostrado que algunos de estos patrones están en proceso de cambio, como en el contexto que precede a la consonante /l/ (ej. *personality* / personalidad) y la /n/ intervocálica (ej. *planet* /planeta), hacia una producción tensa y corta de la vocal *a* en hablantes adultos de Filadelfia. Sin embargo, los niños todavía estaban adquiriendo estos patrones. Entre la edad de tres y cuatro años mostraron un avance activo en el aprendizaje de estos rasgos. También

mostraron un incremento de tensión en los contextos donde ocurrió el cambio comparado con el de los adultos, lo cual sugirió que los niños estaban empezando a participar activamente en el proceso de cambio lingüístico. Este resultado tiene implicaciones importantes en estudios posteriores en esta área, ya que destaca la posibilidad de que los expertos en variación muestren interés en niños de esta edad, no solamente porque ellos están adquiriendo activamente rasgos socialmente regulados, sino también porque ellos están influyendo en los cambios y pueden indicar los puntos donde ocurren dichos cambios que pueden acelerarse o de lo contrario modificarse conforme ellos maduran.

Foulkes et al. (1999) también investigaron la adquisición de la variación en niños en edad preescolar. En su estudio de la variación glotal participaron 40 niños de dos a cuatro años de Newcastle Upon Tyne. Encontraron que los niños eran capaces de aprender patrones variables sofisticados en edades muy tempranas. La glotalización de /t/ abarca tanto la sustitución como el fortalecimiento de /t/ por una oclusiva glotal. Foulkes et al. señalaron que a diferencia de los investigadores de la fonología tradicional, a ellos no les interesaba el surgimiento de contrastes fonológicos, sino la gama de alternantes adquiridos por los niños y, de forma similar a los resultados previos sobre otras variables, concluyeron que los niños tuvieron un buen avance en el dominio del complicado patrón de la oclusiva glotal.

Sin embargo, adicionalmente, un análisis acústico reveló que en el habla de los niños se encontró altos grados de pre-aspiración de la consonante /t/ a final de una expresión, incluso en niños de dos años de edad.

Este resultado va en contra de lo que otros han reportado, como Locked (1983, Foulkes et al.1999:17), quienes afirmaron que los niños operan bajo reglas fonológicas de simplificación. Se descubrió que este patrón de pre-aspiración, predominaba en la habla de mujeres jóvenes de Newcastle Upon Tyne, pero en el estudio fue adoptado tanto por chicos y chicas. Finalmente, existen algunos patrones de glotalización que son restringidos léxicamente, como es la sustitución de la oclusiva glotal por la consonante /t/ a final de palabra, el lugar que precede una pausa, así como también el uso de [r] en lugar de /t/. Aunque la cantidad de este tipo de datos fue reducida (19 observaciones), los niños parecieron mostrar sensibilidad hacia este tipo de condicionante léxico, ya que produjeron [r] solamente con palabras que están presentes en el habla adulta.

El trabajo previo muestra claramente que primero los niños empiezan la adquisición de la variación —supuestamente con la adquisición del lenguaje. Aunque lo irónico de separar la variación social de la variación propia del desarrollo continúa siendo un reto en esta área, hay evidencia en la forma en que emergen diferencias de género y algunos primeros resultados de diferencias estilísticas, que la variación socialmente motivada tiene sus inicios en las primeras etapas de la adquisición del lenguaje (Reid 1978, Romaine 1978, Labov 1989, Roberts 1996, 1997a, Eckert 2000). Se requiere una investigación constante, con incluso más cantidades de datos, que examine la clase social y otros factores extralingüísticos que han sido fructíferos en estudios de variación del lenguaje adulto. En resumen, sin embargo, todo el trabajo anterior destaca el punto de que los niños son realmente miembros de la comunidad de habla desde sus primeras interacciones lingüísticas y tienen mucho que decirnos sobre la temprana etapa de variación y cambio lingüístico.

#### **4. La variable input: El habla dirigida al niño**

Dado que existe evidencia que apoya la hipótesis de que los niños adquieren patrones variables junto con formas categóricas, los investigadores empezaron a observar muy de cerca el input que los niños recibían y su respuesta a éste. Históricamente, los lingüistas no han visto la variación del input como necesariamente útil en la adquisición del lenguaje del niño. Más bien, se ha visto frecuentemente como perjudicial o parte del “ruido” que puede degradar la calidad del input que los niños reciben (Chomsky 1965:58). Incluso la investigación considerable acerca del habla dirigida al niño, comenzando con la de Ferguson (1977), se enfoca en la simplificación, exageración y consistencia del input y su efectividad o, algunas veces, falta de efectividad en la enseñanza del lenguaje, no en su variedad. Expertos en variación han observado más de cerca el input examinando varias características.

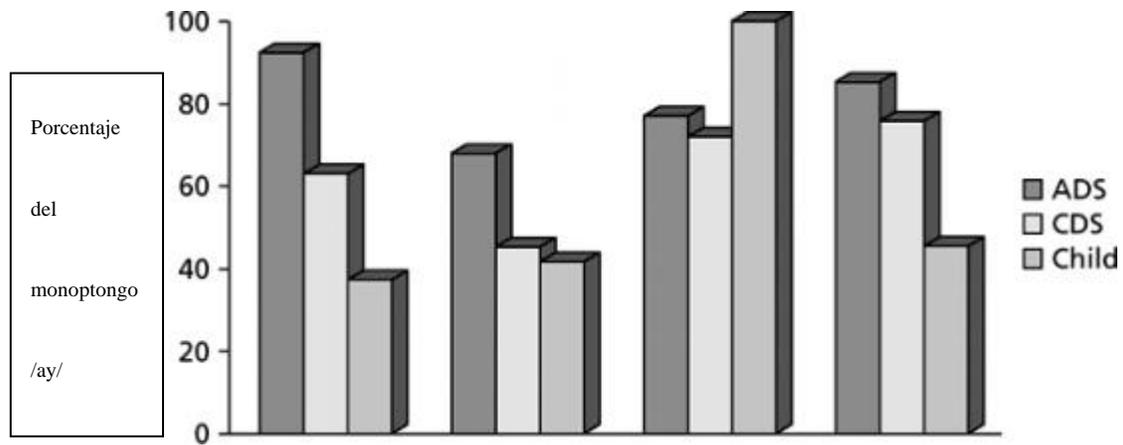
Labov (1990) observó la similitud entre las producciones específicas del dialecto de los niños y la de sus madres y postuló la hipótesis de que los primeros cuidados que el niño recibe, etapa a menudo dominada por la mujer, podrían conducir a favorecer cambios de sonido liderados por las mujeres y desfavorecer los cambios encabezados por los hombres. De nuevo Roberts (1997b) examinó esta hipótesis utilizando a los mismos hablantes de Filadelfia de nivel preescolar. Se encontró que los cambios liderados por las mujeres, de hecho, fueron aprendidos más eficazmente por los niños en comparación con el cambio encabezado por los hombres---como es la centralización del sonido largo (ay), como en *kite*. Además, aunque en el estudio todos los niños eran nativos de Filadelfia y asistían a guarderías con niños y maestros de Filadelfia, los cambios fueron adquiridos más eficazmente por los niños cuyos padres también eran nativos de Filadelfia. Estos resultados

apoyan la conclusión de que el primer input es importante, al menos al inicio del aprendizaje de variables socialmente influenciadas

Foulkes et al. (1999) también observaron la importancia del primer input. Como se observó previamente, en su estudio encontraron que los rasgos de pre- aspiración que caracteriza el lenguaje de las mujeres jóvenes fueron más fácilmente aprendidas por ambos chicos y chicas, que los rasgos que son característicos de los hombres adultos de la comunidad. También argumentaron que más que ser disfuncional a la adquisición de lenguaje, la variación del input dirigida a hablantes de temprana edad, en realidad puede aumentar la transición del nivel de representación holística de la palabra a una conciencia segmental, al producir ejemplos alofónicos, los cuales “pueden servir para destacar la localización de componentes permutables de las palabras” (Foulkes et al. 1999:20).

La transición del nivel léxico hacia el segmental de la adquisición fonológica es un tema que todavía atrae a psicolingüistas y a fonólogos del desarrollo. Acuerdos en cuanto a la naturaleza y coordinación de este proceso son todavía difíciles de alcanzar. Mientras algunos investigadores han encontrado que la conciencia segmental ocurre en el proceso temprano de la adquisición del lenguaje, otros han reportado que ésta continúa en los años escolares. (Ver Vihman1996, para una revisión de esta información). Además de apoyar este proceso en los niños, como Foulkes et al proponen, es posible que la presencia de variación alofónica socialmente regulada en los niños, como fue observado por Foulkes et al. y Roberts (1996, 1997a) y otros, también apoye el argumento de una temprana conciencia segmental. Por lo menos, los resultados sugieren un temprano comienzo de este fenómeno.

El surgimiento de la conciencia segmental también podría indicarles a los niños de temprana edad los contextos en los que ocurre la variación sistemática en el input gramatical--- contextos que a su vez podrían ser de mucho provecho en años posteriores. En un estudio previo acerca del inglés americano que se habla en la parte sur de los Estados Unidos, por ejemplo el que las madres usan cuando hablan a sus niños y a un entrevistador en Memphis, Tennessee sugiere que éste podría ser el caso (Robert 1999). Tres madres y sus respectivos niños (de año y medio de edad aproximadamente) fueron grabados mientras jugaban. La variable en cuestión fue el monoptongo largo (ay) como [ka:t] en *kite*, que se registró tanto en el habla de Alabama (Feaging 1979) y en el de los adultos de Memphis (Fridland1999). Dos de los tres niños produjeron el monoptongo y diptongo largo (ay), mientras que el tercero produjo solamente el monoptongo (ay). Como los niños justo empezaban a adquirir diptongos, la variación en estos hablantes fue cuestión de desarrollo probablemente y no por influencia social. Sin embargo, la observación de dos hablantes de cuatro años de edad reveló que sus producciones largas de (ay) también contenían datos tanto de monoptongo como diptongo. Aunque se necesita documentar más investigación, parece razonable llegar a la hipótesis de que en estos niños la variación de la producción larga (ay) continuaría, mientras que los niños que hablan dialectos en donde la producción larga de (ay) se producen más como diptongos de manera consistente, éstos transitaran de una variación propia del desarrollo natural a una producción del diptongo casi de manera categórica.



**Figura 13.1** Comparación del uso del monoptongo /ay/ presente en el habla infantil, en el habla dirigida al niño y el habla dirigida al adulto.

**ADS** (Adult Directed Speech): Habla dirigida al adulto

**CDS** (Child Directed Speech): Habla dirigida al niño

**Child:** Habla del niño

Sin embargo, más que el comportamiento de los niños, fue el habla dirigida al niño (CDS) que las madres usaban, lo que reveló algunas claves sobre el proceso de un aprendizaje temprano de un dialecto. El habla dirigida al niño ha sido frecuentemente estudiada por psicolingüistas como una forma generalizada de hablar a los niños de muy temprana edad (Ferguson 1977). Registros similares se han observado en el habla que se usa para dirigirse a los animales, a personas que vienen de otro país, y para dirigirse a los amigos, etc. Aunque sigue generando discusión la eficacia de este registro para estimular el desarrollo de lenguaje, parece claro que el alcance de esa variación está presente en el habla dirigida al niño, ya que ésta forma parte de su input lingüístico.

En este último estudio, las madres fueron grabadas jugando con sus niños y platicando con un entrevistador. Aunque todas mostraron variación entre el diptongo y monoptongo (ay), todas utilizaron más el diptongo (ay) cuando se dirigían a sus niños, que cuando platicaban con el entrevistador, como se muestra en la figura 13.1. Además, una de las madres fue

especialmente directa al utilizar el habla dirigida al niño para enseñarle a su niño la pronunciación de nuevo vocabulario que contenía la producción larga (ay). Cuando presentaba una palabra en particular, un sustantivo, la madre la producía con gran énfasis y con una exageración en la producción de la semivocal. Una probable interpretación de estos datos podría ser que las madres están “enseñando” a sus hijos con la producción del diptongo (ay) más estándar. Aunque esta interpretación parece ir en contra de la afirmación de que los niños aprenden tanto patrones variables como invariables a muy temprana edad, una interpretación alternativa de los resultados sugiere que este no es el caso. Más bien a lo que los niños están expuestos es a la producción larga y variable de (ay). Las madres utilizaban mucho el monoptongo (ay) tanto en las conversaciones con sus niños y con el entrevistador. En el caso de la madre descrita anteriormente en realidad ella está exponiendo a su hija a una amplia gama de patrones variables---- desde una vocal plena hasta una semivocal exagerada y enfatizada. En este estudio, las madres parecen desempeñarse seriamente como “profesoras de lengua” y utilizan el habla dirigida al niño para ayudarlos en este proceso. Desde las primeras etapas del input lingüístico la variación está presente y algunas veces hasta es exagerada. El input también es importante en la adquisición de un segundo dialecto tal como lo mostraron los niños en un estudio de Payne (1980), quien descubrió que la edad y la complejidad del rasgo en relación al dialecto nativo del hablante, son factores importantes en la adopción de rasgos dialectales de Filadelfia para los nuevos residentes del lugar.

Chambers (1992) también descubrió que la edad de exposición al segundo dialecto afectó el éxito de su adquisición. Esto quiere decir que en su estudio los niños que estuvieron expuestos a un nuevo dialecto a una edad tardía fueron menos exitosos al adoptar éste en

comparación a los expuestos a una edad más temprana. Chambers también postuló ocho principios de la adquisición de un segundo dialecto para ayudar a predecir el proceso de adopción del rasgo dialectal por los nuevos hablantes.

Mientras algunos de estos principios, como lo es el efecto de representación ortográfica de la adquisición, no tienen importancia en la adquisición del primer dialecto, otros pueden ser vistos como un punto de partida para la investigación futura enfocada en descubrir como los niños de edad temprana y los de etapa preescolar adquieren formas dialectales. Por ejemplo, Chambers propone que ya sea o no variable una determinada forma en el habla nativa, en el dialecto que se está adquiriendo, ésta resulta ser variable en el habla de los nuevos hablantes. Él compara este fenómeno con el proceso de difusión léxico, en el cual el cambio lingüístico se dice que empieza con pocos términos léxicos, después, cuando éste alcanza a una cantidad de gente es generalizado dentro de una regla o proceso fonológico.

De manera similar, Kerswill (1996) examinó el dialecto en la ciudad recién desarrollada de Milton Keynes. En el trabajo previo y en este (e.g. Kerswill y Williams, 1992) también encontró que la edad de exposición a un dialecto en gran medida afectó el proceso de adquisición. Los hablantes de temprana edad (cuatro años de edad) tendieron a adoptar los rasgos de sus padres y por consiguiente mostraron más variación en esta población heterogénea, que los niños más grandes, quienes tendieron a unirse a una norma en común.

Kerswill también postula una jerarquía de dificultades para la adquisición de un segundo dialecto, la cual señala el préstamo léxico como el proceso más fácil que se puede lograr durante la vida. Lo más difícil pueden ser las reglas fonológicas condicionadas léxicamente las cuales pueden reflejar una difusión léxica casi completa y que sociolingüísticamente

no son sobresalientes (Kerswill 1996:200). Él llegó a la hipótesis de que estas reglas tienen que ser aprendidas a la edad de tres para que sean adquiridas completamente.

La investigación sobre la variabilidad del input lingüístico como se pudo ver en el estudio anterior, es un área de investigación especialmente nueva en la variación y cambio lingüístico. Sin embargo, puede ser particularmente útil observar estas cuestiones, como la transmisión de variación y cambio a través de las generaciones. También sería potencialmente útil examinar la génesis del estilo lingüístico en niños de temprana edad, ya que el rango estilístico se acentúa a menudo en tales registros como el habla dirigida al niño.

Finalmente, la integración de los resultados de la investigación de la adquisición de un segundo dialecto con la adquisición del primero podría parecer fructífera para ambas áreas de estudio. Particularmente, como algunos de los rasgos dialectales más complejos (e.g. la vocal *a* corta en Filadelfia y las reglas condicionadas léxicamente en Milton Keynes parecen requerir una intensidad en el input que puede ser muy raro en poblaciones que se mudan de un lugar a otro constantemente o esas en las cuales se está dando una nivelación de dialectos.

## **5. Una mirada hacia el futuro: La práctica social y los niños de temprana edad.**

Eckert (2000) habla acerca de la importancia de reconocer la variación dialectal en niños y adolescentes como una práctica social. Observa que aunque la adolescencia es una etapa donde las formas vernáculas se aceleran, la competencia sociolingüística ya se ha estado

desarrollando por años. En la secundaria, la influencia de las instituciones sociales y educativas es tal que el hablante se concentra en gran parte en compañeros de su misma edad y no en personas adultas. Sin embargo, antes de ese nivel, el foco de poder e influencia no es claro, o se podría decir que la transición de una completa concentración en los adultos como el origen de influencia en la infancia, hacia el poder de influencia que tiene un grupo de hablantes de la misma edad en la etapa de la adolescencia, es un proceso gradual.

Como fase de transición presenta un reto para los investigadores distinguir la influencia de los padres y de otros adultos importantes, de la de grupos de compañeros de edades previos a la edad adulta. En otras palabras, determinar el punto en el que los niños dejan principalmente de imitar el significado social de los adultos y empiezan a utilizar el lenguaje por sí mismos a nivel social, es un objetivo importante en la investigación de la variación en el niño, pero para el investigador es un objetivo difícil de alcanzar debido a la naturaleza efímera del proceso de desarrollo.

Por lo tanto, según los resultados de Eckert y la investigación previa, mucho de la investigación en niños de temprana edad se ha concentrado hasta aquí en descubrir la(s) edad(es) en el cual los niños adquieren particularmente patrones de variación y sus restricciones. De hecho, este estudio ha arrojado resultados importantes acerca de que algunas veces los niños adquieren patrones variables complejos a muy temprana edad y, al mismo tiempo, pueden empezar a hacer uso de la variación a nivel social. Estos resultados continúan replicándose con variables adicionales, en dialectos adicionales y comunidades de habla. Parece ser un objetivo de la investigación futura agregarle a estos resultados, una

exploración del emergente significado social de la variación en el niño en contextos interactivos familiares y de grupos de amigos.

Una situación análoga se puede ver en un primer trabajo de psicolingüística. Siguiendo el trabajo de Chomsky (1965), el cual tuvo un gran impacto no solamente en todo el campo de la lingüística, sino también en la investigación y teoría lingüística del niño, se necesitó mucho estudio psicolingüístico para el análisis sintáctico de lenguaje del niño en comparación con el de los adultos. Bloom y Lahey (1978) fueron algunos de los primeros en observar que el estudio lingüístico del niño tendría mucho éxito si las expresiones de los niños no fueran vistas como expresiones adultas inmaduras y si los niños no fueran vistos como adultos en miniatura y con errores, en vez de hablantes plenamente competentes del lenguaje infantil.

Bloom y Lahey hacen el siguiente argumento.

Durante el proceso de desarrollo, los niños no aprenden partes del habla adulta, y las descripciones de palabras que los niños utilizan como parte del habla adulta pueden ser engañosas. En lugar de eso, los niños aprenden cualquier forma que ellos escuchan y ven, en conjunción con las experiencias que se repiten regularmente y que son representadas en la memoria.

De esta manera, no es una coincidencia que en el modelo del habla adulta, *cookie* (galleta) y *sweater* (suéter) sean sustantivos, *see* (ver) y *put* (colocar/poner) sean verbos, *there* (allí-ahí), *more* (más) y *away* (lejos) sean adverbios y *up* (arriba) sea preposición. Son más

importantes las ideas y los elementos de contenido que los niños representan por medio de las palabras<sup>1</sup>.

(Bloom y Lahey 1978:39)

Bloom y Lahey observaron el lenguaje del niño como un sistema viable y vital, y un sistema de gran valor que es estudiado en toda su complejidad. Desarrollaron el concepto de relaciones semánticas para explorar como los niños de muy temprana edad codificaban el significado durante su habla espontánea. Por ejemplo, el concepto de relación de la no-existencia puede ser descrita como un objeto el cual no existe para el niño pero piensa que podría existir. Un niño puede expresar este concepto utilizando algunas de entre muchas formas. Ella podría decir, por ejemplo, *no*, *gone* (*ido*- pasado participio del verbo *go/ ir*), *allgone* (todos ido), o aún el nombre del objeto e.g. *cookie* (galleta) con una entonación creciente mientras busca el *cookie*. Algunas de estas son formas parecidas al habla adulta, mientras otras como, *allgone* están presentes solamente en la lenguaje del niño. Sin embargo, todas tienen la función de expresar el significado de la no- existencia.

El cambio de enfoque del lenguaje del niño como un sistema adulto imperfecto pero emergente, tiene un gran e importante impacto en el estudio de adquisición del lenguaje del niño. Parece que no es probable o al menos es muy difícil que tal avance psicolingüístico hubiera tenido lugar sin el previo volumen de investigación en el lenguaje adulto y de la emergente comparación del lenguaje del niño con un modelo adulto.

Lo mismo puede decirse sobre el estudio de la variación lingüística en el niño. Existe mucha evidencia de la riqueza y vitalidad de la variación en el lenguaje adulto y menos evidencia aunque en aumento sobre la habilidad de los niños para adquirir esta variación

1. Argumento destacado por la traductora.

durante el temprano proceso de aprendizaje de su lenguaje. Parece que es tiempo de indagar más profundamente en el conocimiento de la variación en los niños y su habilidad para utilizarlo para producir significados sociales. De nuevo, los resultados preliminares sugieren un futuro productivo en este tipo de trabajo. Se ha encontrado que los niños en edad preescolar participan en el cambio lingüístico al adoptar una redistribución léxica de palabras que contienen producciones cortas de *a* en un rango más alto que el de sus padres (Roberts y Lavob 1995) y adoptar formas de un dialecto nuevo que no es producido por ellos (Roberts 1997b, Kerswill 1996). También se ha observado diferencias de género (Foulkes et al. 1999, Roberts 1997a). Estudios actuales sobre el input que proporciona la persona que está al cuidado de niños pequeños y de niños en edad preescolar tienen el potencial de enseñarnos más acerca de la enseñanza directa e indirecta de la variación lingüística como identidad social. Sin embargo, están pendientes estudios más profundos acerca del establecimiento de la práctica social en niños que se encuentran en la etapa de la pre adolescencia. Mirando el futuro del estudio de la variación y el cambio lingüístico, sin duda alguna, un aspecto importante en esta exploración, son los hablantes más nuevos de una comunidad, ya que ellos son quienes adquirirán patrones del dialecto del mañana.

#### **IV. Analysis**

For several years, translators have played an important role in communication among different languages. They have to act as bridges for conveying knowledge and ideas between cultures and civilizations. A good translator understands the source language well, has specific experience in the subject matter of the original text, and is a good writer in the target language. Moreover, he is not only bilingual, but bicultural. All of these aspects are important. However, there are other abilities that translators must have. For instance, they must have the capacity of analyzing the source texts, the audience, and the purpose of the text, among other. Besides, translators must convey the message of the source language into the target language in such a way that it can be easily understood.

This monographic work is a translation of a scientific text and it is about child language variation and the acquisition of variable features by young children. As this text is related to the Linguistics field, there are many words and phrases that had to be consulted with experts in the field, such as linguists, professors as well as Linguistics dictionaries and articles related to this particular area.

Apart from requesting different opinions of experts in the field, it was necessary to apply different techniques to translate a word or phrase into the target language, keeping the original style and the author's ideas. Some of these techniques are Modulation, Borrowing, Calque, Literal, Transposition, among others.

During the process of the translation task, many difficulties were found. Some of them consisted of terms related to the linguistic field, which were ignored or did not have an equivalent in Spanish. The following examples were the most common and complex

problems when translating. Along with the example, a clear description about how these problems were solved step by step is presented.

### **Example 1**

#### ***Child Language Variation***

*Variación en el lenguaje del niño* (literal translation)

*Variación lingüística en el niño* (final versión)

Clearly in this example I made use of the calque technique by translating literally each of its elements, but with a different syntactic structure in the target language. As it can be seen in the sample above, first I used two prepositional phrases when translating which were “*en el lenguaje / del niño*”.

However, after consulting with experts in the field and some articles related to linguistics, it was necessary to make some changes to the first version. For example, there was the need to change the noun *lenguaje* for the adjective *lingüística*. Although, the use of the word *language* is not wrong, the use of the word *lingüística* is the most appropriate since in the linguistics field this word makes reference to the study of language form, language meaning and language in context. And, effectively, this research paper is about the acquisition of variable features of language by young children.

## Example 2

### Acquirers

#### *Aprendices*

During the translation, I found the term *acquirers* a little complicated to translate. In the English language this term refers to people who are acquiring their first language while the term *learner* is used when they are learning a second language. The term *acquirers* comes from the verb *acquire* (*adquirir*) but in the target language there is not a specific term that refers to acquire a first language. There is the word *adquisidor* but it is not used when acquiring a language. Then it was necessary to look for an equivalent word for *acquirer*.

In the Spanish language, there exists a term that is used in both cases; when learning a first or a second language and it is the word *aprendices*. I decided that this word was the most suitable one because it does not cause a misunderstanding in the target language, on the contrary, the original idea of the source language remains. In the target language, when people are learning their first or second language they are usually called *aprendices*. Clearly, I used the equivalence technique to translate the term *acquires*. However, the translator must be very careful when translating this term from the Spanish to the English language because in that case the translator will have to use a specific term (acquirer or learner) depending on the source language message.

### Example 3

**Children, on the other hand, were seen primarily as....**

*Los niños, por otro lado,  fueron vistos  como...*

Passive voice

*Por otro lado, a los niños  se les consideró  principalmente como...*

Active voice

The sentence above was a little difficult to translate because, first it was translated by using the literal translation, but this translated version did not give a clear meaning or sound natural in the target language. This is because, in the target language, it is not very common to use the passive voice but the active one. Therefore, I had to apply the modulation technique in order to convey the same message, but with a different point of view. I had to do some changes such as converting the passive sentence into an active one. In spite of the changes done, the idea of the original text is the same.

### Example 4

**...that the adolescent does not emerge, dialect intact, from a vacuum**

*... Que el adolescente no surge, dialecto intacto de un vacío (literal translation)*

s 1

s 2

*... que el adolescente no surge*

*de la nada sin un dialecto consigo.*

Literal translation

modulation technique

This is another sentence that caused some difficulty when translating. First, it was translated by using only the literal translation, but after consulting with experts in the linguistic field, this version was not understandable in the target language because the

resultant translation expressed two separated ideas when the appropriated way was to express only one idea by joining the two phrases.

After taking into account the opinions of experts in the field of linguistics some necessary changes were done. For example, it was necessary to apply both the literal and modulation techniques. As it can be seen in the example above, for the first part of the sentence the literal translation was used, but for the second part it was necessary to use other words to express the same idea in both languages. So, first it was necessary to look for a word that conveys the real meaning of *vacuum* into the target language without losing the original one since if it is translated literally, the translated word which is *vacío* would not give a clear meaning. Thus, in the target language it was found that people commonly use the phrase *de la nada* making reference to *vacío*. Besides, the phrase *dialect intact* was interpreted as *sin un dialecto consigo*. Therefore, the final version was; *que el adolescente no surge de la nada sin un dialecto consigo*.

### **Example 5**

#### **Glottal stop**

##### *Oclusiva glotal*

Particularly, the phrase above did not require of any translation technique for its translation into the target language because this is a phrase that had already been translated. To find the translated version it was as matter of consulting with experts in the linguistics area as well as literature related to the topic. A *stop* is a consonant sound and the way it is articulated is known as occlusive which means that it is produced by interrupting the

airflow in the vocal track. The occlusion of the vocal track stops all airflow. And the place it is articulated in is the glottis; that is why it is called *glottal*.

### **Example 6**

**She, like Fischer, did not break her findings down.**

*Al igual que Fischer, ella no separó sus resultados* (equivalence technique)

The example above was a little complicated to translate since it is a phrasal verb. Phrasal verbs are frequently used in English especially in informal and everyday speech. They also possess a wide number of linguistic properties that make their accurate translation into other languages a difficult task. Phrasal verbs are idiomatic expressions consisting of a verb + adverb or verb + preposition. They can have more than one meaning, which is why it is very important to learn them. Besides, it is very important to learn how to use them because some phrasal verbs require a direct object while others do not. Some of them can be separated by the object, while others cannot.

In this case, it was appropriate to use the equivalence technique since this phrase uses a different stylistic and structural method and it does not admit a literal translation. In English, it is very common to use phrasal verbs, but not in Spanish. In the English dictionary, *break something down* could mean *divide* or *separate* something. From these two synonyms, I decided that the word *separó* was the most appropriate because it expressed the authors' original idea clearly.

### **Example 7**

**... into more tightly compressed age ranges.**

*En rangos de edades más cerrados* ( modulation technique)

In both English and Spanish, it is very common to see phrases formed by several adverbs and most of the times these elements have the function of intensifiers. This is the case above; the phrase *more tightly* modifies the verb *compressed* and the phrase *more tightly compressed* means that there is not a wide margin among age ranges; on the contrary, the age ranges are limited. For this reason, it was necessary to express the same message in the target language in a totally different way, but maintaining the original meaning. So, the most suitable translated version was *en rangos de edades más cerrados*. This version conveys the same meaning as in the source text and sounds more natural in the target language in spite of changing the syntax of the sentence a little.

### **Example 8**

#### **Little language**

*Reducido léxico* (first version)

*Reducido lenguaje* (literal translation)

Following with the translation task, the phrase *Little language* caused some misunderstanding at the moment of translating, since the word *language* was translated as *léxico*. It was thought that *léxico* was the appropriate word since they are children and have a short vocabulary. But *léxico* and *vocabulary* are not the same. *Vocabulary* is about what

an individual knows and *léxico* is a list of words that belongs to a particular language. When children are one or two years old, they still do not know the lexicon of their language.

It is true that children at an early age do not know a wide range of words; they just begin to use words heard from their parents and complement them with gestures or sounds to show what they really want. So, the most appropriate translation was *lenguaje* since this term also involves sounds, gestures etc., to communicate something. Thus, the translation technique used in this example was the literal translation, although there was the need to look for a synonym for *little*, whose most common translations is *pequeño*, but most of the times this word makes reference to something small in size. So, in order to convey a clear meaning from the source language, *reducido* was considered more suitable. This way the final translation was *reducido lenguaje*.

### **Example 9**

#### **The younger the child, the more such features of child language...**

*Cuanto más joven es un niño, más características de su lenguaje* (modulation technique)

Most of the times when translating a text that is in a language with a different grammatical structure, different syntax and morphology, it is very common to find phrases like the one above.

This is a comparative phrase and in order to translate it into the target language, it was necessary to apply the modulation technique. In this case, there was the need to look for a variation in the form of the message without changing the original meaning. Obviously, all

those respective changes needed a change in the morphology, syntax and grammar structure of the target language. The most suitable translation was *Cuanto más joven es un niño, más características de su lenguaje....*This is a clear example about the importance of having syntactic and semantic knowledge about the source language.

### **Example 10**

#### **Children were making good progress in mastering**

*Los niños estuvieron haciendo buen progreso al dominar* (literal translation)

*Los niños tuvieron un buen avance en el dominio* (transposition technique)

Following with the translation task, I found a phrase in which the past continuous tense was used. However, when translating that phrase into the target language, it was not appropriate to use the literal translation because it would have not sounded natural in the target language. Then, it was necessary to use the transposition technique.

Obviously, a literal translation sounds unnatural and some experts in linguistics recommended changing the tense of the phrase, this with the purpose of having a clearer idea in the target language. This way, I decided to change the past continuous tense of the original phrase for the past simple tense. Besides, I had to look for a synonym for progress which was *avance* and finally I converted the gerund *in mastering* into the noun *dominio*.

All those changes were very important in order to convey the original meaning of the source language in a more natural way into the target language.

## **Example 11**

### **Input**

*Input* (borrowing technique)

### **Output**

*Output* (borrowing technique)

The two terms above are very commonly used terms in linguistic literature. Particularly, these two terms appeared in the source text frequently.

*Input* is all information children receive when acquiring a language.

*Output* refers to the production of language that has been acquired.

For the translator, it was complicated to decide whether or not to translate it into the target language since the majority of literature about this topic in Spanish includes these terms in English, with no translation in Spanish. So, in order to solve this problem the translator consulted experts in the linguistics field. After taking into account their opinions, the translator decided to keep those terms intact. Such a decision was made in order to introduce the flavor of the source language culture into the target language as well as maintain the original message. Clearly, the borrowing technique was used.

### **Example 13**

#### **And attended day care with Philadelphia children and teachers**

*Y asistían a guarderías con niños y maestros* (equivalence technique)

The term *day care* does not admit a literal translation nor a transposition or any other translation technique but the equivalence one. In the source language, the term *day care* refers to an institution that provides care for the children of working parents and in the target language there is a term which is similar to *day care*: *guardería*. I considered it appropriate to use the term *guardería* as an equivalent for *day care* because it is a well known and commonly used term in the target language.

### **Example 14**

#### **In a similar vein**

*De manera similar* (modulation technique)

Literally, this sentence is translated like; en *una vena similar* but it does not have sense in the target language. Therefore, in order to convey the idea of the original text, I had to find another way to express the same message, but keeping the original meaning provided by the author. In this sentence, the modulation technique was used to obtain the most appropriate sentence for such a phrase and it was *de manera similar*.

## Example 15

### Throughout the life span

*A lo largo de la vida* (modulation technique)

To make a clear translation of the source phrase, the translator applied the modulation technique. In the source language, *throughout the life span* refers to the period of time during which a human being, animal, etc. may be expected to live or function under normal conditions (as between birth to death). So, the translator had to find a phrase which conveys the same meaning as the source language. Finally, the phrase *a lo largo de la vida* was considered the most appropriate since the translator found that this phrase was commonly used by Spanish speakers and it makes reference to the period of time during which something is functional.

## Example 16

### Three mothers and toddlers (aged 18 to 19 months)

*Tres madres y sus respectivos niños (de año y medio de edad)* (adaptation technique)

In the sentence above, the word *toddlers* was complicated to translate in the target language because in the source language that word refers to children who are 1 to 3 years old approximately and in the target language there is not a specific term for this age range. In the target language, people commonly use the word *niño* when referring to their children since they are one year old and the word *bebé* is commonly used when their children are under one year. The translator had to find a word that can be considered as equivalent and the most appropriate word was *niño* because it does not cause a misunderstanding since there is not a classification of children by their age in the target language. However, the

translator must be careful when translating the term *niño* (from 1 to 3 years old) to the English language because in English there is a classification of children by their age as it can be seen in the chart below<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, as it is a translation from English to Spanish I used the adaptation technique in order to find an equivalent term without causing a misunderstanding in the target language.

<b>Stages<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Specific terms for each range age</b>	
Infancy	Infant	Babies from 1 month to one year.
	Toddler	Babies from 1 to 3 years approximately.
Early childhood	Child	Children from 3 to 6 years
Middle childhood		Children from 7 to 9 years

This classification is a clear example about the great difference between two languages.

While in the English language there are specific terms for each age range, in the Spanish language there is not. That is why the translator needs to know the lexicon of both languages very well.

<sup>1</sup><http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant>

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.ehow.com/facts\\_5476316\\_life-growing-stages-human-being.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_5476316_life-growing-stages-human-being.html)

### Example 17

#### He hypothesizes...

*Él postuló la hipótesis* (transposition technique).

The verbal phrase, *he hypothesizes* was translated using the transposition technique since it was necessary to change the verb *hypothesizes* by the noun *hipótesis*, and the replacement of that word does not change the meaning of the original word. In the Spanish language, it is very common to use the noun *hipótesis* instead of a verb. The final translated version for this word was *Él postuló la hipótesis*. Although it was necessary to add the verb *postuló* in order to clarify the meaning, it did not change the meaning of the original sentence.

### Example 18

**...more finely grained analyses are necessary to shed light on the resultant questions.**

*Se necesitan análisis más precisos para dar respuesta a las interrogantes que resulten.*

(transposition, equivalence and reduction techniques)

To translate the sentence above in such a way the translator conveys the same message into the target language, it was necessary to apply three different techniques: transposition, equivalence and reduction. This last technique belongs to the adaptation technique. First, the translator replaced the adjective *necessary* by the verb *necesitan* and then the adverbial phrase *more finely grained* became a shorter phrase *más precisos* (reduction) in order to sound more natural in the target language. Finally, I had to look for an equivalent phrase for *shed light on*. Literally, it is not understandable for a Spanish reader to say *liberar luz*. *Shed light on* is a verb phrase and I found some examples on the internet in which this phrase means *to clarify something*. Therefore, I had to find an equivalent phrase in the target

language and the most appropriate was *para dar respuesta*. This phrase is used to make something clear. The quality of these techniques applied when translating is that the translator could do several changes in the translation but at the end the message was the same as the author's.

### **Example 19**

#### **In an item by item fashion**

*De forma separada* (modulation technique)

Translating the sentence above was complicated because it did not admit a literal translation. It was necessary to use other words to express the original message into the target language. To translate that phrase, I had to look for some examples on the internet and I found that *item by item fashion* is a compound form which refers to *separate and distinct from others of the same kind*. Then, taking into account this meaning, I decided to translate the phrase *in an item by item fashion...* as: *de forma separada*. So, to translate the sentence it was necessary to apply the modulation technique since it required looking for another phrase that has the original meaning although the message is expressed in a totally different way.

### **Example 20**

#### **Although the teasing apart of social from development variation...**

*Aunque lo irónico de separar la variación social de la variación propia del desarrollo*

(literal translation).

First, I found it a little complicated to translate the phrase *teasing apart* because literally it means *aunque lo burlesco de separar...* but after requesting some opinions from experts I was advised to change the word *burlesco* since it could sound a little rude. Therefore, I had to look for a synonym for the word *teasing* and it was *irónico*. This last term was considered as the most appropriate because it makes reference to something contrary to what one expects, but with a humorous effect. And effectively, some linguists intend to put the *social from development variation* apart, but this has been quite debated and is still a great challenge.

### **Example 21**

**Closer looks at input have been taken by variationists examining a number of features.**

*Cercanas miradas al input han sido realizadas por expertos en variación, examinando varias características* (literal translation).

*Expertos en variación han observado más de cerca el input, examinando varias características* (transposition and modulation technique).

It is possible to do a literal translation as the following: *cercanas miradas al input han sido realizadas por expertos en variación, examinando varias características*. Although this version is understandable in the target language, it does not sound natural. In the Spanish language, it is not very common to use the passive voice but the active one. The first version is very similar to the English version and it makes the translated version sound unnatural in the target language. For this reason, I decided to make some changes such as

applying the transposition and modulation techniques. First, the passive voice sentence *have been taken by variationists* became into an active one. Besides, the noun *looks was* converted in the verb phrase *han observado* in order to clarify the meaning in the target language. In spite of the changes done, there was no change in the original meaning.

### **Example 22**

**From no glide at all to an exaggerated, highly stressed glide.**

*Desde una vocal plena hasta una semivocal exagerada y enfatizada* (literal translation).

The term *glide* is a linguistic term that has been already translated and it is very common to find it in linguistics literature. However, to be sure about the meaning of this term, it was necessary to consult it with experts. According to them, the term *glide* is known as *semivocal*. Then, if the phrase is negative (*no glide*) it is understood that it is a vowel. Once I had the meaning of the term glide, the rest of the sentence was translated literally.

### **Example 23**

**This finding runs counter to those reported by others.**

*Este resultado contradice lo que otros han reportado* (equivalence technique).

Literally, *runs counter to* means *va en contra de* but it does not sound natural and appropriate in the target language. In the source language, *runs counter to* means *to have a contrary effect or action*. So, in order to achieve a closest register to the source language, it was necessary to apply the equivalence technique. It was necessary to look for a word in the target language that delivers the same meaning as in the original one. In the target

language there is a word that fits better and it is *contradice*. Therefore, the final translation is: *Este resultado **contradice** lo que otros han reportado.*

#### **Example 24**

**...linguists engaged in the exploration of the nature vs. nurture question in child development.**

*...lingüistas interesados en explorar el factor naturaleza versus crianza en el desarrollo del niño* (literal translation).

The terms *nature* and *nurture* are terms that have already been translated into Spanish. Therefore, it was not necessary to apply any translation techniques; it was only a matter of consulting literature related to this topic and with experts in the linguistic area. According to the literature related to these two terms, *naturaleza* makes reference to the influence of heredity and genetics on human's social advancement while the term *crianza* refers that humans develop from environmental influences. Once I have founded the meaning of those terms, the whole sentence was translated literally.

#### **Example 25**

**By a rather small sample of children in age groups spanning several years.**

*Por una muestra bastante pequeña de niños en grupos de edades que se extendían muchos años* (literal translation).

*Por una muestra bastante pequeña de niños con diferentes grupos etarios cubriendo edades avanzadas* (modulation technique).

As it can be seen in the first version, I translated the sentence literally but it was not understandable at all. This first version was not clear and besides it did not transmit the same message as in the source language. So, after consulting with experts in the area, I realized that the author of the text expresses that in those age groups there were older children participants. Then, the first version that expressed that the age groups last several years was wrong. For this reason, it was necessary to make some changes to the first version. This way, I decided to translate the sentence by applying the modulation technique and the final version was the following:

*Por una muestra bastante pequeña de niños con diferentes grupos etarios cubriendo edades avanzadas.*

#### **Example 26**

**Rather, it has been viewed more frequently as detrimental, or part of the “noise” in the degenerate quality of the input data children receive.**

*Más bien, se ha visto frecuentemente como perjudicial o parte del “ruido” en la calidad degenerada del input que los niños reciben (literal translation).*

*Más bien, se ha visto frecuentemente como perjudicial o parte del “ruido” que puede degradar la calidad del input que los niños reciben (transposition technique).*

First, I translated the sentence literally, but after consulting with experts I decided to make some changes because the last part of the translated version (*in the degenerate quality of the input data children receive*) was not understandable although grammatically it is well written. It was necessary to analyze the role of the adjective *degenerate* in the rest of the

sentence. Then, I made use of the transposition technique in order to clarify the meaning of the phrase *in the degenerate quality of the input*. This way, the word *degenerate*, which has the function here of an adjective, became in a verb (*degradar*). Moreover, there was also the need of adding the verb phrase *que puede* in order to give sense to the whole phrase.

### **Example 27**

**Historically, variation in input has not been seen by the linguistic community as necessary helpful to a child's acquisition of language.**

*Históricamente, los lingüistas no han visto la variación en el input como necesariamente útil en la adquisición del lenguaje del niño (modulation technique).*

The phrase above is a clear example of the modulation technique, since it was necessary to convert a passive voice sentence into an active one.

In the Spanish language it is not very common to use the passive voice but the active one. In spite of the change done by the translator the meaning of the source language is the same in the target text. Therefore, the modulation technique was the most appropriate in this sentence.

### **Example 28**

**...child speakers were not seen as miniature, but flawed, adults rather than fully competent speakers of child language.**

*... los niños no fueran vistos como miniaturas sino como adultos con errores, en vez de hablantes plenamente competentes de su lenguaje (literal translation).*

... los niños no fueran vistos como adultos en miniatura y con errores, en vez de hablantes plenamente competentes de su lenguaje (final version).

As it can be seen, I translated the sentence literally with a change in the syntax of the words. But, after consulting with experts I realized that the way I translated the adjectives *miniature* /*flawed* was wrong because I translated them using two opposite ideas. After a careful analysis and taking into account the opinions of experts, I realized that the two adjectives were complements of the noun *adults* and then both of them should be translated as complement of it. It is very important to mention that for the first and second version, it was necessary to make a little change regarding to the word *flawed*. This is an adjective which refers to *defect* or *fault* and then it was appropriate to use the noun *errores* as synonym of *defectos* when translating.

### **Example 29**

#### **Caretaker**

*Persona que está al cuidado del niño* (modulation technique).

The term above was a little complicated to translate because in the target language there are some words that could be related to this term, such as: *niñera* and *cuidador*. However, none of them is the most suitable for *caretaker* because the first term refers to someone who takes care of children and she or he receives a payment for its service, while the other one is a general term that could refer to a person whose job is to take care of a building or something like that. And in the source text *caretaker* refers to the any person who is in charge of children and this person could be, the mother, sister, uncle, etc. Then, to translate this term into the target language it was necessary to apply the modulation technique. This

way, I had to look for an expression in the target language without losing the original meaning of the source language. Finally, the phrase *persona que está al cuidado del niño* was the most appropriate since this phrase maintains the author's original message.

Generally speaking, during the analysis of this text many difficulties were found, most of them were about key terms related to the linguistic field, others were about phrasal verbs and other difficulties were related to equivalent terms in the target language. The source text "*child language variation*" contains very useful information for those people who are interested in linguistic researchers and this very information makes this text is a little difficult to translate because it contains many terms that are used in linguistics by researchers and a wrong translation of those terms could create a misunderstanding in the target language and, as a consequence, the loss of the author's original idea. For these reasons, the translator had to be very careful when translating the text and looked for more linguistic literature in order to have a clear idea about what the author was referring to. Moreover, the translator also required the opinions of experts in the linguistic field in order to translate and transmit the same message in the target text.

## CONCLUSIONS

Before starting this translation, I thought that it would be an easy task but during the translation process I realized that I was wrong. Based on my experience, I could say that being a translator is like being an engineer; if an engineer does not build a bridge strongly, it could collapse, and if a translator does not translate a word or phrase appropriately, then he/she could not act as a bridge that communicates knowledge and ideas among languages, cultures and civilizations.

Undoubtedly, the translator has a great responsibility for transmitting the reader the correct message from the author, and to achieve that goal, he or she needs to respect the style and the ideas of the author among other aspects. It is clear that the translator has the task of conveying the ideas with accuracy and faithfulness.

Particularly, during this translation process, I found it difficult to decide whether to keep some terms in English or not. I required the help of some experts in linguistics about the meaning of some terms such as *glide*, *output*, *input*, *glottal stop*, among other in order to avoid a misunderstanding when translating into the target language. Let us remember that the translation needs to be the closest, the most accurate and faithful to the source text. I also faced other problems when translating. For example, I translated some phrases literally, but at the moment of reading the text, I realized that it sounded understandable and unnatural and the author's message was wrong. Then, it was necessary to consult experts in the topic of the text, who helped me to confirm that, in fact, the translated version was not appropriate. Thanks to this, I made the decision of using other translation techniques in order to achieve a clear and accurate translation of the source text.

Another difficult problem was to find terms that did not admit a literal translation or any translation technique other than the equivalence one. It was complicated to find appropriate equivalent terms in the target language, but thanks to suggestions from experts I could find the most suitable terms when translating.

Something that is important to mention is that in English it is very common to find juxtapositional adjectives that can cause a misunderstanding in the target language if they are not translated appropriately. For example, during this translation process, I found an example of juxtaposed adjectives that described a noun only, and I made the mistake of translating them using two opposite ideas when the appropriate was to join the translated adjectives in just one sentence.

From this experience, I realized how important it is to get familiarized with the topic of the original text before starting the translation task, specifically when it is a scientific translation because there will be several terms that for its translation they will require specific translation techniques. In my case, I found many linguistic terms that were difficult to translate and I needed to consult literature about the child language variation as much as it was possible. Thanks to this I could understand more about what the author was talking about.

During the translation, I used many tools in order to make a good translation. For instance, it was necessary to use the different translation techniques proposed by Viney and Dalbelnet described in the theoretical framework of this monographic work. Besides, other sources of information were used such as dictionaries, books, articles on line, and experts in

the linguistics field, among other, which were very useful at the moment of seeking for a solution.

As translator of this research paper, I recommend those who are interested in becoming translators to be open minded to the different versions when translating a text because there does not exist only one way to translate a text. However, all translators must focus on getting the goal of achieving a clear and faithful translation of the source language (SL). I really hope that this monographic work will become a guide for those students who are interested in getting a bachelors´ degree in the English Language. This piece of work is a clear example of how translation techniques are used when translating a text. It is the desire of the translator that this translated text be used by all those professionals, translators, students and people interested in the topic.

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# Appendix

## **13 Child Language Variation**

Julie Roberts

Child language variation is a relatively new concentration within the field of sociolinguistics. To be sure, children have been included from time to time in studies of variation, beginning with Fischer's groundbreaking examination of (ing) variation among school children in 1958. However, the focus of this work has not been on children before adolescence for both theoretical as well as methodological reasons. The purpose of this chapter will be to review briefly the work leading up to the more recent interest in child language variation, to discuss the possible reasons for the relative neglect of this age group historically, and to examine recent work concentrating on the acquisition of variable features by young children and possible directions for future research.

### **1 .History of Child Language Variation**

There are a number of reasons why the early work on language variation and change did not focus on the speech of young children. For one, the field itself is only approximately 40 years old. It appears reasonable in a new field of linguistic study, particularly one building on that of dialectology—a notably adult-focused discipline—that data would be collected first on speakers who were thought to control the particular dialect in question and its variations. Children, on the other hand, were seen primarily as “acquirers” of the vernacular of a speech community, not necessarily as contributors to its maintenance and change. Indeed, Labov (1964) noted that although dialect features are learned during childhood, it is during adolescence that socially significant variation is

demonstrated. In addition, with his early work (1963, 1966, for example), Labov initiated the study of language variation and change, including using synchronic data to illuminate past linguistic patterns and changes as well as to predict future change. This practice depends crucially on the assumption that dialect patterns, once attained in adulthood, do not change significantly throughout the life span. Although this assumption continues to be debated within the literature, it is the source of much synchronic work and encourages a focus on the speech of adults, since that of children acquiring a linguistic system would not, in principle, be useful in the study of historical processes.

In addition to adult-focused research, explorations of the speech of adolescents have also been extremely fruitful. The evidence for the robustness of the adolescent peer-group-created vernacular is abundant and will not be disputed in this chapter. Rather, it is suggested that the adolescent does not emerge, dialect intact, from a vacuum (Roberts 1999, Eckert 2000). The foundations for adolescent, and adult, speech patterns are laid down in childhood, during the early language acquisition process, and it would appear useful to look to the dialects of children for answers to some of the questions of linguistic variation and change.

As noted above, some very early variationist work did include children as participants. Most notably, Fischer (1958) found social variation in children, aged 3 to 10, and stylistic variation in a 10-year-old boy. However, he did not separate the children by age in his analysis, so it is impossible to state whether or not the youngest children in his study shared the pattern documented in his overall results.

Others examined variation in young speakers as well, but most frequently concentrated on school age, rather than preschool, children. For example, Romaine (1978) continued the exploration of social and stylistic variation in children by looking at the production of word final /r/ in Scottish English by 6-, 8-, and 10-year-old children and found gender, age, and style variation. Her conclusions were noteworthy not only because they documented the acquisition of social variation in young speakers, but also because she concluded they were participants in linguistic change. That is, the girls were taking part in a change from above the level of consciousness favoring a prestige variant, and the boys were participating in a change from below the level of consciousness favoring a variant with less, or perhaps covert, prestige. Similarly, Reid (1978) examined the production of glottal stop and the alternation of (ing) and found style variation in 11-year-old boys in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Purcell (1984) documented social and style variation operating on several variables produced by 5- to 12-year-old speakers of Hawaiian and “General” American English. She, like Fischer, did not break her findings down by age, making it impossible to determine the contribution of her youngest speakers to her findings. Nevertheless, the results are encouraging in showing the sensitivity to stylistic and social factors in the pre-adolescent years.

One of the first studies to look at variation in preschool children was also one of the first to examine linguistic constraints on variation in children of any age. Kovac and Adamson (1981) studied deletion of finite *be* in African-American and European-American 3-, 5- and 7-year-olds. This is a well-documented feature of African-American English (Wolfram 1969, Labov 1969, 1972, Baugh 1986, Rickford et al. 1991, among others). As

has been found to be the case with other dialect features throughout the history of variation studies, *be* is deleted systematically by adult speakers and is much more likely to be deleted in some linguistic and social contexts than in others. For example, Labov (1969) demonstrated the relationship between contraction of *be* in European-American English dialects and deletion of *be* in African-American English. He found that contraction and deletion were favored by the presence of a preceding pronoun over a preceding noun, and by auxiliary *be* over copula *be*, particularly the *be* + *gonna* environment. Preceding phonological environment has also been found to affect contraction and deletion of *be*. By utilizing this variable and following the analysis of Labov (1969) the authors considered a question which continues to be critical in this field—that of developmental versus dialectal variation in child language. They found that for the European American children, absence of finite *be* appeared to be developmental in nature. For the African-American children, however, the results varied by socio-economic class. Working-class African-American children acquired the deletion rule before the middle-class children, whereas contraction preceded deletion for the middle-class children. The constraints on deletion were even more difficult to acquire than the rule itself. Although both grammatical and phonological constraints for contraction had been acquired by both groups of African American children by age 3, the constraints on deletion typical of adult speakers had not been completely acquired by age 7.

Guy and Boyd (1990) examined the grammatical constraints on (-t,d) deletion in their study of its use by speakers aged 4 to 65 in “semi-weak” or “ambiguous” past tense English verbs, such as *lost*, *told*, and *slept*. Like contraction and deletion of *be*, (-t,d) deletion is a widely studied phenomenon in dialects of English (Labov et al. 1968, Wolfram

1969, Fasold 1972, Guy 1980, Neu 1980). It is a form of consonant cluster reduction involving word-final clusters ending in /t/ or /d/ and is influenced by both the grammatical form of the word in containing the (-t,d) feature as well as phonological constraints, particularly the phonological segment following the cluster, and social features, such as gender, social class, and ethnicity (Guy 1980). Guy and Boyd concluded that acquisition of (-t,d) deletion in semi-weak verbs was potentially a long process, with the youngest speakers not producing the stop segments at all, leading the authors to conclude that they were not present in their underlying representations of the forms. A group of adult speakers deleted (-t,d) in final clusters in semi-weak verbs at an intermediate rate, between monomorphemic words and past tense verbs, demonstrating their analysis as a separate morphological class. A mid-level group, comprising older children and some adults, however, appeared to analyze the semi-weak verbs as essentially the same as monomorphemic words (e.g. *mist*, *cent*) and deleted the final segment accordingly, demonstrating that the treatment of the semi-weak verbs as a separate morphological class is incomplete even in some adult speakers.

Finally, Labov (1989) studied stylistic and linguistic variation for (-t,d) deletion and (ing) apicalization in a small sample of children and their parents outside Philadelphia. He found that a 7-year-old boy replicated his parents' patterns of stylistic and linguistic variation in (-t,d) deletion with the exception of treating semi-weak verbs identically to monomorphemic words. This child had also mastered both the linguistic and stylistic constraints on the alternation of (ing), a 6-year-old had mastered only the stylistic variation, and a 4-year-old showed no sign of acquiring the constraints on the (ing) alternation at all.

## 2. Current Issues in Child Language Variation

Early studies that included children in their participant groups suggest that children do acquire socially influenced variable patterns prior to adolescence and may even participate in the process of language change. Methodological challenges, however, make it problematic to answer some of the relevant questions that have emerged. One difficulty is that studies of variation generally require large amounts of data per speaker to be useful—either statistically or in charting vowel systems. In fact, Roberts (1996) reported that approximately 8–14 hours of child interview time was required to collect data on (-t,d) deletion comparable to that collected in a 1- to 2-hour adult interview. This amount of data may be difficult to collect from very young children. The early studies, discussed above, solved this dilemma either by using very small samples (one or two children) or by combining the data from their youngest children with that of older children, particularly as it must be collected in a short period of time to minimize the effect of maturation. Although these methods resulted in clear indications of acquisition of variation, more finely grained analyses are necessary to shed light on the resulting questions.

A second challenge in the exploration of child variation is the difficulty of distinguishing between variation that is socially motivated and that which is developmental in nature. This problem is complicated by the fact that, particularly as children become older, they become far more focused on their peers as primary dialect influences and much less so on their parents and other adult speech community members (Labov 1972, Eckert 2000). Eckert, in particular, notes the importance of emphasizing that the child's sociolinguistic system at any given age is not merely a “manifestation of an effort to

develop ‘real’ language, but a fully mature linguistic form for that stage of language” (2000: 10). Although this child-centered focus on language acquisition is not new to psycholinguistic research (see, for example, Bloom and Lahey 1978), the child variationist, in fact, will receive less help from this field of inquiry than might be expected. One reason for this is that the primary focus of research in child language acquisition has been on categorical features of language. Although individual variation is acknowledged, it is frequently seen as a difference in learning style—with all styles leading to the same endpoint, the acquisition of an adult linguistic system and any remaining differences indicating potential communicative or cognitive disorders (Nelson 1973, 1975). For the most part, child language data have been examined minutely for structural consistencies in the speakers’ utterances (Menyuk 1977). At the level of phonology, on which most variation studies, particularly child variation studies, have focused, the emphasis has also been on consistency and categoricity. Intra-speaker variation is characterized in terms of its difference from adult forms. As Ingram (1986: 223) states, “As the child gets away from the peculiarities of his individual ‘little language’, his speech becomes more regular, and a linguist can in many cases see reasons for his distortions of normal words.” More contemporary child language research, following generative linguistic theory, centers on constraints on production, as opposed to rules and processes, but the emphasis continues to be on “emergent systematicity” (Vihman 1996).

Another reason that child language literature is of limited help in tackling the question of socially meaningful variation is related to the methodological challenge posed above. Early child language studies were often diary studies, first with researchers (often also parents) writing down productions of interest, then, later, tape recording them. (See,

for example, Bloom 1973, Brown 1973, Labov and Labov 1976.) These studies involved very small subject groups—often only one child. They also tended to be longitudinal in nature, so although the total data pool might be quite large, individual samples at each age were often much smaller. As sociolinguists examine child language samples for the systematic variation located within language itself (as noted by, e.g., Weinreich et al. 1968), the need for larger quantities of data from each speaker becomes obvious. Within the past decade, studies have reflected these concerns by attempting to collect larger quantities of data from younger speakers. An ongoing challenge is that the younger the child, the more such features of child language as limited intelligibility and telegraphic speech greatly increase the time needed to collect a sufficient size data pool. At the same time, the researcher must collect speech samples efficiently to minimize the impact of maturation during the data-gathering period itself. In spite of these concerns, current research has included children at the very early stages of language acquisition as well as older ones. The next section discusses some of this work and its implications on child language and variationist literature.

### **3. Variable Output: Child Language Production**

Whereas most, although not all, of the previously discussed work has included children as the lower end of the age range in a study of speakers of varying ages, more recently the focus of child language variation research has been specifically on these younger speakers. The resultant studies have been characterized, generally, by larger data sets and by child speaker groups broken down into more tightly compressed age ranges. Adults, often the children's parents, have functioned more as comparison data and, in later work, providers of

the children's language input, much as they have functioned in studies of first language acquisition.

Labov (1989) noted that as children's language input is variable, as demonstrated by the voluminous research on adult variation, it stands to reason that children's output would be also. This statement, reasonable as it may seem, however, is a long way from demonstrating the connection between language input and a resultant child language system. This very connection has been hotly debated for years by psycholinguists and linguists engaged in the exploration of the nature vs. nurture question in child development. The role of language input in child language variation is discussed in the next section, but, in general, it is not necessary for variationists to enter into the center of this debate in order to discuss the modeling and acquisition of language features that are clearly socially governed and dialect specific. Therefore, the first of these more specific studies took as a working assumption that the early input children receive is indeed variable and examined instead the question of whether or not very young children reproduced these dialect features themselves and at what age.

For example, Roberts (1996, 1997a) examined the much-studied English variable (-t,d) deletion in 3- and 4-year-old Philadelphia children. As discussed above, social, grammatical and phonological constraints have all been found to be operating on the phenomenon of (-t,d) deletion in adult speakers of English. Whereas Guy and Boyd (1990) noted, among other findings, that very young children did not include these word final stops in their lexical representations of semi-weak verb forms, their study was, as noted above, characterized by a rather small sample of children in age groups spanning several years. The purpose of Roberts' study was to examine this same phenomenon with a larger

sample of more closely age-matched speakers. Sixteen children served as participants in this study, which comprised 146 hours of audio-taping. Tokens of possible (-t,d) deletion items ranged in number from 44 from an especially quiet child to about 250 from more verbal children. The children were found to be well on their way to acquiring the phonological and morphological constraints on (-t,d) deletion found in many studies of adult speakers. They demonstrated an acquisition of the following segment constraint that was very close to that of adults, including the inhibiting effect of following pause on deletion, found to be typical in Philadelphia but not in New York by Guy (1980). This particular finding suggested strongly that the children were indeed learning socially significant features, not responding to a universal constraint of consonant cluster reduction. Further, the children demonstrated the adult pattern of deleting (-t,d) segments more often in monomorphemic words than in regular past tense verbs. For the semi-weak verbs, however, the similarity with adult speech ended, with the children consistently treating the semi-weak verbs like monomorphemic words (i.e. high probability of deletion, but not categorical deletion as found by Guy and Boyd) and the adults treating them like regular past tense verbs (i.e. low probability of deletion). In addition, examination of the data revealed that as the children produced increased numbers of more sophisticated grammatical forms, such as participles, they demonstrated adult-like deletion with them, suggesting that variation is learned simultaneously with the related grammatical and lexical forms. The resulting argument was that the children were indeed engaging in systematic variation, often quite similar in structure to those of their parents, and they did appear to include the final (-t,d) stops in their underlying representations of semi-weak verbs. The results strongly suggested that the children were formulating rules, not learning patterns in an item-by-item fashion, and they demonstrated adult like patterns of deletion only when

they shared an adult-like structural analysis. Finally, there were indications of early emerging gender differences, as the girls in the study deleted (-t,d) more often than the boys—a finding in contrast to most studies of the same variable in adult speakers. The study explored children's acquisition of stable variation only, however. It did not address children's acquisition of sound change in progress, nor did it explore the question of whether or not children were able to move beyond acquisition and participate in the variation and change patterns of the speech community of which they were a part.

Roberts and Labov (1995) examined these issues in a study of acquisition of the Philadelphia short *a* (as in *cat*) pattern by some of the same preschool children participating in Roberts (1996, 1997a). The vowel pattern in question is a highly complex one and features lexical, phonological, and grammatical conditioning. For example, short *a* preceding /f/, /θ/, /s/, /m/ and /n/ is raised and tensed, whereas in the environment of /p/, /b/, /d/, /k/, etc., the production of short *a* is low and lax. However, there are lexical exceptions to this phonological conditioning in that in the words *mad*, *bad*, and *glad*, in which short *a* would be predicted to be lax, it is, in fact, tense. In spite of the complexity of this pattern, the children demonstrated significant learning of Philadelphia short *a*. Some of the more straightforward and stable constraints, such as tensing before nasals and in *mad*, *bad*, and *glad*, were consistently produced. However, some of these patterns have been demonstrated to be in the process of change, such as the environments before /l/ (e.g. *personality*) and intervocalic /n/ (e.g. *planet*), to the tense short *a* class in adult Philadelphia speakers. Yet, they were still being acquired by the children. Between the ages of 3 and 4, they demonstrated active improvement in their learning of these features. They also showed increased rates of tensing in these environments where change was occurring as compared

with adults, which suggested that they were beginning to participate actively in the process of language change. This finding has important implications to the future study of this area as it highlights the possibility that children of this age are interesting to variationists, not only because they are actively acquiring socially-governed features but also because they are influencing changes and may be indicating sites of change that may be accelerated or otherwise modified as the children mature.

Foulkes et al. (1999) also explored the acquisition of variation in preschool children. In their study of glottal variation in 40 children from Newcastle upon Tyne, aged 2 to 4 years, they found that children were able to learn sophisticated variable patterns at quite young ages. Glottalization of /t/ encompasses both the replacement and the reinforcement of /t/ by glottal stop. They pointed out that, unlike traditional phonological researchers, they were not interested in the emergence of phonological contrasts but rather in the range of alternants acquired by the children, and, similar to previous findings on other variables, they concluded that the children were making good progress in mastering the complicated glottal stop pattern. In addition, however, acoustic analysis revealed that high degrees of pre-aspiration of /t/ was found in the children's speech, including that of the 2-year-olds, for (t) in utterance-final position. This finding runs counter to those reported by others, such as Locke (1983, in Foulkes et al. 1999: 17), who claimed children to be “operating under phonological rules of simplification.” This pre-aspiration pattern was found to be predominant in the speech of young women in Newcastle upon Tyne, but it was adopted by both the boys and girls in the study. Finally, there are some patterns of glottalization that are lexically restricted, such as the substitution of glottal stop for /t/ in word-final, pre-pausal position, as well as the use of [r] for /t/. Although amounts of this type of data were

small in the samples (19 tokens), the children did appear to show sensitivity to this type of lexical conditioning, in that they produced [r] only in words that would tolerate them in adult speech.

The work discussed above demonstrates clearly that children begin their acquisition of variation early—presumably with the acquisition of language. Although the “teasing apart” of social from developmental variation continues to be a challenge in this area, there is evidence in the form of emerging gender differences and some early findings of style differences that socially motivated variation has its beginnings in the earliest phases of language acquisition (Reid 1978, Romaine 1978, Labov 1989, Roberts 1996, 1997a, Eckert 2000). Continued work, with even larger data sets, is necessary to do the type of examinations of social class and other extra-linguistic factors that have been so fruitful in adult language variation studies. In short, however, all of the preceding work underscores the point that children are indeed members of their speech communities from their earliest linguistic interactions and have much to tell us about early variation and change.

#### **4. Variable Input: Child Directed Speech (CDS)**

With the existing evidence supporting the hypothesis that children are acquiring variable patterns early along with categorical forms, researchers began to look more closely to the input children were receiving and to their responses to that input. Historically, variation in input has not been seen by the linguistic community as necessarily helpful to a child's acquisition of language. Rather, it has been viewed more frequently as detrimental, or part of the “noise” in the “degenerate quality” of the input data children receive (Chomsky 1965: 58). Even the considerable research on child directed speech (CDS), beginning with

Ferguson (1977), is focused on the simplification, exaggeration, and consistency of the input and its effectiveness or, sometimes, lack of effectiveness in language teaching, not on its variety. Closer looks at input have been taken by variationists examining a number of features.

Labov (1990) noted the similarity between children's dialect-specific productions and those of their mothers, and hypothesized that the early child care situation which is often female dominated could lead to a favoring of female-led sound changes and a disfavoring of those led by males. Roberts (1997b) examined this hypothesis again, using the same Philadelphia preschool speakers. It was found that the female-led changes were, in fact, learned most effectively by the children as compared with the one male-led change—the centralization of long (ay), as in *kite*. In addition, even though all of the children in the study were natives of Philadelphia and attended day care with Philadelphia children and teachers, the changes were acquired most effectively by the children who also had parents who were Philadelphia natives. These results support the conclusion that early input is important, at least in the early learning of socially-influenced variables.

Foulkes et al. (1999) also noted the importance of early input. As previously noted, they found that the features of pre-aspiration characterizing the speech of young women were more easily learned by both the boys and girls in their study than features characteristic of adult men in the community. They also made the argument that rather than being dysfunctional to language acquisition, variation in the input to young speakers can actually enhance the movement from the holistic word level of representation to segmental awareness by producing allophonic examples, which “may serve to highlight the location of permutable components of words” (Foulkes et al. 1999: 20).

The movement from the lexical to the segmental level of phonological acquisition is a subject that continues to engage psycholinguists and developmental phonologists. Agreement as to the nature and timing of this process is still elusive. Whereas some researchers have found segmental awareness to occur early in the language acquisition process, others have reported that it continues well into the school years. (See Vihman 1996, for a review of this literature.) In addition to aiding this process in children, as Foulkes et al. propose, it is possible that the presence of socially-governed, allophonic variation in young children, noted by Foulkes et al. and Roberts (1996, 1997a) and others, also supports an argument for early segmental awareness. At the very least, the findings suggest an early beginning to this phenomenon.

This emergence of segmental awareness could also indicate to young children the locations of systematic variation in the input grammar—locations that could be exploited in later years. Some preliminary work on Southern American English, as spoken by mothers to their toddlers and to an interviewer in Memphis, Tennessee suggests that this may be the case (Roberts 1999). Three mothers and toddlers (aged 18 to 19 months) were tape-recorded during play. The variable in question was monothongal long (ay), as in [ka:t] for *kite*, documented both in Alabama speech (Feagin 1979) and in Memphis adults (Fridland 1999). Two of the three children produced both monothongal and diphthongal long (ay), while the third produced only monothongal (ay). As the toddlers were just beginning to acquire diphthongs, the variation in these speakers was most likely developmental, not socially governed. However, observation of two 4-year-old speakers revealed that their long (ay) productions also contained both monothongal and diphthongal tokens. Although further research is needed for documentation, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that in

these children, the variation of long (ay) would continue, whereas children speaking dialects in which long (ay) is more consistently diphthongal would move from developmental variation to near-categorically diphthongal productions.

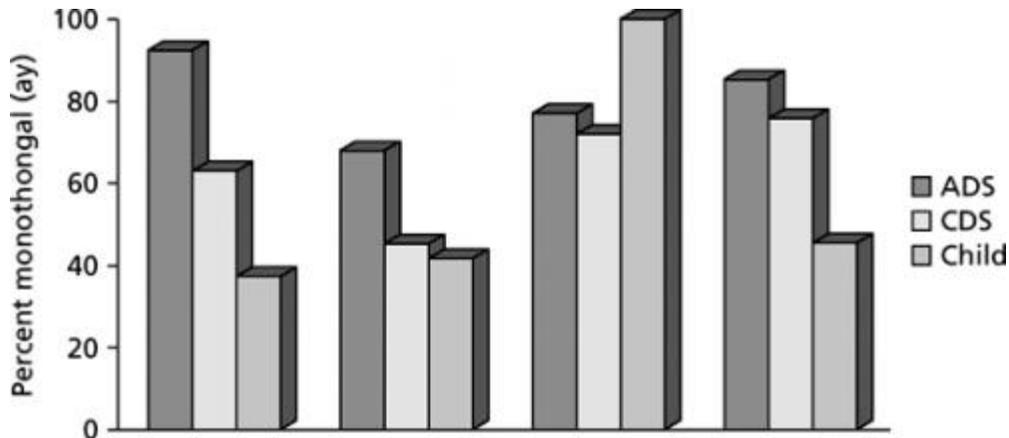


Figure 13.1 Comparison of adult and child directed speech of mothers and their toddlers' speech: monophthongization of long /ay/

More than the behavior of the children, however, it was the Child Directed Speech (CDS) of their mothers that revealed some clues about the process of early dialect learning. CDS has been frequently studied by psycholinguists as a widespread way of speaking to very young children (Ferguson 1977). (Similar registers have been observed in speech directed to animals, foreigners, intimate acquaintances, etc.) Although the efficacy of this register in stimulating language development continues to be debated, it appears clear that to the extent that variation is present in CDS, it becomes part of the child's linguistic input. In the current study, the mothers were tape-recorded both playing with their toddlers and speaking to an interviewer. Although all three mothers demonstrated variation between

diphthongal and monothongal (ay), they all used more diphthongal (ay) when talking to their children than when talking to an interviewer, as shown in figure 13.1. In addition, one of the mothers was especially straightforward in using CDS to instruct her child in the pronunciation of new vocabulary containing long (ay). When introducing a word, particularly a noun, she would produce it with great stress and exaggerate the glide. A likely interpretation of these data would be that the mothers are “instructing” their children in the more standard diphthongal production of (ay). Although this may seem to run counter to the claim that children learn variable patterns very early as they learn invariant ones, an alternative interpretation of the findings suggests that this is not the case. Rather, what the children are, in fact, exposed to is variable production of long (ay). The mothers use quite a bit of monothongal (ay) in both their talk to their children and to the interviewer. In the case of the mother described above, she is actually exposing her daughter to a wide-ranging variable pattern—from no glide at all to an exaggerated, highly stressed glide. The mothers in this study appear to be taking their role as “teachers of language” seriously and utilizing child directed speech to aid them in this process. Variation is present, and sometimes exaggerated, in first language input from very early stages!

Input is also important in the work in second dialect acquisition in children that builds on the work of Payne (1980), who found age and complexity of the feature in relation to the speaker's native dialect to be important factors in the adoption of Philadelphia dialect features by newcomers to the area. Chambers (1992) also found that age of exposure to the second dialect affected the success of its acquisition. That is, the children in his study who were exposed to a new dialect at a later age were far less successful at adopting it than those exposed at an earlier age. Chambers also postulated

eight principles of second dialect acquisition to aid in the prediction of the process of dialect feature adoption by new speakers. Whereas some of these, such as the effect of orthographic representation on acquisition, have no relevance to first dialect acquisition, others may be seen as a jumping-off point for future research looking at how preschool and young children acquire dialect forms. For example, Chambers proposes that whether or not a target form is variable in native speech in the dialect being acquired, it is found to be variable in the speech of new speakers. He likens this phenomenon to the process of lexical diffusion in which language change is argued to begin in a few lexical items, then, when it has spread to a critical mass, is generalized into a rule or phonological process.

In a similar vein, Kerswill (1996) examined the dialect in the newly developed town of Milton Keynes. In this and previous work (e.g. Kerswill and Williams 1992), he, too, found that age of dialect exposure greatly affected the process of acquisition. The youngest speakers (aged 4) tended to adopt the features of their parents and, hence, to show more variation in this heterogeneous population than older children, who tended to coalesce toward a common norm. Kerswill also postulates a difficulty hierarchy for second dialect acquisition with vocabulary borrowing as the easiest process, which may be accomplished throughout the life span. The most difficult would be “lexically conditioned phonological rules, which may reflect lexical diffusion nearing completion and which are not sociolinguistically salient” (Kerswill 1996: 200). He hypothesizes that these rules must be learned by age 3 to be fully acquired.

Research on the variability of language input, as can be seen from the above discussion, is an especially new area of research in language variation and change. It can, however, be particularly helpful in looking at such issues as transmission of variation and

change across generations. It would also seem to be potentially very useful in examining the genesis of language style in young children, since stylistic range is often accentuated in such registers as child directed speech. Finally, the integration of findings from second dialect acquisition research into that of first dialect acquisition would appear to be fruitful for both areas of study, particularly as some of the more complex dialect features (e.g. short (a) in Philadelphia and the lexically conditioned rules in Milton Keynes) appear to require an intensity of input that may become increasingly rare in more mobile populations or those in which dialect leveling may be occurring.

## **5. Looking to the Future: Social Practice and Young Children**

Eckert (2000) discusses the importance of recognizing dialect variation among children and adolescents as a form of social practice. She notes that although adolescence is a time when vernacular forms accelerate, sociolinguistic competence has been developing for years. By secondary school, the social and educational institutions are such that the speaker's focus is concentrated to a large extent on peers, rather than on adults. Before that time, however, the focus of power and influence is not clear, or, one might say the transition from the full concentration on adults as the source of influence in infancy to the dominance of peer-group influence in adolescence is a gradual process. Such a transitional phase presents a challenge to researchers to sort out the influence of parents and other important adults from that of peers in earlier age groups. Another way of stating this is that determining the point at which children stop primarily imitating the social meaning of adults and begin to utilize language socially themselves is an important goal of child variation research—but an elusive one for the researcher due to the ephemeral nature of the developmental process. Therefore,

as Eckert and research reported in the previous discussion show, much of the research on very young children has thus far concentrated on discovering the age(s) at which children acquire particular patterns of variation and their constraints. This work has resulted in important findings that children do, in fact, acquire sometimes complex variable patterns quite early and may begin the social use of variation at the same time. These results continue to be replicated with additional variables in additional dialects and speech communities. It would seem to be a goal of future research to add to these findings an exploration of the emerging social meaning of child variation within the family and peer group interactional settings.

An analogous situation may be seen in earlier psycholinguistic work. Following Chomsky's (1965) work, which had a huge impact not only on linguistics as a whole but also on child language theory and research, much psycholinguistic effort went into syntactic analyses of child language as compared with that of adults. Bloom and Lahey (1978) were among the first to note that child language would be more fruitfully studied if children's utterances were not seen as immature adult sentences and child speakers were not seen as miniature, but flawed, adults rather than fully competent speakers of child language. They make the following argument:

In the course of development, children are not learning adult “parts of speech,” and descriptions of the words that children use in terms of adult parts of speech can be misleading. Instead, children learn whatever forms they hear and see in conjunction with the regular recurring experiences that are represented in memory. Thus, it is only coincidental that in the model of the adult language, “cookie” and “sweater” are *nouns*, “see” and “put” are *verbs*, “there,” “more,” and “away” are *adverbs*, and “up” is a

*preposition*. More important are the ideas, the elements of content that children represent with the words they use.

(Bloom and Lahey 1978: 39)

Bloom and Lahey viewed child language as a viable and vital system in its own right, and one worth studying in all of its complexity. They developed the concept of semantic relations to explore how very young children coded meaning in their spontaneous speech. For example, the relational concept of *non-existence* can be described as an object which does not exist for the child but which the child thinks could exist. A child could express this concept using any of several forms. She could say, for example, “no,” “gone,” “allgone,” or even the object name (e.g. “cookie”) with a rising intonation while looking for the cookie. Some of these are adult-like forms, whereas others, such as “allgone,” are present only in child language. All, however, serve the function of expressing the meaning of non-existence.

The change from a focus on child language as an imperfect, but emerging, adult system had a large and important impact on the study of child language acquisition. It seems unlikely, or at least of increased difficulty, that such a psycholinguistic advance would have taken place without the previous volume of research on adult language and that comparing emergent child language to an adult model. The same may be true of child language variation study. There is copious evidence of the richness and vitality of variation in adult language and less, but nevertheless increasing, evidence of children's ability to acquire this variation early in their language learning process. It appears to be time to delve more deeply into children's knowledge of variation and their ability to use it to produce

social meaning. Again, preliminary results suggest a productive future for this type of work. Preschool children have been found to participate in language change, as shown by their adopting a lexical redistribution of short *a* words at a higher rate than their parents (Roberts and Labov 1995), and to adopt forms in a new dialect not produced by their parents (Roberts 1997b, Kerswill 1996). Gender differences have also been noted (Foulkes et al. 1999, Roberts 1997a). Current work on caretaker input for toddlers and young preschool children has the potential to teach us more about the direct and indirect teaching of language variation as social identity. It remains, however, for in-depth work to be done on the establishment of social practice in children before adolescence. As we look at the future of the study of language variation and change, surely an important aspect of this exploration is the newest speakers of the community as they acquire the dialect patterns of tomorrow.

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