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Editorial

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Editorial

Lauren Hall-Lew

Welcome to the second issue of Volume 7 of *Lifespans & Styles: Undergraduate Papers in Sociolinguistics*. This issue includes five papers that continue the journal's mission of showcasing excellence in undergraduate research in sociolinguistics. This issue's papers are thematically similar to one another in very interesting ways — more so than any set of papers published in any previous issue. The first two focus on language and race, racism, and African American English; the other three are all about lifespan change and second language/dialect acquisition.

Akiah Watts' paper opens the volume with a ground-breaking verbal guise study that tests the effects of colorism. In addition to contrasting African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Standard American English (SAE) auditory guises, the stimuli also included “speaker” faces: European American and African American, with an additional, key manipulation such that half of the participants saw a version of the African American face with an originally light skin tone and the other half saw the same face with digitally darkened skin tone. Participants rated the guises both for how they sounded and how they looked. The significant results of the paper are sobering and, in some cases, surprising. The paper also lays the groundwork for a wealth of further research ideas, ideal for any student of sociolinguistics working in the North American context.

Stella Takvoryan's paper is the only interspeaker analysis in this volume, comparing word-final English /t,d/ production among four preachers, three Black (American) and one white (American), all speaking at the same speech event: the US Presidential Inaugural Prayer Services. Takvoryan finds remarkable similarities between the three Black preachers, who realize /t,d/ at higher rates than the white preacher, but who most notably hyperarticulate /t,d/ at much higher rates still, especially on the words *God*, *Lord*, *Jesus Christ*, and *president/President*. The paper is a good example for students of how a solid analysis is possible with relatively little quantitative data.

Michael Marinaccio's paper is another good example of this, focusing as it does on the variable production of one word (*marscapone*) and one speaker (celebrity chef Giada De Laurentiis). This paper upholds the journal's original vision of studies of individual “lifespans” (studying linguistic change over time) and “styles” (studying changes across situations) as Marinaccio tracks this Italian American's rise to fame. As a word with multiple consonantal and vocalic variables differentiating the Italian and California English pronunciations, *marscapone* is an ideal vehicle for study of how this speaker negotiates the performance of ethnic identity and culinary expertise. The results show some change over time for some variables more than others, towards a less-Italian or more-Californian production.

The final two papers are surprisingly similar in spirit. Victoria Kuo tracks English vowel variation among two YouTube personalities: an Okinawan man who moved as a late teenager from Hawai'i to Las Vegas, Nevada, and a white woman who moved in her mid-20's from upstate New York to Los Angeles, California. Rosa Balliro tracks English vowel variation among two differently gendered twins who moved at age 10 from Southeast England to Canada. Kuo analyses variation in the /ɪ/ vowel appearing in the English (ING) variable; Balliro analyses the English low back vowel merger. In both cases, the results are mixed. Kuo's data do show change over time for both speakers, and in some cases towards a more Californian/Nevadan variant, but not in all cases. Balliro's data show no evidence of low back vowel overlap for the male twin, but some suggestive vowel convergence for the female twin. Both papers raise interesting questions of which social factors might best account for which kinds of phonetic change or phonetic stability.

I hope that you will enjoy reading these five papers. I am very sorry to say that this is the last issue of the journal. Over the past 7 years we have published 52 papers by 63 authors from seven different countries. In addition to contributions from the University of Edinburgh, we featured multiple authors from the University of Manchester, the University of Melbourne, and New York University. Individual authors have also published from the Universities of British Columbia, Duisberg-Essen, Newcastle, New Mexico, Rochester, Tennessee, and Zurich, the National University of Singapore, Dartmouth College, Swarthmore College, and the University of California, Berkeley. In this, our final issue, we are thrilled to feature a submission from a student from the Bronx High School of Science! I'd like to extend my appreciation to all of the instructors who taught each of these students sociolinguistics, who saw the value and potential in their written work, and who encouraged them to submit to *Lifespans & Styles*.

In my first editorial, I wrote:

The journal was inspired by the fact that, while many undergraduates produce exceptional scholarship, most do not get an opportunity to share their work with the wider academic community. Some may go on to postgraduate study in the same field of study as their undergraduate degree, but most will not continue in academia, or if they do, they will often change subfield. Meanwhile, the research they produce for a class, a dissertation, or a thesis will end up in a university library archive or, much more

likely, buried in the folders of their personal computer. It is my belief that this is a disservice to both the student and the academic community at large. This journal was founded in the spirit of giving excellent undergraduate work the exposure and longevity that it deserves. (Hall-Lew 2015:1)

I believe the journal has gone some way to accomplishing that goal. While I wish it could continue, the efforts to make that happen are unfortunately not sustainable. I hope that the journal will serve as a model for future endeavours, and I recommend anyone who would have hoped to be an author with us to consider submitting to *The Journal of the Undergraduate Linguistics Association of Britain*.

Lifespans & Styles was made possible by generous financial support from two sources: the Teaching and Learning Initiative Fund, and the Linguistics and English Language Subject Area Discretionary Fund, both in the School of Philosophy, Psychology, and Language Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. All of these funds went towards copyediting the papers for publication. Our brilliant copyeditor, Dr Marion Nao, has been with us from the beginning. Marion not only checks that all papers adhere to our article style specifications (including my editorials, which inevitably need correction as well), but as a sociolinguist and discourse analyst she has on numerous occasions caught problems of argumentation or analysis that I had missed. If you have engaged with this journal in any way and been impressed with the quality of our undergraduate authors' papers, then you have also been impressed with Marion Nao's work as she has touched every paper in this journal. Thank you, Marion: it has been a pleasure working with you all these years.

Lifespans & Styles has had many volunteer members of its Editorial Board over the years. From 2015–2017, it was a publication requirement for authors to peer-review another submitted paper, because I hadn't yet assembled a board of peer reviewers. Thank you to all 27 first authors from Volume 1 through Volume 3, Issue 1, for your service as peer reviewers. From Volume 3, Issue 2, onwards, the journal's reviewing was conducted in the first instance by the members of our Editorial Board, comprising former authors, and developed over time according to interest and availability. Thanks to Lily Blount, Jessica Göbel, Alexandra Hofbauer, Annika Schimpff, and Anna Scrimgeour for your support in recent years. Thanks to former Board members Victoria Dickson, Maria Dokovova, and Abigail Salvesen, who reviewed a total of 25 submissions between them. Last but not least, thanks to those three Board members who have been there the whole way through: Joel Merry, Dr Ruairidh Purse, and Francesca Shaw, who reviewed a total of 33 submissions between them. It has been a genuine pleasure to work with every single one of you. I want to also thank Dr Laurel MacKenzie who stepped in as Guest Editor with me for Volume 2, when our submission numbers were especially high.

The journal has depended on the fantastic support by the support staff at Edinburgh Diamond, formerly known as Open Journal Systems, especially Rebecca Wojturska and Angela Laurins. It has been a privilege to partner with a team dedicated to the open access of academic scholarship.

Reference

Hall-Lew, Lauren. 2015. Editorial. *Lifespans & Styles* 1:1–2.

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Editor

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