Chapter 10

Making Things Easier: The Pragmatism behind Second Dialect Acquisition

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Introduction

When speakers move to new dialect regions, their pronunciation can, but does not always, shift away from their native dialect (D1) to be more similar to the new ambient dialect (D2). Researchers have considered many factors that potentially influence whether or how much a D2 is acquired, including the age of migration (e.g., Chambers 1992; Kerswill 1994; Payne 1980), the amount or nature of D2 input (e.g., Nycz 2013, 2019), the profile of particular linguistic variables (e.g., Chambers 1992; Trudgill 1986), and the attitudinal orientations of the migrant to the regions or dialects (Rys 2007).

One factor that is not as frequently considered in second dialect acquisition (SDA) research is what second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have called "instrumental motivation," which refers to "the practical value and advantages of learning a new language" (Lambert 1974, 98). This term is often used to include factors like monetary or academic incentives (a person needs to learn a language for a job or for a grade) and is in contrast to "integrative orientation," which is a "sincere and personal interest in the People and culture represented by the other language group" (98) and is much closer to the attitudinal factors commonly considered in SDA. While integrative orientation is often framed as more important than instrumental motivation for SLA, research has shown that instrumental motivations can impact language learning outcomes (e.g., Gardner and MacIntyre 1995).

The most obvious reason that pragmatic factors surrounding communication are not typically considered in SDA is because of the most critical difference between SDA and SLA: mutual intelligibility. By common definition, speakers of different dialects of the same language understand each other, while speakers of different languages do not. Therefore, SDA researchers have noted that there appears to be "little

communicative value in acquiring a D2" (Siegel 2010, 116) and therefore migrants have "no need to explicitly learn new lexical items or their component phonemic categories" (Nycz 2019, 1483). Relatedly, SDA is typically understood to be driven largely by subconscious changes that speakers make over time (e.g., Chambers 1992)—a passive response to a change in the nature of linguistic input—and conscious performance of a D2 is typically cleft from second dialect acquisition and called *imitation* (Siegel 2010, 64–66; Trudgill 1986, 12). Therefore, changes that speakers very consciously and deliberately make are not usually the focus of SDA research, where, like most sociolinguistic research, the most privileged form of data is unconscious speech (Labov 1984, 29).

In this chapter I argue for us to take more seriously the role that instrumental factors could have in second dialect acquisition. I do so based on the self-reflective comments of regional migrants, the classic subjects of second dialect acquisition studies. This type of metalinguistic commentary has been understudied not just in SDA but also in linguistics as a field (for a discussion, see Wright 2022, 16–21, 30–36). This neglect is in part because of a heavy focus in sociolinguistics on form over content (Labov 1972), and evidence that people are not always accurate in (Trudgill 1972), aware of (Labov 1972), or do not have the vocabulary for (Preston 1996) talking about their language usage. In the current chapter, we may have additional concerns that instrumental motivations are likely more consciously available for comment than other factors and that speakers could also assign themselves instrumental motivations post hoc to explain why their speech has (not) changed. I make these caveats and still proceed, for two reasons. First, in his seminal work on second dialect acquisition, Trudgill (1986, 32) defends using anecdotes "since if, on a particular topic, we have many of them and they all point in the same direction, then we cannot ignore them." Second, researchers have argued that people's conscious knowledge and understanding of language use are valuable in their own right, for example, as a way to reveal ideologies and to see how non-linguists cognitively organize and reason about variation (Preston and Niedzielski 2010).

When we do ask (these) migrants about what they've changed in their speech and why, while they do sometimes mention factors like exposure and, rarely, attitudes, most often what they talk about appears very instrumental in nature: they changed (or maintained) their speech in pursuit of pragmatic goals like being understood, getting work, or avoiding being teased. One speaker, interviewed as part of this larger project,[1] stated that they were "very much about" assimilating because "you kind of make things easier sometimes." The insights from these migrants remind us that SDA happens in interactions and that the migrant is not just a receptacle for D2 input but that their speech—be it D1-like, D2-like, or something in between—is also being received by others. Moreover, seriously considering their comments forces us to think more carefully about mutual intelligibility, performance, and our definitions of what does and doesn't count as second dialect acquisition.

The Migrants in This Study

The speakers in this study consist of English expats living in the United States, and US expats living in England, and therefore British and American English are both the D1 and the D2 in this study, depending on the speaker. The standardized forms of each dialect (Southern British English and Mainstream US English) differ substantially from each other at every linguistic level: there is phonetic variation on almost all vowels (Wells 1982, 118–23); a number of phonemic differences (e.g., rhoticity, the BATH-TRAP split, the COT-CAUGHT merger); lexically specific pronunciation differences, often regarding stress (e.g., *garage*, *advertisement*); lexical differences (e.g., *boot/trunk*, *elevator/lift*, *gas/petrol*); syntactic differences (e.g., *I've not* vs. *I haven't*); semantic differences (e.g., *fit*, *quite*); and pragmatic differences (e.g., those discussed in Murphy and De Felice 2018). While the standardized forms of each dialect both have institutional backing and domestic status, it seems that generally British English is considered a higher-prestige dialect (e.g., Garrett, Williams and Evans 2005), and certainly that is the way in which the participants in this study experience the two dialects (Walker 2014, 134–36).

The migrants in this study (table 10.1)[2] were interviewed as part of my dissertation (Walker 2014), and the 19 English migrants were living in and interviewed in Columbus, Ohio, while the 21 US migrants were living in and interviewed in London, England. Interviews were conducted in a variety of locations, including university lab spaces, participant homes, and pubs or cafes, and they immediately followed an integrated listening (in noise) and speaking experiment (a wordlist reading task).[3] The results of those experiments suggest that both groups find it easier to understand their D2 than non-migrants do (Walker 2018) and that both groups exhibit some second dialect acquisition in the wordlist task, though the changes are relatively small (Walker 2019).

Interviews were usually between half an hour and an hour long. The bulk content of the interview covered topics related to England and America, including English and American sports, reflecting my interest in topic-based style-shifting between the two dialects (Love and Walker 2013; Walker 2019). Toward the end of the interviews, I specifically asked participants about their accent and whether they thought they

Table 10.1. Summary of speaker attributes, by speaker category (range of values in parentheses)

Speaker attributes	English expats	US expats
Number of participants	19	21
Men:women	10:09	4:17
Average age	46 (20–71)	41 (23–74)
Average age of immigration	31 (9–60)	30 (18–49)
Average # of years in US	15 (1.5–50)	NA
Average # of years in UK	NA	10 (.25–49)

changed their speech, over time or in the moment. The exact wording of the questions (and which questions I asked) differed across participants, but as an example of the nature of this part of the interview, here, in order, are (tidied) questions I asked participant 309 (a US expat):

> Do you feel like your accent has changed at all?
> Any words that you've noticed you've changed?
> What causes you to jump back and forth?
> Do people ever comment on your accent when you go back home?
> Are there any particular sounds—now I'm being a linguist—that you know are consistently different between British and American English?

In other interviews I sometimes asked people directly if they were ever misunderstood and what the reaction to their accent had been in the D2 region. Sometimes, participants initiated some discussion of dialect shifts earlier in the interview, and frequently, when I debriefed participants on my particular interest in style-shifting, they would offer more commentary. It is worth noting that I am a New Zealander living in the United States and so both saw myself, and believe I was seen by participants,[4] as sharing some SDA experiences, and cultural connections with both types of expats (as being from the Commonwealth, and as being a US resident).

Metalinguistic Insights from Migrants

In the following two sections, I pull quotes from these interviews to illustrate and explore two different types of pragmatic considerations migrants talked about when I asked them explicit questions about whether they had changed their accent or not. The first section deals with insights that referenced intelligibility, and the next covers insights that reflected more social responses from their interlocutors.

Changing Speech to Be Understood

When most speakers talked about changes they had noticed or consciously made in their speech as a function of moving across the Atlantic, they framed it as being in service of being understood. Many of their examples centered on vocabulary choices (e.g., *chips/fries*, *torch/flashlight*, *cellphone/mobile*), or the pronunciation of specific lexical items that differ substantially between British and US English (e.g., *water*, *tomato*, *garage*, *ranch*). The changes they had made were not in anticipation of imagined difficulties but in response to actual difficulties that they (sometimes frequently) had encountered (1–3).

1. I remember the first year I lived in New York City, going into a drug store and asking where the vitamin [vɪtʰəmən] section was. And the woman asked me like five times, "The what? The what?" And I kept on saying, "The vitamin section, the vitamin section." And finally I just said, you know, "Where are the vitamins [vaiɾəmənz]?" And she was like "Oh the vitamins! They're over there." And I think that was like a conscious choice to start using the word vitamin [vaiɾəmən]. (511, English expat)

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2. I can't tell people what my name is, because when I say, "Tara" [tʰæɹə], they get really confused. They're like, "Terror? . . . are you threatening?" I'm like, "No, no, it's Tara." And they're like, "Sarah!" And I'm like "No, like that, but with a T." "What?" . . . And I introduce myself as Tara [tʰaɹə] here. (312, US expat)
3. There are certain words that, well, for instance if I go into a bar and I just want like water, and I say, "Can I have water? [wɔtʰə]," everyone is like "What? Like, what are you asking for?" And I'm like "water!" [wɑɾɹ̩], like and then they get it. (527, English expat)

Critically, a number of speakers underlined how functional these changes were: they were interactionally specific (4, 5), and explicitly just about being understood and *not* to change their accent (6).

4. When I got to the market, I definitely order a pound of tomatoes [tʰəmatʰouz] . . . which when I come home they're tomatoes [tʰəmeiɾouz]. (314, US expat)
5. I don't kind of consciously speak one way or the other, but I was with a student the other day, an American student. . . . And she said that I had an English accent when I spoke to English people like to the waiter, but then an American accent when I talked to her. (308, US expat)
6. I do alter or accommodate . . . in a service encounter . . . but not to change my accent as such. (320, US expat)

In a particularly illustrative example (7), an English migrant frames the conscious adoption of the American pronunciation of *tomato* as something they do because they simply will not be understood otherwise ("if I have to"). But they make clear that they are not trying to sound American, and, when telling the story, they sidenote another US pronunciation change that they wouldn't make.

7. Well because I've taught here for a long time, and I interact with Americans more, I've taught myself—so if I'm in restaurant, to order, or getting fast [fast] food—so I wouldn't say fast [fæst] food, I mean, I'm not going to pretend to be an American—but I will say tomato [tʰəmeiɾou] if I have to. (523, English expat)

It is not surprising then that the majority of places where interviewees talked about making these changes were in service contexts—at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, markets—where they were interacting with strangers (who would not know their dialect background) and where the interaction was fast and transactional in nature (see also Trudgill 1986, 23). That is, as English expat 508 said, they are being motivated by "choosing the words to get through the conversation as fast as possible."

The fact that these described changes are largely lexically specific and interactionally shallow is part of the reason that they are typically not considered particularly important in SDA (Siegel 2010, 116)—it is unclear whether these are part of systematic changes to a person's pronunciation, for example. Another reason they feel exceptional is that these changes often sound very performative: hyper-D2 pronunciations where the speaker is temporarily putting on an accent, both in the sense of

how they sounded to me when speakers were giving me examples and how the speakers themselves talked about them, as separate and distinct from their real voice (8–9). Pulling on my own insights as a New Zealander living in the United States, in service encounters I've realized I need to say *tuna* as [tʰunə] (instead of [tʃunə]), but even after a decade it feels very intentional and performative when I do so.

8. I mean I'm looking at [a word in the reading task]. I think I say butter [bʌɾɹ̩]. Uh, but I could sometimes hear myself saying butter [bʌtʰə] . . . to be understood. (314, US expat, emphasis added)
9. In my real voice or to be understood? (535, English expat, asked during the reading task)

But there are also many instances of people who talk about the role of intelligibility in much broader terms, both in the sense of the changes they made to their accent (10, 11) and in terms of the circumstances under which they made these changes, often attributed to being requirements of their jobs (15, 16). That is, they framed intelligibility as driving systematic changes to their accent as a function of long-term interactional situations they were in. Additionally, some speakers suggested that conscious changes they made to be more intelligible lead to unconscious changes later (12, 13).

10. I actually had to flatten a lot of it, of myself, when I first came over here 'cause people couldn't understand what I was saying. (530, English expat, emphasis added)
11. I really did find myself Americanizing the way I spoke because people seriously did not understand what I was saying. . . . I did make a conscious effort to, to mollify how I was speaking. (520, English expat, emphasis added)
12. You want to be understood—it starts consciously but becomes unconscious. (301, US expat[5])
13. My accent has changed a lot 'cause when I first moved over, I made a conscious effort . . . to be understood. So that meant certain changes were immediate, like I stopped saying *cellphone* and I started say *mobile*. Really simple, and initially that's all that changed was my choice of vocabulary. . . . But I noticed about two years in that my vowel sounds started to change. (318, US expat)

Separate from what participants report changing in their speech and when, it is also worth noting the heavy importance they put on easy communication. Speakers often framed being understood as a non-negotiable outcome that must be achieved (14–17);[6]:

14. Essentially everyone just wants to be understood correctly . . . and that's what I want to be, is I want to be understood by the people I'm talking to. (301, US expat)
15. Sometimes when you're at work, because people are talking really fast and you need to get things done. (526, English expat)
16. I teach for a living, so yeah I have to stand up in front of 30 people and they have to understand me. (509, English expat)

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17. For the most part it's a question of choosing to say them [US vocabulary items] because you're just—it's just easier to be understood. (508, English expat)

And many made clear that not being understood was unpleasant. Participants talked about needing to repeat themselves often (18, 19), which was irritating, tiring, or even "a nightmare" (525, English expat). Other speakers talked of their negative emotional reactions to not being understood (20, 21) or of not understanding (22, in this case, not recognizing lexical items).

18. [AW: Are you ever misunderstood?] Oh yeah, all the time . . . there are times where I have to repeat myself like three or four times, but it's quite rare. (312, US expat)
19. I think I ran into a lot of problems when I first moved here with people . . . asking me to repeat things and I just got irritated enough with that, that it's probably why I started changing my [accent]. (515, English expat)
20. You just want people to understand you and it gets really tiring (301, US expat[7])
21. A lot of people don't understand me and it kind of upsets me sometimes. (525, English expat)
22. I had um an expat moment, where we were stood in front of a pub, thinking "Oh let's go for lunch." And I looked on the pub menu . . . I didn't know what a single item on the menu was and I burst into tears,'cause I was like "I can't even order lunch." . . . So those moments were few and far between but when they happen they are incredibly emotional; it's weird. (318, US expat)

Other Pragmatic Reasons to Avoid/Maintain the First Dialect

Some of the other factors cited by participants as impacting their accent shift or maintenance also seemed pragmatic in nature. The most easily classified of these, given typical examples of instrumental motivation, were related to money: some migrants reported instances where the use of the D2 (23) or their D1 (24) had financial consequences.

23. Because so many people in Britain think you have money if you're from America, sometimes I consciously try and dilute what I'm saying so I don't get [ripped off]. I bought an automobile tire yesterday morning . . . and uh I was trying to speak softly in a non-Kentucky accent to the guy because he will say "ninety-five" or "a hundred and five quid" instead of "eighty-five quid" for that tire if he thinks you're a septic tank yank 'cause you have money. (302, US expat)
24. My radio work for the most part relies on my sounding American. I mean if I didn't sound American there are probably fifty Brits who are as clever as I am. (314, US expat)

The other reasons given by participants for changing or maintaining their accents could be described as what Kerswill (1994, 60) called "pressure to modify speech." In Kerswill's study of Stril speakers in Bergen, Norway, he used this term

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to capture explicit instructions from bosses to lose the Stril dialect but also migrant avoidance of teasing or stereotyping. For the US expats in particular, they were navigating a lot of negative stereotypes about Americans—for example, that they were rich (23), stupid, or tourists—and many saw their accents as activating this baggage. In other cases, speakers talked simply about not wanting the attention and/or othering that comes with having an unexpected accent (25, 26), and one speaker connects this desire explicitly to "disguising" their English accent (27).[8] In her assessment of similar comments by Canadians living in America, Nycz (2016, 70) notes that this doesn't seem to be about dialect-related shame, so much as wanting to not "derail a conversation" toward a discussion of where the speaker is from.[9]

25. There's always that horrible moment in a new class, when—you know, some people I haven't met before—when a professor will say something and I'll have to respond and it's just that awful moment the first time I speak, I can just—the class goes silent and everybody turns around to look at me because it's a different accent. (508, English expat)
26. That's the thing, everywhere you go you'll sound different. . . . You don't want to always stand out. Sometimes it's okay, but you know, I just would rather sometimes be able to blend in, and as soon as I open my mouth, I can't blend in. (303, US expat)
27. To a certain extent I will just try and disguise my accent sometimes. You know, when I get off the bus and say, "Thanks" [in US accent] and then I sound like Brooklyn or something. . . . So sometimes yeah, I'm just, I don't wanna be spotted. I don't wanna be picked out, I don't wanna be asked again after seventeen years here, "Where are you from?" (507, English expat)

The examples above illustrate pressures to lose the D1, but many speakers also felt pressure to maintain their D1 and *not* acquire the D2, mostly coming from D1 people they were still in contact with (28–31). Another reason to maintain the D1 was because of various privileges people felt it afforded them in the D2, as an outsider (32, 33).

28. I get real, real grief when I go home. . . . [M]y brothers give me real grief. Because I inflect. (508, English expat)
29. When I'm talking to my brother . . . because he'll accuse me of sounding like a yank which is regarded as being a negative thing over there and so I would take pains to really anglicize my voice. (520, English expat)
30. I'm really scared to go home and hear my family make fun of me. . . . [Y]ou don't understand how [younger brother] made fun of me so bad when I went home, like everything I said. (315, US expat)
31. I try when I speak with my parents not to sound like an asshole because that's what . . . an American who sounds English sounds like to an American. (303, US expat)
32. I think it's in some ways it's easier . . . when you have an accent, because . . . people are expecting you to say things um, it's like they're listening for them . . . like I think if you have a British accent and you mumble like it's more confusing. (310, US expat)

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33. It's hard to be an eccentric in our own land but you can be in a foreign land and people will excuse your eccentricities on your foreignness, you know? (511, English expat)

I treat these pressures to modify/maintain speech as instrumental motivators because they are not framed as being driven by internal orientations or attitudes of the migrant but instead by external responses that the migrants are trying to avoid or exploit. Kerswill (1994) similarly distinguishes these pressures from attitudinal factors and finds that the degree to which participants felt this pressure aligned with how much they acquired salient morpho-lexical features of the Bergen dialect.[10] At the same time, other writers have treated factors like peer pressure as connected to a speaker's identity (Siegel 2010, 170–71), that is, as something reflecting the internal allegiances of a speaker. And it is true that which external pressures we feel, or feel most keenly, will likely reflect internal orientations and values (see also the "Instrumental Dialect" subsection). The fact that SLA researchers have found high correlation between instrumental and integrative motivations is further evidence that the two factors are not entirely dependent (Gardner, Smythe and Lalonde 1984).

Implications for Second Dialect Acquisition Research

English and American expats talk about the changes they are aware that they have made to their speech in largely instrumental terms, driven by practical considerations of the consequences of D1 or D2 word or pronunciation choices. Specifically, participants talk about using the D2 in order to be understood, and to avoid negative stereotypes or being noticed, and they talk about maintaining their D1 to avoid being teased back home, and for financial or social gain associated with being an outsider.

As mentioned earlier, it should be noted that instrumental motivations may be more consciously available for commentary, so it's unlikely that well-studied factors like exposure, attitudes, or phonological systems don't matter, or don't matter as much, just because they were less mentioned. But the consistency of these comments also indicates that instrumental factors deserve more consideration in SDA research, and I discuss some of these implications in the sections below. Moreover, while some of the changes discussed so far are usually considered too superficial to count in SDA—specific lexical items in limited domains, often very consciously performed and distinct from the speaker's "real voice"—in the "Usage versus Acquisition" subsection, I talk through ways in which these productions have implications for SDA, both as a phenomenon and as a defined field of study.

Mutual Intelligibility Is Not Equivalent Intelligibility

Broadly put, speakers of British and American English understand each other; these are mutually intelligible dialects. The migrants interviewed here did not need to formally study the D2 or be immersed in the D2 in order to talk to D2 speakers, just as British and American tourists do not need or expect translation help on holiday. But critically, being mutually intelligible is not the same as being equivalently intelligible, especially when listening conditions are not optimal (e.g., Clopper and Bradlow

2008; Floccia et al. 2006; Labov and Ash 2014, and this includes the dialects under question here (Walker 2018). SDA contexts are ones of cross-dialectal communication, then, and in the case of British and American English, participants experience the two dialects as substantially different (34–36).

34. We speak the same language but we don't. Entirely. (318, US expat)
35. But the language is so completely different, that . . . you know you get here and you're like well sure there's a few words, and then you start to realize, no, it's significantly different. (304, US expat)
36. Two countries separated by a common language, eh? (520, English expat)

Moreover, while communication difficulties can sometimes be funny anecdotes, they can also be socially fraught. This can be seen in the comments of the expats themselves (see the "Changing Speech" subsection, where they talked about how frustrating and upsetting miscommunications could be. It is also evident from a growing body of literature on the topic: listeners may judge speakers they find hard to understand more negatively (Dragojevic and Giles 2016; Dragojevic et al. 2017; Lev-Ari and Keysar 2010; Rickford and King 2016; though see Vaughn and Whitty 2020), and online commentary about subtitling practices reveal that marking someone as hard to understand is generally considered offensive (Yu et al. 2022).

This is all to say that, based on prior research and based on what these speakers are telling us, I follow Shockey (1984) in arguing that intelligibility or comprehensibility is likely a large factor in many observed SDA patterns. It is of particular interest that many speakers described themselves as making the bare minimum changes to their speech in order to be intelligible. In some cases, this was framed as just changing a specific troublesome word in shallow interactional contexts, but in other cases it was framed as not losing but "mollifying" or "flattening" their D1 accent as a whole. This mirrors recent work from my lab suggesting that changes made by self-identified bidialectal US Southerners from their Southern to Mainstream US English modes did not entirely stop them from sounding Southern to outsiders but did seem to remove intelligibility costs for outsiders (Walker, van Hell and Bowers 2018).

These *just enough* changes may help explain why many studies investigating SDA can demonstrate that migrants have changed their speech statistically, but the effect sizes of these changes are often really quite small (e.g., Nycz 2013; Walker 2019). Intelligibility may also contribute to why some features are more likely to shift than others: some researchers have argued that salient features often change more easily than non-salient features (Trudgill 1986, 11; though see Nycz 2016) and Auer, Barden and Grosskopf (1998) have posited that part of what creates salience is comprehensibility (see also Trudgill 1986, 21). In short, dialect differences that cause communicative challenges are likely to be noticed.

Becoming Accented

The considerations interviewees mentioned when they talked about reasons they changed or maintained their accents sound largely like the concerns of speakers of non-standardized dialects: the onus is on them to be understood (Lippi-Green 1997,

70), and they are very aware of the ways in which the associations of their dialect might impact how people receive them in social and practical ways (e.g., Smitherman 2006; Wright 2022). In fact, for many speakers in this study—who are mostly white, middle class, and educated—what they report experiencing is akin to *becoming* accented but at a later stage of life than we typically associate with speakers of non-standardized dialects.

More integration between traditional SDA studies that involve migration, and studies of bidialectalism that usually involve education, is therefore warranted. These situations both involve substantial exposure to two (or more) dialects, and comparing speech production and perception outcomes across these situations will help us understand how exposure to variability shapes production and perception (see Walker and McAllister 2023). For example, in investigating the outcomes of long-term exposure to multiple dialects, how much does the age and circumstance around first exposures matter, how much do attitudes and dialect prestige matter, and how much does the contextual separation of the two dialects matter?

One thing that bidialectal research has focused on heavily is style- or code-switching (e.g., Charity Hudley, Mallinson and Bucholtz 2022), but this has received much less attention in SDA research (though see Johnson and Nycz 2015; Walker 2019) and rarely involves recording speakers in multiple environments and/or with different interlocutors (Kerswill 1994, 149; Lin 2018; cf. Sharma 2011; Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994). Indeed, a few speakers in my study specifically used the term "code-switching" to describe their behavior. Theoretically, this raises the question of what we're trying to capture in second dialect acquisition—how close a migrant gets to a D2-like accent in their most D2-like mode, how much D2-like features appear in their most D1-like mode (i.e., Trudgill 1986, 40), and/or what their combined baseline productions are—but also highlights the value of looking at their linguistic behavior more holistically.

Usage versus Acquisition

As noted in the "Changing Speech" subsection, some speakers' reported use of the D2 could be described as performative—a highly conscious, categorical shift into an extremely D2-like pronunciation that doesn't appear to reflect their regular speech; in many cases, it even appears limited to a single lexical item. The question is whether this *usage* has any bearing on discussions of *acquisition*. Indeed, the whole of Siegel's quote regarding instrumental motivations in SDA reads, "With regard to SDA, it seems the perception may be that there would be little communicative value in acquiring a D2, *except for a few lexical items* or pronunciations that could lead to misunderstanding" (Siegel 2010,116; emphasis added). That is, the sorts of performative uses of the D2 mentioned by participants in this study are not unknown to researchers but are usually considered exceptions to general second dialect acquisition processes.

The distinction between usage and acquisition is demonstrated best in discussions of actors using non-native dialects for certain roles. Siegel (2010, 64–66) argues that this sort of performance is not acquisition, reflecting familiarity but not "linguistic proficiency" (65; see also Trudgill 1986, 12). As his argument continues, two more

contrasts between performance and acquisition are implied. First, that SDA involves the desire to acquire the D2, and second, that acquisition involves sustained, consistent use of D2: "Actors' aims are normally not to acquire the dialect, but to use it for a performance, and therefore they would have difficulty sustaining the use of the dialect outside their performance. In fact, some actors have difficulty sustaining their dialect imitations even through the duration of their performances" (65).

This reasoning behind separating performance and acquisition does not hold. First, almost none of the speakers in my study, and many other SDA studies,[11] are *aiming* to acquire the D2. Some are even vehemently against it; when US expat 315 asked me if I thought she sounded English and I said, "Yes, variably," she responded with "Oh no! I sound English. I don't want to sound English," and kept coming back to this genuine concern for the next five minutes of our conversation. Second, much of second dialect acquisition research has shown how inconsistent and contextually variable D2-usage is by migrants (see Siegel 2010, 22–55 for a summary),[12] and Rampton (2013) shows that the use of D2[13] features in stylized performance can both be momentary and still also reflect long-term exposure to the D2. In practice then, it's not clear that what it means to "sustain" a dialect is well defined and/or shared across SDA research, especially given that the majority of studies look at summative usage rates without a careful analysis of how this is maintained by speakers across time or context. Even for research that does track use across situations, we still lack clear criteria for what counts as sustaining the D2: if a speaker uses low-but-detectable rates of a D2 variant across multiple contexts, is that sustained? If they shift between very high and very low amounts of D2 variants across contexts, is that sustained? If they always pronounce a particular word with a D2 variant—but only really that word—is that sustained?

This is not to say that usage, especially performed usage, *is* acquisition.[14] Rather, one purpose of this critique is meant to motivate researchers (including myself!) to think harder about what the distinction actually is. In my estimation, the key difference appears to be one of consciousness, with a primary interest in people's utterances when they are paying the least attention to their speech (Labov 1972; Sharma 2018).[15] However, it is worth noting that even vernacular-loving sociolinguists have argued for collecting both more and less conscious speech forms to compare patterns across them, suggesting that rather than excluding highly conscious performances, we should analyze them in tandem with other speech samples.

Whether we want to include a very self-conscious "tomato" that is only used at the farmer's market as an example of SDA or not, these imitative tokens might still be of interest to us as paths through which D2 pronunciations first enter a speaker's repertoire. In the case of SDA, we (implicitly or explicitly) assume that part of the reason that migrants' speech changes is purely from substantial exposure to a D2 that begins to shape their speech production. However, we know that people understand and recognize a great deal more variation than they themselves produce, and some models of the production-perception loop posit that this means we have different representations for perception and production (Baese-Berk 2010; Garrett and Johnson 2013). Even within the migrants in the current study, the (admittedly few) measures of SDA in their speech did not correlate with their performance in

a listening task: changes in perception appeared to be happening independently of changes in production (Walker 2018).

The question then becomes, What causes something that you have heard a lot to become something that you yourself say? This is especially important when we consider that D1 and D2 forms are not socially neutral; for a speaker to produce a D2 form is for them to *sound* like a D2 speaker in some way, and certain variables—for example, BATH realizations—are wildly loaded to participants (Walker 2019, 152). Exemplar accounts of language, which would posit frequency effects (see Nycz 2013), also critically allow for tokens to be tagged with relevant socioindexical information (Foulkes and Docherty 2006). Under this account, one way that D2-tokens start to enter a speaker's repertoire is if D2 speakers start to be tagged as similar to the migrant in some way, or D2-variants acquire new, desirable meanings (for example, intervocalic /t/-flapping is not associated with sounding *American* but maybe with sounding relaxed). Explicit performance of the D2 could be one way that even the most socially marked tokens enter a speaker's repertoire. If a speaker is forced to produce a particular pronunciation in order to be understood, this realization is now, by definition, something that the speaker says, and these performative, mercenary utterances could be the mechanism through which certain pronunciations enter a person's speech production repertoire. Reflecting on changes in intervocalic /t/ in his own speech, Trudgill (1986, 23) states: "I can attest that one factor that without doubt precipitated the introduction of flaps into my own speech in America was the number of people who thought, for example, if only for a second, that I wanted a *pizza* rather than that my name was *Peter.*" The keywords in this quote are "precipitated the introduction," which imply that the conscious need to be understood motivated the initial use of a D2 variant, but once introduced, the variant was used in other contexts. Chambers (1992) has already hypothesized that SDA of sounds happens through a process of lexical diffusion, stating that "speakers must *sporadically acquire* new pronunciations . . . as the basis for generalizing a rule" (695; emphasis added). The point here is that the sporadically acquired new pronunciations are likely to be in the words that cause the greatest communication difficulties.[16]

Instrumental Dialect Needs Will Be Very Situation Specific

More recent discussions of motivation-related concepts in SLA (including "orientation" and "investment") have focused on how these factors are very situated in broader sociopolitical dynamics and also are something that can change within a given person across spaces and time (see Peirce 1995; Ushioda 2012). Therefore, the role that pragmatic concerns have in whether a speaker acquires the D2 or maintains their D1 are going to be very situation and person specific.

We see this specificity in the current study. There are many similarities between both groups of expats, including some of the pressures they feel in regard to changing their accent, for example, to be understood or to avoid being noticed. But there are as well differences between being a British expat and an American expat that also manifest in the cost-benefit of their D1. Specifically, Americans were trying to avoid negative stereotypes associated with an American accent in ways that English migrants were not. Similarly, there will be situations in which a person's D1 is relatively

easy for D2 listeners to understand, for example, because of heavy media exposure or economic and political relationships between countries, and situations where a speaker's D1 will be relatively obscure to D2 listeners. For example, in Walker and Drager (2018), we found that New Zealanders performed similarly with American vs. NZ voices in a lexical decision task, but US listeners did much worse with NZ vs. American voices. Presumably then, New Zealanders in the US would encounter more miscommunication issues than Americans in New Zealand would, so intelligibility would be more of a factor for the former vs. the latter group.

In his analysis of the factor "Pressure to Modify Speech," Kerswill (1994, 106) finds that women and people who migrated at an earlier age had higher scores, highlighting the ways in which dialectal pressures may be non-random: certain types of people might either be more subject to, may more keenly feel, or may be more likely to report, various pressures to maintain or lose their D1. The role of age in Kerswill's study was particularly interesting, as it could reflect how pressure can be age graded and how pressure can change over time. For example, if speakers move to a new dialect region at a younger age, they might be more teased by their peers about their accent than people who move when they are older. It could also be that their own sense of self is more/less stable and therefore more/less subject to change. One US migrant in my study was now living in England for the second time in her life, in her 30s. The first time, she had been in her early 20s, and she felt like her age influenced how likely she was to change her accent (37).

37. I think [my accent's] still quite American, and other people tell me it's still quite American. . . . And I think it's 'cause I'm older. . . . [W]hen I was living here and I was twenty, I remember certain words becoming much more English. (312, US expat)

The other possibility is that attitudes toward the D1, or toward variation in general, change in the D2 community over time. This is one explanation Kerswill (1994) gives for the interaction he finds between age and dialect pressure in his study: that there used to be more bigotry against a Stril accent in Bergen in the past but that at the time of his study, the dialect was less stigmatized (113). Speaker 312 also talks about how dialect change happening over time may contribute to changes in intelligibility-related issues (38).

38. It's harder with I think older people, um . . . it's hard for me to understand some of the older people. . . . [O]ur generation is sort of a lot easier to understand. (312, US expat)

To summarize this section, it is unlikely that any pragmatic pressures driving second dialect acquisition are universal, applicable to all D1-D2s, to all people, or even in all domains and time periods of a single person's life. This point requires researchers to understand the broader contexts of the D1-D2 relationship, and of the types of interactions a person is regularly involved in. One way to get this information, as I hope is clear from this chapter, is just to ask.

Conclusion

In this study I center the metalinguistic reflections of English and US migrants. Their observations remind us that second dialect acquisition is not simply a passive response to a new ambient dialect but the product of interactive experiences with D2 (and still D1) speakers. Migrants tell us that their conscious dialect choices are largely driven by the responses of their interlocutors, either in terms of whether the interlocutor will understand them, or whether the interlocutor will positively or negatively judge them. That is, they often frame their dialect choices as pragmatic ways to achieve communicative or other goals. Importantly, their responses also point to weaknesses in second dialect research, in understating the role of intelligibility in cross-dialectal communication, and in weak and sometimes contradicting definitions of what we include within second dialect research. At the same time, they also highlight interesting avenues of future work, and point to what could be learnt by more connection with SLA research, bidialectal/non-standardized dialect research, and performance research.

Notes

1 This was speaker 038, who was a non-migrant, US fan of English Premier League football (Walker 2014).
2 I did not formally collect information on ethnicity and education, but most (though not all) of people in both groups were white and university educated.
3 In a very few cases, where I was running two people at once, one of the participants completed the interview before the experiment.
4 During the recordings, many participants comment on my accent and the degree to which I've acquired an American accent. One Brit called me "an absolute, cut down the line mix" of a US and New Zealand English speaker.
5 This comment is derived from my notes; it was a comment the speaker made after I had turned off the recorder.
6 This may seem obvious to readers, but there are many examples where people don't actually prioritize intelligibility over other social considerations, for example, the act of "smiling and nodding" when you don't understand someone.
7 This comment is derived from my notes; it was a comment the speaker made after I had turned off the recorder.
8 Another alternative mentioned by a few speakers was just to avoid talking altogether.
9 Shockey (1984, 92) similarly states that she derives "no particular pleasure from sounding different from my colleagues or from being identified as foreign in every encounter involving speech".
10 The exact role of the factor was complicated, given its high correlation with age-of-migration and gender (see the "Instrumental Dialect" subsection)
11 There are also speakers who *do* want to acquire the D2/lose their D1. For example, in Kerswill (1994, 60), one immigrant to Bergen is cited as saying, "I did not dare utter a word until I was sure I could speak the Bergen dialect."
12 English Expat 302, who said he changed his accent sometimes to be understood and fit in, explicitly talked about how he could not sustain a US accent.

proofs

13 In that study, the speaker was a L1 Punjabi speaker who learned English later in life, and I use "D2" here to refer to when his English (L2) most resembled Anglo vs. Indian English pronunciations.

14 It would be very interesting to systematically investigate whether using a non-native dialect while acting has any impact on a speaker's speech outside of the role. There are also some reasons to think usage and acquisition are not wholly separate phenomena. For example, Trudgill (1986, 12) finds similarities between the sounds that change in *imitation* and those that change in accommodation.

15 The perceived difference is probably exacerbated by historical differences in the traditions of research performance and on SDA. These differences are primarily about the populations and situations under study: work that is typically considered as SDA research has primarily looked at the impact of migration on conversational speech, while work looking at dialect performance looks at the accuracy of (non-migrant) actors in capturing the D2.

16 This study also mirrors work in sociolinguistics suggesting that there are carrier words that initially contain the most advanced variants of changes in progress (Drager 2015; Eckert 1996; Kiesling 2004), and work in phonetics suggesting that words most likely to be misunderstood (low-frequency words) lead in a push-chain-shift (Hay et al. 2015).

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