

Sociolinguistic Variation

LSA 068

Penelope Eckert

eckert@stanford.edu

<http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/>

Course Website:

<http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/Institute2011/>

Purpose of the Course

- General Introduction to the Field of Sociolinguistic Variation
 - General Patterns of Social Stratification
 - Role of Variation in Change
 - Research Methods

- Closer Focus on
 - The Use of Variation in Stylistic Practice
 - The Construction of Social Meaning in and with Variation

Introductory stuff

- The big picture
 - Class 1: Macro-sociological Patterns of Variation

LSA069 The sociolinguistics of language change. (Tagliamonte)

032 An introduction to Dialectology (Preston)
- At the opposite extreme - variation viewed up close
 - Class 2: Style and Indexicality
- How do you gather and analyze variation data?
 - Class 3: Researching Variation

LSA035 – Introduction to probability and information theory. (Malouf)

LSA 037 – An Introduction to sociophonetics (DiPaolo and Yaeger-Dror)

Focusing on Meaning

- What is the relation between local practice and macro-sociological patterns?
 - Class 4: Indexicality, Social Practice and Social Reproduction

LSA 042 Language and race (Chun)

LSA 043 Language and sexuality (Barrett)

LSA 048 Language, gender, and sexuality in the material world (Bucholtz and Hall)

LSA 066 Situated approaches to language variation (Mendoza-Denton and Meyerhoff)

- How is meaning constructed in variation?
 - Class 5: Stylistic Practice and Enregisterment

LSA 047 – Language variation and the mass media (Queen)

Some Basic Issues

- How automatic is variation?
 - Class 6: Issues of Agency

LSA 067 Sociolinguistic cognition (Campbell-Kibler)
- How arbitrary are variables?
 - Class 7: Iconization and Affect
- How do we do close-up analysis of variation?
 - Class 8: An analysis of two narratives

A suggestion: Work on the final assignment throughout the course.

Today's Class

- The First Wave of Variation Studies
 - Results of survey studies in variation
 - Class, Style, Gender and Age Correlations
 - The relation between variation and (the spread of) linguistic change
 - Implications of large-scale correlations
- The Second Wave of Variation Studies
 - The place of ethnography in variation research.



Three Waves of Variation Study

- First Wave:
 - The Survey Era. Plotting the big picture

- Second Wave:
 - The Ethnographic Era. Viewing variation locally

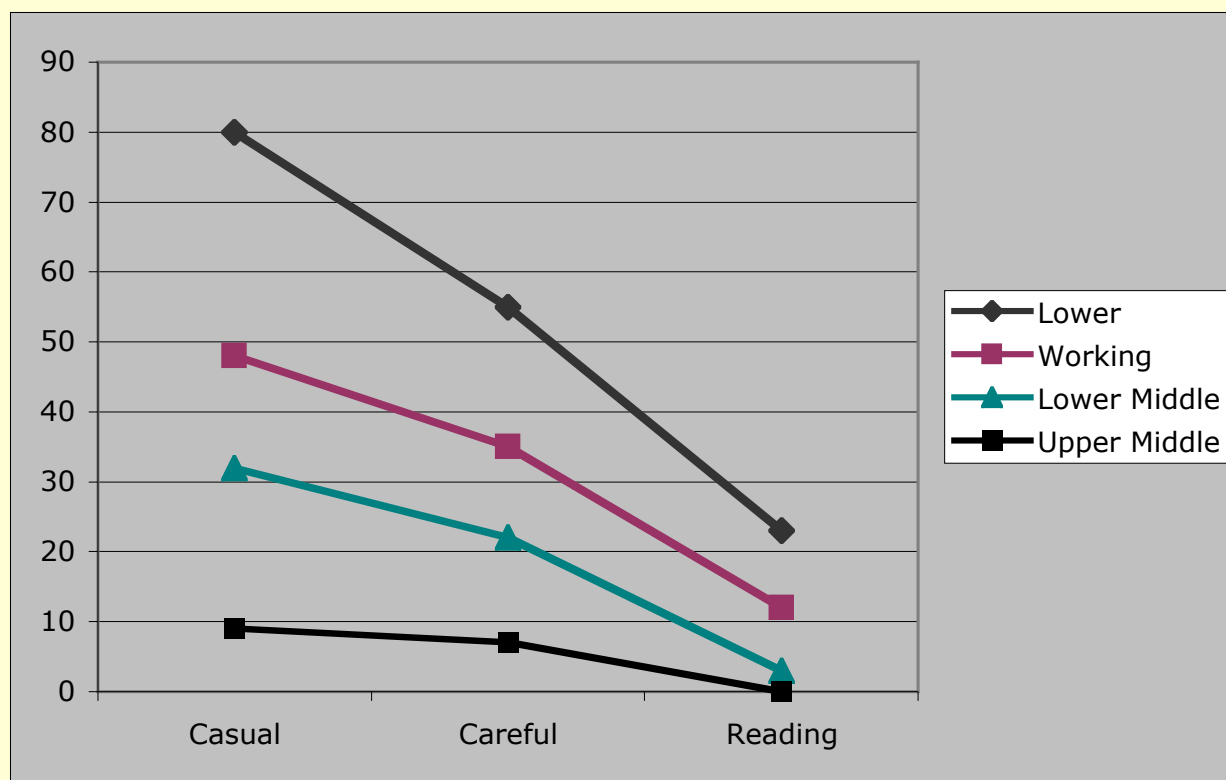
- Third Wave:
 - The Stylistic Era. Focusing on meaning



The First Wave: Some Urban Studies

- CEDERGREN, HENRIETTA. 1973. The interplay of social and linguistic factors in Panama, Linguistics, Cornell University: PhD.
- MACAULAY, RONALD K.S. 1977. Language, social class and education: a Glasgow study. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.
- MODARESSI, YAHYAH. 1978. A sociolinguistic analysis of modern Persian, University of Kansas: PhD.
- TRUDGILL, P. 1974. The social differentiation of English in Norwich. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SHUY, ROGER W., WOLFRAM, WALTER A. and RILEY, WILLIAM K. 1967. Linguistic correlates of social stratification in Detroit speech: Final Report, Research Project No. MH 15048-01, National Institute of Mental Health.
- WOLFRAM, WALT. 1969. A sociolinguistic description of Detroit Negro speech. Washington DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

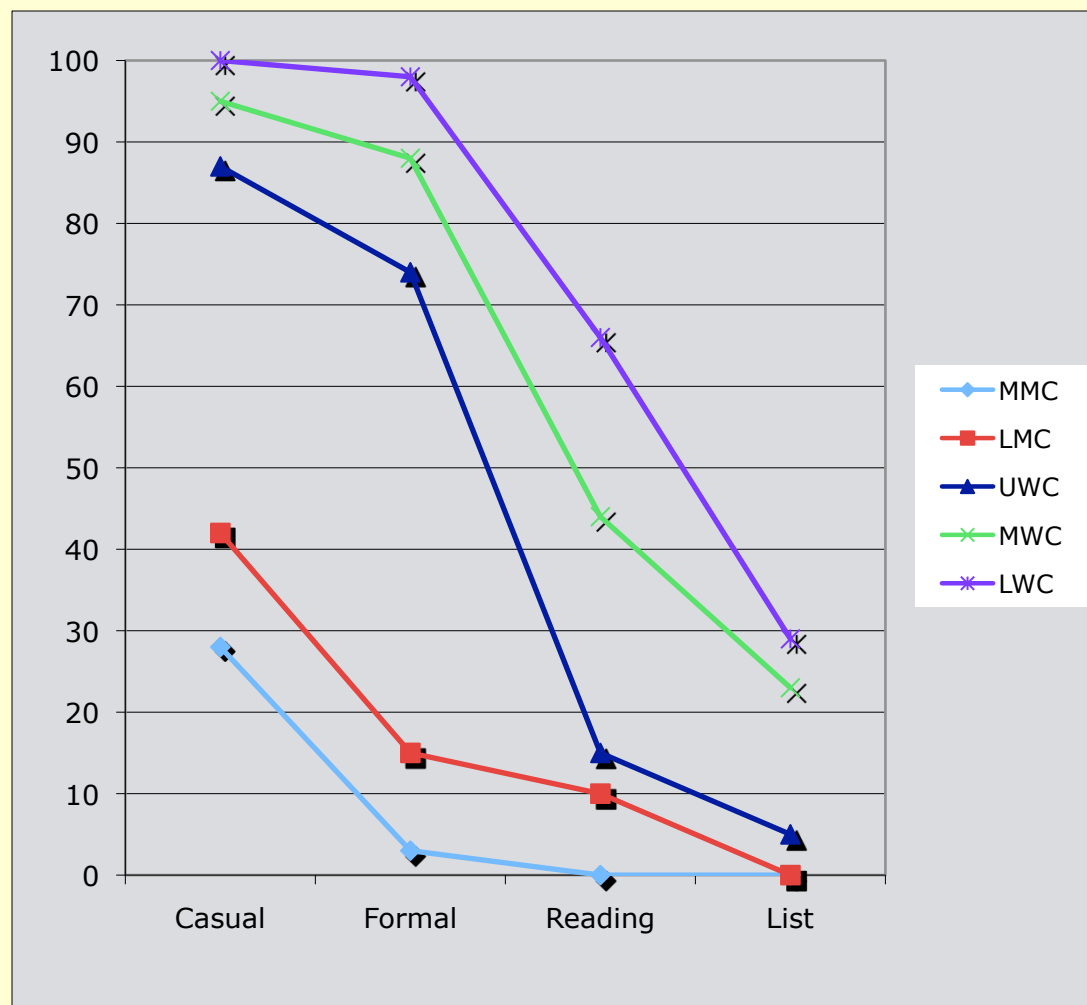
Introducing the First Wave: a Stable Variable



% apical -ing in New York

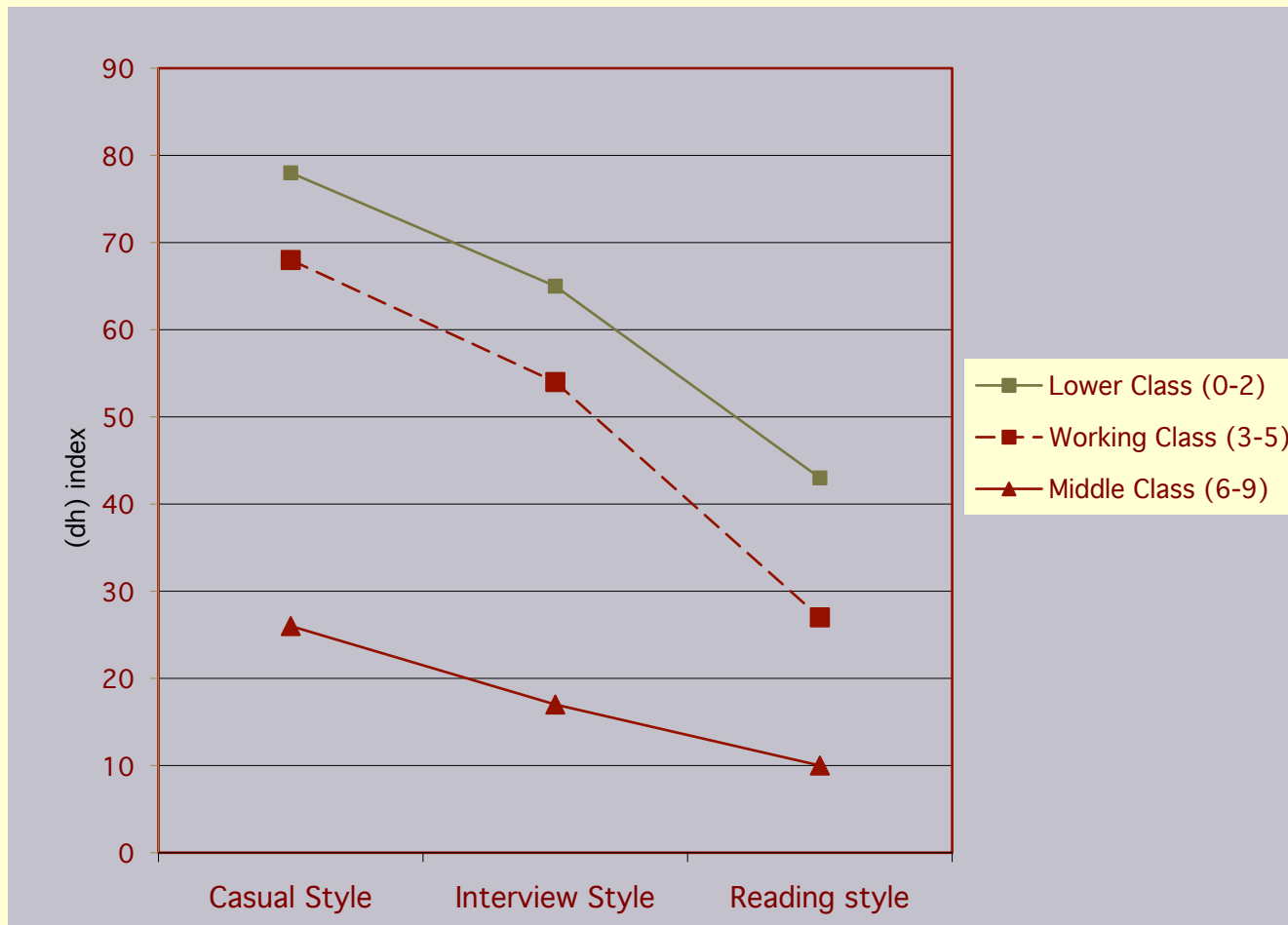
LABOV W. (1966) The social stratification of English in New York City.
Washington DC: Center for Applied Linguistics

-ing in Great Britain



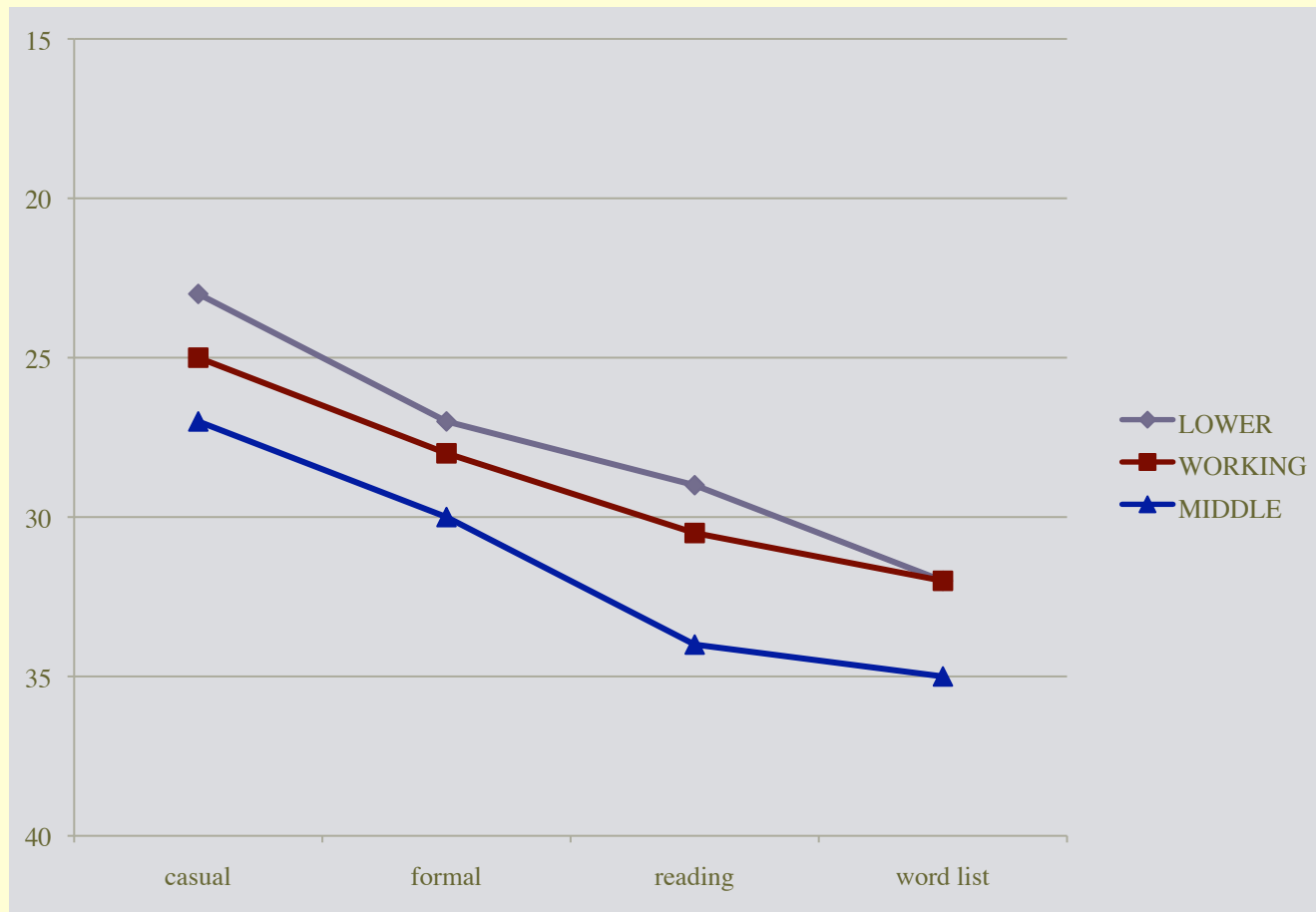
TRUDGILL, P. 1974. The social differentiation of English in Norwich. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Another Stable Variable



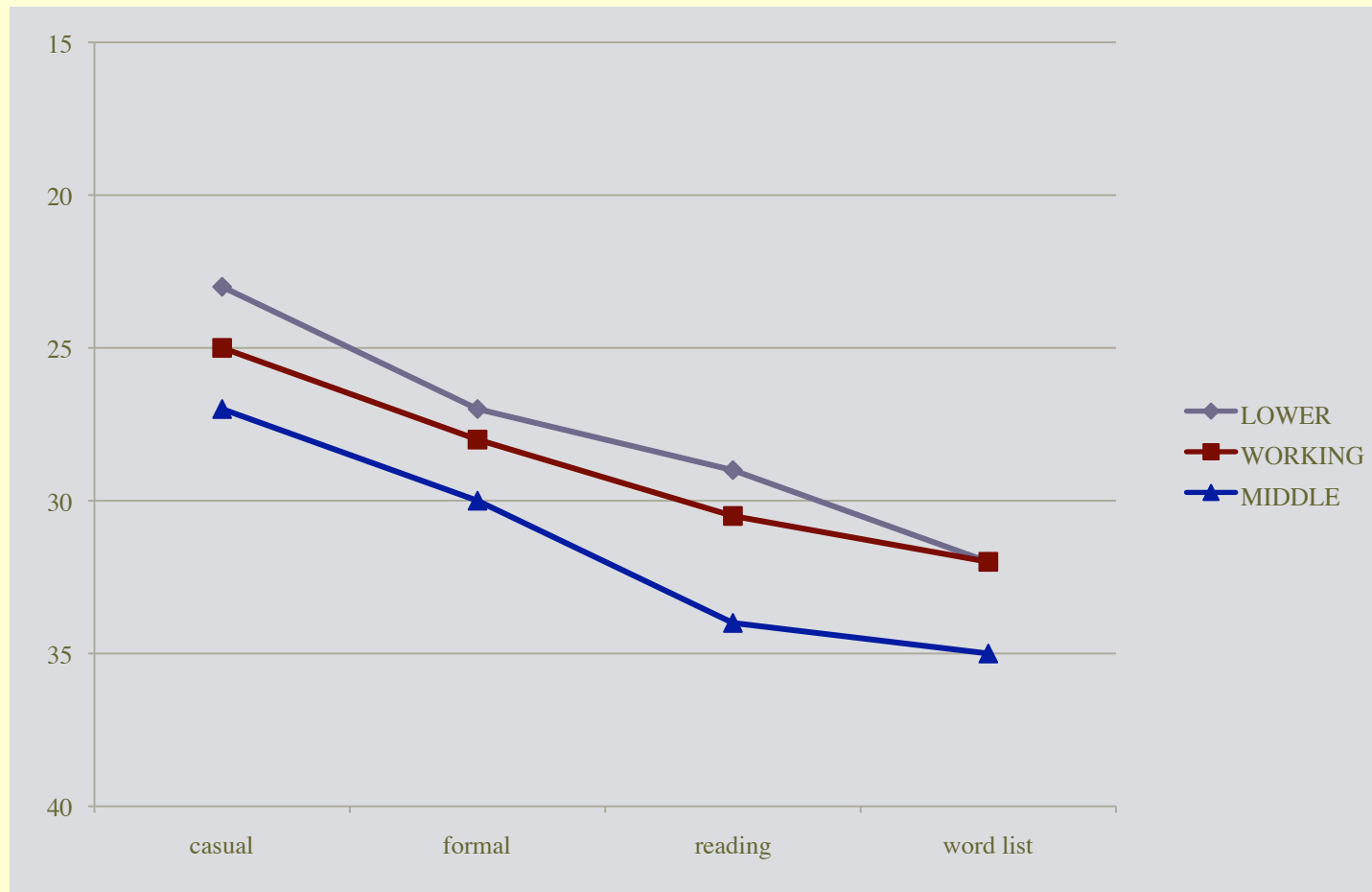
dh-stopping in New York City

A Change from Below New York City /æh/



Labov, W. (1966). The social stratification of English in New York City. Washington, DC, Center for Applied Linguistics.

A Change from Above



/r/ insertion in New York City

Age as Apparent Time

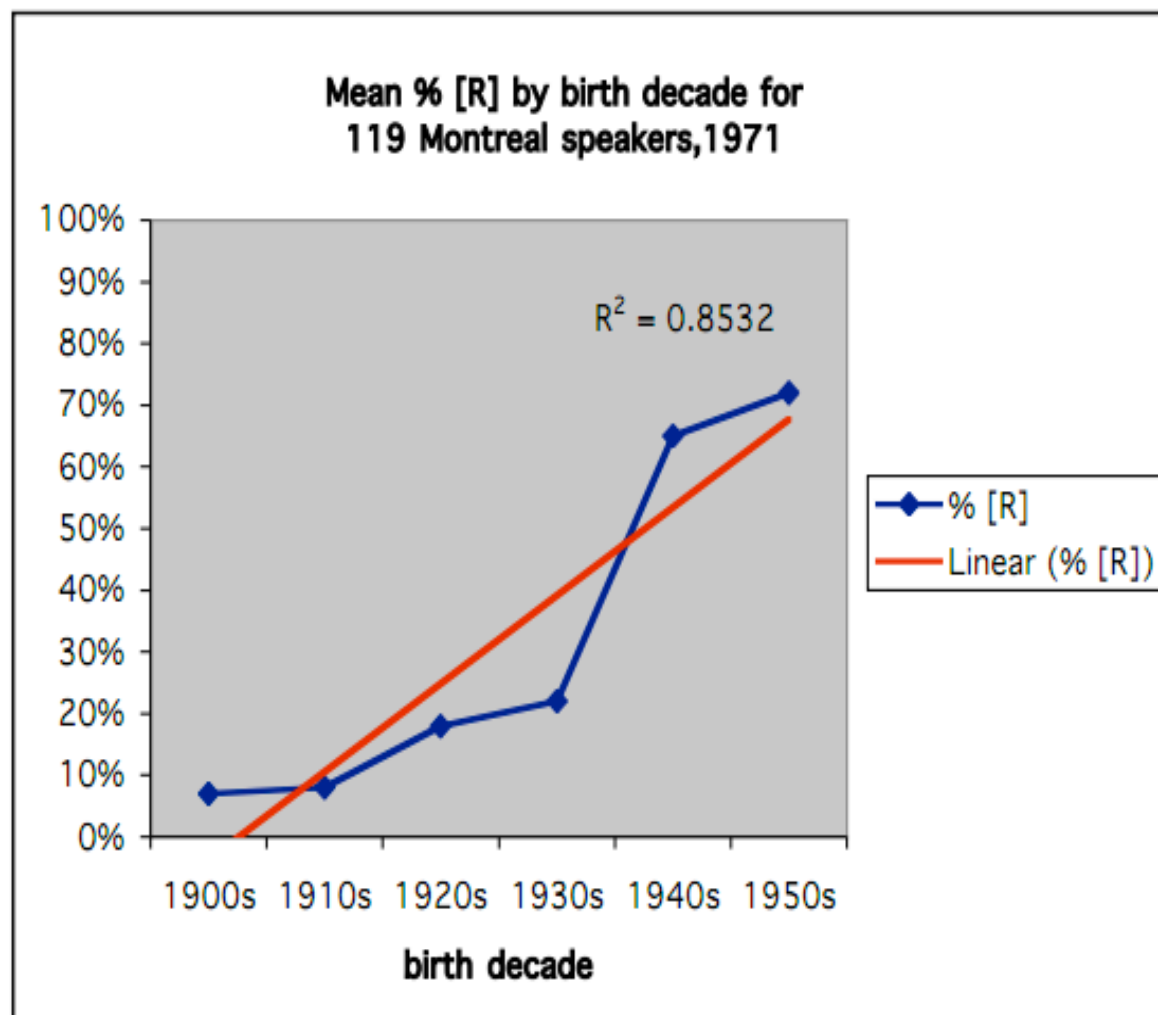


Figure 1. Percentage use of the innovative velar [R] by 119 Montreal French speakers in 1971, grouped by decade of birth [adapted from Clermont & Cedergren 1979].

SANKOFF, GILLIAN.
2006. Age: Apparent time and real time. Elsevier encyclopedia of language and linguistics. Oxford: Elsevier.

Based on CLERMONT, J. and CEDERGREN, H.
1979. Les "R" de ma mère sont perdus dans l'air. Le français parlé: Etudes sociolinguistiques, ed. by P. Thibault, 13-28. Edmonton, Alberta: Linguistic Research.

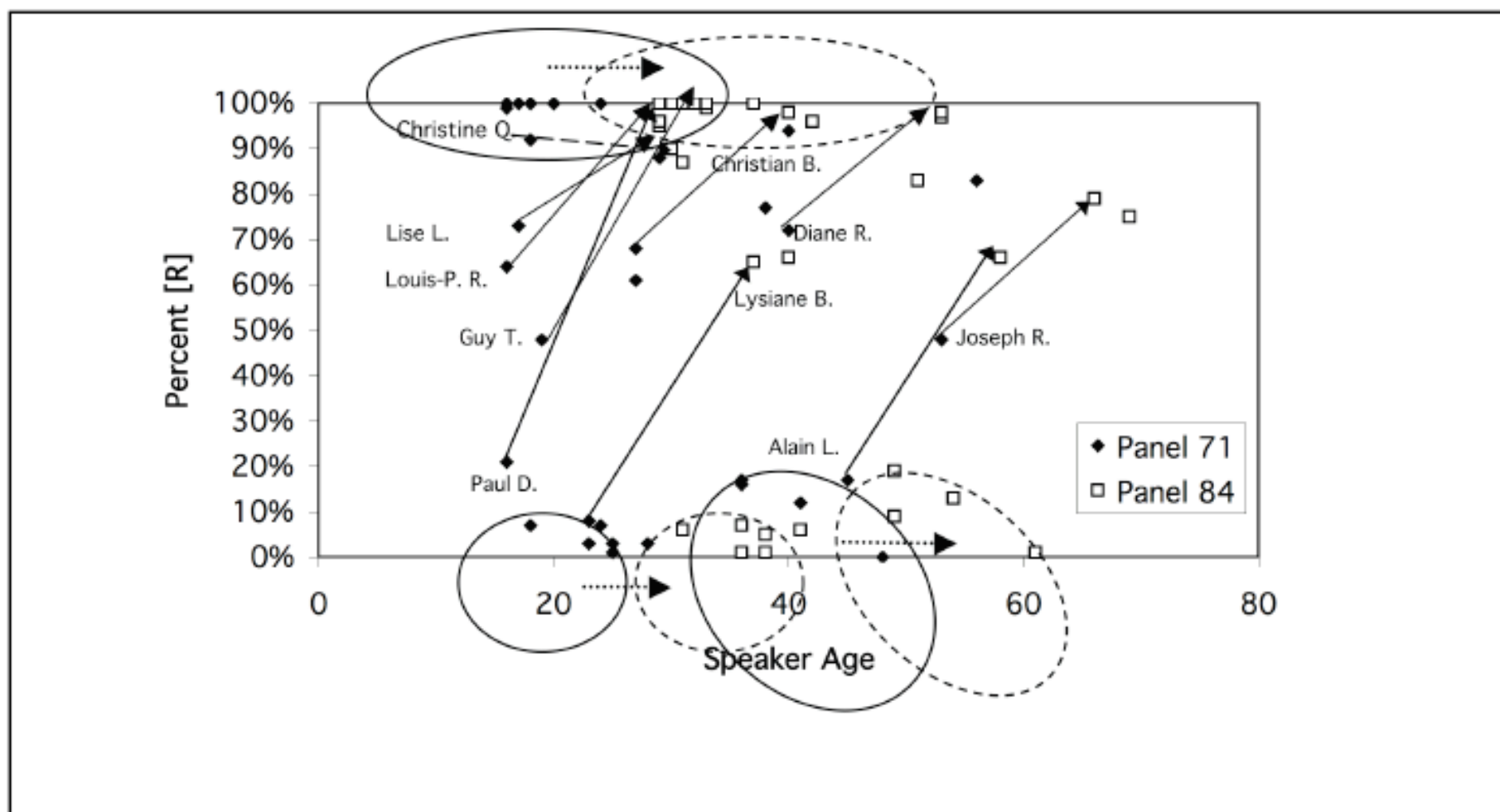
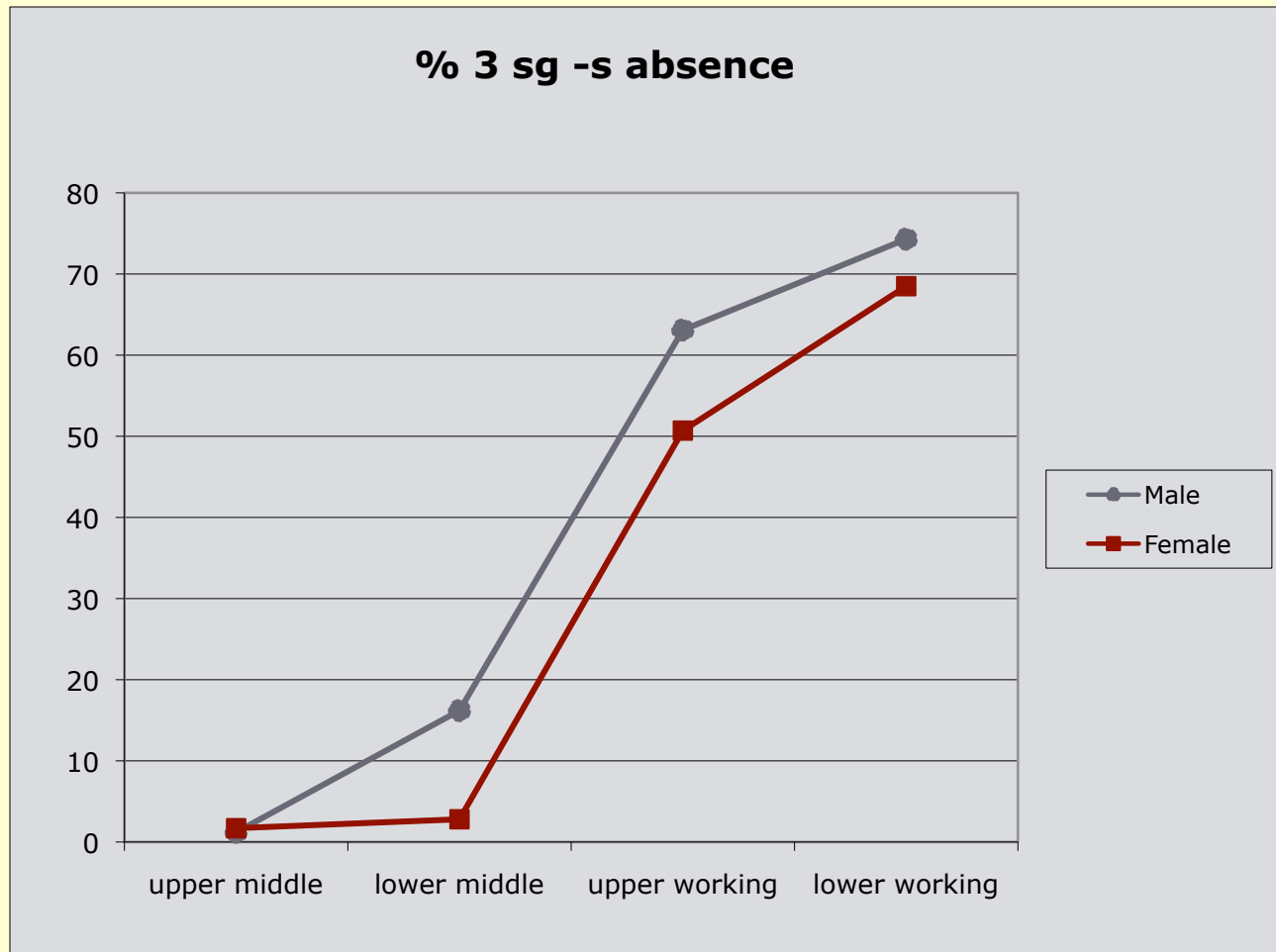


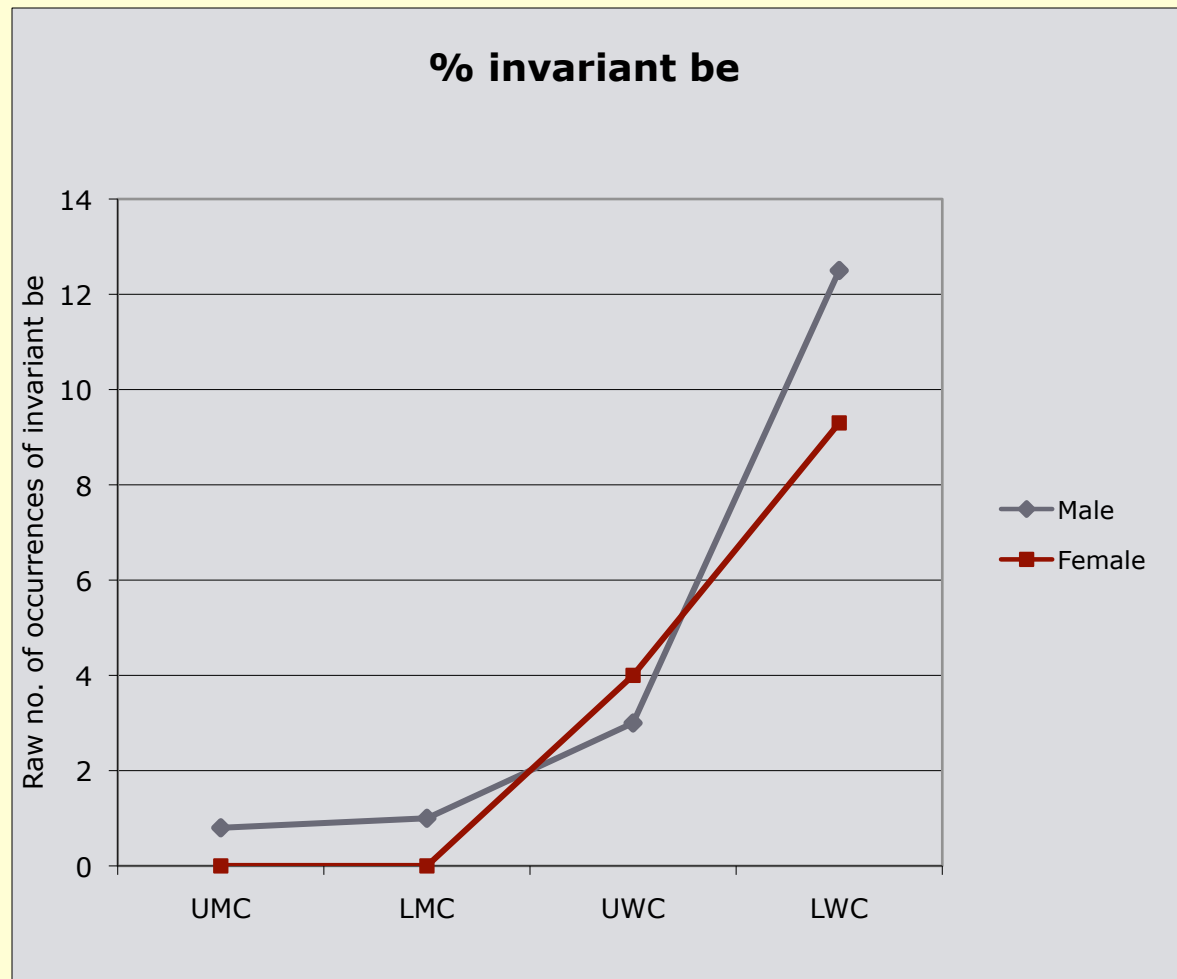
Figure 3. Individual percentages of $[R]/([R]+[ɪ])$ for the 32 Panel speakers for 1971 and 1992. Trajectories plotted for all speakers who showed a significant difference between the two years.

Gender



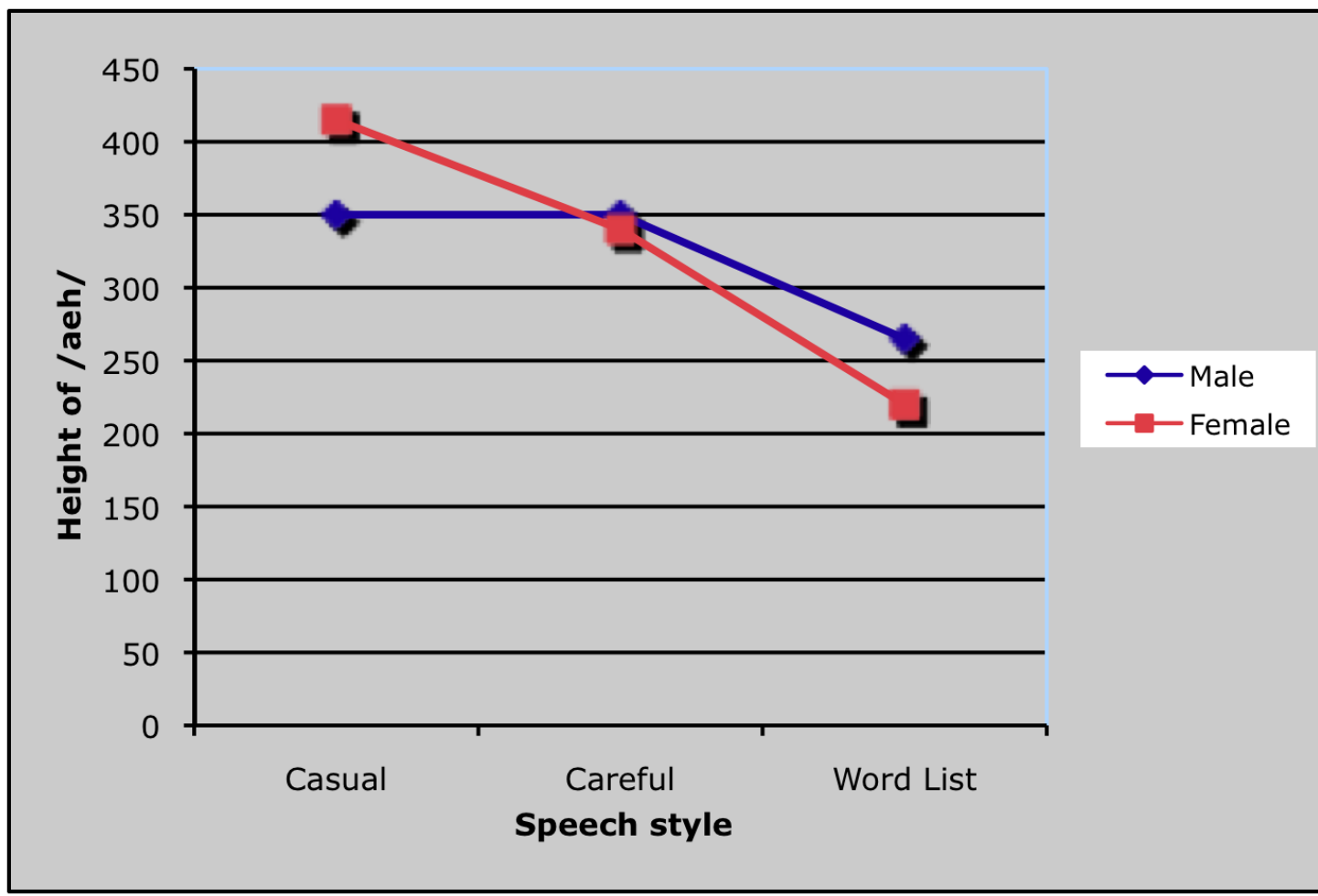
WOLFRAM, WALT. 1969. A sociolinguistic description of Detroit Negro speech. Washington DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Gender

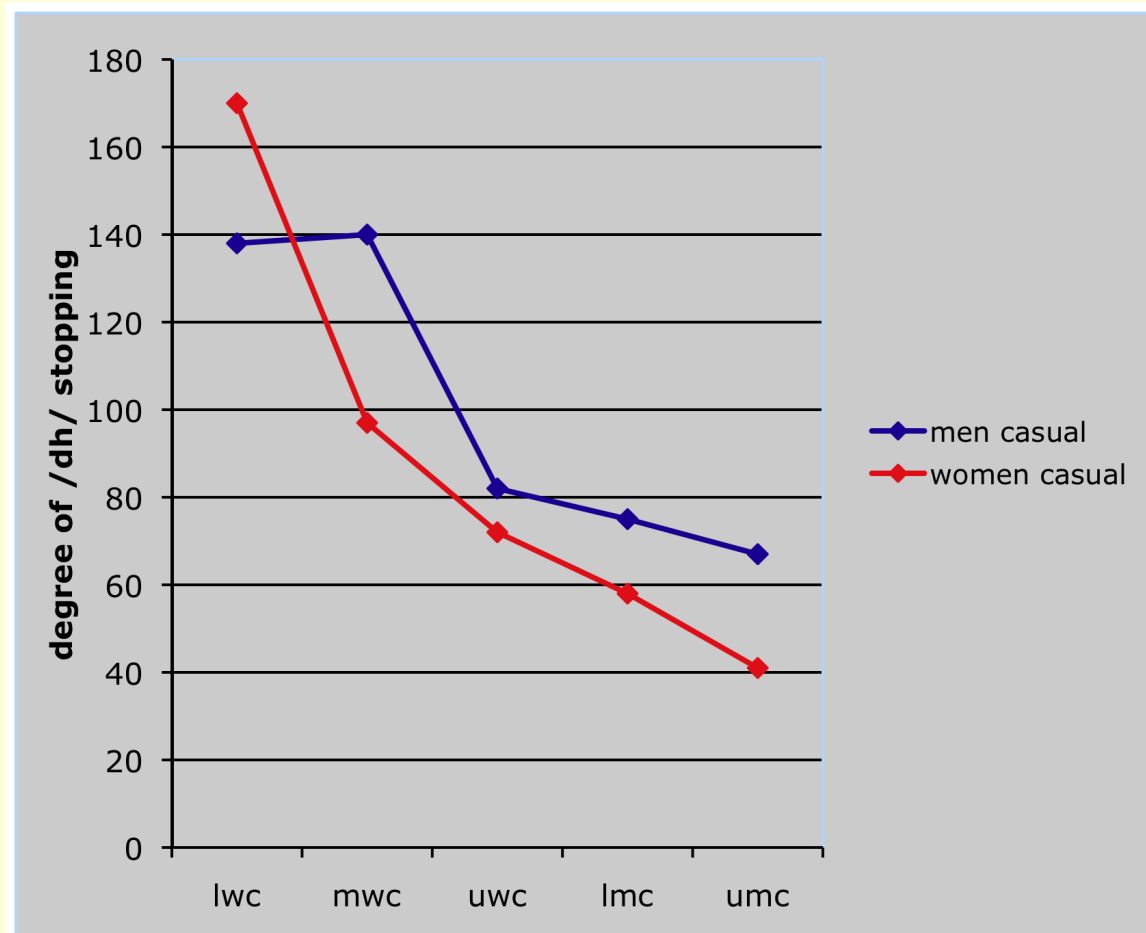


WOLFRAM, WALT. 1969. A sociolinguistic description of Detroit Negro speech. Washington DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

gender /aeh/ raising in New York

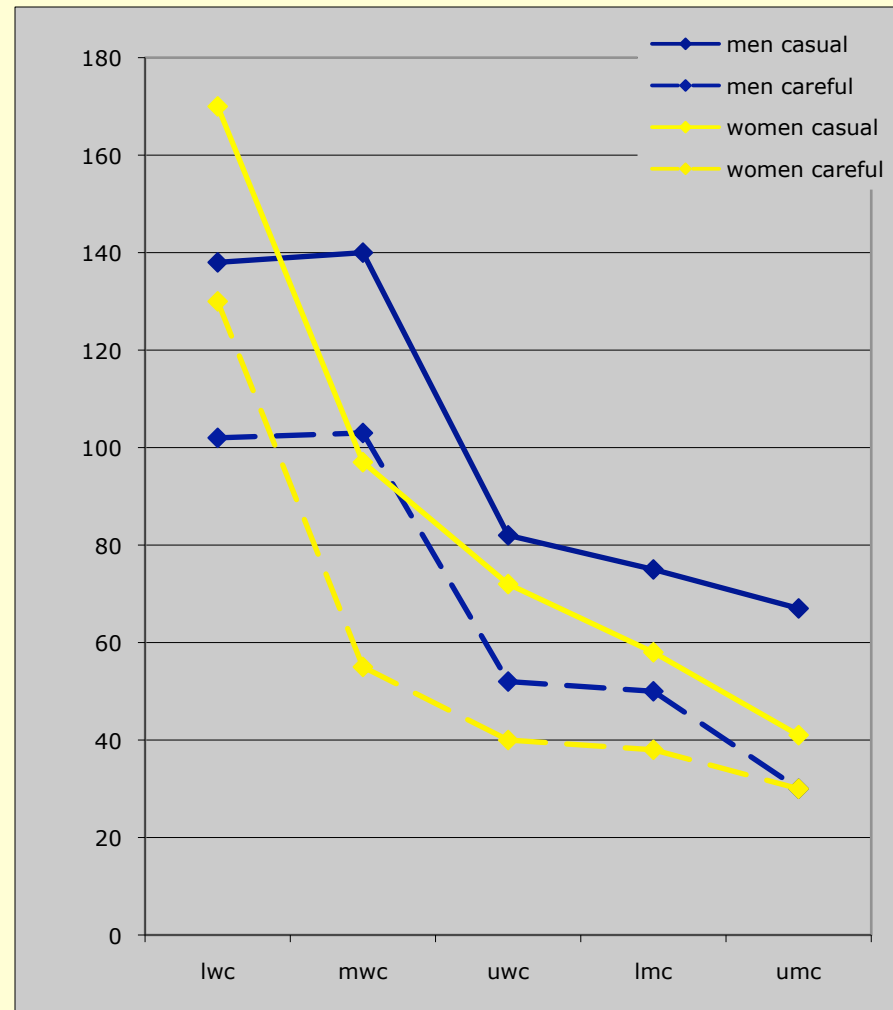


/dh/ in Philadelphia gender



LABOV, WILLIAM. 2001. Principles of linguistic change: Social factors. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Gender: dh-stopping in Philadelphia

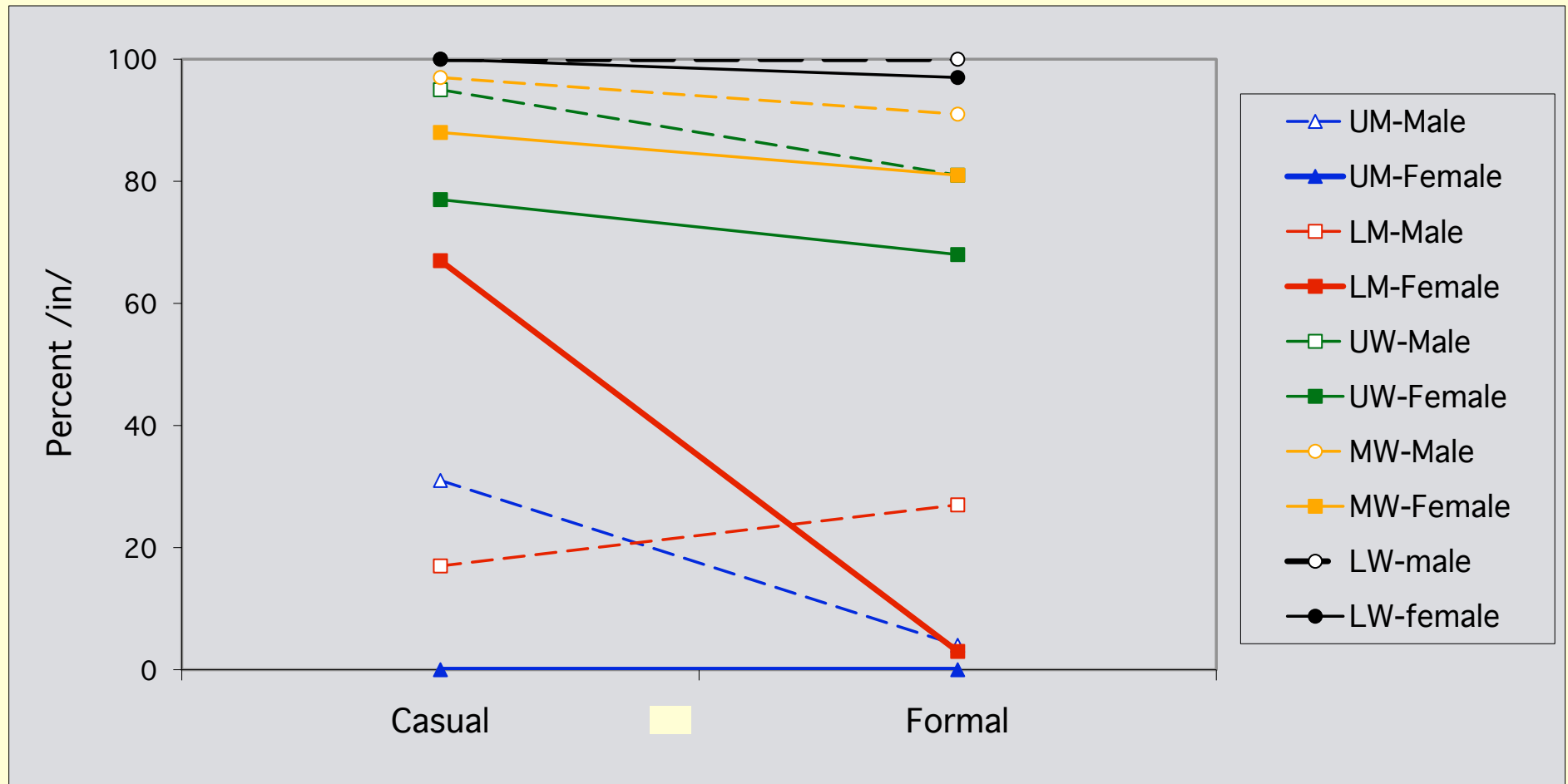


/aes/ in Philadelphia gender



LABOV, WILLIAM. 2001. Principles of linguistic change: Social factors. Cambridge: Blackwell.

(ing) in Norwich by social class, style and gender



Source: Trudgill 1974

BYRD, DANI. 1994. Relations of sex and dialect to reduction. *Speech communication*, 15.39-54.

Table 3

Summary of significant effects of speaker sex on frequency of phone occurrence in TIMIT

Speech rate	Men speak faster than women
Sentence-final stop releases	Men release stops less often than women
Central vowels	Men use [ə] more often, [i] and [ʌ] less often than women
Glottal stops	Men produce glottal stop/laryngealization more often than women
Syllabic consonants	Men produce syllabic [n] more often than women
Voiceless schwa	Men have more voiceless schwa's than women
[h]	Men tended to have more [h]'s than women

One finds all kinds of interesting gender differences across large populations. The question is what do they mean?

These are from the DARPA TIMIT corpus of read speech, containing 10 sentences read by each of 630 speakers from 8 major dialect regions of the United States.



First Wave: Developing the big picture

- Large survey studies of geographically defined communities
- The socioeconomic hierarchy as a map of social space
- Variables as markers of primary social categories and carrying class-based prestige/stigma
- Style as attention paid to speech, and controlled by orientation to prestige/stigma

The Big Questions

What do these large-scale correlations relate to on the ground – in our everyday lives?

Why do working class people speak like working class people, and middle class people like middle class people?

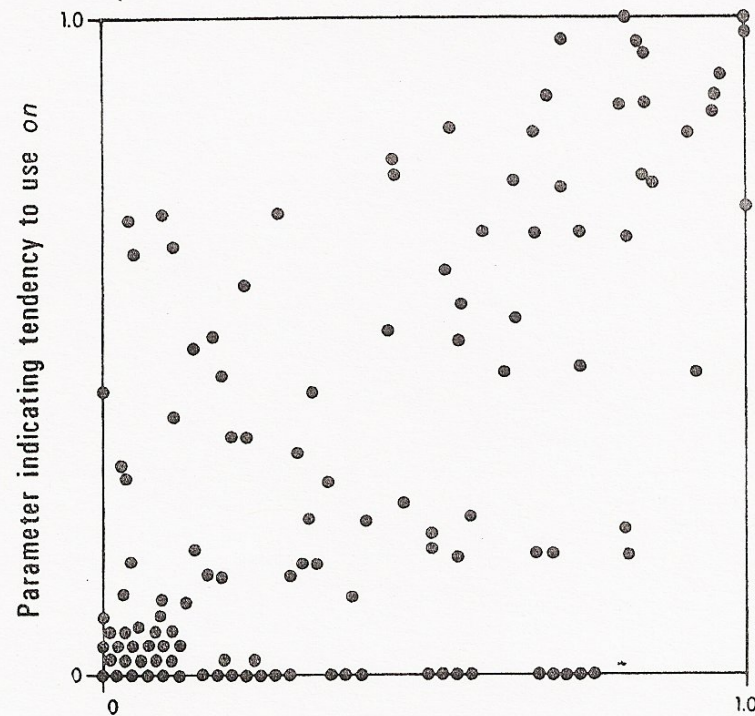
How do we account for the gender patterns we see?

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The Standard Language Market (Bourdieu 1977)

The Linguistic Market and Variability

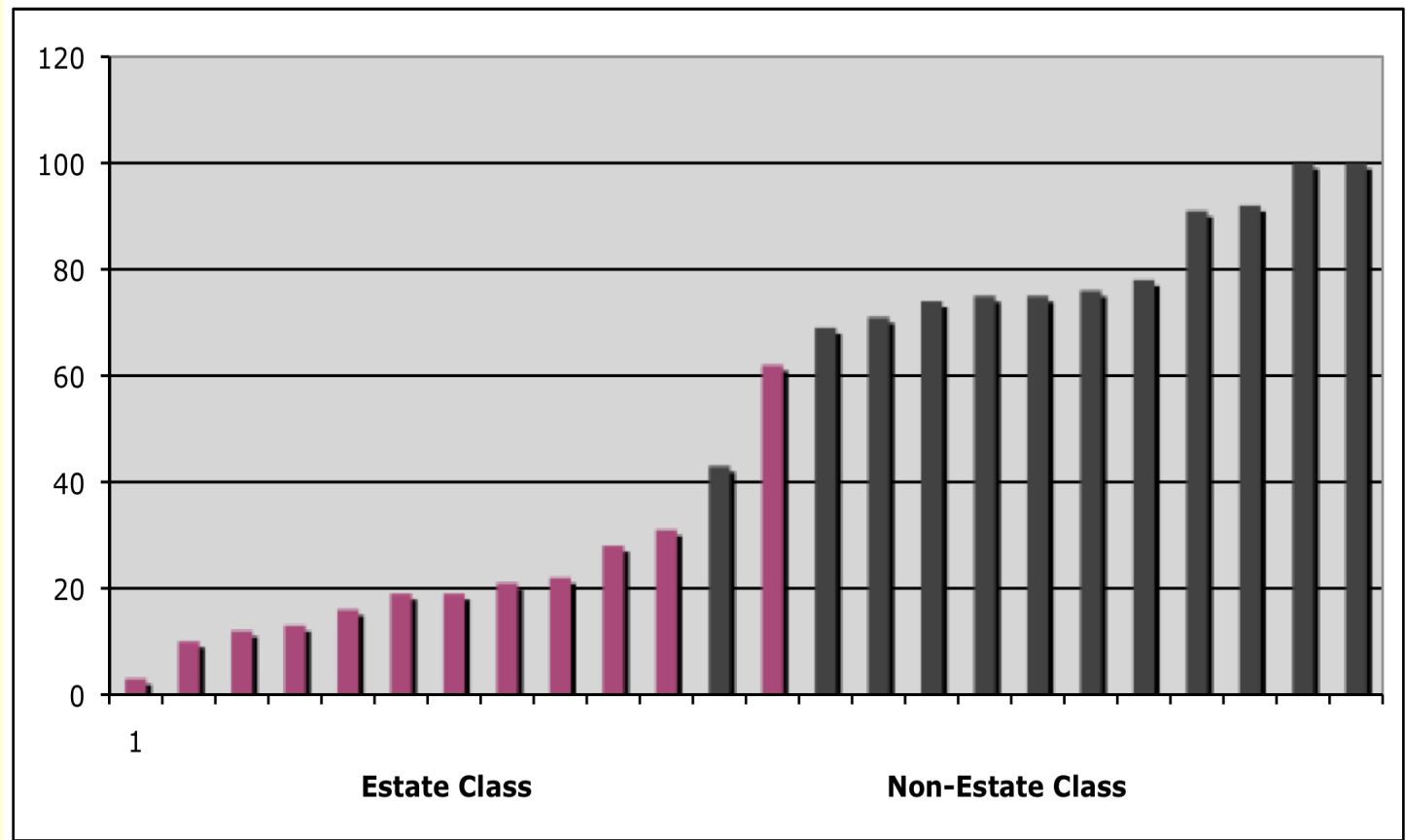
249



SANKOFF, DAVID and LABERGE, SUZANNE. 1978. The linguistic market and the statistical explanation of variability. *Linguistic Variation: Models and Methods*, ed. by David Sankoff, 239-50. New York: Academic Press.

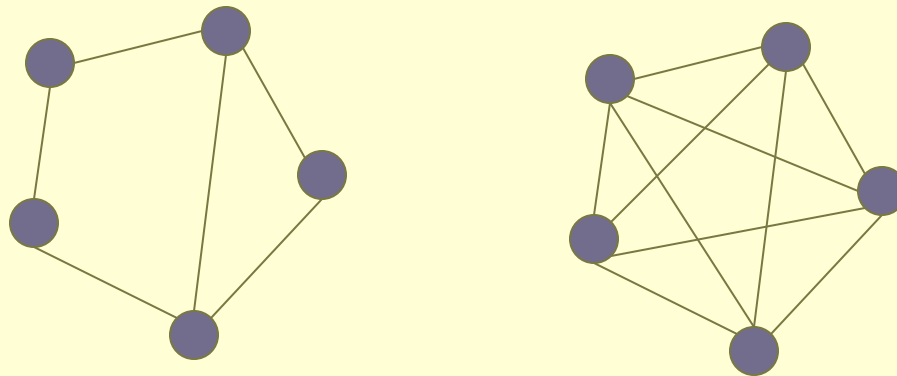
Class as defined locally

% use of
acrolectal
variants
in
singular
pronouns



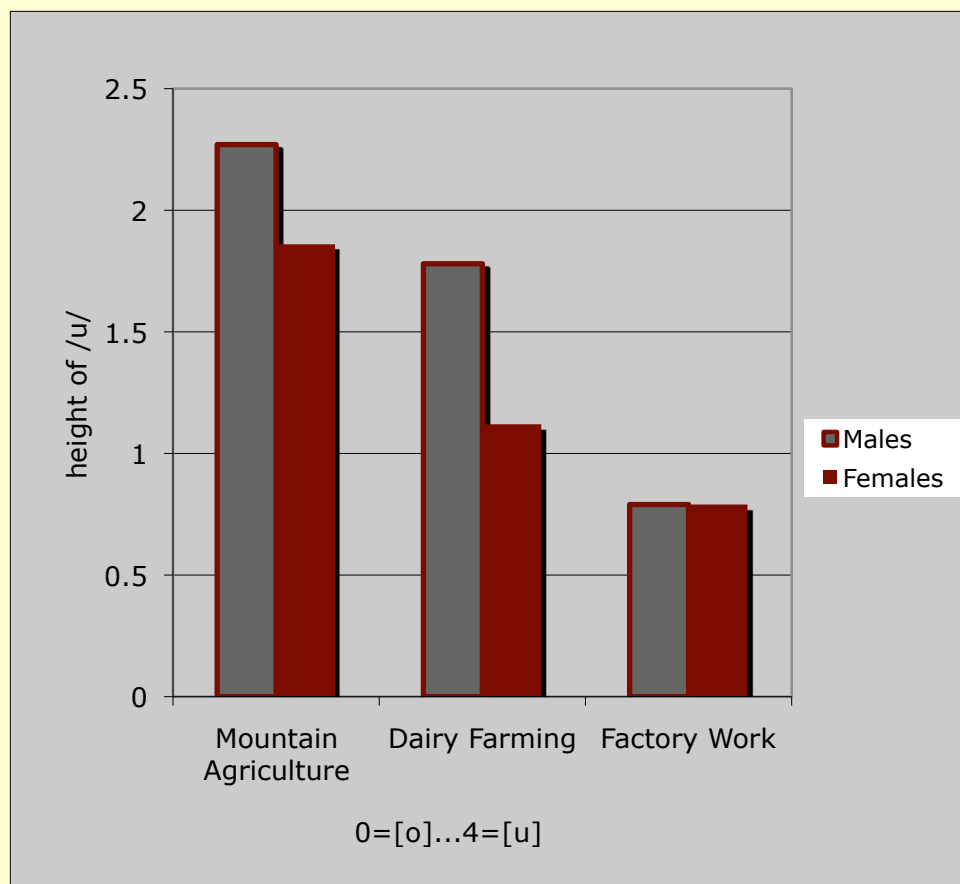
RICKFORD, JOHN. 1986. The need for new approaches to class analysis in sociolinguistics. *Language and Communication*, 6.215-21.

Relation between variation and density, multiplexity of social networks



MILROY, LESLEY. 1980. Language and social networks. Oxford: Blackwell.

Class in a Spanish peasant village



HOLMQUIST, JONATHAN. 1985. Social correlates of a linguistic variable: A study in a Spanish village. *Language in Society*, 14.191-203.



Second Wave: Developing the local picture

- Ethnographic studies of geographically defined communities
- Variables as indexing locally-defined categories
- Local categories as reproducing macrosiological categories
- Style as acts of affiliation

(to be continued)

The nature of linguistic practice

Speakers use language not simply to comment on the world, but to change the world.

Speakers use variation not simply to reflect or reassert their pre-ordained place in the social map, but to mess with their place and with the map itself.