The interaction of age and interview context in sociolinguistic fieldwork

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This paper will draw upon a study of Springville, Texas in which data were collected from a wide range of ages in the community (trend), and from a subset of individuals who were recorded repeatedly (panel). I will show that patterns in the trend data with respect to style shifting can help in the analysis of style in the panel data. Style shifting is more complex than has been described previously, and all the more so when comparisons are made across multiple recording time points. Age intersects strongly with style: in Springville, Texas, younger informants tend to show more style shifting, while older informants appear to be more secure in their identities and less concerned with style. Building an awareness of this intersections into analyses of panel data may be crucial for answering the big question of whether style shifting has linguistic consequences over the lifespan.