Variety, style-shifting, and ideology

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Judith Irvine (this volume) has examined the role of ideology in the relation between social group language differences and the representation of those differences in each speaker’s style contrasts. Her focus is on the social meanings signified by styles, which are primarily contrastive. She is interested, then, not in what Labov (1966) called *indicators*, which she calls ‘empirical distributions,’ but in ideas about language categories that represent social contrasts to participants.

Her paper makes some powerful and important integrative claims. The principle of *iconization* is a claim that the social contrasts that are imputed to groups or to situations are also represented by linguistic features. Wolof speakers have an account of language features that supports iconization, using the underlying trait explanation. That is, beliefs about contrasts in the traits of groups of people are consistent with contrasts in linguistic features, and these correspond to stylistic selections when traits are expressed by individuals. Iconization could create an arbitrary relation of trait to feature, “historical, contingent, or conventional,” but in the Wolof case, the relation appears not to be arbitrary, but to have some naturalness, and the term ‘icon’ implies a likeness.

Korean and Japanese politeness levels provide another example, besides the Javanese case scrutinized with care by Irvine. Here the higher the deference, the more the effort put into morphology, and the less rough the language is felt to be. A person ignorant of these two languages might still guess that the longer form is the more deferential. Possibly there are a few universals in semiotic relations of sign to signified which would allow such prediction by non-members. For example, it might be hard to find that a style involving slower speech is associated with higher excitability.

The claim of *recursion* is that the same process of iconization occurs for different categories of language contrast in the same community—-for intergroup contrasts, registers, and dialects. The effect is that iconization for one contrastive set is projected to another. I will examine a case of that below.

The last principle proposed by Irvine, *erasure*, is an ideological process in which the conception of contrasting categories or dimensions is partial and over-simplified. Of course erasure is very common in colonization or nation-building; an example is the Zionist slogan, "A land without people for a people without land," which erased Palestinians. Nationalism often erases minority linguistic varieties; factors in contrast may be entirely overlooked in the interest of dichotomizing. Irvine finds wealth and status differences were both institutionally and ideologically neutralized in Wolof. Currently in the United States social class is also commonly erased from popular views of immigrant or racially defined minorities. Erasure could have both a formal and a social explanation. For instance, it is possible that binary distinctions are preferred in ideologies of contrast, so that erasure arises for reasons of cognitive simplification, but the choice of what to erase is social.

**Ideology and learning**

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1This paper profited from comments of John McWhorter and Mary Bucholtz, but most of all from the tactful, creative, and detailed attention of John Rickford.

2This property of the status markers makes Koreans and Japanese in asymmetrical power encounters use styles which are, with respect to honorifics, the opposite from the register descriptions of Finegan & Biber (this volume), namely the higher status speaker is more curt.

3There are some cross-cultural similarities in synaesthesia, suggesting non-random correspondences between sensory domains and imputed behavior, e.g. Osgood (1960)
Language ideologies have empirical manifestations in two forms that I will consider below. One is in the acquisition of skill in more than one variety; the other is in the display of that skill in code or style-switching. There appear to be strong similarities in both acquisition and switching dynamics between bilinguals and skilled multi-dialect speakers. Ideologies affect both the probabilities of contact and motivation to speak like another, but it is not clear whether it is beliefs and attitudes accessible to interviewers, or underlying presuppositions and prejudices that are most powerful in affecting understanding and speech. There are dramatic contrasts between reportable ideologies about groups in conflict situations such as in Quebec and in Israel and Palestine, and the more indirect, possibly unconscious meanings assessed by subjective reaction tests to speech guises\(^4\) (Lambert, Anisfeld & Yeni-Komshian 1965; Woolard & Gahng 1990). Which is ideology?

We can expect that in contact situations, lexical, phonetic, and surface and deep grammatical features might have different trajectories of learning, for two reasons. One is that some features are perceived as membership markers more than others, that is, they are iconized as markers rather than indicators. The other is that some require more experience than others; in AAVE, the semantics of invariant BE, for example, or the delicate distributional contrasts in narrative verb final -s. These could be re-analyzed by learners.

There is evidence that second dialect learning is alive and well; Carla, the child discussed by Labov (1980), spoke a variety of AAVE characteristic of some black speakers; her casual speech was accepted by black judges as that of a native speaker, and she was able in narrative quoting to use the level of deletions of copula and singular present verb affixes typical of more extreme forms of AAVE (Butters, 1984).

**Borrowing**

We can separate isolated borrowing and mimicry of marked features, which Poplack (1980) has called *emblematic* from more extensive productive use. Emblematic use can be seen in switching proper name phonology--during the conflicts over US-Central American relations in the eighties the phonetics of Nicaragua or other Spanish proper names could be used to mark one’s allegiances, and political leaders who otherwise could not speak Spanish could use such emblems or some borrowed words. There is also mockery in derogatory use (Hill, 1995).

Ben Rampton’s ethnographic research (1991) on Punjabi in British anglophone speech of teenagers is the most detailed study of the social functions of the deployment of isolated items and features without further learning. These included a few words and phrases, and mimicked phonetic features in nonsense words. Though the boys were good friends, they never learned Punjabi beyond use in taunts.

**Switching**

Those who study code-switching like to reserve the term for maximally bilingual speakers who are known to have parallel options in both codes. Gumperz (1982), McClure (1981), Myers-Scotton (1993) and many others have examined the functions of switching in stable bilingual populations.

Switching by bilingual individuals is expected to different addressees as an accommodation to other participants’ abilities\(^5\). When the participants are all bilingual, code-switching can be induced by

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\(^4\)When voices were recorded reading in Arabic, and in Ashkenazic and Yemenite Hebrew, the conscious attitude measures gave very different results from subjective reaction measures. Yemeni had less education and more menial jobs than Ashkenazi, whereas many Arabs were known to be very well educated. Jewish adolescents reported more positive attitudes to Yemenite Jews on the attitude measures than in the guise measures (on honesty, intelligence, reliability) and more negative attitudes to Arabs in the conscious attitude tests than on the guise measures (on looks, intelligence, self-confidence, reliability, leadership). Overall, there was a significant negative correlation of the measures (Lambert, Anisfeld & Yeni-Komshian 1965).

\(^5\)Failure to switch can be evidence of anger or political ideology (Heller 1992)
situational changes like entering a different setting or the arrival of a participant incompetent in that variety, or by choices of the speakers. A shift can itself be constitutive of situational change. Any of these can represent semiotic contrasts, as Irvine has proposed. The last is the type of switching referred to as metaphorical or conversational, since it is entirely within the semiotic control of the speakers. It appears to be a way to contextualize messages by allusion to a community of speakers and their values (Gumperz 1982).6

Types of style shifts in monolinguals

Shifts of style appear to be like code-switching in invoking contrastive implications of the linguistic features.

Address. One shift is the change in language induced by a change in participants, because of the effect of speech accommodation (and divergence) on speech rates and speech variables. Dramatic examples of these changes can be heard when a speaker is overheard talking to a child or a relative from another region on the telephone. Labov’s analysis of Responses, [in this volume], shows that even brief accommodation alters style. Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) have done the most detailed analysis of this issue, revealing statistically significant shifts in measurable features of AAVE when the conversational partner was changed. They were able to show that there was more than accommodation at work, since the changes were not finely tuned to the addressee’s linguistic behavior so much as to the addressee’s social attributes, as well as to topics that implicated past conversational partners. This is categorical or stereotyped shifting that implies iconization.

Shifts can be affected by stereotyped registers or norms for use, rather than feedback accommodation alone, as in cases of baby talk to children, or hypercorrection to interviewers, teachers or government personnel. Such adjustments begin very early, in vocal shifts, and by four children can change syntax according to age of addressee (Shatz & Gelman 1973).

Some style shifts to addressees involve not accommodation but contrast, as in the example of addressee honorific styles, where asymmetry of speaker and addressee rather than similarity is required when there is a status difference. Learning asymmetrical address styles requires seeing them modelled by others.7 In performance they must be controlled by learned forms with imitation of the addressee resisted.

Speech conditions. Circumstantial shifts can change features not because of addressee behavior or stereotypes about the addressee, but because the psycholinguistics of production and feedback are altered. The contrast between speech and writing, planned and unplanned speech, face-to-face conversation and speech to a crowd are examples. These changes do not necessarily bear on, for instance, dialectal features, but they can so deeply alter the possibilities to edit or monitor speech that the role of dominant norms or stereotypes in production can be affected. Biber and Finegan’s studies showing syntactic shifts according to such mode contrasts may be in part due to these factors, which if they are due to production factors rather than custom should have similarities in different languages.

In code-switching studies these are usually considered situational shifts, for they may be accompanied by social norms constraining language type in writing and speaking.

Rhetorical shifts. Even within fixed interlocutor and situation arrangements, speakers use register, language, or dialectal features as resources for conveying meaning, (Blom and Gumperz 1972, Gumperz

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6 In bilinguals, the relation of thoughts and values to language can be so close that constraining language choice can alter speech content (Ervin, 1964)

7 Koreans raised in the United States learn Korean honorifics best if they have heard their parents use them to older relatives and the family has an ideology promoting correct Korean speech. Such speakers are significantly more able to produce both roles in narrative dialogue than those from nuclear families without models (Jun, 1992).
Ervin-Tripp

1982) in courtrooms, for example (Fuller 1993). Switching has been used in literature for emotional effect, much like literary use of second person pronominal variants in Shakespearean English and Russian. The capacity to make these shifts appears at least by four, as Andersen has demonstrated with children’s role play (Andersen, 1990). In Andersen’s research, the first features which children were able to shift in conveying different role voices were phonological. Later speech acts were shifted, lexical and syntactic choices, and eventually contrasts included even discourse markers. For example well was more often used when the child was enacting a powerful rather than subordinate role. Distributional contrasts in role playing provide vivid evidence that the iconization of linguistic contrasts begins in early childhood.

The functions of dialect feature shifts are probably similar to those found in bilingual code-switches—change of domain or stance, emphasis, emotion, for example. Functions identified in the many code-switching studies have included getting attention, persuasion, asides, elaboration, personalization, dialogue in a narrative, and marking identity. How each of these works to project oppositions in terms of the recurrence expected by Irvine remains to be studied.

Examining shifting in speakers of Hawai’i creole English, Sato (1973) found that addressee, topic, audience and emotion changes all were associated with shifts. The particular advantage that is afforded by creole or dialect forms was pointed out by Rampton (1991), comparing switches of youth groups in Britain which included Pakistanis and African Caribbean speakers of creoles. While shifts to Pakistani risked being unintelligible to listeners, shifts to creole could employ features that preserved interpretability. In Hawai’i speech the shifts can occur at any level, prosodic, phonological, lexical, syntactic, depending on who was among the participants and how important intelligibility might be.

There are two important differences between code-switching and style-switching using dialectal features. One is that with the exception situations or features where intelligibility doesn’t matter, code-switching largely must be limited to use among bilinguals, whereas style-shifts are potentially available for any audience. The other is that dialects in contact have slippery boundaries and possibly weaker co-occurrence constraints between features. It is not clear whether “violations” of the scaled features in creole continua are heard to be inappropriate, and by whom. Speakers are very sensitive to probabilities, so one does not need categorical contrasts to sustain semiotic difference.

**AAVE rhetorical switching.**

To find style switches in social dialects, I have examined data from two African-American college-educated leaders from the civil rights movement in the sixties: Stokely Carmichael, chair of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee in the sixties, and Dick Gregory, who in the same period was doing both political comedy and political protests. Carmichael immigrated from Trinidad to the United States at 11; Gregory grew up in poverty in St. Louis. Because of their education and their political experience they both had a wide acquaintance network.

The transcriptions below use notations from Gumperz and Berenz (1993). These include *stressed word, : prolonged, {scope of feature}, ... pauses, /terminal juncture // emphatic terminal drop, =

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8Roger Shuy has drawn attention to D.H. Lawrence's use in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* of skilled dialect shifts by the gamekeeper for powerful social effects in redefining encounters. Lady Chatterley's awkward attempts to speak the gamekeeper's dialect in afterglow talk is a demonstration of Lawrence's belief in the emotional power of sexuality. There is iconization of dialect as naturalness, at least for Lady Chatterley.

9“Although Punjabi might operate as a symbolic object around which youngsters could develop and display their understanding of group relations, it was never available to them as a vehicle in which ideas about society were acutely encoded. In contrast, because of its linguistic proximity to English, Creole could serve both as a social symbol and as a medium through which non-afro-Caribbeans could gain access to dissident political perspectives” (Rampton, 1991: 415)

10Mitchell-Kernan rejected the "two-systems" model for AAVE and standard English because of the "absence of systematic co-occurrence relations, with or without social correlates." (1971: 54)

11His childhood in desperate poverty in St. Louis, and his rise to national status are described in *Nigger* (1964) and *Up from nigger* (1976).
overlapped segment, ( ) not clearly audible. In addition, for ease of reading this publication, non-standard primary stressed syllables are in capital letters, phonological deletions from SE forms are marked with apostrophe, and interpretive quotation marks have been added to identify representations of direct speech.

In the two texts Carmichael uses standard English without any AAVE features except where he uses a shift to make his major point to a black audience. The first sample is from a media interview with Charles Susskind to a general TV audience. In this segment he explained some idioms from AAVE unknown to Susskind. He quoted and translated the idioms (e.g. up tight, out of sight), then made a general point about white ignorance of black lexicon:

(1) **Stokely Carmichael interview with Charles Susskind**

1. it means it means that *white people ought to *realize
2. that what *black people say to each other
3. they cannot always *interpret from *their frame of *reference/

Not only was this segment entirely in standard English, it included careful forms like cannot. The topic here is language, which Labov has noted (this volume) is the least vernacular of topics. However, when he was giving a speech at a Black Power rally and referring to the Vietnam War in which there were many black servicemen, in the punch line he made a switch, which brought applause.

(2) **Stokely Carmichael at Oakland Black Power rally**

1. we will *not *allow them to make us *hired *killers/
2. we will stand *pat/
3. we will *not kill anybody that they say kill/12
4. and if we *decide to *kill
5. we’re gon *decide  {[slow, dropping ] *who *we *gon *kiy::ll}
6. A: [applause]

Three features marked the switch: gon, prosodic drop and prolongation of the final clause, and vowel height and prolongation in kiy::ll. We will see similar features included in those used by Dick Gregory for marking punch lines that bring applause.13

Dick Gregory was a comedian and a political activist. After he ran for president in 1968, he went back to comedy in colleges and in nightclubs in Chicago and New York. By then he had participated in many political demonstrations and was well known for taking strong stands, including hunger strikes, on issues like civil rights and the Vietnam war. He was also a skilled professional comedian who began by drawing on stylistic features in vernacular wit, but also studied many traditional comedic techniques. In his autobiography (1964) he reports that he relied on quick relevant wit to survive in his early street experience.

In a recorded performance at Southampton College14, Gregory was in the midst of a political campaign, so his speech is both a political speech and an example of his skills as a comedian. His overall style contained certain AAVE features, such as -in verb suffixes and de as the dominant article, but variable dh - in other words such as demonstratives. Overall in the text examined, 33% of SE dh fricatives were realized as stops, post-vocalic or syllabic r deletion or non-constriction was 32%, consonant cluster simplification was 54% (e.g., send, post). Copula and number agreement opportunities were few in

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12A similar speech by Carmichael can be heard on the web at http://www.blackhistory.com/Sounds/03.Stokely_Carmichael.aiff
13John Gumperz has analyzed switching in a Black Power speech of David Hilliard, showing special prosodic features (1982) similar to preaching styles
14"Black rioters" from The dark side, the light side, Poppy Records. The recording was made at Southampton College, Southampton, New York on March 6, 1969, two days after newspapers reported Gregory was "sworn into 'office' as president of the United States in exile" in a Washington, D. C.school.(Gregory 1976: 184). His rendition of the Declaration of Independence (lines 87-94) was on the television news. One can assume more than college students came to his performance.
this text, but there was 75% non-agreement and 47% copula deletion. Though these features are rare, their distribution is strategic.

Gregory was very situation-conscious, and refused some invitations so as not to tangle his political and entertainer worlds (1964). A 1978 formal interview on a California radio station gives us his most serious, albeit at a later age. Here there is a dramatic difference in the level of the AAVE features, with 6% of *dh* realized as stops, 5% *r* deletion, 26% cluster simplification, 21% verb non-agreement. One copula deletion occurred on a punch line.

In the transcript below from the college performance, at several sites, Gregory moved from his normal unmarked style to the most standard English features. One was a joke about why there was no rioting last year, with his usual slowing at the punch line where he referred to the *Consumer Reports* in carefully articulated middle class English with strong /r/ and final clusters. He combined allusion to white middle class behavior with speech features in contrast to black rioters’ behavior and speech.

(3) **Dick Gregory in “Black Rioters”**

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19    i'(ll) *tell you whe' we were las' *riot season/
20    we got *tired a stealin all 'em ol' *bad an' *no-good products/
21    so las' *july through *augus’
>22    we decided to go *underground and
>23    {slow} study the con*sumer repo:rts:/}..
24    A:  [light laughter]
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In this "we" he makes rioters sophisticated. In another passage we see in a ludicrous family scene the same contrast between parents (=old fools) and the politically up-to-date young protesters who can speak standard English when drawing on political materials. The segment begins with directions to read the Declaration to parents while they are watching the television news of rioting. This ‘family talk’ segment displays many AAVE features, including copula deletion and *gon*. This AAVE is not in quoted speech but in a description of a family setting that contrasts with the voice of the Declaration and the voice of the political youth. The quotation from the Declaration of Independence was intoned in a declamatory reading style. Here standard English from a respected source is used to subvert, to promote revolution, to question American political consistency. Instead of politically sophisticated youth versus rioters, the contrast is now youth and the sacred texts of American history versus ignorant parents.

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66    pull out your *declaration of independence
67    and wit de *soun’ *turned *off so they caint hear **nothin
68    just look at dem *black folks *loot and *burn de *town down/
69    at *that point i want you to move *way in de *back of your parents,
70    and while they lookin at them cats *burn
71    i want you to *read yo’ declaration of independence
72    as *loud as you can *read it, and maybe for the *first time
73    dem *fools will understand what they lookin at/
74    {[loud steady declamatory]
75    "we *hold these *truths to be self-*evidint....
76    that *all *men are *created *equal.....
77    and *endowed by the *creator....
78    with *certain *inalienable *rights,.....
79    that *when these *rights are *destroyed....
80    over *lo:ng *periods of *time...
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15In the text samples examined, the sample Ns for each feature are given first for the college talk, second for the radio interview: 113/68 for initial voiced dh, 97/43 for post-vocalic r, 41/19 for final cluster simplification, 16/19 for number marking of verb, and 19/14 for copula deletion.

16January 22, 1978 interview on "the unheard-of hour" on KSAN, Oakland California, with thanks to the Bancroft Library, University of California, and Alex Prizadsky of the Berkeley Language Laboratory.

17*The light side, the dark side*. Poppy Records.
The response by this audience is usually applause to political messages and laughter to humor. The greatest laughter is to narrative segments involving quotations, where Gregory uses features like lack of number agreement for his depiction of George Wallace, the governor of Alabama. Here he parodies a white racist view of blacks that even failure to riot is a defect. In his narrative lines, he uses standard past tense affixes so most of the AAVE marked features are in the representation of direct speech.

He also gets humorous effects by putting AAVE features into the mouths of whites as in the Wallace extract above (though this could be an allusion to white Southerner speech) and line 215 below. The violation of linguistic expectation is a regular source of humor, for example in New Yorker cartoons where cleaning personnel recite Kipling or children quote stockbrokers. In the segment below, Gregory, who later wrote a book analyzing the politics of American history books (1971), complains about how Black violence is not seen in the same way as white violence in American history. The use of AAVE features for Paul Revere alludes to a shared political situation for colonists opposing the British and for Black Panthers opposing the police, made explicit in the next line by the term “White Panthers.” Here, the contrast of AAVE and standard English is turned to depict the revolutionary, Paul Revere, versus himself as modern, educated, commentator.

18“Marking” is an African American folk term about a form of characterization used in narratives that reports “not only what was said, but the way it was said, in order to offer implicit comment on the speaker’s background, personality, or intent.” (Mitchell-Kernan, 1971: 137). Parodies may overdo features associated with a social group in the minds of listeners, so they depend on shared assumptions about the meaning of styles, and thus are an example of recursion. Skill in such parodies is honed in family and personal contexts.

19Woolard has a particularly nuanced examination of code-switching in humorous performances, based also on a recorded comedian. She found that during a period of tension about Catalan-Castilian linguistic issues, the Catalan comedian switched within every quote and never used single-variety quotes to make character types. She interprets this as a politically motivated move to peace-making by reducing boundaries. (Woolard, 1987)

20In his autobiographies he is Dick Gregory, in the history book he is Richard Claxton Gregory.
He plays with stereotypes in ‘marking’ his politically uninformed boyhood, using stereotypic AAVE features both for himself and the principal of his school. This is all done as a reality-defying parody.

141 i remember i was *back in the *ghet:to in *grade school,
142 *happy, jus’ bein a *good nigger *singin ma blues
143 "[hi singing] i *love mah *baby"
144 [lo, singing nonsense syllables]."
145 A: [laughter ]
146 n the principal *ran up *to us one day and *said
147 {{hi ] **board of education say
148 you-all can’t graduate from *grade school
149 till you *read and *learn de declaration of *independence/
150 i said "[hi] **what, de decla-**who?..
151 A: [laughter ]
152 man we ain’t gon read that *old *white *stuff/"
153 "{[fast] well you ain’t gon *graduate/"
154 i said "*lay it *on me den/.."
155 A: [laughter ]
156 "{[lo] as long as these (serious objections is xxx)=
157 =[light laughter]=
158 then you have the *duty to destroy or *abolish yo *govment}"
159 ==i said "{[hi] baby you-all got some *more of this stuff man?}...
160 A: [laughter ]

At this point, Gregory makes a dramatic shift in key and begins a political statement that has the repetitious structures (lines 161, 164, and the conclusive 172) also found in political speeches like Carmichael’s and is not intended to be taken as humorous. It seems to be what Labov (this volume) calls “soapbox” variety. While this segment is supposed to be directed to “white folks”, there is consistent copula deletion. There are marked lexical items like *nigger and mammy, *gon, and *yo’ and *they for the possessive, and AAVE monophthongization and cluster reduction of *mind. On lines 163 and 172 there is the vowel prolongation, and in 172 the prosodic drop which typically marks punchline emphasis. This dense use of AAVE features in a serious political vein seems to be present to emphasize a stance that “we” are black and “you” are white; the content is political implications drawn from the shared events which have politically educated black soldiers. The applause given this segment, spoken to a mixed audience, suggests that the audience identifies itself as too radical to be aligned with the white establishment, the you white folks of line 161.

161 {{slow, loud} you white folks really *sick enough to *believe
162 you can put this *stuff in our *neighborhood,
>163 and we’re not gon *read it and *do what it say:s to::://
164 you white folks *sick enough to *believe
165 you can *stiyill *draf’ *niggers into yo’ army,
166 and send ‘em down to *Fort Benning Georgia,
167 and teach ‘em how to be *go: rillas,
168 and send ‘em to *Vietnam,
169 {{accel} killin *foreigners to liberate *foreigners,
>170 and think they not gon *come back to *America,
171 and kill *you to liberate they *mammy}>
172 then you *sick and *out yo [lo] *mi::n'/.....
173 A: right! [22 sec. applause]

In addition to growing up in a community that used linguistic marking as a narrative device, Gregory, who carefully observed other comedians, was certainly familiar with Jewish stand-up comics who exploited code-switching to get laughter. Jewish families relied on code-switching in humorous narratives (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1972), and, depending on the audience, Jewish comedians have drawn on both dialect features and language shifts (using Hebrew, Yiddish and other languages) and even pseudo-Italian
or other languages, with the punch line in English. But what is striking about Gregory is the combined presence of switching for humor and switching for ideological impact.

Political comedy is a linguistic representation of ideology. What we see in Dick Gregory is a deft use of identity features at critical junctures to represent both the ideological message of white culture in the constitution and its interpretation by African American citizens as indicated by AAVE features. This is no accident, as we see in his self-correction of the to de, although this feature is variable in his AAVE style, as we see in 139 and 141:

137 and {[louder] git your *television set
>138 and put it in the.. de *middle a de *roo:m/  
139 and then turn on de *evenin *news
140 cuz’ey’re gon show dem niggers *riotin and *lootin
141 and {{breathy} *sockin it to the *town/}

The AAVE and standard English contrasts which are used for ideological goals in this performance convey a range of social contrasts, to indicate rioters versus sophisticated protesters, old versus young, colonists versus British, and in the most serious passages a dense use of AAVE features and the most radical political message are joined to evoke the most applause. This was the era of The student as Nigger” (Farber, 1969), a perspective in which being African-American was to symbolize protest against the the Vietnam war as well as against civil injustices. Yet the contrast shifts meaning in each segment. What never occurs, and thus indicates a kind of erasure, is any recognition of the social class range and political variety in each generation of African Americans.

While we think of ideology as a powerful force in the societal processes involved in language planning, school curriculum decisions, and language maintenance and shift, such rich individual cases of shifting do not just represent higher and lower status, more and less educated, white and black, or formality and informality, but allude to different aspects of the groupings and identities of speakers and their beliefs. If such style switching exemplifies recurrent iconization, it is not necessarily simple. Here we see that it requires realigning a complex array of potential contrasts.

References


21Mel Brooks, in TV interview with Charlie Rose October 9, 1997, speaking of Sid Caesar.


