20   The Family

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Parents were invented to make children happy by giving them something to ignore.

Ogden Nash (quoted in Simpson 1988)

...parental models must count for something in the acquisition stages and perhaps exert discernible effects not yet understood or appreciated.

Chambers (1995: 160)

Both psychology and sociology have specific subfields designed to investigate the family,[1] one of the most basic units in society (Benson and Deal 1995). Although sociolinguistics has at least some of its roots in sociology (Chambers 1995), the field has never thoroughly investigated the family. While we certainly do not have to rigorously subscribe to all the methods of other fields, we should have the capacity to detail and explain the effects of the family on linguistic variation. Does the family need to be a distinct subset of the speech community; does its inclusion in a sociolinguistic analysis make an appreciable difference? How does the study of the family help our understanding of language variation for the individual? Can our analysis of language variation in the family help sociological and psychological fields better understand the processes and properties of families? Although a study of familial influence could be wide ranging in sociolinguistics, this chapter focuses primarily on the family's effects on language variation.[2]

   As is well recognized by most variationists, children do not retain their parents' language variation patterns as complete sets through their adolescent years. When given two models of transmission, the parents' and the peer group's, children normally follow the peer group. As Chambers (1995: 159) notes, "when Scots school-teachers settle and work in London, England, they retain most features of their native Scottish accents, but their London-born offspring do not retain their parents' Scottishness in their own accents."

However, exceptions to this rule do exist and can inform our understanding of language variation. Chambers (1995: 160) argues, "the children of the Scots parents should have Scots dialect features – at least some – up to around age five, and should lose them – probably rapidly – thereafter." Whether children lose all features, and those beyond just phonology, has yet to be thoroughly investigated.

Perhaps the best approach to language variation in the family is through analysis of language transmission (Labov 2001).[3] Generativists in formal fields traditionally view language transfer between generations as between parents and children (Halle 1962, McMahon 1994). Sociolinguists view language transfer as between older and younger members of the same speech community with the main point of transfer as the peer group. Neither group has put the family into the model of language transfer.

The study of language variation in the family is also at the intersection of the study of language acquisition and language change: Within the family we have children, in part instigators of language change (Roberts and Labov 1995, Romaine 1984), and we have parents who may act as a foil to adolescent peer groups (Kerswill and Williams 2000, Payne 1980).[4] Often, these details about language variation in the family come as a side product of the study of child language or discourse analysis of families. This chapter draws together studies that have produced data on language variation in the family and suggests questions for future study. I first offer some related assumptions and approaches for family language variation study, then review several relevant studies, and third, present case studies to note the complexity of language variation in the family. In concluding, I outline potential research questions.

1.   Theoretical Issues and Questions

1.1   *The individual, the family, and the speech community*

Since the family may be seen as an intermediate grouping between the individual and the speech community, the study of the family from a variationist perspective investigates the language variation patterns of individuals and compares them to subgroups of the speech community (i.e. families). For some researchers, the language variation patterns of individuals are idiolects. But according to traditional variationist analysis, specifically Weinreich et al. (1968) and Labov (1989b), idiolects are not a theoretical reality. Labov (1999) has called this foregrounding of the speech community "the central dogma" of variationist analysis. In this view, the language variation grammar exists at the level of the speech community but not at the level of the individual. These assumptions prohibit a nested view of language variation whereby dialects

are collections of similar idiolects, and languages are collections of similar dialects. What then would language variation in the family be? Is the family a unit of society in the same way as a social division like ethnicity? Are there family dialects? These are appropriate research questions, but it is not clear that we have appropriate answers at this point in variationist research.

In language change, what role does the family play? Could the children in a family have exactly the same language variation patterns as the parents? Roberts (1999) and Roberts and Labov (1995) note that children actively participate in language change by extending the parameters of variation as a natural part of their acquisition process. Given that children and parents do not acquire language at the same time and that parental language acquisition modules are no longer operational, children should always have some differences in their language variation patterns from their parents. While peer groups may play a large role in shaping socially significant language variation patterns, some of the differences between family members may result from the natural structure and processes of the human language faculty which lead to the constant flow of language change (Labov 2001).

For any given speaker, how is a researcher to determine which language variation patterns come from the rest of the speech community and which come from the family? The easiest scenario would be if the language variation patterns of the family were different from those of the speech community either qualitatively or quantitatively but within the same language. For example, if a family from the Southern US with features such as /ai/ ungliding (e.g. [baːd] for *bide*), the /ɪ/~/ɛ/ merger before nasals (e.g. *pin~pen* [pɪn]), and syllable-initial stress in words like *pecan* ['pikan] and *cement* ['simɪnt] moved to Canada, the family language variation patterns the children preserve after their teenage years would be much easier to detect. If the family unit has an influence on language variation independent from other social factors (e.g. gender or age), then we would expect the children in these families to align, in terms of dialect features, with their parents to some extent and not necessarily with their social categories or the larger speech community. If the family has an influence on the children, the children would demonstrate language variation that would be unexplainable through any influence other than the family unit (cf. Chambers 1995: 168).

1.2   *Types of influences of the family on language variation patterns*

What does it mean to study language variation in the family? For language variation analysis, ontogeny and phylogeny need to be distinguished. Specifically, two questions arise: (1) What is the effect of the family on the language variation patterns of a speaker within that family and (2) what is the effect of families on variation in the speech community? The second question grapples with a system of compounded complexity, but it moves towards providing

answers for how language variation becomes embedded in a speech community and becomes language change. Most studies reviewed here focus on the first question since a large-scale study of a collection of families has not been attempted.[5]

In focusing on variation effects within the family, two possible influences could be demonstrated with family language variation patterns: transfer of patterns from child to parent or transfer of patterns from parent to child. Either of these may result in family markers distinguishing one family from others in the speech community. Although not formally documented, there is no a priori reason to restrict language transmission to simply the realm of child language acquisition. At future stages of investigation, researchers should assess other social relationships associated with family: accommodation between parents; accommodation between extended family; different cultural constructions of family; influences, both accommodating and distancing, between siblings.

Parents' norms may be modified through contact with their children. Since teenagers in the western world focus intensely on what is popular in their culture, some parents may try to win back the affections of their children by identifying with them. This situation would foster accommodation on the part of the parent. Of research interest would be which of the teenager's language variation patterns are attempted – lexical, phonological, morphological – and how accurately can the parent produce them. In a nonwestern context, parental accommodation may also be possible. Meyerhoff (2000) investigates a situation of language change in Bislama involving subject deletion. Although it is clear that deletion of subject pronouns is a relatively recent innovation in Bislama and is more widespread among younger speakers, an examination of the community-wide patterns showed no monotonic relationship between rates of subject deletion and speaker age. Based on more detailed data from one extended family, she hypothesizes that the reason there is an absence of clear age-grading in the community at large is because, even though the children in these families learn the general trend of the change from the wider speech community, the parents adjust their norms to fit those of their children. Dubois and Horvath (1999: 303) also report a context for sociolinguistic acquisition where children may influence their parents in Cajun English.

The most frequent transfer of language variation patterns is the language acquisition process itself. Most often, parents provide the stimulus triggering language acquisition, helping the child form their grammar(s). What is obviously not determined by this process is the exact language variation patterns of the child. Given our current understanding of language variation and change and the stances on principles and parameters (Chomsky 1995, Henry 1995, Roberts and Labov 1995, Wilson and Henry 1998), a safe hypothesis is that no child copies exactly the language variation patterns of the parents. Neither is there a radical break from the parents: no child creates a separate language from the language(s) of the parents. Given these extremes, the questions for variationists are not clear. If we ask what socially significant language

variation patterns children acquire and maintain in the face of competing patterns from peer groups, then we have a dilemma because most often the socially significant patterns are the ones linked to the peer groups. Except in cultures where kinship families are a predominant part of the social structure (Rogles et al. 1989), the socially significant patterns will be the peer-group patterns.

If variationists ask what parts of the child's overall language resemble those of the parents, there will of course be a great deal of overlap: within the same language, the child and the parent will share the majority of lexical items and grammatical processes. The foundering point is that the child also shares the majority of lexical items and grammatical processes with most speakers of the same language. The most revealing question might be which language variation patterns, including lexical items, are shared by family members but not by the community at large. Although family language patterns may occur in every family, the effects may be masked by overlap between the parents and the community if the parents are originally members of the community. As Chambers (1995: 159) notes, "In the most common social situations, the disparity between family and friends as linguistic influences is inconsequential because family and friends are natives of the same speech community. It is when we look at the situations in which the parents belong to a different speech community from the one in which the children are being raised that the primacy of age-mates over elders becomes very obvious."

If differences between the family and the speech community exist, members of a family could be unified in some language variation pattern if they use it as a sociolinguistic marker for the family (Fasold 1990). For example, one quantitatively variable feature of a rural North Carolina community is the negative, past *be* (e.g. *We wont going to the store* – Hazen 1998, 2000). Although in most English speaking communities the negative past *be* paradigm bifurcated into *wasn't* and *weren't*, in Warren County and other areas of North Carolina there is a tripartite paradigm: *wasn't*, *weren't*, and *wont* (spelled without the apostrophe to distinguish it from the future auxiliary, *won't*, as in Hazen 1998). *Wont* is a separate linguistic variant, and in Warren County is a highly diagnostic social variant. In one particular family, this feature is highly variable for the three adult children, but is frequent and stable for the parents. For the children, in more formal, nonfamily contexts, the rates of *wont* are most often nil, but in family contexts, the children often demonstrate rates of *wont* at 100 percent (see Hazen 2000: ch 5). In nonfamily, less formal contexts, *wont* varies with both *wasn't* and *weren't* for the children. Essentially, the children's rates are lower than those of the parents in most contexts except family gatherings, where they exceed or match those of the parents. Considering the close ties of the children with the parents in this family, their variable rates of *wont* may be the children's attempt for family unity and identity.[6]

The transfer from parent to child may be considered an inheritance model. There are four family-pattern types by which the children may vary in relation to the parents and the community.

1   Children may pattern with the parents.
2   Children may pattern with the community.
3   Children's patterns may be in between the parents and the community, possibly moving towards one or the other as they grow older.
4   Children in a family may be split. In other words, one child may fit Family Pattern 1 and another in the same family may fit Family Pattern 2. However, children in a family may also be split with systematic variation. In other words, one child may align as in 3, but another child in the same family may align as in 3 but in a different manner.

For family pattern type three, this midpoint may mean having both parental and community norms, or it may be that their language variation patterns fall between parents and community quantitatively (e.g. the parents' rates of certain variants are high, the community's rates are low, but the children's rates fall in the middle).[7] In family pattern type four, some children lean towards the parents' patterns while their siblings lean towards the community's for reasons of identity (or nonidentity) with other members of the family.

2   Related Studies

Large-scale sociolinguistic studies have most often focused on the speech community as the place where sociolinguistic variation happens, in contrast to the individual or smaller social units being the locus of language variation. Labov (1972) in New York City, Wolfram (1969) in Detroit, Fasold (1972) in Washington, DC and Trudgill (1974) in Norwich, England, all focused on how independent social variables affected the dependent linguistic variables. Individuals were categorized as subdivisions of social groups (e.g. 18-year-old, Native-American female). This methodology was taken to its logical extension by Wolfram et al. (1997) and Wolfram et al. (1999) in the study of the speech of Muzel Bryant, an older, African-American woman living in Ocracoke, NC. Although recognized as an individual, she was also cast as the last representative of her speech community, that of African-Americans socially isolated on a historically isolated island.

The borrowing of social network theory into sociolinguistic analysis (Milroy 1987) redirected analytical attention to the individual within the speech community and to the interactions between individuals. With the study of social networks in Belfast (Milroy and Milroy 1997: 59), "the main methodological difference between network . . . and other variables that have been examined is that it is based, not on comparisons between groups of speakers, but on relationships contracted by individual speakers with other individuals." Social network ties may act as norm-enforcing mechanisms if strong enough to constrain individuals in the maintenance of their vernacular. Families certainly played a role in the social network analysis of Belfast speakers, but the family

relations were treated no differently than those of other social connections, such as having the same employer.

In discourse studies, the family is seen as a context for interactions between speakers, and discourse analysis has been the most productive field for studies of language in the family (e.g. Attanucci 1993, Beaumont 1995, Blum-Kulka 1993, Burrell 1995, Connidis 1989, Daly 1983, Haviland 1979, Mathews et al. 1989, Varenne 1987). In language and gender studies the family is seen as a context for power relations and social organization (Hartmann 1981, Ochs and Taylor 1995). The fields of discourse analysis and language and gender studies illustrate that the family is an influential context for construction of social identities.

Innovative scholarship bearing on the sociolinguistics of the family has come about from Community of Practice (CofP) theorists (Holmes 1999, Meyerhoff this volume). A CofP is defined as "An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464), and Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 174) label the family as a type of CofP. One working assumption of the CofP model is that becoming a "core member" of a CofP involves the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence (Ochs and Schieffelin 1983, Romaine 1984); the implication is that family members do follow the sociolinguistic patterns of their families (cf. Daly 1983). But family members are also going to be members of other CofPs – groups of friends, clubs, sports teams – and the sociolinguistic norms of the family may compete with those other CofPs.

Turning to work in the variationist tradition, Weinreich et al. (1968: 145) criticize Halle's (1962) model of language acquisition for relying on the "unexamined assumption that the children's grammars are formed upon the data provided by their parents' speech." Weinreich et al. emphasize the role of the peer group in restructuring the grammars of children. They comment that "there are two situations where parents' language may indeed be taken as the definitive model for children's language. One is in the isolated household – rural or urban – where the child cannot or may not play with other children. The other is in the direct transfer of a prestige feature from parent to child in the variety of careful speech used for scolding or correcting." Almost all variationist research since this work confirms that the peer group is the predominant model, but whether it is the only model is still a question.

In an article challenging some of the claims of Weinreich et al., Kazazis (1970) argues that occasionally "the linguistic model provided by the parents may sometimes resist successfully the model provided by the peers even in the absence of . . . the isolated households or the direct transfer of prestige features from the parents to the children." He focuses on the retention of Istanbul features among children born and raised in Athens but with parents from Istanbul. These children mixed with children of native-born Athens parents, but Kazazis identifies lexical, morphological, and syntactic differences between the children of Istanbul parents and those of native Athenian parents. For example, Istanbul Greek does not make a distinction for the accusative pronoun in an indirect or direct object context whereas Athenian Greek does; although

this does not detract from the functional load of a phrase, Kazazis notes that it does function as a social marker. He notes the strong place of the family in Greek society, but in harmony with Kerswill and William's (2000) findings below, the children with strong allegiance to their families often come from nonlocal families. Like the CofP model, Kazazis construes membership in the family in Greek society as allegiance to an "in-group."

In an often-cited study, Payne (1980) looked at 24 families from a middle-class suburb of Philadelphia. Half of the families were originally from out of state and half were native to the neighborhood, giving precisely the context necessary to distinguish parental from community influence. Payne showed that both parental and peer influences were active in the language acquisition of the children, noting that the peer influence affects the active and completed language acquisition from the parents' influence. Payne focuses on the complex short *a* pattern: The constraints on this language variation pattern make a fine-grained diagnostic instrument to help determine the language acquisition abilities of the children. Specifically, Payne (1980: 143) investigates, "first, whether a child freely reorganizes and/or restructures his grammar up to the age of 14; and second, whether a child will learn to speak like his peers or retain the system learned from his parents." She concludes that even if the child is born and raised in this neighborhood, unless the parents were also natives of the area, then the child has a slim chance of fully acquiring this short *a* pattern with native competence. Here is direct evidence for the impact of parent to child transmission on language variation patterns.

Results like these lead to the assumption that there is an early window of opportunity for children learning more complex patterns which is usually filled by parental input, or perhaps that the more complex patterns take longer periods of input than do simpler processes. Of those children who did not fully acquire the short *a* pattern, there were two general approaches to language learning: focusing on lexical items and focusing on phonetic classes. Although children of nonnative parents did not fully acquire the pattern, they did learn it to some extent, demonstrating the influence of the peer group. Payne also concludes that the most important factor for acquiring the pattern was the age of arrival in the community, with age 8 being the cut-off point. This finding demonstrates that children do not have the ability to restructure their grammars, but may add low level rules to them.

The implication for the study of language variation in the family is that if patterns are set by the family from a young age, later peer groups may only be able to modify what is already established. However, a new study of Payne's data forces a modified view. Labov (2001) revises Payne's finding that the major social variable was the age of arrival in Philadelphia. His multiple regression reanalysis reveals that the most significant independent variable was the number of times the speaker was mentioned by peers in their interviews. Labov relates this factor to the density of the speaker's social network.

As with Payne's analysis of acquisition success of a complex phonological feature, Trudgill (1986: 35) indicates that although they may otherwise have

perfect local accents, speakers born and raised in Norwich who do not have native parents cannot acquire a vowel distinction between /ʊu/ (e.g. *moan*, *nose*, *rose*, *sole*) and /ou/ (e.g. *mown*, *knows*, *rows*, *soul*). A good complement to the complex phonological features of Payne (1980) and Trudgill (1986) is Local (1983), which investigates fine phonetic variations of stressed /i/ for a Tyneside boy over different interviews covering a year of development. Local (1983: 452) finds that at age 5–6, "this child is still engaged in gaining control of the relevant localized phonological patterning of the variants of this vowel." This case again exemplifies that some phonological dialect features are so complex that they require either early acquisition or extensive time for acquisition for the child to fully adopt them.

In another vowel comparison of parents and children, Roberts (1997b) reports findings of a study of vowel changes in progress. The three Philadelphia changes – the fronting of the nucleus of (aw), the raising of the nucleus of (ey) in checked position, and the backing of (ay) before voiceless final obstruents – offered the opportunity to study if children could acquire changes in progress which their parents themselves may not have, as compared with the almost-completed short *a* pattern of Roberts and Labov (1995). Roberts (1997b) finds that, as with the other studies, all the children were making at least some progress in learning their local vowel system. All of Roberts's subjects had mastered the fronting of the (aw) nucleus, but the raising of the (ey) nucleus created a division of those with parents native to the area and those with at least one nonlocal parent. Roberts (1999) explores the role of children (and their parents) in language change through acoustic vowel analysis in the same set of children. In her subject pool, she has children of native Philadelphian parents and children of parents with mixed dialect background. Except for one child's production of (aw), the children of native Philadelphian parents are qualitatively similar. When considering the other children, more heterogeneity arises. Roberts finds that the simpler vowel changes (e.g. fronting of (uw), (aw), and (ow)) were similar amongst all of the children, but the more complex changes revealed possible parental influence in the children's acquisition of the Philadelphia changes in progress. The children with nonnative parents did not have the advanced tokens of a more complex change, the raising of (ey) in checked environments. With an even more complex change, that of the Philadelphia short *a*, the children of nonnative parents again show the least advanced tokens of the change. Roberts emphasizes that even the children of nonnative parents are not out of "community range" but are not leading the pack in terms of language change. This distinction between children with two native parents versus those with parents of any other orientation is a recurrent theme.

Chambers (1992) also employs methodology useful to the study of family language variation in the investigation of Canadian children's success at acquiring British features after several years in England. This study of dialect acquisition also allows us to see that the influence of peer groups is in part limited by the biological ability of the learner, since one finding was that the older the child, the less thoroughly the child was able to acquire the new

dialect. Chambers' methodology consisted of a longitudinal study of multiple phonological and lexical variables. By focusing on a net of both simple and complex processes, there were many possible points of linguistic variation. When analyzing families, subtle influences may be the only influences from the family members and such cautious searching for language variation patterns should be the norm for family studies.

Surek-Clark (2000) discusses the relative importance of parental influence and of the prestige of the dialect features acquired. In Brazilian Portuguese, the standard dialect has a rule of raising /e/ to [i] which partly feeds a rule of palatalization of /t,d/ before [i]. The Curitiba dialect Surek-Clark investigates does not have this feeding relationship. In her study of 41 informants, a child needed both parents to be from Curitiba for that child to acquire the Curitiba pattern. If either parent had the more prestigious dialect (that from Rio de Janeiro), then the child's patterns would more closely follow the standard version. Surek-Clark (2000: 266) finds that, "These results seem to indicate that pressure from within a family with regard to accommodating to the most prestigious dialect present within the home has a stronger effect than outside [i.e. Curitiba] peer pressure." Her findings demonstrate that the sociolinguistic competence as well as the linguistic competence of the child influences the language variation patterns acquired.

In another study of the acquisition of socially constrained variable patterns, Roberts (1997a) examined the pattern of (-t, -d) deletion in word final consonant clusters for 16 three- and four-year-old children. These patterns were then compared with eight of their mothers. Roberts found that these young children had successfully acquired the phonological constraints of (-t,-d) deletion, including the phonological and morphological distinctions.[8] She notes that the children acquired not a general process of deletion but the specific geographically-restricted constraints of their parents. In addition, the children do show social differentiation, for example by gender, but they do not demonstrate the same sociolinguistic patterns as their parents.

Internal constraints of the children's grammar may also direct how closely they follow their parents. Guy and Boyd (1990) and Labov (1989a) both consider (-t/-d) deletion in semiweak verbs (e.g. *keep ~ kept*). A relatively small class of verbs, semi-weak verbs fall between the dental-preterite weak verbs and the ablaut strong verbs. For both studies, the younger children who have consonant clusters follow a pattern of a high deletion rate, whereas their parents have either a medium or low deletion rate depending on their age. Guy and Boyd (1990: 11) argue that the child's lexicon is restricted to only two types of verbs, weak and strong, and does not have a category of semi-weak verbs. The children in these situations cannot match the patterns of the parents because their language faculties are not at the same point of development.

Labov (1989a) makes an additional important point about the influence of parents and the wider community on sociolinguistic norms. Although the children in his study had not acquired, at ages 6 and 7, the grammatical constraints on alveolarization of *–ing* pertaining to its morphological category,

the children showed the parental patterning of stylistic constraints: (1989a: 96) "Children first show the social and stylistic constraints on variation, then the language-specific grammatical and articulatory constraints." This finding indicates that children acquire sociolinguistic competence from parents before strictly linguistic patterns are set, which helps to explain Surek-Clark's findings (cf. Chambers 1995: 151–9).

Andersen (1990) also investigates the sociolinguistic skills of children, specifically the ability of the children to acquire registers. The children investigated – four, five, and six year-olds – had the best understanding of different registers in the context of the family and were best able to maintain a certain social role when play acting in that context. But the children did not learn all of the register variation for the family roles at home, and Andersen (1990: 164) notes media influence on the children's concepts of the family registers. Apparently, even a child's understanding of the sociolinguistics of the family does not come exclusively from the family.

Working with an assumption of language variation resulting from continuous dialect contact, Kerswill (1996) examines the speech of younger children and adolescents during their acquisition of a new dialect in Milton Keynes, Great Britain. Although some younger children mirrored the productions of their older peers, one child more closely followed his father, and another appeared to have a compromise variety between his parents (family pattern type I). Kerswill cites Howe (1981) and Newport et al. (1977) to demonstrate that individual differences between parents (speaking the same language) have an impact on the acquisition of language features. Kerswill concludes that children learn most of their phonological features of the local variety by age 6. He also claims that for more salient variables, the children move away from the parents towards peer groups possibly from age 7 on. Kerswill proposes a language change difficulty hierarchy whereby some types of language change (e.g. lexically unpredictable phonological rules) are more complex, requiring input from the earliest age; others (e.g. lexical borrowings) are learnable at any age. Obviously, if certain language variation patterns require early input, the parental influence will be greater.

Kerswill and Williams (2000) details a comprehensive, in-progress view of koineization in Milton Keynes through a study of 48 children and the principal caregiver of each child. They document the ability of children to restructure their phonologies rapidly: within 18 months one child had transformed himself from a Scots speaker to a southern English speaker, essentially moving from his parents' variety to that of his classmates. Kerswill and Williams also found that the language variation patterns of the parents do make a difference in the production of the children. In an analysis of one phonological variable, Kerswill and Williams (2000: 100) illustrate that having both parents of London extraction gives a greater likelihood of having the London variant than does having only one parent of London heritage, which in turn gives a greater likelihood than having neither parent from London. It appears that the input variation from the home does have an influence on what quantitative rates of variation are

attainable for some variables. Perhaps the family has a more predominant influence on the rates of variation rather than the establishment of language variation patterns not found in the wider community. They also conclude that younger children are more oriented to the parental norms of variation than are older children. They justify this progression of moving away from parental norms by noting that as children approach adolescence, they become more fully integrated into peer networks.

In an observation of the family and the speech community, Kerswill and Williams (2000) note that when children are more family oriented, they are oriented to a family-language variety originating from somewhere besides the local community, holding on to an outsider identity. As they (2000: 102) write, "when children are for some reason more parent- or family-oriented, they are inevitably oriented toward language varieties that originate elsewhere." Perhaps social isolation from the community is a self-reinforcing process whereby some social distance of the children, marked by nonnative language variation patterns, feeds a closer association to the family, which in turn heightens a distinction between the family oriented dialects of the children and the local dialects of the wider community.

Different, though not necessarily contradictory, results come from Wolfram, Thomas, and Green's demonstration that families sometimes have little molding influence on socially significant language variation patterns (Wolfram et al., forthcoming). In their study of Hyde County, North Carolina, they focus on four generations of one African-American family. Whereas the grandfather shares most of the phonological features of the local European-American community, each younger generation adopts progressively more AAVE features. Although parental influence persisted in adjacent generations, with the youngest family members, there is no differentiation from the rural AAVE found in other areas of North Carolina.

Along the same line, in his study of Hebrew speaking communities, Bentolila (2000) writes, "One cannot help noticing that the linguistic behaviour of children is often very dissimilar to their parents', mostly as the result of different social routes, at adult ages, and of ties with peer groups, in the adolescent phase of life (Eckert 1988; Peleg 1992)." Given that Oriental Hebrew is the more socially marked variety perhaps it is little wonder that children speak the more general variety even if their parents speak the Oriental variety. However, he notes that of the exceptional cases, those that maintain some linguistic patterns of their Oriental Hebrew parents, "only very few may keep their parents' way of speaking, in most cases because they married Oriental spouses outside the village and went to live in heavy Oriental social environment." In this context, reinforcement of the parental norms by the speech community is necessary to maintain those norms in the face of sociolinguistic stigmatization.

Trudgill (1986) makes a comprehensive study of dialect accommodation and new dialect formation resulting from contact. In a discussion on irregularity in accommodation (1986: 29), Trudgill provides exemplary methods for the study of children in a family by surveying a wide variety of variables over a range of

time. Trudgill focuses on twins raised in Britain till age seven who then were relocated and recorded in Australia over a six month period.[9] Fifteen variables are assessed for each month's recording to determine if and to what extent the twins had acquired the Australian variants. One would expect that their acquisition of the Australian patterns would be similar, but they are not, perhaps from their different friends, activities, and personalities. Both children, however, accommodated to a large number of Australian features, and although it is not documented, one would assume that their parents would not have been so rapidly able to accommodate such a cornucopia of features.

Labov (2001) reports a revised study by Sankoff of Tok Pisin verb structure and its quantitative distribution amongst parent–child dyads. Sankoff found both a shift by children away from parents and a child–parent alignment. For the morphophonemic reduction of the future *bai* (e.g. /em bai igo/ "he will go") either secondary stress or full vocalic reduction is applied. In a group comparison, children assign this future secondary stress 30 percent of the time compared with 50 percent for the parents; with complete reduction, the adults only had a rate of 1 percent but the children had 10 percent. For the group comparison, the children are distancing themselves from the parents. When parent–child dyads are compared, a striking pattern results. The percent differences between the children correlate with those between the parents so that the child with the lowest rate has the parent with the lowest rate and the child with the highest rate has the parent with the highest rate. The relationships indicate the primary influence of the peer group while highlighting the molding influence of the family. As Labov (2001) notes, "Their [the children's] system is a regular projection from the language of their parents."

Henry (1995) explores through a study of overt imperatives (e.g. *Go you away*) how children handle the syntactic input from both parents and the wider speech community. The parents of Henry's young subjects had this construction, but some of their children were learning the more standard forms. Henry asks how a child comes to view such constructions as ungrammatical considering its occurrence in their parent's dialect, leading her to conclude: "What is clear from this [situation] is that language learning does not involve selecting a grammar which fits all the data. Rather, it must involve selecting, from the options provided by UG, the grammar which best fits the majority of the data" (1995: 79). Even with syntactic variation, parents input is not a hegemonic influence.

Mæhlum (1992) promotes a model of dialect socialization built around the family; besides the dialect varieties of North-Norwegian and Standardized East-Norwegian, Mæhlum runs the poles of the model as a continuum between family-internal and family-external norms. In her study of Longyearbyen, a stable, local dialect has not formed as a result of continuous intervals of population movement. With a lack of a "indigenous and genuine basic dialect" Mæhlum (1992: 121) finds that, "the dialects of the parents here seem to influence the spoken language of the children to a greater extent than is usually the case in mainland Norway." This unusual circumstance results from the

prominence of the family in comparison with other social groups available to the children of Longyearbyen. Mæhlum (1992: 121) claims the "social and dialectal conditions are so unstable that the parents are precisely the ones who normally represent the most, or even the only, really stable social unit over some period of time." Clearly the influence of the family on the language variation patterns of the children must take into account the relative importance of the wider speech community.

In a lexical study, Hart and Risley (1995) report findings from an amazingly comprehensive study of lexical frequency in 42 families over a two year and a half-year span. They (1995: 176) find that for the three-year-olds, between 86 to 98 percent of the children's words were also recorded in their parents' speech. The finding they focus on most is that families speaking less often had children who spoke less often and who used fewer different words per hour. By their one significant social factor, socioeconomic status, the children of professional families averaged 297 different words per hour compared to 216 for the working class and 149 for the welfare children; these rates directly correspond to those of the parents.[10] The different families also speak to the children at different rates, which Hart and Risley (1995) interpret as the cause for the greater diversity in the professional children's vocabulary. What is clear is that for young children, the family has a dramatic influence on aspects of their lexical usage.

3   Case Studies of Language Variation in the Family

Deser (1989, 1990) studied six African-American families in Detroit, Michigan, analyzing vowels to determine parental influence on children's language variation patterns. The Detroit families were recorded in the 1960s as part of an urban language study (Shuy et al. 1968), and the interviews were conducted with one parent and two children, all of whom were born in Detroit. Deser conducts two different studies on these data. First is an impressionistic judgment by three speech pathologists as to the dialect orientation of the 18 people studied: subjects were judged as Northern (Detroit) or Southern.[11] If speakers got equal numbers of votes for Northern or Southern, then they were deemed mixed. The six families are shown in table 20.1. All of the Northern families are upper-middle-class and all of the Southern families are lower-working-class.

Table 20.1, although based on impressionistic judgments, allows for a simple comparison of dialects.[12] For the Harper family, the interviewed parent is Northern, as is the first child, but the other child is more Southern, apparently following the other parent. For the other Northern–Southern parent set, the Sanders, the interviewed parent is mixed, but both children are Southern. From these two families, it appears that children of parents from different dialect regions can go either way in terms of their own development. The

Table 20.1   Impressionistic dialect judgments of children and parents

Families		Parent's dialect	Parent	Child 1	Child 2
Northern	Harper	Louisiana, NY	N	N	S
	James	Detroit, Detroit	mixed	N	N
	Shawn	Detroit, Indiana	N	mixed	N
Southern	Atkinson	Georgia, Georgia	S	S	N
	Sanders	Detroit, Alabama	mixed	S	S
	Jones	Kentucky, Illinois	S	mixed	S

Source: Deser (1989: 116, tables 1 and 2)

James and Shawn families demonstrate mostly mixed or Northern orientation which is in line with the parents' dialect origins. Of interest, when the one interviewed parent is mixed, as in the James and Sanders families, the children had no restrictions as to which dialect variety to follow. In the James family, both parents had Detroit dialects but the Sanders family had one Northern and one Southern parent. The Jones children have followed the parents for the most part in their Southern traits. What is missing in this family comparison is the social situations of the children and the parents: are the children fully integrated into the Detroit community? Do they or their parents associate with mostly Detroiters from the North or the South?

The main focus of Deser's study is the acoustic analysis and comparison of /ai/ and /æ/ vowel qualities between parents and children. The unglided /ai/ vowel is a sociolinguistic stereotype of Southern speakers. From these comparisons, she concludes that at least for the more Northern families, the older children deviate from the parents while the younger children adhere more to the parental model. For the more Southern families, the opposite seems to be true: the older children follow the parents' more extreme /ai/ ungliding while the younger children deviate more. Overall, the older children are more Southern and the younger children are more Northern. This pattern seems to fit the general assimilation of speakers of different dialects to a new region. The /æ/ vowel plays a crucial role in language change in the Detroit area (Eckert 1999, Labov 1994, Labov et al. 1972). For the children, the Northern speakers have slightly raised /æ/ tokens as compared to their Southern counterparts. Here the younger children more closely approach the raised Northern norm than do their older siblings, who follow their parents' patterns more closely. In an expanded report of the study, Deser (1990: vii) finds that, "contrary to the Neogrammarians [sic] error-in-transmission theory as well as Labov's theory of adolescent rebellion, children do continue to show the influence of their parents' dialect model even through the teen years."

Hazen and Hall (1999) investigated two West Virginia families involved in dialect contact. West Virginia is bifurcated by a northern–southern dialect

boundary, although some features bleed over the entire state: a semi-accurate generalization is that the northern half follows more of the norms of western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio while the southern half has more in common with the southern Appalachian region. Family 1 has one parent from Michigan, the mother, but the father is from northern West Virginia and the children were born and raised in suburban, southern West Virginia. The mother is a lawyer, the father an iron worker, and both children have graduated from college. Family 2's parents are from rural, southern West Virginia, but the son was born and raised in northern West Virginia. The daughter was born in the southern half of the state but has lived most of her life at the northern edge of the state, although the family did move often when she was younger. Neither parent is college educated but both children are. The father retired as a civil servant and is now a computer specialist, the mother is a transcriptionist, the daughter has a graduate degree, and the son is in college. Family 1 presents a situation of children receiving input from parents of two different dialect regions; Family 2 presents a situation of children being raised in a different dialect area than the parents.

The children of Family 1 do not demonstrate socially diagnostic phonological patterns that would identify them as Southerners[13] (e.g. they have extremely restricted /ai/ ungliding). This may be explained by both of them having some high school friends who were not Southerners, but mere contact is not enough. Perhaps more compellingly, both strongly reject a Southern identity. Here the children align with their family. The parents also were quite direct in their rejection of a Southern identity, and in their interviews this sociocultural orientation seemed to be one of the few unifying points for the family.

For Family 2, the son, the younger of the two children, patterns like his peers in the urban north and does not show any influence from his parents, having no instance of a sociolinguistically Southern feature. In the interview, the daughter does have predominantly two Southern traits: /ai/ ungliding and the /i/ ~ /ɪ/ merger preceding /l/ (e.g. *heel ~ hill* [hil]).[14] She also commented on numerous encounters where she was identified as being Southern. For the daughter, peer influence may have either contributed or been a reinforcer of family language patterns. This daughter associated with what would be the rednecks of this Northern speech community, and she claims that they "sound more Southern." However, it is plausible that she acquired her /ai/ ungliding and her high front vowel merger at home, and then chose her peer group based on who she identified with as marked by their dialect features. The Family 2 son associated with an altogether different peer group. The key difference in the upbringing of the daughter and the son is stability of their young peer groups. Whereas the family moved often during the first seven years of the daughter's life, they did not move again after the son was born. The mother commented in the interview that since they moved so often, her daughter was her constant companion and her little buddy. Clearly, the daughter had more extended contact with the parents and relied on them more for social interaction (and vice versa) than did the son.

Despite the son's different language variation patterns, he does not hear anything unusual in his parents' speech. When asked directly, he said that everybody in his family sounded the same to him. In contrast, he does notice the Southern accent of his parents' relatives when visiting them in West Virginia. Perhaps children think their parents sound normal, even if they differ from the surrounding community, which leads to a wider question: under what circumstances do children remark that the parents' language seems other than normal?[15]

These differences between the older and younger siblings of Family 2 may point out the fluid and complex nature of language variation in families originally from other speech communities.

In most communities, the children who most closely follow the language variation patterns of their parents are those in families more recently immigrated (Deser 1989, Kerswill and Williams 2000). How local the family is – how dense and complex their social network ties may be or how many CofPs they may be a part of – will usually increase over time if they harmoniously live in the community. As the social integration of the family changes, the effects on older and younger siblings will differ. Whereas an older sibling may be more connected to the family when the family is recently immigrated, a younger sibling a few years later may have more opportunity for peer group interaction. For both, the family guides their language variation patterns: the older child by the lack of social integration of the family and the younger by its higher degree of social integration. For the younger child, this stability from the family in the community then allows wider social exploration outside the family.

What may also be transpiring in these situations of older/younger sibling differences is what many researchers found for more complex phonological processes. They require early and extended exposure for children to fully acquire them. The older sibling may have been exposed to more norms of the original speech community than the younger sibling and the more complex processes would not have been acquired by the younger child.

Contributing to the lessening or complete absence of the original speech community's language variation patterns in the younger sibling may also be the parents' accommodation to the new speech community. As Henry (1995) points out, children do not fit their emerging grammars to all the observed data in their environment but just most of it, which makes the variable frequency of the input a crucial factor for the acquisition of a linguistic feature. For the father of Family 2, his /ai/ ungliding patterning is erratic by the normal phonetic constraints. His constraint ordering is voiced obstruents > nasals > liquids > voiceless obstruents as compared to the traditional liquids > nasals > voiced obstruents > voiceless obstruents (following the sonorancy hierarchy). His rates also vary depending on his interlocutor, providing lower rates for a non-/ai/ ungliding interlocutor (57 percent) as compared to an /ai/-ungliding interlocutor (88 percent). After 20 years of living in a non-ungliding environment, this father's rates may have been different during the language acquisition

period of his youngest child. Most likely the scenario is more complex than even this analysis, probably involving gender (e.g. the daughter patterns more like the mother, who has traditional /ai/ ungliding patterns) and peer group reinforcement of family-learned norms.

Hazen (1999) extends this intrafamily comparison with data from Warren County, NC; Family 3 has both parents and the father's mother, since she also raised the children (a daughter and a son). Except for the mother, who is from the Outer Banks of North Carolina, the family is from Warren County. The mother graduated from college and the father went to two years of college but earned a professional license instead of finishing school. Given that both children were raised in the same small, rural community as their father, next door to their grandmother, one would expect the children to have the language variation patterns of Warren County. For the older child, the son, this expectation plays out: for example, he has traditional features of the area such as /ai/ -ungliding, /r/- and /l/-vocalization, consonant cluster reduction, and negative concord. For the daughter, she patterns like no other native in the community. Except for the /ɪ/ ~ /ɛ/ merger before nasals, the daughter has not a single Southern feature. She does, however, follow to some extent the language variation patterns of her mother.[16] An important sociocultural connection is that the daughter identifies in part with the mother's family on the Outer Banks, but she is in the local public schools, has never lived anywhere but Warren County, and also strongly identifies with her Warren County, born-and-bred grandmother who lives next door.[17]

The daughter's adherence to the mother's patterns may seem to be an identity alignment by gender, especially since the son more closely adheres to the patterns of his father and the rest of the speech community. But this daughter's language variation patterns are not strictly motivated by gender per se; she does not follow the patterns of her grandmother, who lived next door and spent considerable time raising her.[18] She also does not follow the patterns of her European-American peers, most of whom consider her speech a bit bizarre.[19]

4   Family and Language Variation

To date, most relevant research touches upon the transfer of language variation patterns from parent to child. Other effects of the family, such as the influence of the children on the parents and sociolinguistic marking of the family as a group have not been as widely explored.

Language transfer between parent and child, as a point of departure for future research, definitely occurs. How strongly the parental patterns emerge probably depends on the child's degree of identification with the family. How noticeable the effects of the family are probably depends on how different the parents' patterns are from that of the surrounding speech community. If the

norms of the parents and the speech community are similar, influences may be impossible to tease apart.

Current research results in five general findings relating to the family's influence on language variation:

1 Children first acquire the language variation patterns of their immediate caregivers; these patterns will survive if reinforced by the language variation patterns of the children's peer groups.
2 Family variation patterns will be noticeable to the extent that they differ from community norms. If family traits, be they lexical items or phonological patterns, are not social markers, there is no reason to assume that peer group influence will necessarily counteract those traits.
3 Complex phonological patterns require early and extended input to be fully acquired by the child.
4 Language-variation-pattern differences between older and younger siblings of the same family is not unusual. They may be the result of different parental input or different social connections in the community, and thereby different opportunities for identification with and participation in CofPs.
5 Amongst families, the children of families recently immigrated to a community may demonstrate more family-oriented language variation patterns. The effects on the children may vary by age and the relative prestige of the family's variety versus that of the community.

For the study of language variation of the individual, the family provides another point of social connection to the speech community. Instead of viewing individuals as directly linked to the speech community, individuals may be seen as connected through small groups, and that normally includes the family (Holmes 1999, Meyerhoff this volume). The concept of the speech community may be expanded and modified so that it includes families. As a basic component of every community, families and their linguistic influence (or lack of it) should be integrated into the description of the speech community.

In the future, language researchers should be capable of detailing the influence the family has both in a speech community and on an individual. At this point, however, some questions have yet to be asked and others remain unexplored. Future studies on language variation in the family may include the following:

1 Which level of language is most effected by the family? Do families make their mark most in the realm of the lexicon or perhaps phonology?
2 What role does the family have on the child's acquisition of communicative competence, not just the language variation patterns (Ochs and Schieffelin 1983, Romaine 1984)?
3 When is the family least influential on a child's language and when is the family most influential (both in terms of stage of development and socio-cultural context)?

4 Are family factors such as birth order an influence on sociolinguistic variation? Are there differences between types of families (e.g. single-parent vs. extended families)?

5 Do families use sociolinguistic patterns to mark in-group/out-group status? For example, could blood relatives in a family adhere to a certain language variation pattern which married relatives do not?

6 Does the effect of families on sociolinguistic patterns of the speech community vary between different cultures (Collins 1998)? Furbee and Stanley (1996) describe a time (1880–1920) in the language attrition of the Chiwere Siouan language where the original tribes were so fragmented by European settlement that the Chiwere language was restricted to home usage. This situation allowed each family to view their language as the acrolect, in essence creating family dialects. Dorian (p.c.) finds similar trends in her study of Gaelic. Romaine (1984: 158) notes that in some societies, the older siblings are responsible for raising younger children: would this situation dampen the effect of the peer group or possibly distance further the language variation patterns of the younger children from that of the parents?

7 What role does the family play in the child's identification with the peer group? When the child begins to identify more with the peer group and less with the family, how do the language variation patterns alter. Does diminishing identification with the family push the child away from their language patterns and towards those of the peer group?

8 Are the choices of a child's peer group influenced by the language variation patterns of the family? Might some children feel more comfortable with peer groups whose language variation patterns match those of their family?

9 How do highly mobile families, such as military families in the USA, differ from geographically stable families? Do families in rural areas differ from those in urban areas?

10 What is the effect of the entire family, and not just parent–child transfer, on language variation patterns of every member of the family? Could an older daughter influence the language variation patterns of a younger brother, who in turn influences the language variation patterns of the parents? Such complex loops of accommodation may be the reality in families, and until we investigate the possibilities of such interactions, we have no evidence that bears on the questions (cf. Dubois and Horvath 1999: 303).

11 If families play a minimal role in the language(s) of the speech community, why? Why would the family be the focus of so much social interaction but its influence on sociolinguistic variation be negligible?

The system of how children acquire and then modify their language variation patterns is complex. As with any complex system (Zimmer 1999), multiple factors not only affect language variation, but most likely interact with each other, producing effects not predictable by independent application of factors. This property of emergence (Mayr 1982) may be a necessary part of the study

of language variation in the family in that we necessarily have a social system, the family, embedded in another social system, the speech community, and properties may emerge which are unpredictable when analyzing each system in theoretical isolation. In the end, describing how the family affects language variation patterns will require rigorous investigation of the identities of family members, integration of the family into models of the speech community, and comprehensive quantitative analysis of family language variation patterns.

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NOTES

1   The term *family* will be used to refer to any modern instantiation of the family. There may very well be differences in sociolinguistic variation as factors of types of families (e.g. single parent vs. two parent families; gay parents vs. straight), but discovering this first requires general assessments about the influence of any family on sociolinguistic variation.

2   Other comprehensive work focusing on how sociolinguistics can help fields such as sociology better understand the family is undertaken by Daly (1983).

3   Labov (2001: ch 13) states that the core of the transmission problem is that children must learn to speak differently from their mothers, the primary caregivers, and these differences must be in the same direction in each succeeding generation. This is the general condition for language change.

4   There are also many fine studies of language acquisition based on quantitative studies of parent–child interactions (e.g. Rondal 1985, Snow and Ferguson 1977).

5   In the sociology of the family, statistical analysis of mean differences between families first requires that interactional processes within families be accounted for:

> In a research context, within-group differences should be examined first, before between-group analyses are examined. Any between-group differences should then be interpreted in the context of the within-group findings. Testing for differential processes within groups, then, coincides with conceptual and analytical underpinnings for advancing science.   (Benson and Deal 1995)

6   Interestingly, the married spouses in the family, the non-blood relatives of the same community, do not have different rates of *wont* between the family and nonfamily contexts.

7   This midpoint (of whatever type) may constitute the basis of the range of their style shifting. This tension between language variation pattern norms may be their initiation to style shifting.

8   The children's pattern disfavored deletion when in the environment of a following pause and also made a distinction between monomorphemic and weak past tense.

9   The children were recorded by Inge Rogers of Macquarie University (Rogers 1981).

10 Parents: professional (382); working-class (251); welfare (167). The average utterances per hour were professional (parents 487; children 310), working class (parents 301; children 223), Welfare (parents 176, children 168). Hart and Risley assume that vocabulary is a direct reflection of cognitive ability (1995: 6): "the vocabulary that individuals can command reflects so well their intellectual resources." There is no linguistic evidence suggesting that vocabulary reflects a person's cognitive ability.

11 The obvious drawback which Deser notes (1989: 116) is that only one parent is interviewed. An additional drawback is that we do not know the background or experience of the speech pathologists with Detroit or Southern dialects.

12 The column "parents' dialect" is given in Deser (1989) without any comment as to whether these were the home areas of these parents, if these are of both parents (I suspect they are), or if in some method it was determined that these are the *dialects* of the parents.

13 The possible exception is the /ɪ/~/ɛ/ merger before nasals (e.g. *pin~pen* [pɪn]). Although traditionally a Southern US feature, I have found that most people under the age of 30 in West Virginia have this feature regardless of sociocultural identity.

14 Although this merger is a feature of some sociolects of Pittsburgh, PA, an hour to the north of this speech community (McElhinny 1999), few speakers in this area have this feature, and all of those who do have strong ties to the Southern USA.

15 Teenagers may remark how their parents use out-of-date words or how they sound old fashioned. This dissonance may be an indication of their alliance with Communities of Practice other than the family.

16 The mother herself has engaged in long-term accommodation (Trudgill 1986) by lowering the Outer Banks backed and raised /ai/ (Wolfram et al. 1999) and occasionally ungliding it.

17 The daughter's language variation patterns do not match those of her mother exactly. Unlike her daughter, the mother has occasional /ai/ ungliding and diphthongization with /ɛ/ as in *bed* [bɛjd].

18 The daughter of Family 3 also thinks highly of her grandmother, but does not have her language variation patterns.

19 Knowing that I am a linguist, others in the community have asked me on numerous occasions, "Where did she get that accent?" in reference to the daughter of Family 3.

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