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# The 'X it up' Verb Construction: A Syntactic and Sociolinguistic Approach

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Approved by Major Professor(s): Elena Benedicto

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# THE ‘X IT UP’ VERB CONSTRUCTION:

# A SYNTACTIC AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACH

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# ABSTRACT

Hubble, Ryan M. M.A. Purdue University, December 2013. The 'X it up' Verb Construction: A Syntactic and Sociolinguistic Approach. Major Professor: Elena Benedicto.

This thesis focuses on a unique and, as of yet, unstudied particle verb construction in English, referred to as the 'X it up' construction (e.g. *I partied it up last night*). Syntactic and sociolinguistic perspectives are taken to explore this phenomenon. In the area of syntax, it is proposed that the 'it' in the construction is non-referential and that 'it' is an (object) expletive. It is further proposed that the construction is unergative. These hypotheses are confirmed via syntactic tests, and a potential syntactic representation based on Basilico's (2008) particle verb analysis is offered as a structure in which the expletive can occur. Additionally, the particle 'up' is proposed to be distinct from other 'up' particles in the English language, which serves as a possible explanation for the construction's contrastive structure from other particle verb constructions. Shifting to the sociolinguistic dimension of the study, possible social factors that may influence the usage of the construction are investigated. Results indicate that this construction is influenced primarily by age and that younger age groups (18-35) might use the construction more frequently in casual conversation. Additional factors such as gender and social media usage are also considered; however, these are not shown to have any significance on the usage of the construction.

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The English language has a vast inventory of particle verbs whose underlying structures have been under debate for some time. The nature of the internal argument is quite problematic for syntacticians. The varying position of the internal argument poses a challenge in identifying the position in which the object originates and identifying the position to which it moves in order to give the surface representation. There is one type of particle verb that further complicates the matter and has yet to be properly documented and studied. This particle verb is shown below:

(1) We partied it up last night.

(2) I coffeeed it up with my friend yesterday.

(3) The teenagers are gonna McDonalds it up tonight.

(4) We're gonna pizza it up for dinner.

As shown in the above examples, there are a number of peculiarities about the construction in question, which I will refer to as the 'X it up' construction. First, all of the verbs are derived from nouns (*party, coffee, McDonalds,* and *pizza*). This trait allows for many creative and productive uses of the verb; virtually any noun can be used and have meaning within the construction given the proper context. The Figure 1.1 is a screen capture taken from a blog dedicated to pictures of pizza, an example of the many creative forms and meanings the construction can take.


*Figure 1.1 Screen Capture from pizzaitup.tumblr.com*

In addition to the construction consisting of a denominal verb, it can also take a traditional unergative verb in the structure.

(5) My good friend and I chatted it up.

(6) We danced it up at the party.

(7) We laughed it up while hanging out.

The denominal verbs seen in (1), (2), (3), and (4) are also unergative, and it is this class of verbs that can be used in this particular construction. Transitive verbs and unnacusative verbs cannot be used in 'X it up.' Transitive or unnacusative verbs create an ungrammatical sentence as exemplified below.

(8) *We pushed it up yesterday.

(9) *We arrived it up at ten o'clock.

Pragmatically, the construction is informal in nature and is not likely to be used in formal, academic or professional speech or writing. It can be found, however, in online, informal texts. For example, an article from the feminist, journalistic blog *Jezebel* provides an interesting example when discussing issues surrounding pop music celebrity, Rihanna, and women's sexuality. "Women's sexual behavior needs to be accepted so that

women's sexual *health* [emphasis in original text] can be protected. So slut it up, Rihanna." (West 2012) Because this particular blog is written in a stylistically informal manner, the use of the 'X it up' construction would be acceptable and even appropriate. Other examples taken from websites are shown below.

(10) …and coffee it up once you have your idea and are ready to get to work. (Harness 2013)

(11) I hatted it up. (Lollapalooza 2008 blogpost)

(12) We Scarfed it Up for Women's Cancers! (Beausang 2009)

The construction can also be found in advertising, another genre in which informal language can often be useful for attracting the attention of a potential audience. The construction can actually serve as a rather useful linguistic device for brand-specific products because it is a simple, concise means for displaying the title of a product and telling the audience to purchase and consume said product.

Another peculiarity of this construction is that 'it' always appears in the object position. But what does this 'it' refer to? What is the underlying structure of the 'X it up' construction? The nature of this 'it' and the possibility that it differs from other objects should have consequences for the underlying structure. The fact that the construction only allows for unergative verbs, both traditional and denominal, but not transitive or unnacusative verbs must also have implications for the structure. These issues will be the focus of investigation in Chapter 2. In this chapter, I will address the overall underlying syntactic representation and related issues of the 'X it up' construction and how it might differ from other particle verbs in the language.

Going beyond the grammatical qualities of the construction, I will also explore the potential social limitations and constraints. I have already established that the construction is colloquial, but there are more questions. What are the further restrictions on who is using the construction? Are there particular groups that are more or less likely to use the construction in conversation? Chapter 3 will explore this sociolinguistic complexity of the 'X it up' construction.

Chapter 4 will close the thesis with a restating of the conclusions gathered from the various topics addressed therein. This chapter will also elaborate upon potential future avenues of research over the 'X it up' construction. While this thesis approaches the construction from syntactic and sociolinguistic perspectives, there are many other unexplored aspects of the construction that would be worthy of investigation.

# CHAPTER 2. A SYNTACTIC PERSPECTIVE

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the structure of the 'X it up' construction. As previously stated, the surface structure is peculiar in a number of ways. Verbs are often derived from both common nouns (*coffee it up*), proper nouns (*Walmart it up*), or traditional unergative verbs (*dance it up*). Transitive and unnacusative verbs, however, are not permitted in the construction. (**buy it up, *arrive it up*). Additionally, 'it' must always occurs in the object position of the construction. It is this 'it' that will be of notable interest in this chapter. The nature of this seeming object and other aspects of the 'X it up' construction will factor into my analysis of the underlying structure.

Before I begin to discuss in depth the structure of the 'X it up' construction, I must first address its semantic properties. The meaning of the construction is scalar, targeting the upper end of the scale. This scale corresponds to the level of intensity with which an activity, denoted by the verb, is done. The scale is contextually determined by the external argument, meaning that the upper end of the scale is relative to a particular subject. In this way, the specific intensity indicated by the 'X it up' construction varies according to each subject, and certain pragmatic information about the subject in relation to the activity must be presumed by interlocutors in order for the construction's scalar interpretation to be understood. The semantics of this verb must be further formalized to

accurately describe what this verb construction means, but this brief description will suffice for exploring the syntactic structure.

As previously mentioned, ‘it’ must always occur between the verb and the particle. However, what exactly does this ‘it’ refer to? This ‘it’ seems to lack a referent, and native speakers struggle to define what exactly this ‘it’ is referring to. Some suggest that it might refer to the situation, but when ‘it’ is replaced with ‘situation’ or ‘event,’ the sentence becomes ungrammatical. This ‘it’ is the only item that can occupy this position.

Because ‘it’ appears to lack a referent, I hypothesize that ‘it’ is actually an (object) expletive, merely filling a grammatical position. I will provide substantial syntactic evidence to support this claim in Section 2.2 of the paper. To further support that the verb does not have an internal argument and that the object is an expletive, I also propose that the ‘X it up’ construction is unergative, and only an external argument is introduced.

In addition to providing evidence that ‘it’ is an expletive and that the construction is unergative, I must also address the underlying structure to explain where in the derivation this expletive can occur. I further hypothesize that the structure for the ‘X it up’ construction is based on the structure for particle verbs using the Distributed Morphology framework in Basilico, 2008. This structure provides a location where the expletive can originate and avoid being assigned a theta role. The avoidance of theta role assignment is essential in arguing for a structure that permits an expletive because expletives cannot receive a theta role (Chomsky, 1981).

Finally, I must explore the nature of the particle ‘up’ in the construction and how it allows for a different structure. Discussion on the function of the particle can

adequately explain my proposed structure based on Basilico's particle verb analysis. Therefore, I additionally hypothesize that the particle in the 'X it up' construction is a distinct particle from other 'up' particles in the language such as in *eat it up* and *look it up*. To support this claim, I will provide evidence that this particle is functionally different from the 'up' particles in the previously mentioned particle verbs.

## 2.2 Evidence for Object Expletive 'it'

I will first discuss the evidence that 'it' in the 'X it up' particle verb construction is an expletive, a non-referential item. The first test addresses the ability of 'it' to be replaced with a wh- pronoun. The premise of this test assumes that an expletive cannot be replaced with a wh- pronoun because it is non-referential. The test is exemplified in the following sentences. As (13)-(15) show, expletive subjects of weather verbs cannot take wh- pronominal forms:

(13) *What's raining?

(14) *What's snowing?

(15) *What's windy?

In the 'X it up' construction, 'it' cannot be replaced with a wh- pronoun either, as expected:

(16) *What did you party up?

(17) *What did you coffee up?

(18) *What did you pizza up?

The output shows that 'it' cannot be replaced with a wh- pronoun, confirming the initial hypothesis.

The second syntactic test to support that 'it' is an expletive addresses the construction's ability to take any known referential objects such as nouns or pronouns other than 'it' in the object position. The premise for this test assumes that if a pronominal argument is referential, it can be replaced with another referential item, either a noun or a different pronoun. This test is exemplified in the following sentences, with both a single verb and a particle verb.

(19) a. We ate it.

b. We ate them.

c. We ate the cake.

(20) a. We ate it up.

b. We ate them up.

c. We ate the cake up.

However, with the 'X it up' construction, 'it' cannot be replaced with a referential pronoun or full DP:

(21) a. #We partied them up.[1]

b. #We partied the night up.

(22) a. #We coffeed them up.

b. #We coffeeed the morning up.

(23) a. #I'm gonna pizza them up.

b. #I'm gonna pizza dinner up.

[1] The symbol # indicates ungrammaticality under the intended meaning. The sentence may be grammatical under another unintended reading.

The output shows that ‘it’ cannot be replaced with a referential item, either a noun or a different pronoun, confirming the initial hypothesis. Doing so creates an interpretation different from that of ‘X it up.’

The third test addresses the construction’s ability to take an anaphor in the object position. The premise of this test assumes that a subject co-referential anaphor can appear in an object position, agreeing in both number and gender with the subject. The test is exemplified in the following sentences with a single verb and a particle verb.

(24) He sat himself on the couch.

(25) He sat himself down on the couch.

However, with the ‘X it up’ construction, an anaphor that agrees in both number and gender with the subject cannot appear in the object position:

(26) #She partied herself up.

(27) #They partied themselves up.

(28) *I Walmarted myself up.

The output shows that an anaphor that agrees in both number and gender with the subject cannot appear in the object position, confirming the initial hypothesis.

As previously mentioned, replacing the ‘it’ with another pronoun, as well as a co-referential anaphor, might change the interpretation, but it may not necessarily create ungrammaticality. This different interpretation from the ‘X it up’ construction that results from an alternative pronoun or co-referential anaphor is due to a different construction, which I will discuss in Section 2.5. For now, it can be seen that ‘it’ is the only acceptable pronoun that will permit the ‘X it up’ interpretation.

The fourth test addresses the ability of ‘it’ to be passivized. The premise for this test assumes that a referential internal argument can undergo passivization. This test is exemplified in the following sentences, with both a single verb and a particle verb.

(29) a. We ate it.

b. It was eaten (by us).

(30) a. We at it up.

b. It was eaten up (by us).

However, with the ‘X it up’ construction, ‘it’ cannot be passivized:

(31) a. We partied it up.

b. *It was partied up (by us).

(32) a. You guys coffeeed it up.

b. *It was coffeeed up (by you guys).

(33) a. I pizzaed it up.

b. *It was pizzaed up (by me).

The output shows that ‘it’ cannot be passivized, confirming the initial hypothesis. If ‘it’ were referential in (31b)-(33b), it would be able to move higher in the derivation from the position of the internal argument to the specifier of TP.

The fifth test addresses the quantification of ‘it.’ The premise for this test assumes that a referential argument can be quantified. The test is exemplified in the following sentences with a single verb and a particle verb.

(34) I ate all of it.

(35) I ate all of it up.

However, with the ‘X it up’ construction, ‘it’ cannot be quantified:

(36) *We partied all of it up.

(37) *They coffeeed all of it up.

(38) *I'm gonna pizza all of it up.

The output shows that 'it' cannot be quantified, confirming the hypothesis.

Given the evidence, it would appear that 'it' is in fact an expletive. It behaves in the same way as expletives in subject positions, such as the 'it' in 'it rains.' It cannot be replaced with a noun or any other personal pronoun, it can neither take a wh- pronominal form nor can it undergo wh- movement, it cannot be passivized, and it cannot be quantified. Unless future evidence shows that it is in fact referential but does not display the aforementioned qualities of all other referential pronouns, it can be concluded the 'it' is an expletive.

## 2.3 The Unergativity of the Verb

Because the object in the 'X it up' verb construction has been shown to be an expletive, the verb itself cannot be transitive because the verb has only one apparent argument, that of the subject position in the surface structure. This indicates that it must be either unergative or unaccusative. I will argue that this 'X it up' verb construction is unergative. The unergativity of the verb will also provide further evidence that the 'it' in the construction is an expletive because the construction will only contain an external argument to which it assigns the agent theta-role.

The first evidence that the verb is unergative refers back to the referentiality of 'it' and its status as an expletive, as shown in Section 2.2. Because 'it' has been shown to be an expletive, it would likely block any actual arguments of the verb in the structure. This

would obstruct the internal argument from moving higher to the specifier position of TP, thus causing any unaccusative derivation to crash.

Further evidence for the unergativity of the verb involves testing the agentivity of the verb: the single argument of an unergative verb is observed to have agentive interpretation as opposed to that of an unaccusative verb, which is interpreted as a theme/patient/undergoer. The premise of this test assumes that an agent-oriented adverb (*willingly*) can appear with an unergative verb, targeting the agent argument. The test is exemplified in the following sentences.

(39) I willingly danced.

(40) They willingly ran.

However, the 'X it up' construction can appear with an agent-oriented adverb such as *willingly*:

(41) I willingly partied it up.

(42) They willingly coffeeed it up.

(43) I'm gonna willingly pizza it up.

The output shows that the 'X it up' construction can take an adverb such as *willingly* and be semantically acceptable, confirming the initial hypothesis.

The premise of the next test assumes that unergatives cannot be used in an adnominal participial form. This is exemplified in the following sentences.

(44) *The run man.

(45) *The laughed woman.

Many unaccusatives, however, can be used in this way:

(46) The arrived package.

(47) The fallen tree.

The ‘X it up’ construction cannot be used in an adnominal participial form either:

(48) *The partied it up man.

(49) *The coffeeed it up woman.

(50) *The pizzaed it up guy.

The output shows that the ‘X it up’ construction cannot be used in a participial form, confirming the initial hypothesis.

Another semantic test is that which targets telicity; unergative predicates denote atelic activities. The premise of this test assumes that a phrase signaling telicity (*in two hours*) cannot be used to modify those verbs that denote an activity. The following sentences exemplify this test.

(51) *We ran in two hours.

(52) *He laughed in two hours.

(53) *She danced in two hours.

A phrase signaling telicity cannot be used to modify the ‘X it up’ construction either:

(54) *We partied it up in two hours.

(55) *They coffeeed it up in a few hours.

(56) *I pizzaed it up in an hour.

The output shows that a phrase signaling telicity creates cannot be used to modify the ‘X it up’ construction, supporting the initial hypothesis. To further support this, we can see in the following sentences that the construction *can* be modified with a phrase signaling atelicity (*for two hours*).

(57) We partied it up for two hours.

(58) They coffeeed it up for a few hours.

(59) They pizzaed it up for an hour.

I previously mentioned that the 'X it up' construction can also take traditional unergatives as the verb:

(60) We danced it up.

(61) They laughed it up.

In these specific examples, the interpretation is the same as those 'X it up' forms in which the verb is denominal. The denominal verbs are also clearly unergative when used outside of the 'X it up' construction. But the construction can never take a known unaccusative or transitive verb such as 'arrive' or 'buy':

(62) *We arrived it up.

(63) *I bought it up.

This pattern pertaining to the verb types that are permitted in the construction is no mere coincidence. That all of the verbs that can be used in 'X it up' are unergative and that the object is an apparent expletive both point to the construction as being unergative, and no internal argument should be ever introduced into the derivation. This unergativity of the verb means that the object 'it' cannot be referential and receive a theta role from the verb. I must now investigate and propose a structure that will fit the 'X it up' construction's unergative nature as well as explaining how the expletive occurs within it.

## 2.4 Proposing a Structure

Having shown that the 'X it up' construction does not have an internal argument, I must now propose a structure that will accurately explain where the object expletive 'it' occurs in the structure. The expletive cannot occupy the position in which a referential object would originate because expletives cannot occur in subcategorized positions, such as object positions (Chomsky, 1981). In these positions, an argument must receive a theta role, which an expletive cannot. To overcome this restriction, I propose a structure that offers a position in which the 'it' expletive could occur and avoid being assigned a theta role. This particular position will likely be higher in the structure since arguments receive a theta role as soon as they are introduced into the structure.

The issue of object expletives in English and their corresponding positions in underlying structures has been explored in the past. (Rosenbaum, 1967; Postal & Pullum, 1988; Rothstein, 1995; Runner, 2000) These various studies focus on sentences such as the following.

(64) I considered it rude that he was eating with his mouth open.

In this sentence, the expletive occurs between *considered* and *rude*. We can see that the verb *considered* has two positions to which it assigns a theta role, 'it' and *that he was eating*... Because the verb can only assign one theta role between these positions, the complementizer phrase receives the theta role and 'it' is generated as an expletive. The previous studies on these particular sentences and their respective object expletives present different solutions of the expletive and where it originates in the structure, but these analyses do not address an expletive such as that in the 'X it up' construction and

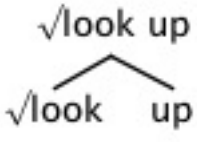
cannot explain its position in the structure. Therefore, I must present a different structure to properly address this.

Under the Distributed Morphology theoretical framework, Basilico (2008) proposes two alternating structures for particle verbs. One structure accounts for those particle verb constructions in which the object occurs after the particle, and the other accounts for those constructions in which the object occurs before the particle. The key difference in these alternating structures depends on if the verb root merges with the particle or if the verb root and the particle form a complex root.

The structure in which the root and the particle form a complex root account for the surface structure in which the object is preceded by the particle.

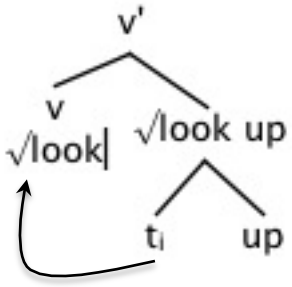
(65) Look up a word.

(66)



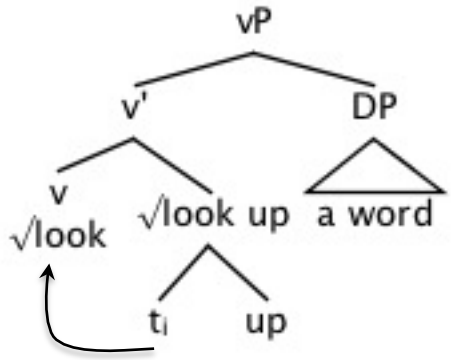

Because this complex root has not yet been categorized, it cannot be interpreted and introduce the internal argument. It can then only merge with the categorizing *v* head. Once the complex root and the categorizing *v* head have merged, the verb root then moves up to the categorizing *v* head.

(67)



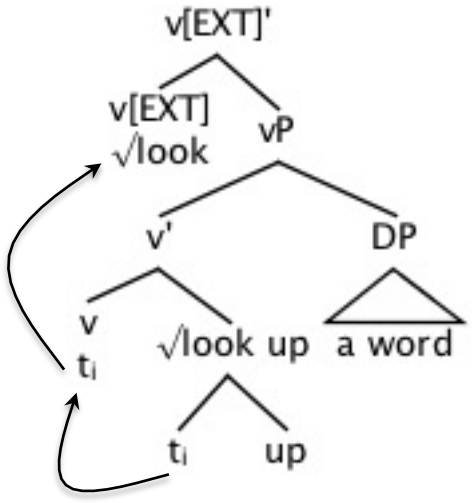

Because the root has now been categorized, the internal argument can be introduced, giving the verb-particle-object structure as seen in (68).

(68)




Finally, the verb root moves from the categorizing *v* head to the external *v* head (*v*[EXT]). This *v*[EXT] head is that which assigns accusative case to the internal argument and introduces the external argument; Basilico refers to this as *v*[EXT].

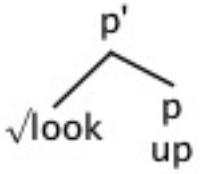
(69)




Because the internal argument is not in a complement position to the categorizing *v* head, it can receive Case from the *v*[EXT] due to the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC). (Chomsky 2001).

The second structure, in which the verb root and particle merge, accounts for the verb-object-particle word order. Because the root and particle merge, the particle projects.

(70)




Basilico propses that the particle head, *p*, is similar to the categorizing *v* head in that it gives the root a fixed interpretation. Evidence for this is that many particle verbs have no bare, simple transitive counterparts. The following examples are taken from Basilico (2008 p. 741).

(71) a. They really dolled up your sister for the party.

b. *They really dolled your sister for the party.

(72) a. He clammed up and didn't say another word.

b. *He clammed and didn't say another word.

Because these verbs only exist in the presence of the particle, this suggests that it is the particle that is responsible for the interpretation and accompanying argument structure for roots in particle verb constructions. This holds true for the denominals found within the 'X it up' construction. With the exception of *party* and the traditional unergative verbs (*laugh, chat,* etc.), the verbs in the 'X it up' construction only exist in the construction itself and have no bare form counterparts. This is exemplified below.

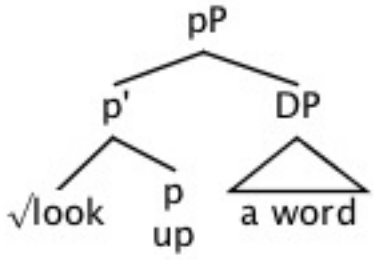
(73) *We coffeeed for five hours.

(74) *He pizzaed last night.

(75) *She Walmarted all day.

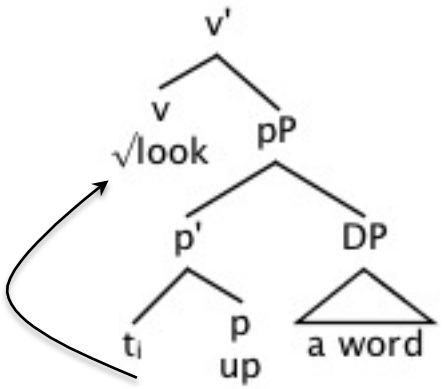
Under this assumption, the structure can then be interpreted and the internal argument must be introduced.

(76)



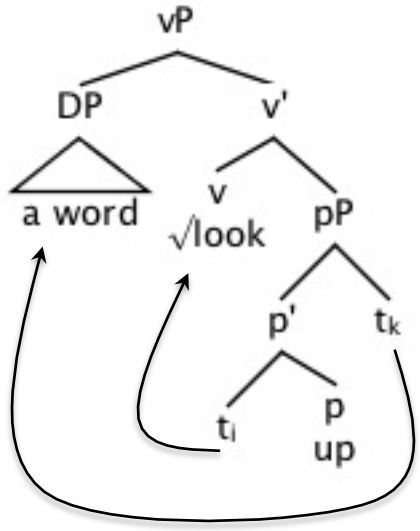
The particle phrase then merges with the categorizing *v* head, and the verb root moves to the *v* head to be categorized as a verb in (77).

(77)



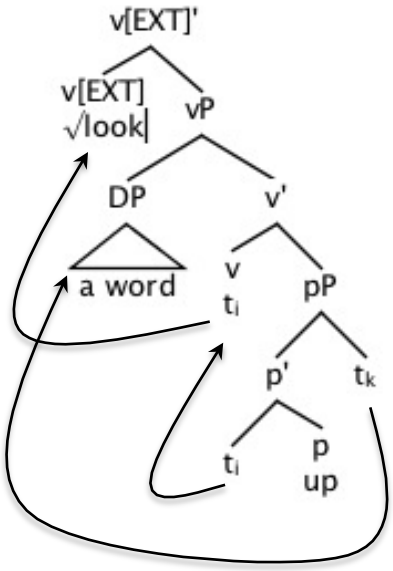

The DP then must move to the specifier position of the categorizing *v* phrase in order to receive case and to satisfy an EPP feature of the categorizing *v* head.

(78)




Finally, the verb root moves to the external *v* head (*v*[EXT]).

(79)

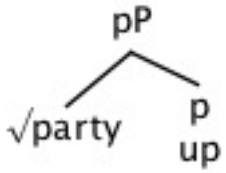



It is this second structure that I propose is the underlying syntactic representation of the 'X it up' construction. The specifier position of the categorizing *v* head is an appealing position for the expletive 'it' in the 'X it up construction because in this position, the expletive will not receive a theta role. The EPP feature of the categorizing *v* head would also explain well why the expletive must be generated. I will exemplify this structure with 'X it up' in the following example.

(80) Party it up.

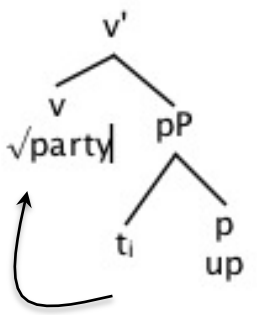
The verb root and the particle first merge, and the particle projects.

(81)



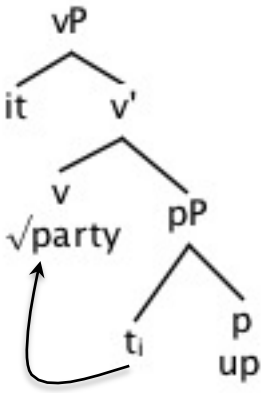
The paricle gives the root its fixed interpretation, and the particle phrase can then be interpreted. Because this specific particle phrase is unergative, no internal argument is introduced. I will explain later in Section 2.5 why I believe this particle phrase does not introduce an argument as a result of differing particles, but for now I will simply say that it does not. The verb root additionally moves to the categorizing *v* head position.

(82)



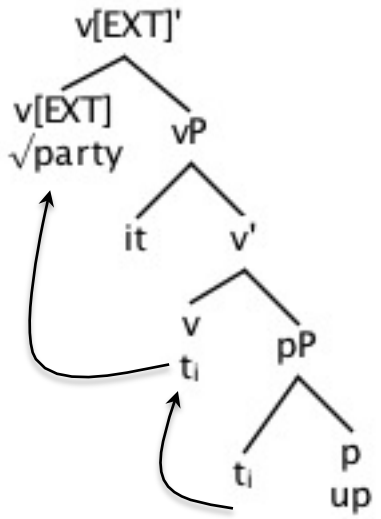

Because there is no internal argument to move to the specifier position of the categorizing *v* phrase to satisfy the *v* head's EPP feature, the expletive must be generated.

(83)



The verb root then moves to the *v*[EXT] head to give us the surface structure.

(84)




As I have shown, the verb-object-particle construction proposed by Basilico suits the 'X it up' construction quite well. The specifer position of the categorizing *v* head is an ideal position for the expletive to be born because the expletive must be generated due to the lack of any internal argument to satisfy the *v* head's EPP feature and it will not receive a theta role in this position. But there is one problem with this structure, and that pertains to the particle phrase not introducing an internal argument. I will explain this in Section 2.5.

## 2.5 The Nature of the Particle

Now that I have proposed a structure for the 'X it up' construction, I must explain how an internal argument is not introduced once the particle phrase is interpreted. As

seen in Basilico's structure for particle verbs with the verb-object-particle structure, the particle phrase introduces the internal argument as soon as it is interpreted. However, in the 'X it up' verb construction, as I have proposed, this does not occur. This allows for the object expletive to be generated. These two particle phrases in the structures are seemingly identical, but what allows one to introduce an internal argument and the other not? I propose that it is the particle that is the key factor, and I propose that the 'up' in the 'X it up' construction is a distinct particle from the 'up' in particle verbs that introduce an internal argument.

Evidence for this is that the particle cannot be modified. The premise for this test assumes that 'up' particles can be modified with the word *right*. This test is exemplified in the following sentences.

(85) We ate the cake right up.

(86) He looked the word right up in the dictionary.

However, the 'up' in the 'X it up' construction cannot be modified with the word *right*:

(87) *We partied it right up.

(88) *They coffeeed it right up.

(89) *I'm gonna pizza it right up.

The output shows that the 'up' in the 'X it up' construction cannot be modified with *right*, confirming the initial hypothesis.

A similar test targeting the particle's ability to be modified shows similar results. The premise for this test assumes that 'up' particles can be modified with the word *back*. This test is exemplified in the following sentences.

(90) We turned the volume back up.

(91) He hung the picture back up.

However, the ‘up’ in the ‘X it up’ construction cannot be modified with the word *back*:

(92) *We partied it back up.

(93) *They coffeeed it back up.

(94) *I’m gonna pizza it back up.

The output shows that the ‘up’ in the ‘X it up’ construction cannot be modified with the word *back*, confirming the initial hypothesis.

There is also evidence that there are a variety of ‘up’ particles in English that all have different meanings.

(95) He ate the cake up.

(96) He turned the volume up.

(97) He looked the word up.

(98) The two friends made up after their fight.

(99) He partied it up.

In (95), the particle signifies completion; all of the cake was eaten. This ‘up’ particle is quite common in English particle verbs and is grammatically productive. But in (96), the particle has a different meaning. In this context, it indicates an increase, but certainly not completion. This particle is also grammatically productive. However, the ‘up’ in (97) differs quite drastically from the two previous examples in that it has no meaning without the verb ‘look.’ The particle has essentially been lexicalized so that it does not simply modify or specify the event, but is required to give the verb its meaning. Another example of a lexicalized ‘up’ particle can be seen in (98). As with (97), the particle is

required for the verb to obtain its meaning and does not simply specify or modify the verb. Lastly, the ‘up’ particle in the ‘X it up’ construction of (99), as already discussed, indicates doing an action with a certain intensity based on a scale that is determined contextually.

As shown above, it is clear that there are ‘up’ particles with different meanings. This might indicate that some of these particles are functionally different, as well, which could explain why the ‘up’ in the ‘X it up’ construction does not introduce an internal argument; both semantically and syntactically, it does not need to. This can also be related to the fact that this particle only appears with unergatives, which do not have internal arguments.

The particle in examples such as (95) and (96) also seems to modify the object as well as the verb. In (95), the particle semantically relates to the object, ‘cake,’ in that it specifies that the cake has been totally eaten. The same can be said for (96); the ‘up’ semantically modifies ‘volume’ by specifying that the volume is increasing or has increased. The ‘up’ in the ‘X it up’ construction can only modify the verb itself. The particle does not describe the state of an argument in any way. It is this semantic distinction that allows for no internal argument to be introduced once the particle is interpreted.

As previously mentioned, there exists another particle verb construction that has a surface structure that is similar to that of ‘X it up.’ This is exemplified in the following sentences.

(100) We partied (ourselves) up.

(101) We partied them up.

The ‘ourselves’ in parentheses in (100) indicates that anaphora in this construction can be both overt and non-overt so that the following example is also possible.

(102) We partied up.

In these particular constructions, the meaning of the construction denotes a change of state. In (100), (101), and (102), the referents of the respective internal arguments are going from a state of not partying at all to partying. The major difference between these constructions and that of ‘X it up’ is that they are transitive. I will henceforth refer to this opposing construction as the ‘X someone up’ construction.

To further show how this construction differs from that of ‘X it up,’ we can modify the particle with *right* and *back* as in the tests above. I hypothesize that the ‘up’ particle in the ‘X someone up’ construction can be modified with *right* and *back* because it is distinct from that of ‘X it up’:

(103) We partied (ourselves) right up.

(104) We partied them right up.

(105) I coffeeed (myself) right up.

(106) I coffeeed them right up.

(107) We partied (ourselves) back up.

(108) We partied them back up.

(109) I coffeeed (myself) back up.

(110) I coffeeed them back up.

The output shows that the particle in the ‘X someone up’ construction can be modified, confirming the hypothesis that the ‘up’ is different from that of the ‘X it up’ construction. Because the particle phrase of the underlying structure in the ‘X it up’ construction and

that of the ‘X someone up’ construction are phonologically identical it appears that the particle’s ability to be modified is the important variable that differentiates the two.

If these particles are indeed functionally different, this offers an explanation of how the *p* head of ‘X it up’ gives the root of *party* an unergative interpretation within the ‘X it up’ construction, which consequently does not introduce an internal argument. Likewise, it explains how the *p* head of ‘X someone up’ gives the root of *party* an transitive interpretation, thusly introducing an internal argument.

Additionally, the verbs found in the ‘X someone up’ construction cannot be used in a bare form, as the following sentences show.

(111) *We partied ourselves.

(112) *We partied them.

Because these verbs are different depending on the particle construction, this provides further evidence that specification of the root is provided by the particle.

Traditional unergative verbs also cannot be used in the ‘X someone up’ construction, which also indicates a difference in semantic restrictions between ‘X it up’ and ‘X someone up’:

(113) *I danced (myself) up.

(114) *They laughed me up.

Furthermore, while the verb in the ‘X it up’ construction can virtually be derived from any noun, this is not the case with those in the ‘X someone up’ construction. Many denominals, particularly those derived from proper nouns, are unacceptable in the ‘X someone up’ construction:

(115) *She Walmarted (herself) up.

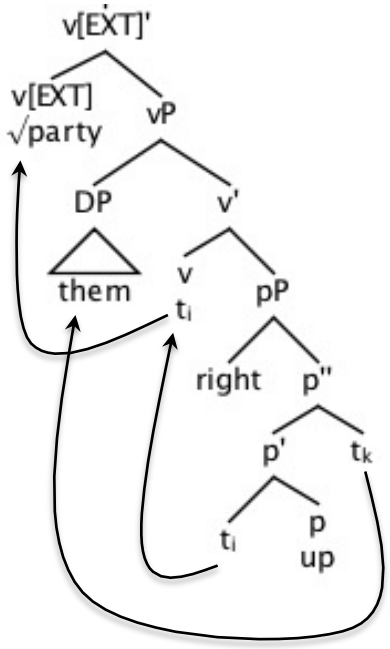
Perhaps the ‘X someone up’ construction is more similar to those lexicalized particle verb constructions such as *to look something up*. These constructions share many similar properties such as they lack bare forms that retain the same meanings, they take referential internal arguments, and the particles can be modified. Because of these shared qualities, I believe that their underlying structures are the same. The Figure 2.1 displays the different ‘up’ particle verbs and their respective parameters.

| | Type 1 | Type 2 | Type 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Verb | look it up, party them up | eat it up | party it up |
| Parameter | Lexicalized | Compositional - completive | Compositional - scalar |
| Object | Referential | Referential | Non-referential |
| Particle Modification | look it right up, party them right up | eat it right up | *party it right up |

*Figure 2.1 'up' Particle Verbs and Parameters*

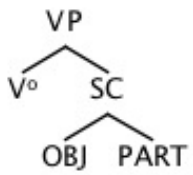
Using Basilico’s (2008) particle verb model, I will now explain the underlying syntactic representation of the ‘X someone up’ construction, seen in (116), in which the particle is modified by *right*. The particle and the verb root (*party*) merge. The particle projects and the root is interpreted. As I have shown, this particle is different from that of ‘X it up’ and does introduce an internal argument (*them*), giving the root the transitive interpretation. The particle phrase then merges with the adjunctive modifier (*right*). The particle phrase can then be merged with the categorizing *v* head and the verb root can move to this *v* head position. The internal argument must move to the specifier of the categorizing *v* head to receive Case and satisfy the EPP feature of the *v* head. Finally, the verb root moves to the *v*[EXT] head.

(116)



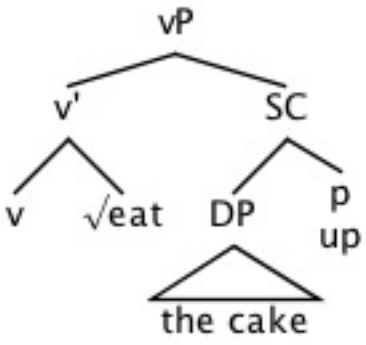

The 'X it up' and the 'X someone up' structures differ from the structure of compositional particle verbs such as *to eat something up* because this class of particle verb constructions can take bare forms that retain both their transitivity and general meanings. It has been proposed that the structure of this type of compositional phrasal verb differs from that of their lexicalized counterparts mentioned above because the verb merges with a small clause, consisting of the particle and the internal argument. (Wurmbrand 2000). The structure is exemplified below

(117)



This structure, using the DM framework, is shown below.

(118)



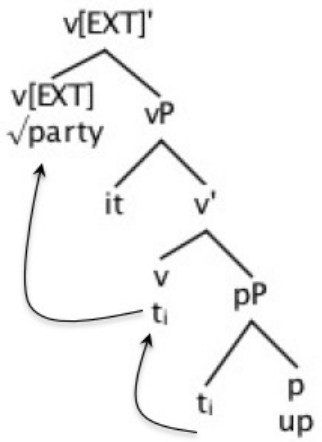

This structure explains why the bare forms of the verbs and their particle verb counterparts retain the same basic meaning. The root is categorized by the *v* head in both its bare form and in the particle construction, and the *v* head selects both the particle and the internal argument. This prevents the particle from influencing the interpretation of the root and allowing for the bare form construction, as well. A small clause consisting of the particle and the internal argument also better explains the semantic relation between the particle and the internal argument.

As I have shown in this section, the particle 'up' in the 'X it up' construction is distinct from other 'up' particles in the language. Evidence supporting this is that the 'up' particle cannot be modified, while the 'up' in the similar structure of 'X someone up' and other 'up' particle verbs can. Because of the difference in particles, I proposed that it is the particle that provides the root's unergative interpretation found in 'X it up' or the unnacusative or transitive interpretation found in 'X someone up.'

## 2.6 Summary

I have exemplified and supported various properties of the ‘X it up’ verb construction. First, I have shown that the ‘it’ in the construction is an (object) expletive. I have also shown that the verb construction is unergative and does not introduce an internal argument. I have also determined that the verb-object-particle construction from Basilico (2008) is a proper syntactic representation of the ‘X it up’ construction, as seen in (119).

(119)




Lastly, I have substantiated that the particle ‘up’ in the construction is a distinct particle that does not introduce an internal argument when it is interpreted in the structure.

As it stands, the structure gathered from Basilico (2008) is an adequate syntactic representation of the construction. It explains how the surface word order is derived and how the object expletive is generated. However, alternative underlying structures might also need to be researched. If other representations come about that might better represent the construction, those will certainly be investigated.

# CHAPTER 3. A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

## 3.1 Introduction

Changing perspective from the syntax of the 'X it up' construction, I will now discuss this particular phenomenon within the sociolinguistic realm. As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the construction is quite colloquial and very unlikely to be found in any academic or professional speech or writing. If one were to include it in these types of registers, it would either be for stylistic reasons or merely a linguistic faux pas. From this, it is clear that there are certain contextual limitations on the construction. If such restrictions exist, what might be some other factors that constrain the usage of the 'X it up' construction?

My own sociolinguistic intuition first alerted me to what seemed to be age restrictions on the 'X it up' construction. By my own subjective perception, it appeared that younger speakers were using the construction almost exclusively. This led me to further investigate this possibility. While the validity of this sociolinguistic aspect cannot be affirmed solely based on my own biased intuition, it has, nevertheless, been the impetus for my investigation into this topic. Much like the linguistic intuitions on grammaticality corresponding to syntax, phonology, and the like, a person's sociolinguistic intuitions are equally worthy of validation. If not for sociolinguistic intuitions, it would be impossible for a person to verbally traverse the many diverse

social situations he or she may find him or herself in. Our sociolinguistic intuitions are just as essential, if not more so, than basic intuitions on grammar because it is language in the social context by which many real-world conflicts occur and are resolved. It is more than necessary for one to have a strong sense of the social constraints and expectations of his or her own language, apart from just the ability to simply produce and perceive it.

With this in mind, I hypothesize that age is the main factor in the usage of the 'X it up' construction and that subjects in their early thirties and below are the primary users of the construction. The more frequent usage of the 'X it up' construction serves as a linguistic marker of youth speech.

Before preceding any further, I must clarify a few key issues. First, I will address the concept of grammar. It is not within the scope of this study to conclusively state whether or not the 'X it up' construction as a linguistic variable of youth speech resides within the domain of one's grammar, that internal, innate ability for one to produce and perceive his or her native language in a fluent manner. If the data may support my hypothesis, that the usage of 'X it up' is influenced by age and used primarily by younger age groups, I do not intend for this to indicate that the construction is strictly within the grammar of young populations and not within that of older populations.

This leads into the second issue that I will address: speech style, which pertains to those linguistic variables used by different social groups to indicate stance, identity, and membership, and other meta-linguistic notions. Style, as with grammar, is not meant to be determined as the reason for the possible variation concerning the usage of the 'X it up' construction either. My research seeks only to suggest that age, as a quantifiable social factor, plays some role in the variation of the usage of the construction. Whether

this variation is due to differences in grammar or speech style is not for this study to decide. However, these questions will be considered and touched upon in Section 3.4 of this thesis.

Studies in age and language variation have focused on the lexicons of younger age groups, specifically the usage of slang (Bucholtz 1999, Eble 1996, Labov 1992, Stenström, Andersen and Hasund 2002). Others have focused on phonological variation and sound change among different generations (Eckert 1988). There exists little research on syntactic variation and age as a sociolinguistic factor. Most studies that have centered on the area of grammatical differences have addressed the recent change in quotatives in English (Macaulay 2001, Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999, Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2004). The quotatives in question are 'go' and 'be like.' These studies have correlated the usage of a nonstandard grammatical marker with age as a sociolinguistic variable and have shown that these distinct uses of such markers have spread throughout several varieties of English (e.g. British, Canadian, and Scottish) among younger speakers. In this way, the usage of these nonconventional quotatives might be analogous to the usage of the 'X it up' construction. If younger speakers tend to use these nonstandard, colloquial forms of quotatives, then they might also use other nonstandard, colloquial grammatical forms such as 'X it up.'

These studies also address such age-related variation in terms of style and not just in a younger versus older dichotomy. These particular studies approach age groups consisting of many different subcultural groups such as 'nerds' and 'jocks' (Bucholtz 1999, Eckert 1988). This has suggested that there is even more nuanced variation between these different groups. Additionally, other studies on age have also addressed the

notion of stance, the indication of attitudes or positions toward a particular subject or other individuals using linguistic markers, and how it is linguistically represented within age-based styles of speech. To be more specific, it has been argued that the speech of younger speakers of American English utilizes more linguistic features to express stance than that of older speakers. (Barbieri 2008)

## 3.2 Methodology

Data collection consisted of a four-part survey. A survey was the most adequate method for gathering the necessary data to determine if age, and perhaps other demographic factors, influence the usage of 'X it up.' Other studies on age and language variation have used corpus research (Barbieri 2008, Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2004, Tottie and Hoffmann 2006) and recorded conversation methods (Macaulay 2001). These two methods were not possible with regards to the 'X it up' construction.

Preliminary research on *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies 1990) came up with very few results. This is most likely due to the context in which the data were produced, as well as the fact that the 'X it up' construction is not a very common phrase. The phrase's uncommon nature and its contextual sensitivity is also a reason that elicitation tasks and recording of natural speech would yield few results; speakers may never produce this construction while being recorded. Because the 'X it up' construction occurs only in informal and casual speech, and recording speakers might further restrict them from producing such an utterance.

The first section of the survey pertained to demographic questions, which included: age, gender, and social media usage. These would be the sociolinguistic factors

to be investigated to see if they have any influence on the use of ‘X it up,’ with age being the presumed primary factor in the sociolinguistic reality of the construction. Factors such as gender, a prevalent social factor in language variation, and social media usage were investigated in addition to age with no assumption as to whether they are relevant influences on the usage of the ‘X it up’ construction or not. They were merely included as exploratory factors to be revealed by the data.

Subjects were also asked what their country of origin is in order to exclude any non-native speakers from the data analysis. While this does not mean that I find the insights of second language speakers to be of lesser value, there was not a practical means to account for how well acquainted non-native speakers were with both the linguistic and sociolinguistic nuances of the English language; therefore, their insights into the ‘X it up’ construction may not have been reliable. Speakers from English-speaking countries outside of the United States were included in the data for analysis because, at this point in time, there is no evidence that region has an effect on the usage of ‘X it up.’ Also, the likely very low number of subjects from other English-speaking countries would not have been significant enough to have an effect on the data, and a sample size would not have been large enough to determine a difference between regions even if there was one.

Socioeconomic status was not investigated as an additional sociolinguistic factor that may have influenced the usage of ‘X it up’ because there was not a means to adequately gauge this via the survey. Even if subjects were asked to give their annual incomes as a method for determining socioeconomic status, this would not be accurate because many of those in the 18-25 and 26-35 age groups might have lower incomes

because of their young age and student occupational status, but may have come from middle to upper class backgrounds.

The last additional factor to be investigated was social media usage. What this refers to is the frequency and duration with which subjects use the two popular websites, Facebook and Twitter. Participants were also asked if they use any other social media websites. The rationale for seeking out possible variation based on this factor is that social media is a network that serves as a potential means for the transmission of linguistic variables such as slang, discourse styles, etc. For this reason, it is possible that one's engagement with and activity within social media could perhaps influence the likelihood that he or she would come into contact with 'X it up' and perhaps use it more frequently. This would seem especially accurate for a construction like 'X it up' because social media websites, such as Facebook, harbor much peer interaction and casual conversation that would certainly facilitate the usage and transmission of such informal language.

An additional, non-demographic but linguistic factor that was also investigated was the derivation of the verb. Because the 'X it up' construction can be derived from nouns, proper nouns, and traditional unergative verbs, it is possible that the derivation could affect the users' acceptance of the construction. It is my assumption that those 'X it up' constructions that are derived from traditional unergative verbs will be more acceptable to participants than those verbs derived from nouns and proper nouns. The reasoning for this is that denominal verbs, while found quite commonly in English, may be deemed unnatural, ungrammatical, or simply "improper" by speakers due to prescriptivism.

The second section of the survey contained the language tasks that would be used to gauge subjects' familiarity with, recognition of, and likely usage of the 'X it up' construction. This section would also investigate subjects' perceptions of the age of users of the construction. The tasks were separated into different language scenarios. Scenarios began with a brief description of a scene or situation so as to give context to the reader. This contextual information was then followed by a line of dialog from one speaker, which contained an underlined 'X it up' utterance. This would direct subjects' attention to the construction for tasks they would respond to later about the construction. There were six different scenarios that each contained an 'X it up' utterance. In order to account for any differences between verb derivation, two of each verb type were used in the six scenarios: two derived from nouns (*scarf it up*, *coffee it up*), two derived from proper nouns (*Jones's it up*, *Walmart it up*), and two derived from traditional unergative verbs (*chat it up*, *laugh it up*).

Based on the scenarios and their corresponding dialogs, subjects were to answer a series of questions pertaining to each dialog. The first task consisted of a naturalness judgment task focusing on the 'X it up' construction. Using a Likert scale of one to six, subjects were to rate how "natural" the 'X it up' phrase in the respective dialog sounded given the context. A rating of one represented a "not natural at all" judgment, and a rating of six represented an "extremely natural" judgment.

The word 'natural' was used on the survey instead of 'grammatical' so as to avoid creating confusion among participants concerning the various meanings of the word 'grammatical.' For the average, non-linguist, this word usually entails the prescriptive meaning, that which is taught to children in the K-12 education setting. This has created

the common belief that much casual, informal, and "improper" language is "ungrammatical." Because 'X it up' is informal and "improper" and "ungrammatical" from a prescriptive perspective, subjects may have thus always given the phrase a low rating if 'grammatical' were used instead of 'natural,' believing that it is "grammatically incorrect." Thus, the term 'natural' seemed like a better alternative to 'grammatical' in order to allow participants to use their linguistic and sociolinguistic intuition rather than their prescriptive biases.

I also chose the word 'natural' because my research and the data gathered from the judgment tasks should not represent the notion of 'grammatical.' As I stated previously, I am not arguing for or against 'X it up' as a part of any one particular grammar. With this in mind, I did not want the acceptability tasks to simply represent grammaticality. Grammaticality is also typically viewed in absolute terms; an utterance is either grammatical to a native speaker or not. But subjects for the survey were allowed to judge 'X it up' on a scale, meaning that its acceptability is not absolute. By 'natural,' the data should reveal how well the 'X it up' construction resonates with a given subject. If a subject uses the construction often or has encountered it much, then they are likely to give it a relatively more favorable or "natural" rating than another subject who rarely if ever uses the construction or has never encountered it.

Participants were then tested on their familiarity with each 'X it up' phrase in the corresponding scenarios. The question was simply a 'yes/no' question, and only asked if subjects recognized the phrase. The rationale behind asking this question is that recognition can help determine the accuracy of subjects' ratings. I assume that if a person gives a relatively low naturalness rating, then they would likely answer that they do not

recognize the corresponding ‘X it up’ construction, and if they give a relatively high rating, then they should recognize the construction. But, if they answer that they do not recognize the phrase but give it a relatively high rating, then this might indicate that their results were not completely accurate and that subjects rated naturalness randomly. Although, this may not be the case for the inverse, in which a subject claims to recognize the construction but gives it a relatively low natural rating. This combination may simply indicate that the subject has heard the phrase but does not deem it “natural” for grammatical, prescriptive, or stylistic reasons.

The next question concerning the different scenarios pertained to subjects’ perception of their own usage of the construction. Subjects were asked if they agreed that they use the ‘X it up’ construction in daily, casual conversation. As with the naturalness rating, this question also used a 6-point Likert scale. A rating of one represented “strongly disagree,” and a rating of six represented “strongly agree.” This test provides support for the aforementioned assumption that ‘X it up’ is used more commonly among younger age groups. While reporting of self-perceptions is not the most reliable or credible form of research, exercises such as this in tandem with the naturalness ratings exercises can provide a sense of one’s attitude toward the construction and possibly reveal if it is something that they do or do not use.

Additionally, because this phrase is uncommon and rather marked, it is possible that subjects would be accurate in their self-perceptions of its usage. This could be on par with a word such as ‘ain’t.’ Most people would be accurate in their own perceptions of whether they use it or not due to the phrase’s marked nature. Also, the validity of the task of likelihood of usage would be supported by the subjects’ naturalness ratings for ‘X it

up.' If subjects give a low naturalness rating for a given 'X it up' phrase, then they will most probably give a low rating for likelihood of usage.

The final question in the second section of the survey focused on how participants viewed the age of those who use 'X it up.' Subjects were asked to guess the age of the speaker who used 'X it up' in each scenario. Subjects were given age ranges of 15-20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35, 35-40, 45-50, and 50 and above. Subjects were allowed to choose more than one possible age group for the speaker. This would allow the data to show if subjects favored a particular age group who might use 'X it up' even when given many options. This task does not rely on the speakers' own linguistic intuitions, but rather their perceptions of the sociolinguistic qualities of the construction.

To distract subjects from focusing on the 'X it up' examples and consequently responding in a biased way, filler scenarios and tasks were included. These scenarios were structured identically and contained the same questions as those scenarios pertaining to 'X it up.' The underlined utterances were completely random. This would move subjects' attention away from 'X it up' briefly so that when they would come across an 'X it up' example, their intuition would not be influenced by the previous scenario.

The third section of the survey involved subjects' ability to judge the likelihood of others' usage of the 'X it up' construction. The section consisted of hypothetical persons of varying age groups (e.g. an elderly man, a middle aged woman, a teenage boy, etc.). Using another 6-point Likert scale, subjects were to rate how likely each hypothetical person would be to use the 'X it up' construction. As with the perception of one's own usage task, this task of perception cannot be completely relied upon. It does, however,

offer a glimpse at the general perception of the construction in much the same way and can highlight possible assumptions among the participants as to who might use the construction.

There were a total of 95 participants in the survey. Subjects' ages ranged from 18 to 83. For the data analysis, subjects were arranged into three age groups: 18-25 (46 subjects), 26-35 (15 subjects), and 36 and above (34 subjects). The rationale for structuring the groups in this way is that previous research on age-based language variation shows that most variation occurs until the mid-twenties and lessens as generations increase in age (Tao and Xiao 2007, Tottie and Hoffmann 2006). Chambers (2003) also states:

> Having worked their way through . . . formative periods, people reach a point where the range of styles and the inventory of socially significant variants are deemed sufficient, at least subconsciously, for all practical purposes in the situations they find themselves in. (p. 203)

There were 45 males and 50 females. Most subjects resided in and originated from Indiana, United States, but there were subjects from other states and a small number from Canada. Because there were not enough of these subjects from outside of Indiana, region could not be analyzed as a possible factor influencing the usage of 'X it up.'

Data was analyzed using IBM's SPSS software program. Scenario data such as natural ratings, perceived likelihood of one's own usage, and perceived likelihood of others' usage underwent one-way ANOVA tests as independent variables with age, gender, and social media usage as fixed factors. In addition to the ANOVA tests on natural ratings and the three age groups, the 18-25 and 26-35 age groups were later

combined, and the mean of this combined group was compared with the 36 and above age group using an independent t-test.

To ensure the reliability of the analysis, three models were used to calculate the data, and their results were compared. Because there were six scenarios and each scenario asked the same questions about naturalness, recognition, perception of one's own usage of 'X it up,' and age guessing of speakers, there were a total of 570 responses among the 95 subjects. The first model of analysis calculated the mean of all of the responses in each age group combined. The second model involved nesting the data so that SPSS could account for each scenario response pertaining to a particular subject; this meant that within the factors such as age, gender, and social media usage, SPSS was also able to calculate each response as being associated with a particular subject. The last model of analysis involved first calculating the mean of each subject's responses and then performing the ANOVA on the resulting data so as to have only 95 total responses.

Data for age guessing tasks were analyzed using Excel. Due to the data pertaining only to categories based on age, there were no numbers that could be averaged and analyzed in SPSS as the other data sets. The analysis for this particular data merely involved calculating the totals of the responses for each age range chosen by subjects in the corresponding scenario. Because subjects were able to select more than one age category per scenario, the totals should reflect how subjects truly felt about the speaker's age, and it would allow for wider ranges of ages if subjects felt that the construction is not used solely by one narrow age group.

## 3.3 Results

The initial results pertaining to age showed a p-value (Sig.) of less than .05 in the ANOVA test (Figure 3.2); this indicated that there was evidence of at least one difference between the natural ratings among the three age groups. Post-hoc Tukey tests, which are used to determine which age groups have differing means, showed that the 36 and above age group had a significantly lower mean of natural ratings than the 18-25 and 26-35 age groups. It must be noted that there was a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances as determined by the results of the Levene's test. In general, the ANOVA is robust to violations of assumptions, i.e. it still performs well in the face of such violations.

| Age Groups | Number of Responses | Mean | Std. Deviation | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 276 | 3.123 | 1.4891 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| 26-35 | 90 | 3.211 | 1.5176 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| 36-above | 204 | 2.637 | 1.6537 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| Total | 570 | 2.963 | 1.5710 | 1.0 | 6.0 |

*Figure 3.1 Descriptives for Non-nested Natural Ratings and Age of Subjects*

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 34.269 | 2 | 17.134 | 7.092 | .001 |
| Within Groups | 1369.957 | 567 | 2.416 | | |
| Total | 1404.226 | 569 | | | |

*Figure 3.2 ANOVA of Non-nested Natural Ratings and Age of Subjects*

This initial analysis used the model that combined all responses within a given age group regardless of subject, which accounts for why the total number of responses came out to 570. Each of the 95 subjects had a total of six responses. To account for the

data coming from 95 subjects the second model was used in which the data were analyzed by nesting the subject within each of the age groups.

As with the previous model of analysis, the ANOVA showed at least one difference between the three groups (Figure 3.3), and the post-hoc Tukey tests showed that the 36 and above age group had a significantly lower rating than the other groups. This model violated the Levene's test of homogeneity of variances, as well.

| Source | Sig. |
|---|---|
| AgeGroups | .000 |

a. R Squared = .354 (Adjusted R Squared = .226)

*Figure 3.3 Univariate Analysis of Nested Natural Ratings and Age of Subjects*

To ensure thoroughness, the final model for analyzing the data was used. This consisted of first calculating the mean of each subject's six ratings and then performing an ANOVA on the data. This model allowed for the data to be represented according to the number of subjects (95) as opposed to the number of responses (570), thus providing a sample size of 95 instead of 570. As expected, the ANOVA provided a p-value of less than .05, indicating a difference between the age groups. Also, the data under this model did not violate the Levene's test as the previous models did. One caveat of this model was that the post-hoc tests were not sensitive enough to detect this difference. When these numbers were arranged in a means plot (Figure 3.4), they again show that the 36 and above age group, has an overall lower mean rating.

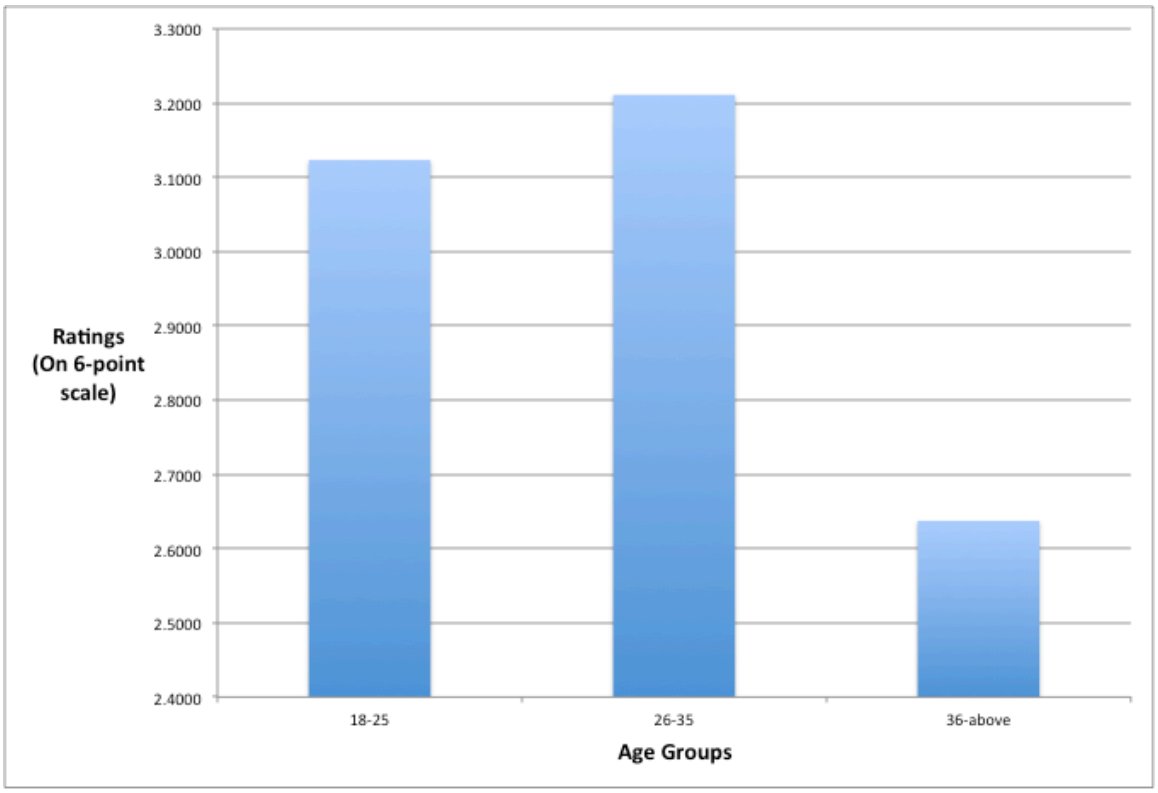



*Figure 3.4*

While there were limitations within each of the different models for analysis of the data, each one showed a difference between the age groups, with the younger age groups having an overall higher natural rating of the 'X it up' construction than the older age group. To further illustrate this, the two younger age groups were combined into an 18-35 group and analyzed using independent t-tests of the non-nested and aggregated models, and the results came out similarly, as seen in Figures 3.6 and 3.8 The p-value for each of the tests was less than .05, showing that this younger population rated the construction higher than the older population. Because there was no evidence of a difference between the 18-25 and 26-35 age groups, arranging the two age groups as one is the more appropriate way to examine the data and offers a binary contrast for the natural ratings. Additionally, while the Levene's test was violated in the non-nested data

(Figure 3.6), a more conservative t-test (line labeled “equal variances not assumed”) shows that the p-value was still considerably less than .05.

| Age Groups | | Number of Responses | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Rating | 18-35 | 366 | 3.145 | 1.4946 |
| | 36-above | 204 | 2.637 | 1.6537 |

*Figure 3.5 Group Statistics for Non-nested Natural Ratings and Age of Subjects*

| | | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Rating | Equal variances assumed | 3.740 | .000 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 3.634 | .000 |

*Figure 3.6 Independent t-test of Non-nested Natural Ratings and Age of Subjects*

| Age Groups | | Number of Subjects | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Rating | 18-35 | 61 | 3.1448 | .85390 |
| | 36 and above | 34 | 2.6373 | 1.00710 |

*Figure 3.7 Group Statistics for Aggregated Natural Ratings and Age of Subjects*

| | | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Rating | Equal variances assumed | 2.603 | .011 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 2.483 | .016 |

*Figure 3.8 Independent t-test of Aggregated Natural Ratings and Age of Subjects*

Results based on verb derivation as a factor in the natural rating of the construction also showed significant differences. Those examples of constructions derived from nouns and proper nouns had natural ratings lower than those derived from regular unergative verbs in English, as expected.

Other demographic factors such as gender and social media usage did not seem to have a significant influence on the natural ratings of the construction. Neither males nor

females had significantly higher scores than the other. Likewise, one's usage of Facebook and Twitter and frequency and duration of usage of these particular websites did not influence the data in a significant way. But there was a significant difference detected when the usage of other social media websites was considered. The group consisting of subjects who use other social media websites had higher natural ratings than those who do not. While it seems that this is an additional variable that influenced the data, it was merely another representation of age. Those subjects within the group that use other websites consisted primarily of younger ages and those of an older age were less likely to use websites apart from Facebook and Twitter.

Results for subjects who claimed to recognize 'X it up' overall showed no difference in natural ratings when age was a factor. Because each response on recognition corresponded directly to a specific construction in each scenario, the data pertaining to individual scenarios and 'yes' answers for recognition were also analyzed to detect any differences. For the verbs *to scarf it up, to coffee it up, to Jones's it up, to Walmart it up,* and *to laugh it up,* no differences in natural ratings were detected. The verb *to chat it up* did show a difference between the 18-25 and 36 and above age groups, with the 18-25 age group having a significantly higher rating than the 36 and above group. Below is shown the number of instances of positive recognition ('yes' responses) within each age group.

| | Age Groups | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 18-25 | 26-35 | 36-above |
| 'Yes' Responses | 222 | 80 | 135 |
| Number of Possible 'Yes' Responses | 276 | 90 | 204 |

*Figure 3.9 Instances of Positive Recognition of Each Age Group*

Ratings for subjects' perception of their own usage of the 'X it up' construction yielded comparable results. The two age groups of 18-25 and 26-35 rated more agreeably to the notion that they use the construction in daily, casual conversation, while the 36 and above age group rated significantly less so.

| Age Groups | Number of Responses | Mean | Std. Deviation | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 276 | 2.884 | 1.4601 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| 26-35 | 90 | 2.744 | 1.3371 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| 36-above | 204 | 2.289 | 1.5019 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| Total | 570 | 2.649 | 1.4797 | 1.0 | 6.0 |

*Figure 3.10 Descriptives for Perception of One's Own Usage Ratings and Age of Subjects*

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 42.476 | 2 | 21.238 | 10.007 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 1203.348 | 567 | 2.122 | | |
| Total | 1245.825 | 569 | | | |

*Figure 3.11 ANOVA for Perception of One's Own Usage Ratings and Age of Subjects*

The total responses of age guessing for each of the six scenarios are displayed in Figures 3.12- 3.17 Because subjects were able to choose more than one age range for each scenario's respective speaker, the total number of responses exceeded 570. A glance at each scenario shows a pattern of age ranges 15-20, 20-25, and 25-30 as being more favorable. There were steep declines in selections with the older age groups except in the examples derived from regular unergative verbs, *chat it up* and *laugh it up*, which had more gradual declines. When all of the scenarios' selections were combined, as seen in Figure 3.18, this general trend of favoring the 15-20, 20-25, and 25-30 age groups is shown.

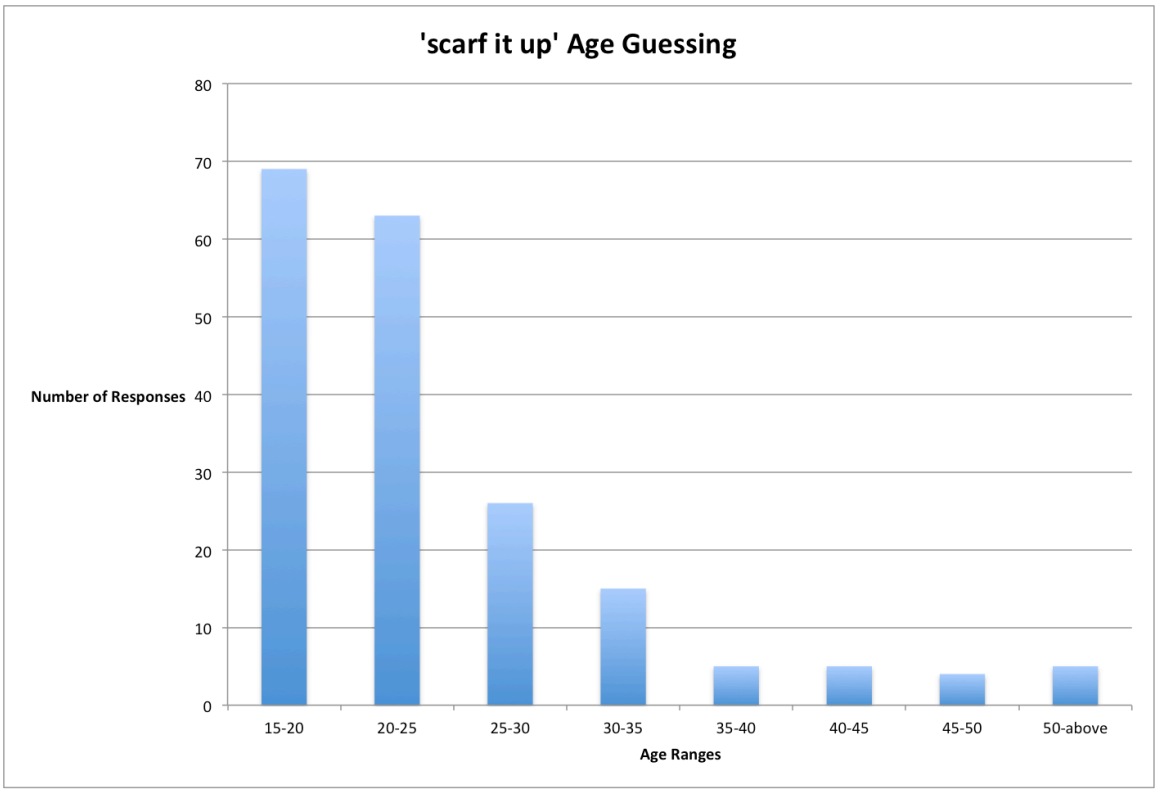



*Figure 3.12 Totals of Age Guessing Responses for 'scarf it up'*

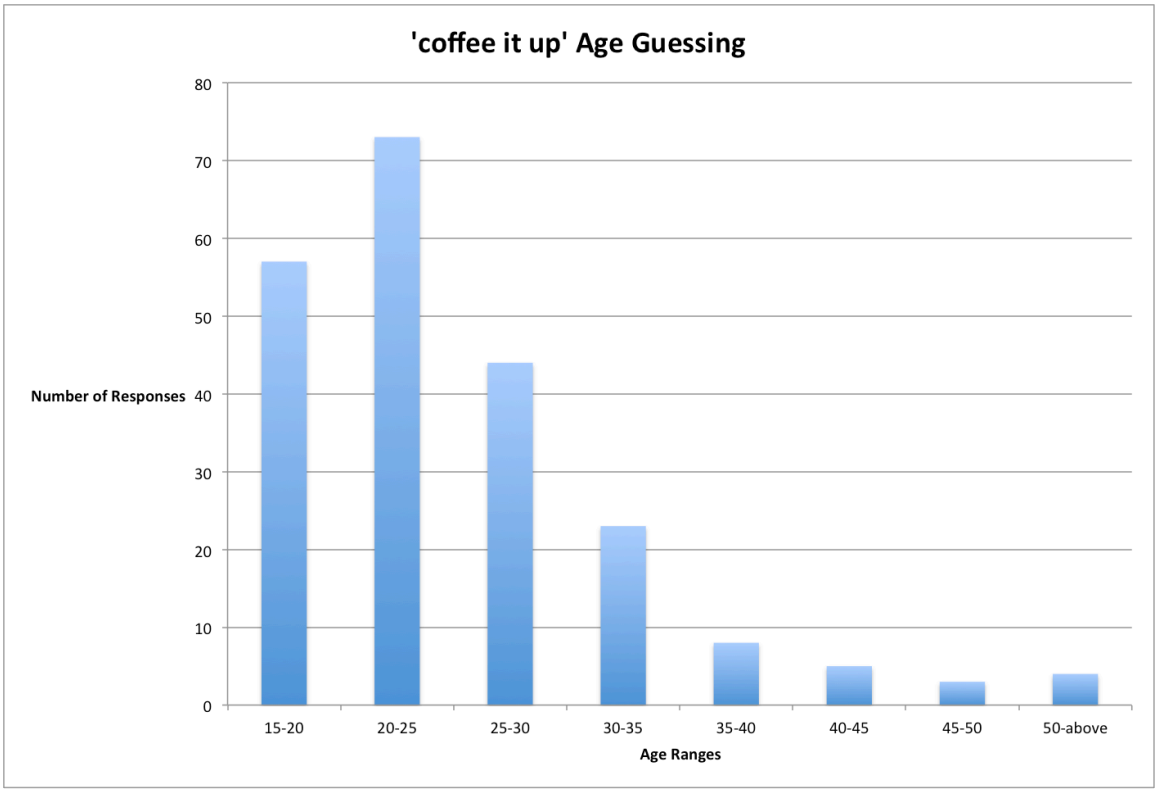



*Figure 3.13 Totals of Age Guessing Responses for 'coffee it up'*

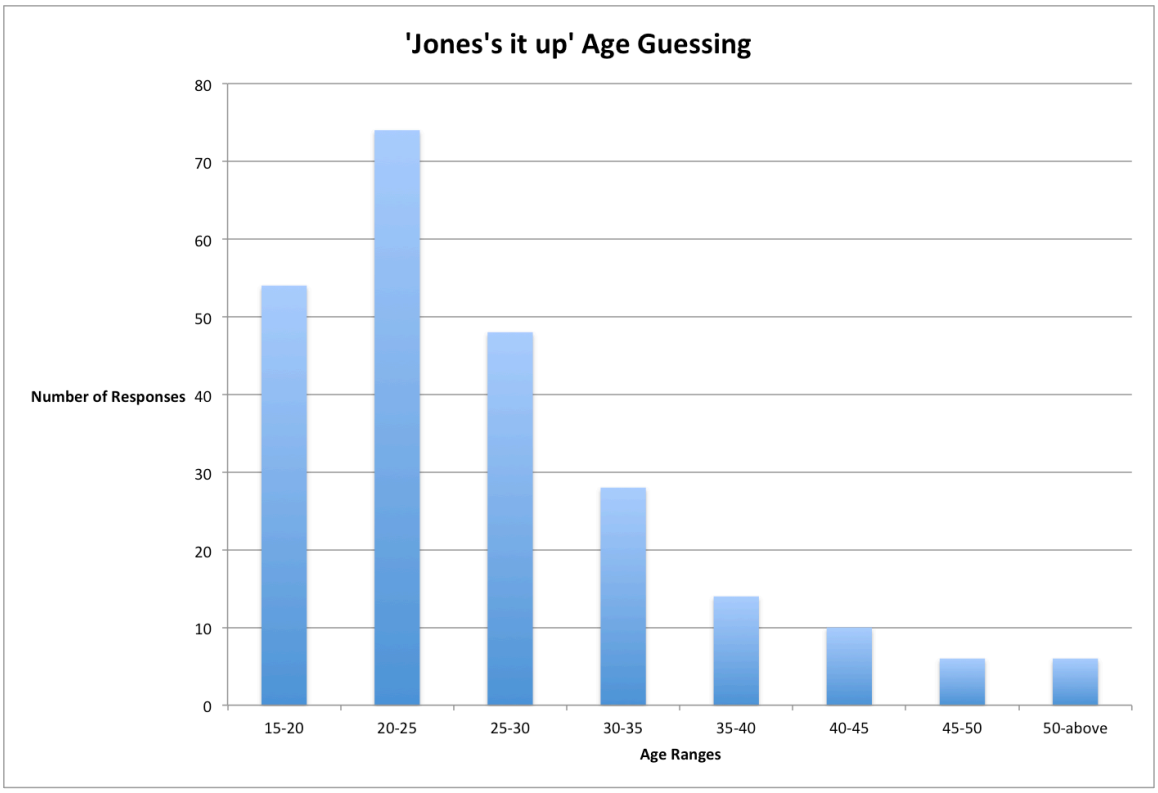



*Figure 3.14 Totals of Age Guessing Responses for 'Jones's it up'*

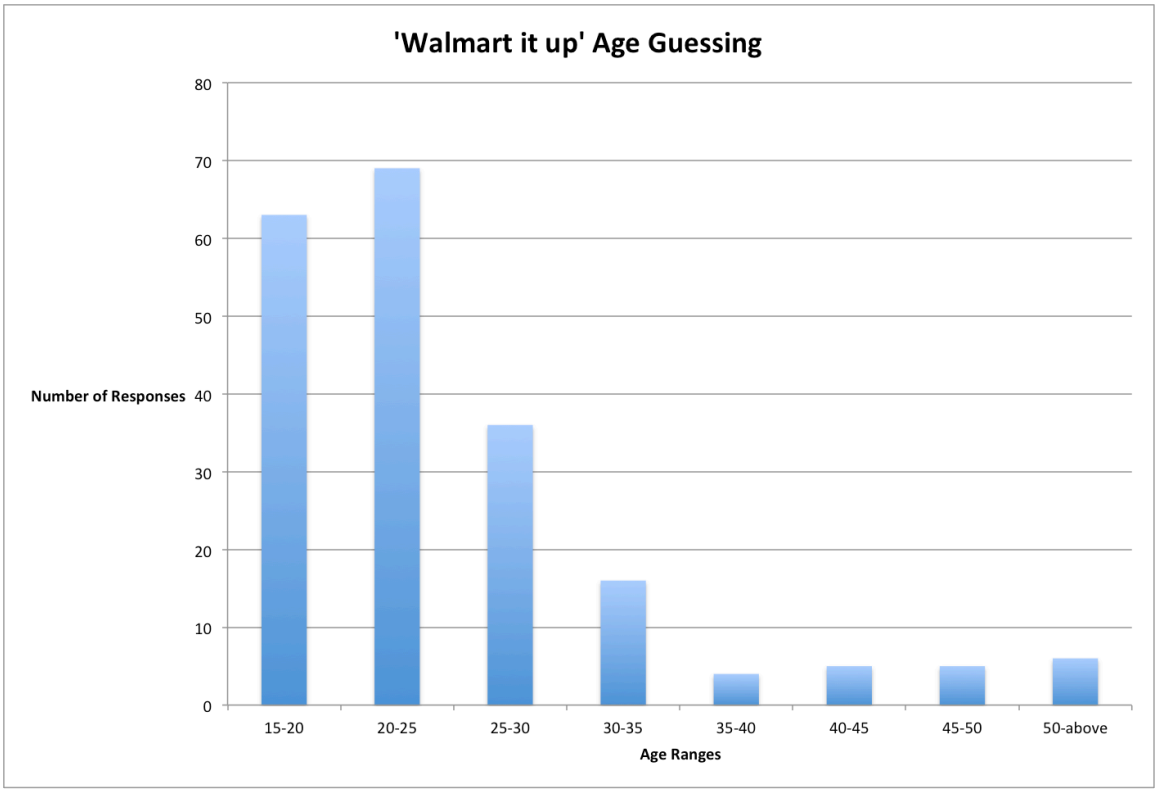



*Figure 3.15 Totals of Age Guessing Responses for 'Walmart it up'*

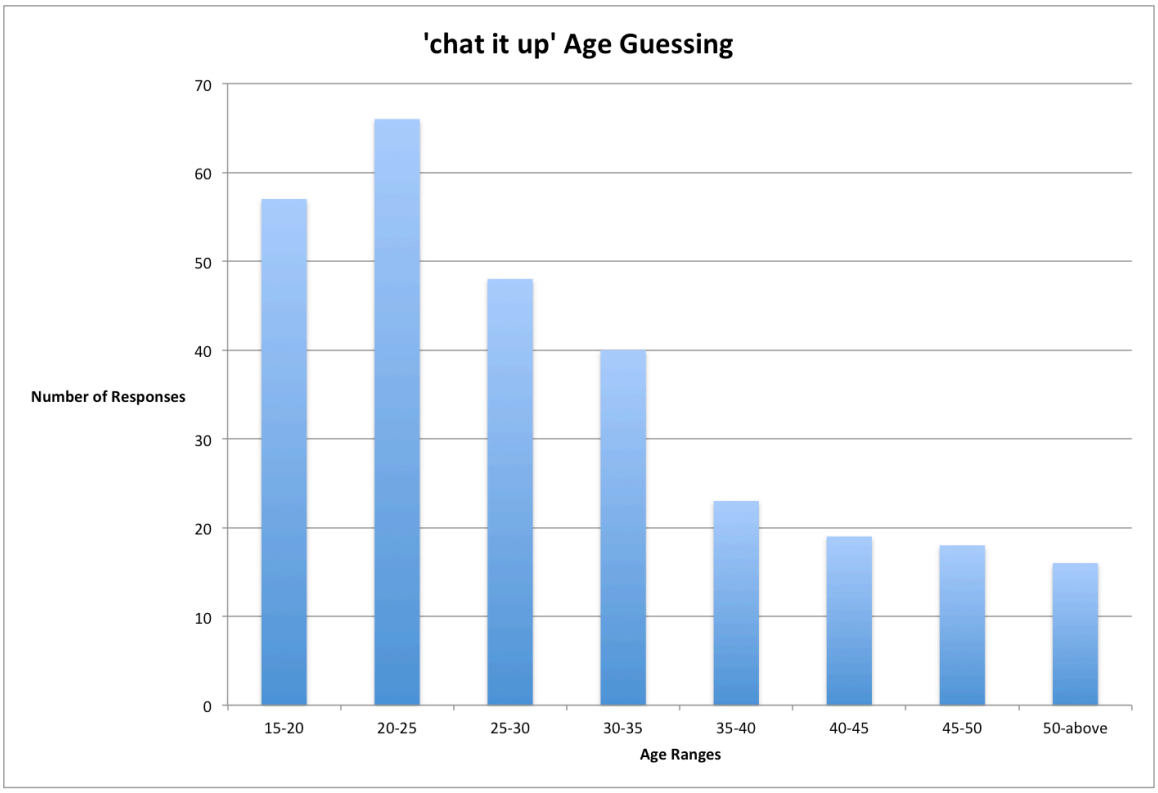



*Figure 3.16 Totals of Age Guessing Responses for 'chat it up'*

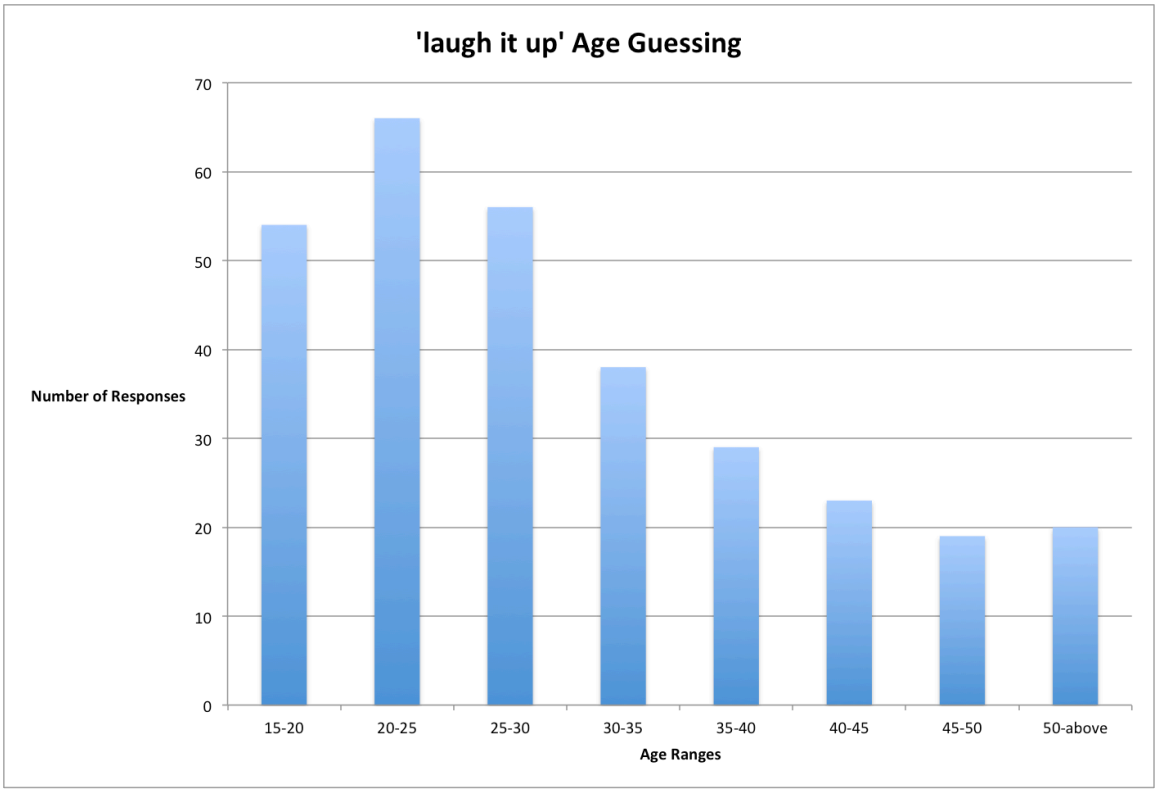



*Figure 3.17 Totals of Age Guessing Responses for 'laugh it up'*

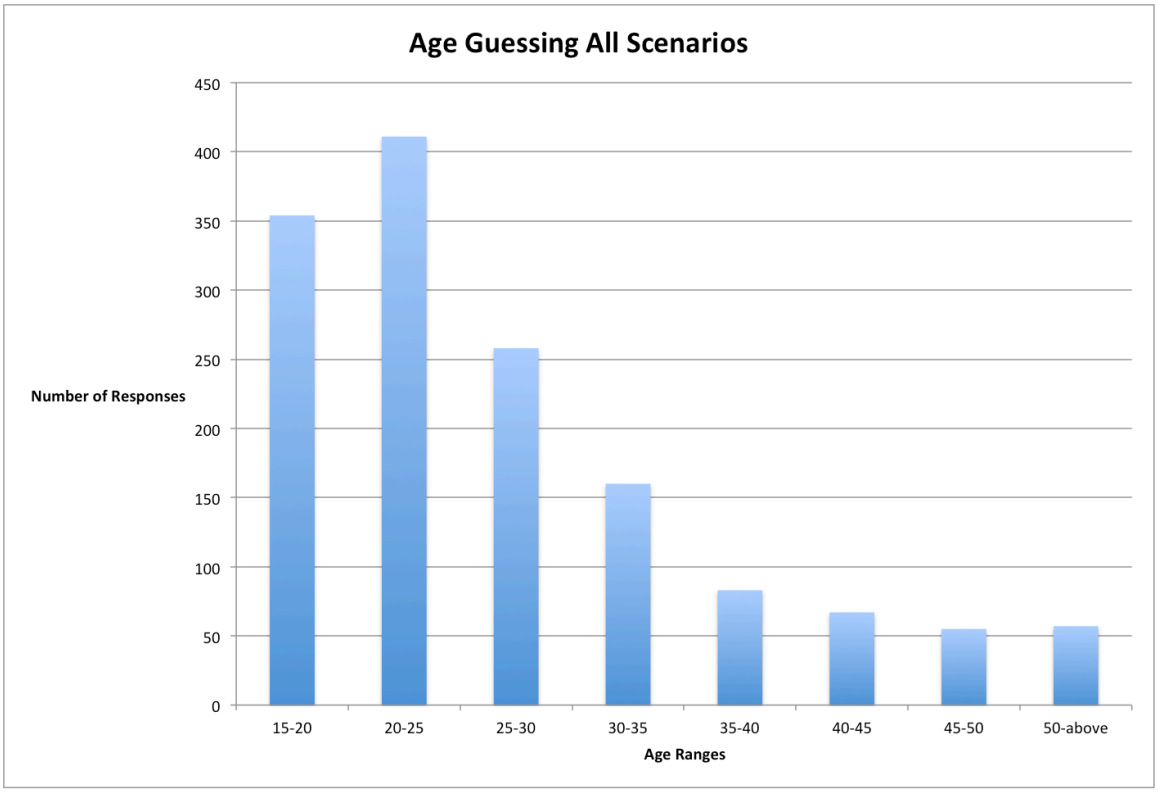



*Figure 3.18 Age Guessing Responses for All Scenarios Combined*

While the 20-25 age group was shown to be most often selected by subjects and 15-20 was the second most often selected in the majority of the scenarios, the *scarf it up* and *laugh it up* scenarios differed from the others in certain aspects. In the *scarf it up* scenario, subjects selected the 15-20 age group the most, and the 20-25 age group was the second most selected. For *laugh it up*, the 25-30 group was the second most selected and 15-20 was the third.

Figure 3.19 displays subjects' mean ratings and standard deviations of their perceptions of others' usage of 'X it up.' Hypothetical persons were arranged in order of descending ratings. The data showed that younger hypothetical persons received higher ratings, which then descended with older persons. The youngest hypothetical persons, a

teenage girl and boy, received the highest ratings, and the oldest hypothetical persons, an elderly woman and man, received the lowest ratings.

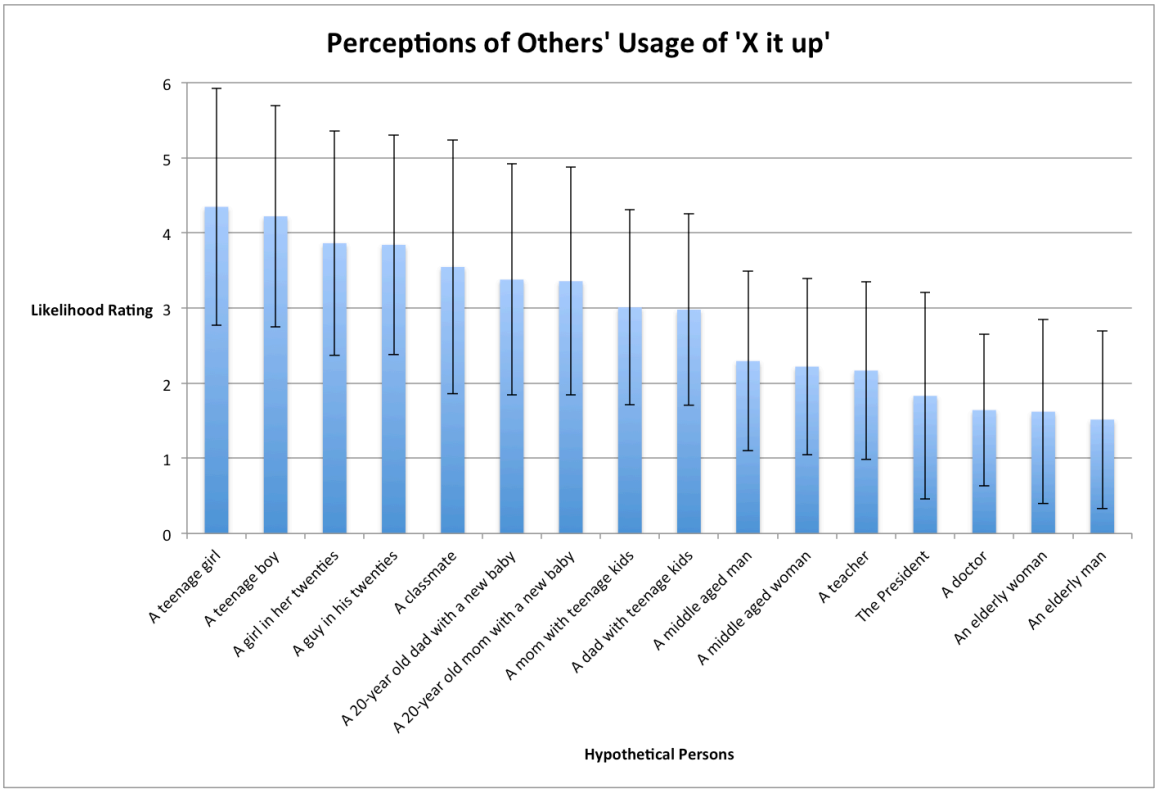



*Figure 3.19 Means and Standard Deviations for Likelihood of Usage Ratings for Hypothetical Persons*

The data for perceptions of others were also analyzed in SPSS to see if perceptions of others were influenced by subjects' own ages. Figures 3.20 and 3.21 show these analyses for the different hypothetical persons. For example, was the mean rating pertaining to the middle age woman different between the 18-25 age group and the 36 and above age group?

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doctor | Between Groups | 1.024 | 2 | .512 | .497 | .610 |
| | Within Groups | 94.808 | 92 | 1.031 | | |
| | Total | 95.832 | 94 | | | |
| Middle-age Woman | Between Groups | 9.747 | 2 | 4.873 | 3.717 | .028 |
| | Within Groups | 120.611 | 92 | 1.311 | | |
| | Total | 130.358 | 94 | | | |
| Middle-age Man | Between Groups | 10.730 | 2 | 5.365 | 4.012 | .021 |
| | Within Groups | 123.018 | 92 | 1.337 | | |
| | Total | 133.747 | 94 | | | |
| Mom with teenage kids | Between Groups | 3.504 | 2 | 1.752 | 1.037 | .359 |
| | Within Groups | 155.486 | 92 | 1.690 | | |
| | Total | 158.989 | 94 | | | |
| Dad with teenage kids | Between Groups | 7.424 | 2 | 3.712 | 2.363 | .100 |
| | Within Groups | 144.534 | 92 | 1.571 | | |
| | Total | 151.958 | 94 | | | |
| Elderly Man | Between Groups | 1.150 | 2 | .575 | .405 | .668 |
| | Within Groups | 130.576 | 92 | 1.419 | | |
| | Total | 131.726 | 94 | | | |
| Elderly Woman | Between Groups | 1.488 | 2 | .744 | .493 | .612 |
| | Within Groups | 138.870 | 92 | 1.509 | | |
| | Total | 140.358 | 94 | | | |
| President | Between Groups | 2.667 | 2 | 1.333 | .702 | .498 |
| | Within Groups | 174.639 | 92 | 1.898 | | |
| | Total | 177.305 | 94 | | | |
| Teacher | Between Groups | 1.904 | 2 | .952 | .677 | .511 |
| | Within Groups | 129.401 | 92 | 1.407 | | |
| | Total | 131.305 | 94 | | | |

*Figure 3.20 ANOVAs of Likelihood of Usage Ratings for Older Hypothetical Persons and Subject Age*

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teenage Girl | Between Groups | 2.078 | 2 | 1.039 | .413 | .663 |
| | Within Groups | 231.459 | 92 | 2.516 | | |
| | Total | 233.537 | 94 | | | |
| Teenage Boy | Between Groups | 9.015 | 2 | 4.507 | 2.123 | .126 |
| | Within Groups | 195.343 | 92 | 2.123 | | |
| | Total | 204.358 | 94 | | | |
| Girl in 20s | Between Groups | 4.284 | 2 | 2.142 | .962 | .386 |
| | Within Groups | 204.937 | 92 | 2.228 | | |
| | Total | 209.221 | 94 | | | |
| Guy in 20s | Between Groups | 1.958 | 2 | .979 | .453 | .637 |
| | Within Groups | 198.673 | 92 | 2.159 | | |
| | Total | 200.632 | 94 | | | |
| Classmate | Between Groups | 26.240 | 2 | 13.120 | 5.002 | .009 |
| | Within Groups | 241.297 | 92 | 2.623 | | |
| | Total | 267.537 | 94 | | | |
| 20-year old dad | Between Groups | 9.128 | 2 | 4.564 | 2.031 | .137 |
| | Within Groups | 206.703 | 92 | 2.247 | | |
| | Total | 215.832 | 94 | | | |
| 20-year old mom | Between Groups | 15.711 | 2 | 7.856 | 3.497 | .034 |
| | Within Groups | 206.647 | 92 | 2.246 | | |
| | Total | 222.358 | 94 | | | |

*Figure 3.21 ANOVAs of Likelihood of Usage Ratings for Younger Hypothetical Persons and Subject Age*

For the younger hypothetical persons, the p-values for a classmate and a 20-year old mom were less than .05, which indicated that there was a difference between at least two of the age groups' ratings for likelihood of usage for these two people. Post hoc tests for classmate showed that the 26-35 age group gave a significantly lower rating than the 18-25 age group. A difference between the 18-25 and 36 and above groups was detected for 20-year old mom, with the 36 and above group having a higher rating.

In regards to the older hypothetical persons, a difference was detected for both the middle-aged man and woman. Post hoc tests detected differences between the 18-25 and

36 and above groups in both cases, and both differences being that the 36 and above group had a significantly higher rating for the man and woman. Possible explanations for these particular differences in perception between the subjects' age groups will be discussed in Section 3.4.

Results for the qualitative portion of the survey will be analyzed in Section 3.4. Because this was an optional part of the survey, the majority of subjects chose not to answer it. But those who did offered interesting and insightful comments on the 'X it up' construction. These comments will be used to facilitate further discussion and evidence for the sociolinguistic reality of the verb.

## 3.4 Discussion

The results showed that age did influence the data. The general trend in the data also supported the hypothesis that the 'X it up' construction may be more common among younger speakers. Younger subjects found the construction more natural and reported themselves to be more likely to use the construction in daily, casual conversation. Most subjects also guessed that those who used the construction in the six scenarios were of younger age groups. Lastly, most subjects perceived younger people as generally more likely to use the construction. One younger subject's comment in the qualitative portion of the survey also reflected this: "I and my friends use it all the time." (Subject #21) What is interesting about this comment, made by a 19-year old subject, is that they only mention using it frequently with their friends, and it can be assumed that the subject's friends are of the same age. The subject makes no mention of using it with parents or other elders. While this single comment alone is not reliable data to support the

hypothesis, it is a small piece of evidence that does reflect the notion that younger speakers primarily use the construction.

Additionally, while the data showed a significant difference between the younger speakers' perceptions of their own usage and those of the older speakers, the means for all of the age groups were all relatively low (less than 3). This could perhaps be due to certain stigmas attached to such a colloquial form of language, which could cause speakers to deny that they actually do use the construction. Younger speakers perceive 'X it up' as something used primarily by younger speakers, but do not want to acknowledge or admit that they themselves use it. One subject wrote, "it's irritating in most contexts." (Subject #5) Another said, "I feel it is over used and doesn't make much sense to me because you can say the same thing and not sounds [sic] awkward about it." (Subject #29) Both of these particular subjects were aged 19, and used language indicative of their attitudes toward the construction. A subject aged 36 wrote, "I know a Masters student, a classmate and colleague of mine, who used it *all the time*. [emphasis in original text] He should be about 31-33 now. He used it in a 'let's party now' context, even if it was like 10 AM. He was kind of a douche." (Subject #89) These comments expressing unfavorable attitudes toward the construction, or those who use it, could reflect certain negative stereotypes that 'X it up' carries in the social context.

The data does not determine that the construction is used exclusively by younger speakers, but simply that they may be the primary users of the construction. When only data of those who recognized 'X it up' was analyzed, natural ratings indicated no differences between age groups. This suggests that at least those older generation speakers who recognize the construction have similar intuitions about this construction as

younger speakers. This has interesting implications for the notions of grammar versus style in relation to ‘X it up.’ As stated in the introduction to this chapter, this research will not conclude whether or not the ‘X it up’ construction and its potential variation as influenced by age is due to grammatical or stylistic differences between generations. But the results facilitate discussion on this.

Because a portion of the older subjects recognized at least one of the ‘X it up’ constructions in the scenarios presented in the survey and because their natural ratings corresponding to these recognized verbs did not differ, this supports more the notion that that the ‘X it up’ construction and its variation falls within the realm of style. If these generational differences were due to one generation having ‘X it up’ in their grammar and the other lacking it, then we would expect that there to be minimal recognition of the verb among the older subjects, and even if older subjects recognized the verb, they would still have significantly lower natural ratings because it would not be within their grammar, and they would likely not find it to be natural.

What might be the likely possibility, if in fact the disparities in the usage and intuitions of ‘X it up’ are due to generational differences, is that the construction is within the grammar of all speakers, regardless of age, but the variation of its usage is due to stylistic differences associated with generation and those contexts associated with age differences. Because style is something that can be rather fluid and not as boundary-defined as grammar, speakers may have the ability to recognize and have intuitions about those linguistic variables of particular styles that may not be their own due to their exposure to the style. For example, some older speakers may have much interaction with younger speakers due to career or familial situations, which would further strengthen

their intuitions and familiarity with the construction. A comment made by a subject, aged 57, directly exemplifies this possibility. The subject wrote, “if you have teenagers, use social media, or associate w/ young adults 20-25, you know what it means even if you don’t use it.” (Subject #79)

More evidence that the variation of ‘X it up’ is related to style pertains to the possibility that it can also indicate the stance of the speaker when used. As mentioned previously, age-based studies on language variation focus on this notion of stance and the linguistic tools used within a particular speech style to display a speaker’s stance. Furthermore, the speech of younger generations seems to use a wider variety of linguistic tools to indicate stance. (Barbieri 2008). One subject, age 27, wrote in the qualitative portion of the survey that when they use the construction regarding others, they are not only indicating that the person has done a particular activity more so than is usual for them, but that they are also indicating approval by using the construction. In the words of the subject, “it also means that what [someone] is doing is uncharacteristic and that I want him or her to know that what he or she is doing is uncharacteristic and weird but also acceptable if that's what he or she wants to do.” (Subject #17) This comment suggests that the ‘X it up’ construction might be another linguistic tool to express stance by younger speakers, a way to project their attitudes toward a particular activity and to display their approval of this activity even if it is not typical of the person to whom it refers.

Comments from the qualitative portion also highlight the assumption that those constructions derived from regular unergative verbs would be more accepted by the subjects. One subject notes that “laughing/chatting it up make a little more sense than the

other examples." (Subject #9) Another states, "A few of them sound very natural – 'like chatted it up'. But, others don't sound natural at all." (Subject #52) This aversion to those derived from nouns and proper nouns is likely due to prescriptivism. This prescriptive favoring of the regular verbs was perhaps further intensified by the fact that the dialogs were represented in written form and not spoken. Had participants heard these used in speech, they may have responded to them more favorably.

Finally, the results pertaining to the perception of hypothetical persons' usage of 'X it up' were also consistent with four exceptions: a classmate, a 20-year old mom, and a middle age man and woman. The 26-35 age group gave a significantly lower rating for classmate. An explanation for this could be due to personal traits of subjects; the majority of subjects were either students or faculty from the university. Therefore, the 26-35 age group likely consisted of many graduate students. For these subjects, a hypothetical classmate may not be likely to use the construction because it is very informal, and a graduate student academic setting may not facilitate this type of informal language.

Regarding the 20-year old mom, the 18-25 age group had a significantly lower rating than the 36 and above group. The likely reason for this is that an age of 20 years is younger for all those in the 36 and above age group, so these subjects saw this person as likely to use the construction. The 18-25 group perhaps also found the fact that the person was a mother to make her less likely to use the construction, as parenthood could stereotypically suggest maturity.

The middle age man and woman received significantly higher likelihood ratings from the 36 and above group than the 18-25 group. This can possibly be explained by those subjects in the 36 and above age group who saw themselves as beyond middle age.

If they considered themselves of an age that surpasses this middle age stage, then those persons deemed middle aged would be seen as younger, and perhaps more likely to use the construction. If this is indeed the explanation, it provides further evidence that the construction is age-graded. Even if it is not used by middle aged people, elders still associate it with relatively younger generations.

## 3.5 Summary

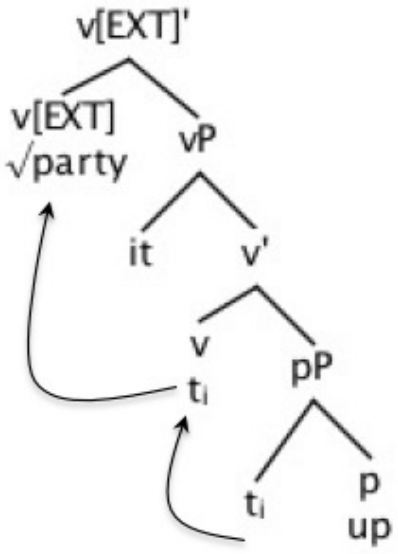
In conclusion, the hypothesis that the usage of the 'X it up' construction is influenced by age was supported. The data also suggested that the construction is more frequently used among younger speakers, particularly those within the age range of 18-35. Participants in this age range found the construction to be more natural than older generations, and they found themselves to be more likely to use the construction in daily, casual conversation. Subjects also perceived hypothetical speakers who use the construction to be of a generally younger generation.

However, more natural speech data is needed to fully prove that the construction is used exclusively or more frequently by young speakers. The survey conducted for this study merely suggests that age is an influential factor in the sociolinguistic context of this verb as a linguistic variable, and that speakers perceive the construction to be used more by younger generations. Corpus research and recordings of natural, conversational speech would provide further and more solid support for this. Elicitation of the verb in conversation might be difficult due to the very informal nature of the construction, but it would certainly offer clearer insight on the usage of 'X it up.'

# CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis has explored many different linguistic and sociolinguistic qualities of the ‘X it up’ construction. Through various syntactic tests, I have shown that the ‘it’ is an object expletive and that the ‘up’ is a distinct particle from other phonologically identical ‘up’ particles in the language. I have also shown that the construction is unergative, which further supports that the ‘it’ is non-referential. Lastly, based on Basilico’s (2008) structure for particle verbs, I have suggested a potential position where the object expletive may originate, seen in (120).

(120)



Regarding the sociolinguistic reality of the construction, I have found that age, as a social factor, is influential in its usage. Younger speakers, aged 18 to 35, seem to be more likely to use the construction than older speakers, aged 36 and above. I also found that other social factors such as gender and social media usage do not have significant bearing on the construction's usage. Other social factors not addressed by this study could further influence 'X it up.'

Because this study only focused on age, gender, and social media usage as sociolinguistic factors and because there were not enough participants from different regions of North America or other English speaking regions of the world, future research should also investigate region as a factor in the usage of the construction. Likewise, social class and any other social variables should also be examined to determine the full sociolinguistic reality of the verb.

Additional research might also address those speakers under the age of 18 to see what, if any, variation might exist in those age groups. Research in this area could determine whether the 'X it up' construction, as either a grammatical or stylistic linguistic variable, is ephemeral or enduring. This could also reveal if children and adolescents use the construction less or more so than those in the 18-35 age range.

Lastly, an overall more or predominately qualitative approach could further illustrate the sociolinguistic parameters of the 'X it up' construction. While this study has suggested that age is an influential factor in its usage and that other factors such as gender and social media usage are seemingly not influential, there are many more factors that could be explored. Is there further variation among different social groups and speech communities within the youth demographic? Are there certain stigmas or attitudes

associated with a construction like this? If so, this could account for those younger subjects who gave the construction relatively low natural ratings and perceived likelihood of usage scores. Approaching this topic qualitatively would certainly reveal many more fascinating qualities of the 'X it up' construction.

Future research on the construction should also focus on the semantics of the verb. Thus far, I have only briefly touched on the scalar nature of the construction's interpretation, and a more in depth semantic analysis is needed to fully explain the verb's meaning. Because the verb is extremely context sensitive, a formal semantic explanation of the meaning is necessary to explain this aspect. How do speakers create meaning from something that can be quite ambiguous on its own? This must be addressed.

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# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX: SAMPLE SURVEY

Please answer the following questions:

1. Age _____
2. Gender: Male / Female
3. Country and State of Origin: _____
4. Do you use Facebook? If no, skip Questions 6 and 7: Yes / No
5. How often do you check it (per hour, day, or week)?: _____
6. How long are you on it each time you check?: _____
7. Do you use Twitter? If no, skip Questions 9 and 10: Yes / No
8. How often do you check it (per hour, day, week)?: _____
9. How long are you on it each time you check?: _____
10. What other social media websites do you use?: _____

_____

Answer the following questions in response to their corresponding scenarios.

**Scenario A:** Two friends are walking together. One of them is wearing a nice, colorful scarf, and the other says to them, "scarfin' it up today, I see."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

| Not natural at all | | | | | Extremely natural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

| Strongly disagree | | | | | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario B:** A person is telling their friend what they did during their vacation. The person says, "I went to the mountains and saw a lot of birds and other animals."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

| Not natural at all | | | | | Extremely natural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

Strongly disagree =1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree =6

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario C:** A group of people went to a popular, local restaurant called Jones's. The next day, one of them was discussing the night with a friend who also frequents the restaurant. The person says, "we Jones'sed it up last night."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

Not natural at all =1 2 3 4 5 Extremely natural =6

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

Strongly disagree =1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree =6

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario D:** A person bought a new car and is describing it to someone else. The person exclaims, "It's brand new! And it's got great gas mileage."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

| Not natural at all | | | | | Extremely natural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

| Strongly disagree | | | | | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario E:** A person asks their friend, who enjoys shopping at Wal-mart, what they're going to do the following day, to which the person replies, "Oh, I'm just gonna Wal-mart it up."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

| Not natural at all | | | | | Extremely natural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

| Strongly disagree | | | | | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15-20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | 30-35 | 35-40 |
| 40-45 | 45-50 | 50-above | | |

**Scenario F:** A group of friends go out to see a movie, and one of them says, "There's a great horror movie out right now."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

| Not natural at all | | | | | Extremely natural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

| Strongly disagree | | | | | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15-20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | 30-35 | 35-40 |
| 40-45 | 45-50 | 50-above | | |

**Scenario G:** A person runs into a friend whom they haven't seen in a while and recounts the reunion to another person. The person says, "I chatted it up with my good friend yesterday."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

Not natural at all Extremely natural
=1 2 3 4 5 =6

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

Strongly disagree Strongly agree
=1 2 3 4 5 =6

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario H:** Some people went to a soccer game and were talking about it the next day. One of them says, "I can't believe the ref didn't call that foul!"

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

Not natural at all Extremely natural
=1 2 3 4 5 =6

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

Strongly disagree Strongly agree
=1 2 3 4 5 =6

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one.

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario I:** Two friends who haven't hung out for some time are discussing making plans. One of them says, "let's coffee it up sometime."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

Not natural at all Extremely natural
=1 2 3 4 5 =6

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

Strongly disagree Strongly agree
=1 2 3 4 5 =6

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one.

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario J:** A person is talking with a cashier at a retail store about the price of an item. The person says, "This thing's overpriced."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

| Not natural at all | | | | | Extremely natural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

| Strongly disagree | | | | | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

15-20 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40

40-45 45-50 50-above

**Scenario K:** A person is telling their friend about what a good time they had at a comedy show the previous night. The person says, "<u>we laughed it up</u> all night long."

1. On a scale of 1 – 6, how natural does the underlined part of the dialogue sound? 1= not natural at all, 6 = extremely natural. Circle one:

| Not natural at all | | | | | Extremely natural |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

2. For the underlined part, do you recognize this type of phrase? Yes / No

3. On a scale of 1 – 6, would you say that you use this type of phrase in daily, casual conversation? 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree. Circle one:

| Strongly disagree | | | | | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

4. What do you think the age range is for the person who says the underlined part? You can choose more than one:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15-20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | 30-35 | 35-40 |
| 40-45 | 45-50 | 50-above | | |

On a scale of 1 – 6, how likely is it that the following people would use this "something it up" type of phrase? 1 = not likely at all, 6 = extremely likely. Circle one:

**1.** A middle aged woman:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**2.** An elderly man:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**3.** A teenage girl:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**4.** An elderly woman:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**5.** A teacher:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**6.** A classmate:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**7.** A girl in her twenties:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**8.** A 20-year old dad with a new baby:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**9.** A middle aged man:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**10.** A dad with teenage kids:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**11.** A guy in his twenties:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**12.** A teenage boy:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**13.** The President:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**14.** A doctor:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**15.** A 20-year old mom with a new baby:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

**16.** A mom with teenage kids:

| Not likely at all | | | | | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | =6 |

Do you have any additional comments about this ‘something it up’ phrase?: