

Labov's Research

The Social Stratification of (r) in NYC
Department Stores

Introduction

- William Labov
- 1966
- Hypothesis: “If any two subgroups in New York City speakers are ranked in a scale of social stratification, then they will be marked in the same order by their differential use of (r).”



Method

- 3 Manhattan Stores:
 - Saks
 - Macy's
 - S. Klein
- Asking for items that can be found on the 4th floor

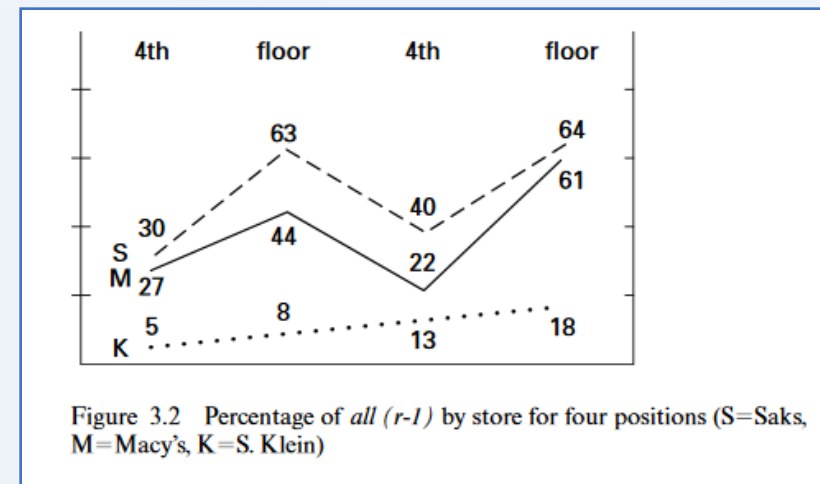
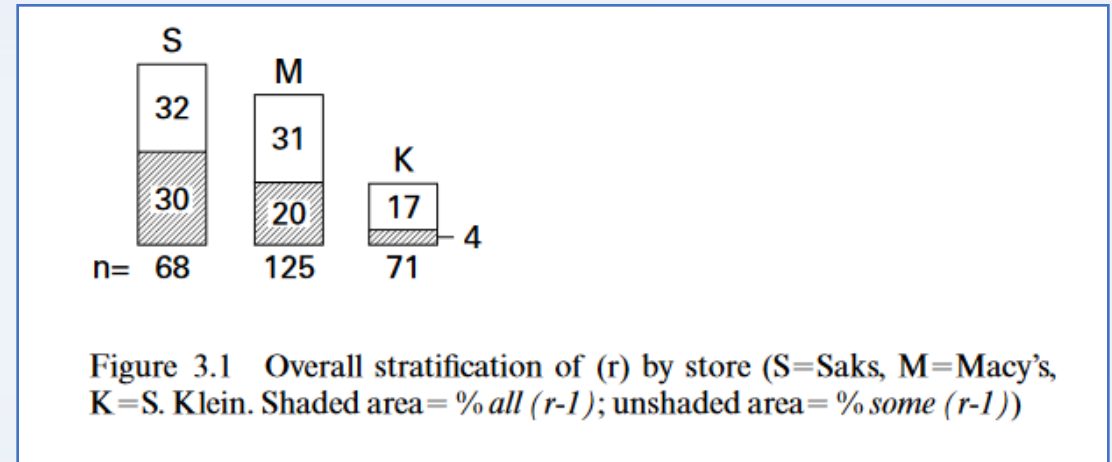


Variables

- independent
 - e. g. age, race, occupation, accent, floor
- dependent
 - natural and emphatic pronunciation of (r)

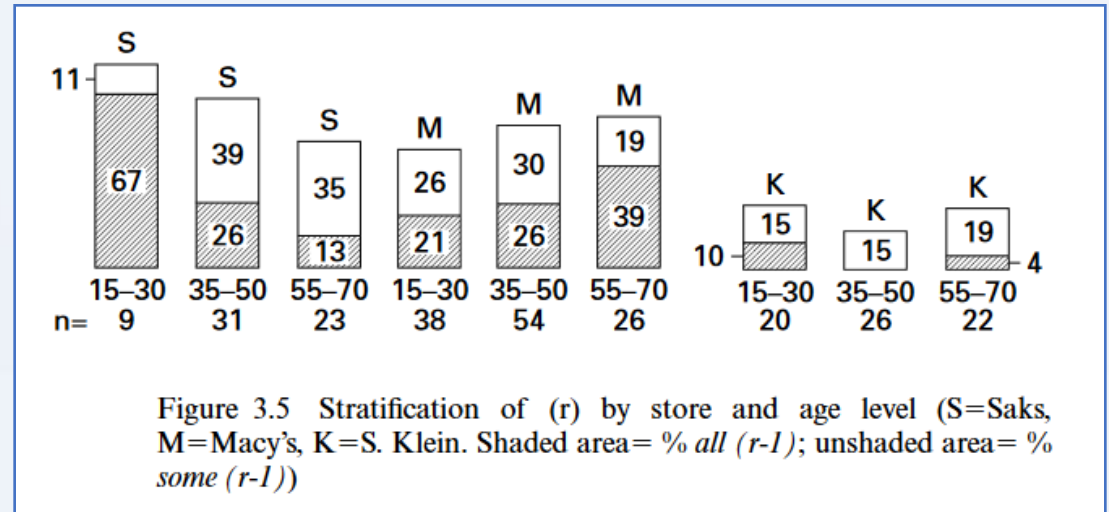
Results

- Labov's hypothesis verified
 - People with higher socioeconomic status pronounced (r) more frequently
- Increase in (r) pronunciation when speaking with emphasis



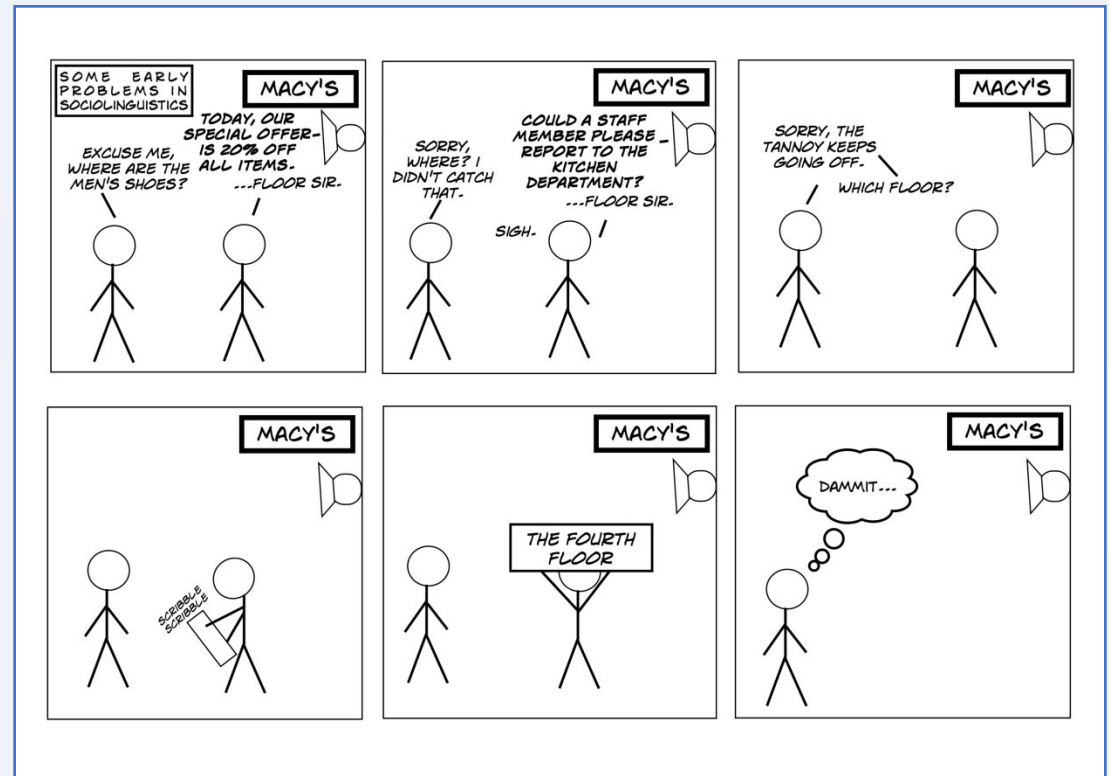
Impact of Independent Variables

- Race
 - African Americans
 - S. Klein > Macy's > Saks
- Age
 - Expected result only at Saks



Possible Sources of Error

- Selecting sample
- Not tape recorded
- Emphatic speech



Sources:

Labov, W. “The Social Stratification of (r) in NYC Department Stores”

Pictures:

<https://www.altalang.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/william-labov.jpg>

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macys dep store.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macys_dep_store.JPG)

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SaksFifthAvenue.JPG>

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:S. Klein Union Square Manhattan.jpg>

Labov, W. “The Social Stratification of (r) in NYC Department Stores”

<https://thesociallinguist.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/labov1.jpg>

Thank You for Your Attention