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edited by Janet Holmes

**Department of Linguistics
Victoria University of Wellington
P.O. Box 600
Wellington
New Zealand**

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Talk and laughter in New Zealand
women's and men's speech

Anita Easton

Abstract

This study examines a number of discourse features in the casual conversation of a group of eight young New Zealand friends. The participants were well educated Pakehas aged between 20 and 25 years old, talking in single gender and mixed gender groups. As in previous research, it was found that men talked more than women, and they tended to initiate more overlaps than women. This study also examined laughter as a feature of relaxed conversation and it was found that the women laughed considerably more than the men. An explanation is proposed in terms of the function of laughter in women's linguistic repertoires.

Introduction

Although the debate about the reasons for gender differences in language has been very vigorous over the past few decades, the precise nature and extent of those differences is still a matter for research. Many folk linguistic theories about gender differences in speech behaviour have been challenged and refuted (eg women just can't stop talking, women don't finish their sentences), and new generalisations have been discovered. In recent research, for example, it has been found that men normally talk more than women in mixed groups, men tend to interrupt women more than women interrupt men, and that women use more strategies which facilitate successful communication than men (eg Coates 1986, Holmes 1990, Thorne, Kramarae and Henley 1983). The identification of these differences inevitably adds fuel to the controversy over the reasons for such differences.

I was interested in exploring the possibility that these patterns might be changing as women increasingly begin to infiltrate areas formerly dominated by men. This study therefore focusses on the amount of talk and overlap patterns occurring in the interactions of a group of young, well educated Pakehas, since I felt that it was

in this group that any changes from stereotypical patterns were most likely to emerge. I also explored differences in the use of laughter by women and men, a paralinguistic variable which has been little studied to date.

Coates (1986: 103) and Kramarae et al. (1983: 279-281) both cite studies which concluded that men produce a greater amount of talk than women in situations ranging from staff meetings (Eakins and Eakins 1978, Edelsky 1981) to married couples in informal conversation (Soskin and John 1963). From these mainly American studies of middle class women and men, it seemed likely that this pattern could be expected in the New Zealand data too. I hypothesised therefore that

- in mixed-gender conversational contexts young middle class New Zealand men would speak for a larger total number of words than young middle class New Zealand women;
- in mixed-gender conversational contexts young middle class New Zealand men would take a greater number of turns of talk than young middle class New Zealand women;
- in mixed-gender conversational contexts young middle class New Zealand men would take, on average, longer turns than young middle class New Zealand.

Many studies have been conducted on the subject of overlap and interruption (eg Zimmerman and West 1975, West and Zimmerman 1983, Hyndman 1985, and see Stubbe 1991 for a very thorough overview). Most have found that men tend to interrupt women more than women interrupt men. There are also studies (eg Fishman 1983, Hyndman 1985) showing that men have more successful outcomes to overlaps/interruptions than women. That is, having interrupted, they are more likely to either be able to continue their own turn or to force a turn change in their own favour. Once again, the vast majority of this data has been based on interactions between middle class participants. I have therefore hypothesised that, in conversational contexts,

- young middle class New Zealand men would initiate a larger number of overlaps/interruptions than young middle class New Zealand women;
- young middle class New Zealand men would have a higher percentage of "successful outcomes" to overlap/interruption than women.

Very little work has been done on the distribution of laughter in women's and men's discourse. Ervin-Tripp and Lampert (1992) examine the construction of

humorous talk, and they note gender differences in both the distribution and type of humour used by women and men, and in the ways that humour was managed. It has been noted that women "in single gender groups self-direct humour significantly more than men in single-gender groups" (Ervin-Tripp and Lampert 1992: 108). Women tend to use more self-deprecatory humour, and to collaborate with others in building up a humorous effect. Men tended to initiate a humorous key rather than build on the remarks of others; their humour took the form of flip wisecracks more often than that of women, and male humour frequently had a "performance quality" about it. As in previous studies of discourse features (eg Mulac, Wiemann, Widenmann and Gibson 1988, Limbrick 1991), in mixed groups women and men accommodated to each other to some extent.

The facilitative role of women's humour, increasing "empathy and camaraderie" (Ervin-Tripp and Lampert 1992: 115), is consistent with other aspects of women's interactive behaviour such as their tendency to use more minimal feedback than men (eg Fishman 1983, Hyndman 1985). It seemed to me that laughter could be regarded as yet another facilitative feedback device. It provides encouragement and support to the speaker in ways similar to the use of minimal responses. Previous research suggested that women's laughter was more likely to be "other-oriented" than men's. I therefore hypothesised that in conversational contexts

- young middle class New Zealand women would laugh more than men;
- young middle class New Zealand women would have a lower percentage of in-turn laughter than men
- women and men would accommodate to each other's norms in mixed-gender groups.

Methodology

I decided to record and analyse the interactions of both women and men in mixed and single gender groups in an informal conversational context. I chose to use groups of four as it would allow me to balance the number of males and females in each group. This size also provided a group that was not too large to transcribe accurately.

I used four males and four females as informants, and planned the study so that the same people would participate in both the single and mixed gender groups. Each participant was assigned to two groups, one single gender, one mixed gender. Mixed gender groups consisted of two participants of each gender. In order to control additional potentially relevant variables such as degree of solidarity or social distance, I did not include 'couples' in the same group; nor did I assign people to the same group if they not know each other well.

Setting

The setting was selected to be as natural as possible in order to encourage informal conversation. I decided that the most natural way that I could get together a pre-determined group of four people in a quiet space to talk to each other for an extended period of time would be to organise a dinner party. The only other types of organised time spent in groups seems to be time spent doing something - watching a video, playing a game or going to a movie for example. This was not likely to be easy to record and would not necessarily provide enough talk. As a result of these considerations I decided to organise four dinner parties at my own home in order to collect the data. This gave me control over the amount of background noise and the recording equipment, as well as the participants.

Participants

To encourage informal conversation I used people who belonged to a strong network cluster, of which I was a member. I could only be a member of two of the four groups of four, so I included my de facto husband among the participants since he had agreed to record the male group and the "other" mixed gender group from the one in which I participated. This was ideal since he, like me, would be acting as host, and he would not be in either of the same groups as me.

The eight participants had known each other for some time, came from similar social backgrounds and socialised together regularly. All eight were between the ages of twenty and twenty five and they were all university students. Six were born in New Zealand, while the remaining two moved from England during childhood. They have overlapping social networks: in various combinations they socialise together regularly and often attend parties together. There are currently three couples in this group and another couple existed a few years ago. However, the longer-term inter-relationships within the group are more

complex. For example, to understand the significance of one piece of dialogue, it is necessary to know that one participant is the girlfriend of the ex-boyfriend of the ex-girlfriend of one of the participants, who is in turn the boyfriend of another participant. This type of "in-group" relationships and knowledge serves to bind this group together.

The choice of eight people forming a network cluster was a very effective way of ensuring that the situation was as relaxed as possible. The topics of conversation flowed quite naturally over a range of subjects which all participants had in common.

The Recording

Having obtained permission from these people to use them in the study, I had to organise four dinners. This presented considerable logistical problems, but was finally achieved. Due to a number of unforeseen disasters (illnesses, assignments due, people leaving town) the final recordings were spread over a period of six weeks.

The participants were all aware that they were being recorded. They were told their anonymity would be protected in the transcription process¹, and that they could withdraw permission after the recording if they wished to do so. (Fortunately, none did.) The recordings were made on a Sony WM-D6C Stereo Cassette-Corder with a Sony ECM 144 lapel microphone.

While the recorder was not in the centre of the room, it was in sight of all participants at most times. They were only out of sight of the recorder when they were either out of the room or in the kitchen. All the transcripts used in the study are taken from times all four participants were in the living room area. Every half hour the tape was turned over, which temporarily raised the level of awareness of the tape recorder. However, in general, the awareness of the tape recorder was surprisingly low.

¹ I would like to thank my friends for generously giving their time to assist with this research. All proper names and other identifiable words denoting people other than public figures have been changed in the transcript. The transcripts and recordings may not be used by others without my explicit permission.

The Samples

At the end of the four sessions I had collected between 1.75 and 2.25 hours of interaction from each group. To increase the likelihood of obtaining spontaneous, relaxed speech I selected sections for transcription and analysis, from the last full side of recording, omitting just the first five minutes to avoid the period of recording awareness after the tape was turned over. Within this restriction, I selected the first usable 1700 words from each session. The final samples therefore consist of the first 1700 words occurring after the fifth minute of the last full side of tape recording, during which all participants were in the room and no participants were eating.

Transcription

With minor modifications, the samples were transcribed in accordance with the transcription conventions of the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English (see Appendix). The main relevant modification involved a different convention for signalling laughter.

In the conventions for the Corpus not all laughter is included in the transcript. Laughter which overlaps speech is generally not transcribed. Simultaneous laughter is transcribed as [laughter], rather than assigning the laughter to specific speakers. To allow an analysis of laughter, I transcribed all laughter in the samples. Laughter which overlapped speech was transcribed in the same fashion as overlapping speech.

FF lines 48-51

F4: well I wasn't cross or anything I was just
really weirded // out I mean \ 'cause what =
F1: / [laughs] \ \

F4: = happened was I'd + went up to my lecture to

Laughter by more than one speaker overlapping speech was transcribed as overlapping speech, but assigned to laughers, as illustrated here.

FF lines 67-74

F4: sort of you know don't admit you know me again so I
sort of wandered past [laughs]: it was: really weird and
I have NO idea WHAT he was doing with this woman

+ that would consist of him being really worried about
me going hi Pete // you know \ =/

F1,F2: / [laugh] \ \

F3: /= he's probably trying to get

Laughter by more than one speaker not overlapping speech was transcribed simply as [laughter], but with the laughers identified within the brackets, as in the following example.

FF lines 124-126

F1: maybe she's got a gun to my back please help
get the police

[F4, F3, F2, F1 laugh]

Analysis**Number of Words**

For the purposes of this study, 'word' refers to a standard orthographic word; contractions (eg can't, I'm) and onomatopoeic representations are treated as words (eg [deflating noise], *pow*). The transcripts were analyzed to provide a total number of words for each speaker in each group.

Number of Turns

The number of turns was slightly harder to count. The main problem was to decide whether minimal feedback should be regarded as interrupting a turn, splitting one turn into two, or whether it should be ignored for the purpose of defining a turn.

The definition of a turn, while seeming intuitively obvious to speakers, has generated a great deal of discussion among linguists. Since Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) first defined turns using a framework including turn-constructional units and transition relevance places, their model has been the basis of most work on turn construction and turn-taking. The framework consists of turn-constructional units, ended by transition relevance places (TRPs), where speaker change can be accomplished smoothly. Turns consist of one or

more turn-constructive units that are contiguous although they may be separated by silence. The main problem with using this model for the kind of data in my study is that interruptions and overlaps do not fit easily within this framework.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's model copes comfortably with overlap at a change of speakers, where the two turns can be seen to overlap at the TRP of the first speaker's final turn-constructive unit. It also models interruption reasonably well, in that interruption can be seen as a contravention of the rules; the interrupting speaker has broken a rule which gives the speaker holding the floor the "right" to continue to the end of the turn-constructive unit. Where it encounters far greater difficulties is in dealing with minimal feedback, which is not intended as an attempt to start a new turn, but rather is seen by both parties as a short turn which is intended to support the floor holder's turn rather than an attempt to end that turn.

A speaker's discourse may continue over a turn of minimal feedback whether or not they continue actually talking over it or not. On the other hand, a speaker may pause during a turn for a far longer period than a single piece of minimal feedback may take. These two difficulties make a definition of a turn of talk very problematic. I used the following definition.

A turn: of talk constitutes any continuous period of speech that has no silences filled by another speaker.

As it happened, I did not need to make any judgements about the discontinuity of a speaker's utterance in the sections selected for analysis.

Overlap and Interruption

Zimmerman and West's studies of overlap and interruption in cross-gender communication (Zimmerman and West 1975, West and Zimmerman 1983) are probably the best known studies on this topic. They define overlap as

...(1) events occurring in the immediate vicinity of possible turn-transition places; and (2) those brief utterances (eg "yeah", "right") or longer incursions (eg "saying the same thing at the same time") which have some facilitative warrant (West and Zimmerman 1983: 105).

Interruptions are defined as a "... deeper intrusion into the internal structure of a speaker's utterance ..." (Zimmerman and West 1975: 523). They further state that an interruption must "... have the potential to disrupt a speaker's turn..." (West and Zimmerman 1983: 104).

These distinctions are dependant on the ability of the analyst to decide what the speakers were trying to do. An overlap immediately before a transition relevance point may be just as disruptive as overlap in the middle of a speaker's turn. Even minimal feedback may disrupt a speaker's train of thought.

To simplify analysis and to reduce the problems of the analyst second guessing the speakers' intentions, I treated simultaneous speech as involving different types of overlap, defined as:

Overlap: any simultaneous speech by two or more speakers. (This does not include laughter.)

I noted instances of accidental overlap vs deliberate overlap:

Accidental overlap: overlap that occurs when, after a silence, two speakers simultaneously start their turns.

Deliberate overlap: overlap is initiated by a speaker who starts a turn by overlapping another speaker's established turn.

I also distinguished between successful and unsuccessful overlaps:

Successful overlap: overlap is successful for the speaker whose turn continues after the period of overlap, whether or not they initiated overlap.

FF lines 79-80

F3: that we // know \

Example A

F4: / you'd \ \ know + it's you he hangs

FF lines 18-19

F2: maybe he told her // that \ you're an =

Example B

F4: / that \ \

Both example A and example B are examples of overlap. The overlap is initiated by F4 in both examples. Overlap is successful for F4, in A, and F2 in B.

Example B is an example of a situation that West and Zimmerman's analysis cannot easily handle. Without knowing the speaker's intentions, it is not clear whether F4 was "saying the same thing at the same time", or was attempting to start a new turn herself.

While these definitions have some weaknesses, they also have some considerable advantages. Returning to the definition of overlap used by Sacks et al. (1974) enables the analyst to calculate the total amount of simultaneous speech involving each speaker. Identification of *deliberate overlaps* permits analysis of who initiated the overlap. The concept of *successful overlap* facilitates identification of those speakers who gain or continue their turns through overlaps.

Laughter

The transcription conventions recognize two main types of laughter. The first is when a speaker laughs through an utterance.

FMB lines 1-2

M1: yeah I've done enough to know that I probably
should [laughs]: shut up:

The second is when a speaker just laughs without speaking at the same time.

FMB line 72

F4: [laughs] yeah

The transcripts include many combinations of the two; a speaker may laugh then carry on speaking while laughing, laugh then carry on without laughing, and so on. For the purpose of analysis the two types were not distinguished, partly because the distinction was often difficult to make and partly because there was no evidence that they functioned differently.

The next issue was how to count instances of laughter. I defined a single occurrence of laughter as one where the speaker laughed without audible pause. Where laughter occurred more than once in a turn but was separated by periods of either silence or non-laughing speech, the instances were counted as more than one occurrence. There are two instances of laughter in the following example.

FMB lines 202-203

M1: /= okay + [laughs]: okay: um and what do [laughs]: you want:

Three formally distinct types of laughter were identified: laughter in turn, overlapping laughter and non-overlapping laughter. These are defined as follows:

Laughter in turn: laughter which occurs within a speaker's turn, either surrounded by speech or at the beginning or end of the turn. Turn-initial or final laughter in turn may overlap other participants' laughter.

Overlapping laughter: laughter which constitutes a speaker's entire turn and which overlaps the words of another speaker.

Non-overlapping laughter: laughter which constitutes a speaker's entire turn, which does not overlap the words of any other speaker. The laughter may overlap the laughter of another speaker.

Laughter within a speaker's own turn is generally a response to something humorous in the speaker's own utterance, a self-appreciative response. In-turn laughter is therefore usually self-oriented in its focus. Ervin-Tripp and Lampert (1992) discuss self-deprecating laughter, which would usually be coded here as laughter in turn. Self-deprecating laughter, while self-oriented, can be seen as conveying negative feelings about the self, where other forms of laughter in turn tend to express positive feelings towards the self.

Overlapping and non-overlapping laughter more often express amusement at another's utterances, or at something humorous in a situation. Hence, overlapping and non-overlapping laughter are more likely to represent positive feedback towards another speaker's humorous utterance.

All occurrences of laughter were coded according to speaker, laughter type and group eg single-gender female etc.

Results and discussion

Number of Words

I hypothesised that

- in mixed-gender conversational contexts young middle class New Zealand men would speak for a larger total number of words than young middle class New Zealand women;

Table 1 shows that the hypothesis is confirmed. Despite a wide range of individual variation in the speech of both genders, overall men spoke more than women. So the familiar pattern noted by many earlier researchers recurs in this sample of young New Zealanders. In the mixed groups men produced 70% of the words while women produced only 30%.

Table 1
Amount of talk by speaker, gender and group composition.

	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Single Gender Group	126 7%	505 30%	271 16%	797 47%	881 52%	292 17%	292 17%	235 14%
Mixed Group	224 13%	153 9%	231 14%	420 25%	729 43%	324 19%	1076 63%	251 15%
Total	350 10%	658 19%	502 15%	1217 26%	1610 47%	616 18%	1368 40%	486 14%
Total Mixed groups	1028 30%				2380 70%			
Note: across rows % sum to 200% as there are two groups of each type. Percentages indicate percentage in the group. F1 = female 1 etc M1 = male 1 etc								

On analysing this data I was very surprised, as were other participants, that the gap between female and male contributions was so great. While most participants thought that men had spoken more than women, they guessed that the ratio would be closer to 40:60. This over-estimation of women's share of the talk has also been reported in other studies (see, for example, Spender 1982, Edelsky 1981, Graddol and Swann 1989) It is reinforced by the fact that I was told that F4 spoke "a lot" in her group, by other participants. In fact, she produced only one quarter of the talk. That a women taking "her fair share" of the talk was

perceived as talking "a lot" illustrates clearly that a double standard is operating and, as Spender (1980) has noted, the norms for men and women are different.

Number of Turns

I hypothesised that

- in mixed-gender conversational contexts young middle class New Zealand men would take a greater number of turns of talk than young middle class New Zealand women;

The fact that men produced a great many more words than women does not in itself entail that men took more turns of talk. They could have produced many words in few turns. Moreover, the fact that women tend to produce more single words, and minimal feedback than men suggests that men may produce more longer turns than women. In fact, as table 2 demonstrates, the hypothesis is confirmed. Men not only produced more words than women, they also took more turns of talk. However, the contrast is not as great as the difference in the number of words produced by women and men.

Table 2
Number of turns by speaker, gender and group composition

	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Single Gender Groups	17 17%	25 24%	22 21%	39 38%	42 33%	32 25%	27 21%	26 20%
Mixed Groups	28 27%	22 22%	21 18%	30 25%	40 34%	27 22%	29 28%	23 23%
Total	45 22%	47 23%	43 19%	69 31%	82 33%	59 24%	56 24%	49 21%
Total - Mixed Group	101 46%				119 54%			
Note: across rows % may sum to 200% as there are two groups of each type. Percentages show percentage in the group.								

Length of turn

I hypothesised that

- in mixed-gender conversational contexts young middle class New Zealand men would take, on average, longer turns than young middle class New Zealand.

Table 3 demonstrates that this hypothesis was also confirmed. On average, the men's turns were longer than the women's. The difference in turn length is not great, but it is statistically significant.

Table 3
Average number of words per turn
by speaker, gender and group composition

	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Single Gender Groups	7.4	20.2	12.3	20	21	9.1	11	9
Mixed Gender Groups	8	6.9	11	14	18	12	37	11
Total	7.8	14	11.7	17.6	19.6	10.4	24	9.9
Total	13.4				15.6			

Why do men dominate the talking time? It may simply be considered socially acceptable in mixed gender contexts for men to take considerably longer turns than women, to take the floor for longer periods of time, and to produce long monologues. Women may be contributing to this pattern by producing more short, minimal feedback turns than men. Alternatively, women may be having their turns cut short by male interruption. This possibility is considered in the next section.

Overlap

I hypothesised that

- young middle class New Zealand men would initiate a larger number of overlaps/interruptions than young middle class New Zealand women;

The second hypothesis, that men will initiate more deliberate overlaps than women, is confirmed by the data. Table 4 shows that not only do men initiate more overlaps than women, but that the majority (54%) of the turns at talking gained by deliberate overlap were initiated by men. If, as suggested above, women produce more minimal feedback overlaps than men, then the high number of male-initiated deliberate overlaps suggests that men are interrupting others considerably more frequently than women are.

Table 4
Number of instances of deliberate overlap initiated by speaker
according to gender

	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Single Gender Groups	5 55%	4 29%	5 55%	11 61%	17 63%	3 23%	9 60%	4 31%
Mixed Gender Groups	3 25%	7 70%	8 88%	3 20%	16 67%	5 31%	6 60%	3 50%
Total	8 38%	11 46%	13 72%	14 42%	33 65%	8 28%	15 60%	7 21%
Total Mixed Gender	21 46%				30 54%			

I further hypothesised that

- young middle class New Zealand men would have a higher percentage of "successful outcomes" to overlap/interruption than women.

This hypothesis is also supported by the data, as table 5 demonstrates. Men are successful in 57% of the overlaps in which they participate, while women are successful in only 41%. This result must be interpreted carefully in the light of the fact that in those rare cases where minimal feedback overlaps non-accidentally with another speaker's contribution, it has been classified as "unsuccessful overlap" Bearing this in mind, overall it appears that women are "losing" their turns to men more often than vice versa.

Table 5
Number of instances of successful deliberate overlap
for each speaker according to gender

	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Single Gender Group	5 55%	10 71%	6 67%	4 22%	19 70%	2 13%	5 33%	7 54%
Mixed Group	3 25%	5 50%	7 77%	4 27%	14 58%	7 44%	8 80%	3 50%
Total	8 38%	15 63%	13 72%	8 24%	33 65%	9 31%	13 52%	10 53%
Total Mixed Gender	19 41%				32 57%			

Laughter

I hypothesised that

- young middle class New Zealand women would laugh more than men;
- young middle class New Zealand women would have a lower percentage of in-turn laughter than men
- women and men would accommodate to each other's norms in mixed-gender groups.

These hypotheses were based on the belief that women use laughter as a positive associative device. As Ervin-Tripp and Lampert (1992) suggest, laughter has a number of functions in discourse. In this sample its main function is as a supportive device, a form of positive feedback. In the example below, for instance, F1 and F2 are laughing to show appreciation of the story F4 is telling. They are also supporting F4's laughter at the story.

FF lines 212-217

F4: yeah and Elwyn e- every time we wander up to each other Elwyn's there as well () Jill Bill Jill Jill Jill Jill Bill Bill Bill [laughs] [laughs]: in this very mutant voice and it's quite funny:

[F1, F4, F2 laugh]

The first hypothesis is clearly born out by the data, as can be seen in Table 6. Women laugh considerably more than men in both mixed and single gender groups.

Table 6
Amount of laughter for each speaker by gender

	F1	F2	F3	F4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Single Gender Groups	21	23	17	17	7	1	5	2
Mixed Groups	14	7	12	9	8	0	5	1
Total	35	30	29	26	15	1	10	3
Total by gender Mixed groups	42 75%				14 25%			
Total by gender All groups	120 81%				29 19%			

The difference between women and men is very large, considerably greater than the difference in total amount of talk. The difference is statistically significant at a 95% confidence level, not only in the single gender groups where the difference is greatest ($p = 0.0002$), but also in the mixed gender groups ($p = 0.0274$).

As the data for individuals shows, only one man *ever* laughs more than a women, and that is in a mixed gender group. The individual involved is M1, the person who speaks most in his mixed gender group; he laughs more than F2, the person who speaks least in her mixed gender group. It is also important to realise that M1 and F2 were not in the same mixed group. F2, in fact, laughs more than any male in her group, while M1 laughs less than any female in his.

The clear difference between the amounts of laughter for the two groups suggests that either there is a difference in the social significance or functions of laughter

for women compared to men, or that the different social roles of women and men give rise to differences in the functions of laughter for each gender.

The second hypothesis involving laughter suggested that the women would have a lower percentage of in-turn laughter than the men. Laughter within one's own turn is normally a response to humour in the speaker's own utterance, a self-appreciative response, whereas overlapping and non-overlapping laughter generally express amusement at other's utterances, or at a situation. Hence, overlapping and non-overlapping laughter are more likely to represent positive feedback for another's humour. This other-oriented role of laughter is clearly facilitative or associative. It seemed likely, then, in the light of previous research on female and male interaction that women would use more of the latter "other-oriented" type of laughter, while men would be more likely than women to use self-directed within-turn laughter.

Table 7 shows the percentage breakdown of each gender's total laughter by type. It is very clear from this that the hypothesis is confirmed: men have a much higher percentage (62%) of in-turn laughter than women (29%). Conversely this indicates that women are using a higher percentage of laughter supporting other speakers than men are.

Table 7
Amount of laughter by gender and type

	Women	Men
Laughter in Turn	35 29%	18 62%
Overlapping laughter	21 18%	0 0%
Non-overlapping laughter	64 53%	11 38%
Total	120	29

The third hypothesis, that women will laugh less in mixed groups than single gender ones, while men will laugh more in mixed groups than single gender ones derives from accommodation theory. The theory predicts that each gender

will move towards the norm of the other when in contact with members of the other gender.

If both groups accommodated fully, we would expect the average amount of laughter in the mixed groups to equal the average amount in the two single gender groups. If they accommodated only partially, but to the same extent, we would expect the two groups' total amounts of laughter to fall equally distant from the amount in their single sex group, that is to have moved an equal distance towards the average amount in the single sex groups.

As Table 8 shows, this is not what occurs. Whereas the average of the two single gender groups is 46.5 occurrences of laughter $((78+15)/2)$, the average amount for the mixed gender groups is only 28; this demonstrates that full and equal accommodation has not occurred.

Table 8
Amount of laughter by group composition and type

	Female group	Average for Mixed Groups	Male Group
Laughter in turn	19 24%	12 43%	10 67%
Overlapping laughter	16 21%	2.5 9%	0 0%
Non-Overlapping laughter	43 55%	13.5 48%	5 33%
Total	78	28	15

Table 9 reveals that the amount of laughter for the two sexes has not moved equally towards the total mean. While the women have substantially decreased their amount of laughter in moving towards the average, the men have barely moved at all. This decrease in women's laughter is statistically significant ($p=0.0337$ in a paired t-test). One can summarise this by saying that any accommodation has not been shared equally between the sexes; while women laugh considerably less in mixed groups, men do not laugh more.

Table 9
Amount of laughter by gender and group composition

	Women	Men
Single Gender Groups	78 65%	15 52%
Mixed Gender Groups	42 35%	14 48%
Total	120	29

There are at least two possible reasons for this deviation from the predicted pattern. The first is that women but not men are accommodating to the other's patterns of laughter. This interpretation would be consistent with earlier research that shows that women tend to accommodate more than men (eg Mulac, Wiemann, Widenmann and Gibson 1988). It is, however, surprising that the men show such little evidence of accommodation. A second possibility is that the difference between the women's behaviour in single gender groups and mixed gender groups is not so much accommodation to male norms as a change in speech styles.

Jones' (1990) work on gossip does not discuss laughter or humour as possible features of female gossip. However, the other features she cites suggest that laughter might be appropriately included as a feature of at least some types of gossip. Laughter clearly serves as feedback indicating that a contribution is appreciated; it shows that the contribution is valued. However, this type of gossip may not be perceived as appropriate in mixed gender groups. A different style is required so that rather than accommodating to men's self-directed humour and relatively low level of laughter, women appear to switch to a different speech style. While they still laugh considerably more than men, they do so less than in single gender groups.

Conclusion

The data analysed in this study was collected from eight young New Zealand women and men in single gender and mixed gender conversational contexts. As in many overseas studies, the women's patterns of interaction were quite different from the men's in a number of ways.

Clear differences emerged in the amount of talk, number of turns and length of turns used by men compared to women. Overall, the men talked more, more often and for longer than women.

Overseas studies have generally found that men tend to interrupt women more than women interrupt men. Though it used different terminology, this New Zealand study confirmed this general pattern. Men initiated more deliberate overlaps than women. They were also more successful in gaining the floor as a result of deliberate overlaps than women were.

This study also looked at the amount of laughter produced by women and men in single gender and mixed gender groups, a feature which has been little studied in earlier research. It was clear that women laughed considerably more than men both in single gender groups and mixed gender groups. Moreover, the type of laughter produced by each gender differed. Women tended to produce more associative, supportive laughter responding to the contributions of others. Men, on the other hand, tended to produce more in-turn laughter, responding to their own contributions. In mixed gender groups, the pattern of women's laughter modified in the direction of male norms, as predicted by accommodation theory. However, male patterns of laughter modified to a much lesser extent in the different groups.

These results confirm the widespread observation that men tend to dominate mixed gender interactions, and confirm the robustness of this finding for New Zealand data and in informal interactions. They also provide further support for the claim that women tend to be more supportive and co-operative conversationalists than men. The evidence that women laugh more than men, especially in response to the contributions of others, is consistent with previous findings on ways in which women's interaction patterns express support for other conversationalists. The fact that women accommodate to male norms more than men do to female norms is equally consistent with these findings. This study therefore adds another feature to the list of cooperative characteristics which have been found to be typical of women's talk.

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APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Pauses

- + Short pause: ie up to one second.
- ++ One to two second pause.
- +++ Two to three second pause.
- (4) Four second pause: ie after three seconds indicate length by noting number of seconds in parentheses.

Stress

CRAZY Capitals to indicate emphatic stress

Simultaneous speech and contiguous utterances

- // Indicates start of simultaneous or overlapping speech in utterance of "current" or "first" speaker.
- \ Indicates end of simultaneous or overlapping speech in utterance of "current" or "first" speaker.
- / Indicates start of simultaneous or overlapping speech in utterance of "incoming" or "second" speaker.
- \ \ Indicates end of simultaneous or overlapping speech in utterance of "incoming" or "second" speaker.

eg: A: I'd like to come as well + //is\ that okay?

B: /yeah\ \

= Indicates continuous speech within section of simultaneous speech.

eg: S1 mm no + we can't + no ++ no u-m+ finally decide on=
 S2 m m
 S1 = the one + best + solution

=/

/=

Indicates latching: where second utterance immediately follows first with no discernible pause.

eg: A: do you know the time =/

B: /= six o'clock

Jocular abuse patterns in mixed-group interaction

Jennifer Hay

Abstract

This paper examines the distribution of patterns of jocular abuse in the interactions of a small group of New Zealand women and men. Examples of jocular abuse between members of a natural social group of three females and four males were transcribed and analysed. Solidarity, integration and gender all proved to be important variables in determining abuse patterns. There was a "bulge" effect, with abuse occurring most between friends, rather than between acquaintances or intimates. Jocular abuse offers all members a method to express group membership and solidarity, while marking and maintaining gender divisions. For the men, it provides a vehicle for competition and status negotiation, and an opportunity to express their power over women, by drawing attention to the women's sexuality.

Introduction

This paper examines jocular abuse in mixed-gender group interaction. Jocular abuse occurs in particular kinds of relationships which have been little explored in New Zealand society. In other cultures, such abuse occurs in what have been called "joking relationships" (Radcliffe-Brown 1952). A joking relationship is a relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some cases required to tease or make fun of the other, who in return is required to take no offence (1952: 90).

Radcliffe-Brown discusses two types of joking relationships: symmetrical, where the teasing goes both ways, and asymmetrical, where a person accepts the teasing with good humour but seldom, if ever, retaliates. He claims such relationships serve to prevent any serious hostilities. This teasing is a mix of friendliness and antagonism and has been observed in Africa, Asia, Oceania and North America.

Since Radcliffe-Brown, there have been numerous studies of joking relationships of various types. Labov (1972) describes a game played by Urban Black American young males. The game is a battle of wits and creativity, in which ritual insults are traded and participants are cheered on by their friends. Games involving ritual insult have also been described in Puerto Rico (Lauria 1964), and Italy (Vaillant 1959, as cited in Ayoub and Barnett 1961). All of these are largely or exclusively restricted to males.

Loudon (1970) describes several types of teasing among adults on Tristan da Cunha. Public teasing takes place among groups of men, usually of a similar age. Individuals are subjected to ridicule, often by close friends who have appropriate knowledge of the victim. Women are never subjected to this teasing the way men are, and seldom, if ever, take part in the teasing themselves. There is, however, often a polite sexual banter between men and women.

More recently, Koenraad Kuiper (1991) studied the terms of address between males in a rugby locker room. Sexual humiliation was used to create group solidarity. The loss of face of one of the members served to create and reinforce group solidarity. He points out that this data contradicts Brown and Levinson's claim that "it will in general be to the mutual interest of two MPs (model persons) to maintain each other's face" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 60), and calls this type of politeness phenomena "the dark side of politeness" (see also Austin 1990).

In her study of the different strategies men and women use when gossiping, Jane Pilkington (1992) talks of the "mateship culture". She discovered that, while women are supportive and cooperative in their gossip, men tend to be more aggressive and abusive. She concludes that males use abuse as a means of signalling solidarity. Coates (1986: 153) similarly points to the contrast between female and male behaviour. She points out that insults, along with shouting, name-calling and threats, are part of male aggressiveness, while women try to avoid such displays, finding them unpleasant and often interpreting them personally.

Donna Eder (1990), on the other hand, shows that such behaviour is not exclusive to males. Both playful and non-playful conflicts among 10-14 year old girls were the focus of her research. Ritual insulting occurred much more among girls of a working or lower-class background. The girls clearly viewed the

activity as competitive, but did not seem to use it to establish and maintain status differences, as males in several earlier studies seemed to do.

There are also a number of accounts of cross-gender teasing, but these relationships seem to be of a different nature. The teasing between men and women often has a distinctly sexual slant. Spradley and Mann (1975), for example, studied the joking between waitresses and barmen in "Brady's Bar". The banter consisted largely of ridicule and sexual insults, and was usually initiated by men. The focus was on parts of the female anatomy, and waitresses were frequently referred to as sexual objects.

Whitehead (1976) discusses a similar type of cross-gender teasing in a bar in Herefordshire. She notes that teasing between potential sexual partners is light-hearted, coy and suggestive, whereas teasing between people who were not potential partners bordered on obscene banter. Men talking together used insults, joking and obscenities to negotiate status. Their general standing relied on their joking ability, and their ability not to get into a victim situation. Here women were used as "joking currency"; the primary content of teasing was "the degree of control that a married man exerted over his wife's behaviour" (Whitehead 1976: 193). In a different context, Parkin (1979) discusses the use of abuse as greetings between friends in Giriama. Such joking often includes sexual obscenities and, when occurring between genders, frequently presupposes the possibility of marriage or is an attempted prelude to sexual liaison.

It can be seen that most of the data on ritual insults and jocular abuse is restricted to males. Joking between men and women seems to be rather different, and have a suggestive, sexual element. Only one study (Eder 1990) has shown females apparently insulting each other in the same way men do.

Aims and hypotheses

I was interested in exploring the use of jocular verbal abuse in a particular mixed gender context involving a group of New Zealand women and men. Those involved are friends who meet weekly as a role-playing group. Abuse is traded within the group on a regular basis, primarily as a source of humour. It is jocular in nature, and the recipient is not expected to take offence. Individuals are sometimes congratulated after delivering a particularly scathing or witty piece of abuse.

The term "abuse" here, is used to refer collectively to two particular types of face threatening act (FTA) as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987: 66):

- "(iii) (b) expressions of strong (negative) emotion toward H - e.g. hatred, anger, lust"
- "(i) (a) expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands; accusations, insults".

These definitions are unmitigatedly negative, and such behaviour would not normally be appropriate in a friendship group. The FTAs are acceptable in this group because they are jocular. There is a certain tension here. The participants must ensure that the abuse is perceived as jocular, delivering it in such a way that the recipient is unlikely to interpret it at face value.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 76) claim that there are three factors which determine the level of politeness a speaker (S) will use to an addressee (H):

- the relative power of H over S
- the social distance between S and H
- the ranking of the imposition involved in doing the face threatening act.

Kuiper (1991) has pointed out that Brown and Levinson's framework is based on an assumption that participants do not wish to offend each other, an assumption which does not extend to abuse or the "dark side of politeness". It is, however, reasonable to assume that the factors listed above are relevant in all interactions, and will influence the patterns of abuse within the group.

The factors are chosen to evaluate the level of politeness used by a speaker. If a speaker chooses an elaborately polite form for those from whom they are most socially distant, then one would predict the opposite will hold true for impoliteness. In this group, we would expect that those who are closest will abuse each other most. Similarly, if we use the most polite forms to those more powerful than ourselves, then we are likely to be most impolite to those with much less power than ourselves. Just as it is inappropriate to be too polite to an intimate friend, it is also inappropriate to be abusive to someone we do not know well. At least theoretically, Brown and Levinson's criteria can transfer neatly into the realm of abuse.

Given the three crucial factors, a number of predictions can be made. One would expect, for example, that, since men are in the more powerful position, men will abuse women more than vice-versa, and that men will abuse females more than they will abuse males. As discussed above, research has revealed overwhelmingly more data on abuse between males than on abuse involving females, seemingly contradicting the second of these hypotheses. Pilkington (1992) suggests men use abuse to signal solidarity. If this "mateship culture" is most prominent, we would expect to find most abuse between males; if power is a more important variable, the male-female abuse would be most common.

The relevant factor in measuring the ranking of the imposition is how personal the abuse is: the more personal the abuse, the higher the potential offence or ranking of the imposition. Assessing social distance or solidarity will involve measuring how well participants know each other. Moreover, if, as Kuiper and others have suggested, abusive behaviour enforces group solidarity, then group integration will be another important factor relevant in assessing solidarity.

Although there is evidence that males use jocular abuse to mark solidarity, there is virtually no data collected of mixed-gender interaction involving jocular abuse. This gives a scanty base on which to form hypotheses. Leaving the "mateship culture" aside, Brown and Levinson's criteria provide the following hypotheses.

Hypotheses

- (i) The men will give more abuse than the women will.
- (ii) The men will abuse the women more than the women will abuse the men.
- (iii) The men will abuse the women more than the men will abuse each other.
- (iv) The women will abuse each other more than the women will abuse the men.
- (v) Those most integrated into the group will give and receive more abuse than those less integrated into the group.
- (vi) The men will abuse the women with whom they have high solidarity scores more than the women with whom they have low solidarity scores.
- (vii) The men will abuse the men with whom they have high solidarity scores more than the men with whom they have low solidarity scores.

- (viii) The women will abuse the women with whom they have high solidarity scores more than the women with whom they have low solidarity scores.
- (ix) The women will abuse the men with whom they have high solidarity scores more than the men with whom they have low solidarity scores.
- (x) The women will receive abuse of a more personal nature than the men.

I was interested, then, in investigating the relationship between gender, solidarity and group membership, as it affected the use of jocular abuse in the group. Because of their possible relevance to estimating the ranking of the imposition, I also needed to examine the topics of abuse and the form of abuse. Finally, I was interested in how the victims reacted to abuse, and in particular whether there were any gender differences in this area.

Method

Collecting the data

Given the composition of the group, some of these hypotheses are difficult to test. One would need equal numbers of men and women, all present for all of the taping and with comparable solidarity and group integration scores. Unfortunately, it is unrealistic to expect to find such a naturally occurring group, especially one which regularly trades insults! Since I did not want to adopt an experimental design, I was confined to exploring the hypotheses within the constraints of the group I had selected for study.

In order to do this, I tape recorded the regular sessions of a role-playing group which meets once a week.¹ I restricted my data to the non-role-playing period of the evenings. The group consists of seven people, although not all were present for all of the taping sessions. The group has existed for some years, but the current members have not all taken part since the very beginning. One of the members has joined the group only very recently. I have been a member for just over a year.

The group knew that I was collecting data for a language and gender project, but not that I was specifically interested in jocular abuse. They were taped over a period of seven weeks. Someone was missing from the group on five of these seven occasions. The data is drawn from approximately 15 hours of tape.

¹ I would like to express appreciation to my friends without whose cooperation this research would not have been possible.

The group consists of three females (named here Lisa, Jen and Meena) and four males (Alan, Barney, Chris and Dan), all aged between 20 and 26. They have all completed university degrees, and four are currently engaged in various levels of post-graduate study (Jen, Meena, Alan and Barney). The other three all have good jobs. I assessed the social class and status of all of the members to be more or less equal.

Analysis

Measuring P, D and R

So how are relative power, social distance and the ranking of the imposition to be assessed in such a study? Assuming that men are generally more powerful than women in New Zealand society, gender is the most obvious element of power functioning in this group. The men can be assumed to be socially more powerful than the women.

Assessing social distance or solidarity involves measuring how well participants know each other, and how well integrated they are into the group. Consequently, I constructed a solidarity scale and a group integration scale to determine the extent of solidarity between individual members, and the integration of each of the members into the group as a whole.

Solidarity scale

To rank the social distance between S and H, a person-person solidarity scale was constructed for each combination of two people in the group. Each combination was awarded points for the following:

They live together	1 point
They are both in the Ultimate team	1 point
They associate together outside of role-playing or Ultimate	2 points
They have known each other for more than three years	2 points
or	or
They have known each other for more than one year	<u>1 point</u>
Maximum points available	6 points

This is reasonably self-explanatory, except, perhaps, for the second criterion. Five of the seven members of the group are in the same Ultimate² team. The team started over a year ago as a social team, but is now reasonably competitive. Therefore those who are in both the sports team and the role-playing group see each other on a regular basis and have a solid set of common interests. It therefore seemed appropriate to include this in the solidarity scale.

The actual scores ranged from zero to five as shown in table 1:

Table 1
Person-person solidarity scores

	Alan	Barney	Chris	Dan	Lisa	Jen
Meena	4	3	2	3	0	2
Jen	5	2	1	2	4	
Lisa	1	0	0	0		
Dan	3	4	2			
Chris	2	1				
Barney	4					

Integration scale

In addition to a score for interpersonal solidarity, it was also necessary to devise a scale to assess each individual's degree of integration into the group. The scale used to measure degree of integration into the group was developed as follows:

Regular contact (ie at least weekly) with three or more members outside of Ultimate or role-playing	1 point
Member of the Ultimate team	1 point
Original role-playing member	2 points
or	or
Role-playing member for over a year	<u>1 point</u>
Maximum points available	4 points

² Ultimate is a fast team sport played with a frisbee. It can be played four-a-side on a basketball court, or seven-a-side on a rugby field.

The results of this assessment are shown in table 2.

Table 2
Group integration scores

Alan	Barney	Chris	Dan	Lisa	Jen	Meena
4	3	2	4	0	2	4

As mentioned above, the relevant factor in measuring the ranking of the imposition is how personal the abuse is: the more personal the abuse, the higher the potential offence or ranking of the imposition. Jocular abuse referring to a person's sexual behaviour, for instance, was interpreted as very personal.

Counting tokens of jocular abuse

All instances of abuse were transcribed. A key of transcription conventions is provided at the end of this paper. The corpus consists of 80 conversations, containing 133 instances of abuse. Repeated abuse from the same person, on the same topic, and within the confines of the same conversation is treated as only one instance. In the following conversation, for example, Meena comments several times on drips on the toilet seat. Rather than counting every utterance as an instance of abuse, the whole series of comments she makes is counted as one instance.

EXAMPLE ONE

(See appendix for transcription conventions)

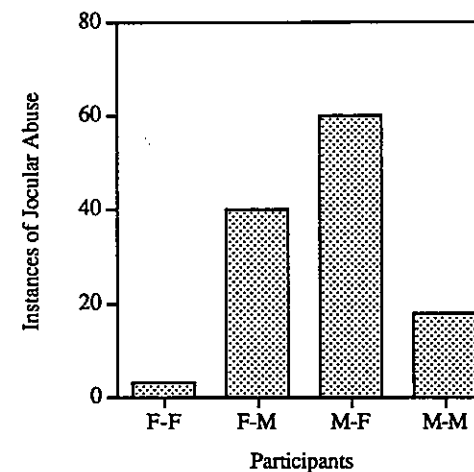
- Meena: even though somebody dribbled on the toilet seat
 Dan: i DID NOT dribble on the toilet
 Meena: did so
 Dan: how? i was sitting down
 Meena: that's a drip
 Dan: i was sitting down
 Barney: let me look + i want to see ++
 Dan: [yells]: i was sitting down:
 Barney: YEP i see it + there are drips on that toilet

- Meena: there's a dribble look i don't know how you did it
 Dan: i was SITTING DOWN
 Alan: it's probably from the flush it's probably you know-
 Meena: it's all yellow
 Alan: yellow? it's a BLUE toilet seat if you said GREEN somebody might believe you

Results

The corpus consists of 60 instances of jocular abuse from men to women, 40 instances from women to men, 18 instances from men to men, and only three from women to women. See figure 1. This is the data used to create the graphs in the following sections, and forms the base of the discussion. There are also 13 instances in which the whole group, or parts of the group are abused.

Figure 1
Participant gender and jocular abuse

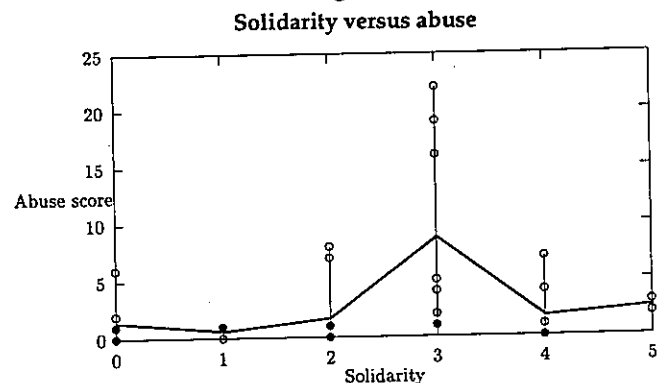


The differences here are quite striking, but it would be simplistic to take these raw figures and draw conclusions from them. The solidarity and integration of members is quite diverse, and there is an uneven number of men and women. It is therefore most sensible to look at pairs. How do gender, integration and solidarity affect who abuses who and how much?

Solidarity and levels of jocular abuse

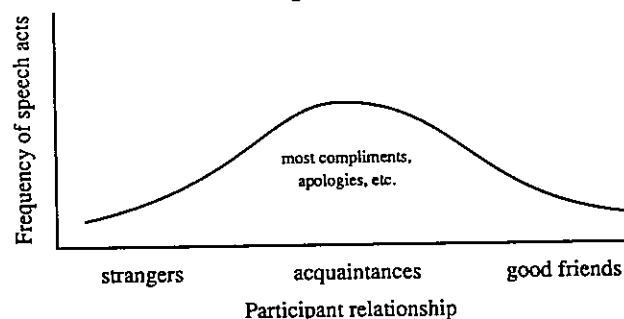
If jocular abuse functions as a solidarity marker, the hypotheses predicted that more abuse would occur between those with higher solidarity scores than those with lower solidarity scores. In fact this was not the case. Figure 2 shows instances of abuse plotted against solidarity. For each pair (A and B) there are two figures, one for abuse from A to B, and one for abuse from B to A. The line indicates the average amount of abuse for each solidarity score. Where there is more than one occurrence of a score, the point is shaded on the graph.

Figure 2



Graphs for abuse from men to women, women to men and men to men each show a similar pattern. Rather than the steady increase expected, the figures suggest a pattern more like Wolfson's "Bulge". Wolfson's (1988) theory plots speech acts such as compliments and apologies against solidarity to produce the pattern shown in figure 3.

Figure 3
'The Bulge' (Wolfson 1988)



The theory predicts that the most attention to face will occur in the middle section of the graph, where there is most interpersonal insecurity. At each end of the graph – with strangers and with intimates – speakers are relatively certain of the kind of relationship they have with each other. The idea that this theory could be extended to include abuse is interesting. Indeed, it supports the suggestion that abuse serves to express friendliness and intimacy. If abuse expresses solidarity, then it is understandable that it neatly reflects Wolfson's bulge. Wolfson's "bulge" reflects the fact that speakers pay most attention to those friends who are not intimate, and attention includes jocular abuse. Of course the theory does not apply directly to this situation, as there are no strangers involved. To fit better, the categories would have to be adapted to extend from acquaintances, through good friends, to intimates.

Insults do not function solely as solidarity markers. The recipient suffers a loss of face, so the abuser must be relatively certain of the relationship. Those pairs with low solidarity scores are clearly not certain enough of the relationship to engage in jocular abuse – or at least not frequent abuse.

In this group, it is possible to suggest an additional reason why scores are low at the high end of the solidarity scale. Not only do members with solidarity scores of four or five apparently not feel as much need to express solidarity, but when they do so, they tend to use different strategies. These high solidarity relationships have usually been formed independently of the group, and the interactors have developed their own ways of expressing solidarity. Role-playing is not the only time of the week they meet, and they may not feel, therefore, the need to employ the group strategy of jocular abuse for expressing solidarity. Those scoring three points, however, have known each other for some time and know each other reasonably well, but most first met through the group, and the group's meetings provide their main opportunity for interaction. It makes sense, then, that they have adopted this in-group strategy of jocular abuse to express their solidarity.

One score does not fit the bulge pattern. Lisa abused Dan six times. These two have a zero solidarity score, so six instances is rather more than expected. Lisa is the new member to the group, whereas Dan is fully integrated and is a frequent recipient of abuse. Lisa is clearly keen to integrate quickly, and so makes relatively frequent attempts at abuse. Of the six instances in which she abuses Dan, four provide direct support for abuse initiated by one of the other members,

and two are instances of abuse on a clearly established topic – something about which Dan has been regularly hassled. The inconsistently high six on the left of the graph can be seen as a reflection of Lisa's eagerness to be accepted into the group. As will be discussed in the next section, Dan's full integration into the group makes him an obvious target.

Integration and levels of jocular abuse

It is clear that solidarity is not the only factor influencing the amount of jocular abuse. Group integration also plays a large role. The hypotheses predicted that those more integrated into the group would both give and receive more abuse. As all members were not recorded for exactly the same length of time, this hypothesis cannot be directly tested by my data. Instead, I examined person to person abuse, looking not at who gave and received the most abuse overall, but at patterns showing who has the right to abuse who.

Analysis revealed that the overwhelming majority of abuse involved someone who was fully integrated into the group. There were only scattered, isolated incidents of abuse between those less integrated. The most abuse occurred between two members, Meena and Alan, who were both fully integrated. It was clear that most members of the group had the right to abuse the fully integrated members. It was less common, however, for the fully integrated members to abuse those less integrated than themselves.

It seems logical that less integrated members target the most integrated. Individuals have to fling at least token abuse to properly establish group membership. There are established topics about which integrated members tease each other, so the less integrated can latch onto these topics with a minimum degree of risk. It is also safest to abuse the most integrated members – they are comfortable with the group, and their loss of face will be less severe.

This situation explains the "asymmetrical joking relationships" within the group. Meena, for example, (integration = 4) is abused 16 times by Barney (integration = 3), whereas there are only four examples of Meena abusing Barney. Similarly, Dan (integration = 4) receives seven instances of abuse from Chris (integration = 2), but offers none in return. Rather than impose a face threatening act on members less integrated into the group, fully integrated members concentrate their efforts among themselves. This involves the least risk, as the most integrated members are least likely to take offence. It is also a

form of politeness, in that there is consideration for the feelings of the newer members.

Example two illustrates the situation neatly. The group is playing a card game called "Scumbag", for which each of the players is assigned positions ranging from scumbag to president. The conversation takes place when Lisa is scumbag, and has mistakenly given Jen the wrong card.

EXAMPLE TWO

- Jen: oh no hang on, that changes my play can i take those back?
 Barney: no + no of course you can
 Meena: tabled card
 Barney: go on take them back + it wasn't your fault that they were screwed up
 Chris: yeah it was SCUMBAG's fault
 Barney: bloody scumbag
 Meena: i thought it was called asshole not scumbag
 Dan: yeah asshole is //the\
 Barney: /i've\<\< always called it scumbag
 Chris: why don't we call it something REALLY bad like + pols student
 Meena: hey you mother fucker
 Dan: [to Lisa]: yeah you're a POLS STUDENT:
 Lisa: I AM though
 Chris: [draws breath in mock horror]
 Barney: well that's done it
 Dan: accidental faux pas + oh no

Meena is doing a doctorate in political science and Chris's remark is clearly directed at her. Lisa, however, is also studying political science. When Dan realizes that his remark, which was primarily for Meena's benefit, actually does apply to Lisa, he is temporarily thrown. The men edge their way out of the situation using humour to note the inappropriateness of the statement. Meena is fully integrated, so it is quite acceptable to hassle her about her degree, but the same insult applying to Lisa, who is not integrated into the group, is clearly not appropriate.

Gender and levels of jocular abuse

Gender appears to play a very important role in accounting for levels of jocular abuse, and it is unfortunate that the degree of solidarity and integration of women and men were not more comparable. The hypothesis that men would abuse women more than men was confirmed resoundingly overriding the expectation that the "mateship culture" may have interfered with this. The hypothesis that women would abuse women more than men was clearly unsupported. The results are provided in table 3.

Where more than one instance of jocular abuse is involved, the men abused the women more than vice-versa (apart from Lisa - Dan, see above). It is important not to conclude too much from this. Most of the large numbers involve Meena. We have already seen that those most fully integrated into the group receive the most abuse. However, Dan and Alan are also fully integrated, but the differences between the abuse they give and receive from the other women is not so dramatic. This could be explained in part by the fact that the solidarity scores between Dan/Alan and Lisa/Jen fall outside of the middle part of the bulge. But Jen has the same relation to Dan as Chris does to Meena, yet Meena receives 8 instances from Chris, and Dan only 1 from Jen. There are several variables at work, and it is misleading to separate one out and make sweeping statements. Gender must be examined in the context of the other variables.

Table 3
Instances of cross-gender jocular abuse

Woman	int	Man	int	sol	W-M	M-W
Meena	4	Dan	4	3	19	22
Meena	4	Alan	4	4	4	7
Meena	4	Barney	3	3	4	16
Meena	4	Chris	2	2	1	8
Jen	2	Alan	4	5	2	3
Jen	2	Dan	4	2	1	0
Jen	2	Barney	3	2	1	0
Jen	2	Chris	2	1	0	0
Lisa	0	Dan	4	0	6	2
Lisa	0	Alan	4	1	1	0
Lisa	0	Barney	3	0	0	1
Lisa	0	Chris	2	0	1	1

Meena and Alan have identical integration scores, but Alan abuses Meena more than vice-versa. This could suggest that gender is an important variable, and that the men may be more prone to abuse the women than the women are the men. It is certainly not the other way around.

Table 4
Instances of jocular abuse between men

Man A	int	Man B	int	sol	A-B	B-A
Dan	4	Alan	4	3	1	2
Dan	4	Barney	3	3	1	5
Dan	4	Chris	2	2	0	7
Barney	3	Chris	2	2	1	1
Barney	3	Alan	4	4	0	0
Chris	2	Alan	4	2	0	0

There are comparably few instances of abuse between men. In fact, those who are fully integrated do not seem to abuse each other much at all. The main instances of abuse occur when less integrated men abuse fully integrated men - and this clearly functions as an attempt to confirm group membership. There were only three instances of women abusing women. Table 4 shows men to men abuse, and table 5 illustrates abuse between women.

There is clearly more involved here than just power structures. Power differences would explain why men abuse women more than they abuse men, but not why women abuse men more than other women. It is true that there are no pairs of women in the sample who have a solidarity score of three points - the optimal score for jocular abuse. Yet, gender excepting, the same relation exists between Meena and Jen as between Meena and Chris, but not the same extent of abuse. Similarly, Lisa, new to the group and keen to establish group membership, abused both the fully integrated men, but avoided abusing Meena. It seems then that jocular abuse may serve to maintain gender divisions. In a paper examining women's gossip, Jenny Coates observes:

Where the main point of relaxed informal conversation among equals is the maintenance of good (equal) social relationships, one of the main goals of mixed interaction is inevitably the

maintenance of gender divisions of male - female inequality
(1989: 120-21).

Jocular abuse, while expressing in-group solidarity, may also signal ingroup/outgroup divisions within the group.

Table 5
Instances of jocular abuse between women

Woman A	int	Woman B	int	sol	A-B	B-A
Meena	4	Jen	2	2	1	1
Meena	4	Lisa	0	0	0	0
Jen	2	Lisa	0	4	1	0

Closer examination of the data lends weight to this suggestion. Men often side with men and women with women, and there are several cases of general abuse aimed at the women or the men. Example three shows how the men and women sometimes find themselves on opposing sides. The excerpt begins during role-playing, but when Lisa asks her question, everyone drops out of character (apart from Chris!).

EXAMPLE THREE

- Lisa: why can't we make friends with these animals? is there any way of making friends with them?
- Dan: i don't know, is there?
- Jen: we just shot a big HOLE in their WALL
- Meena: [replying to Lisa]: i tried that once and it didn't work:
- Alan: [silly voice]: I wonder if it wants to be my friend:
- Meena: generally these games are basically aggressive + you shoot first and ask questions later
- Lisa: //it's just so male oriented\
Chris: /can i percept?\
Dan: no not at all but you're in the //middle of a\
Chris: /can i percept?\
Dan: i mean can you imagine if a soldier in Waterloo on the French side said oh you English people let's be friends what

- Meena: //would of what would\
/ the whole of \\ history would
have been changed //perhaps\
Chris: /can i \\ percept?
Lisa: maybe if there'd been women fighting we would have come to a more agreeable arrangement
Dan: if women had been fighting they would have used much nastier weapons than guns and things they would have REALLY been at each others throats
Lisa: can't imagine much worse than napalm
Dan: I can
Lisa: can you?
Dan: ironing boards at ten paces
Meena: fuck up Dan
Chris: at ease
Meena: you're starting to tread where napalm might be worse but then again it might not
Dan: hey i didn't invent napalm and i refuse to take responsibility for it
Lisa: right what's happening?
Alan: kills the moths though + no slugs in my cabbage patch

Various ideas and stereotypes relating to gender differences are employed in this discussion. Meena accepts the validity of Lisa's suggestion, but says she's already tried the strategy and it doesn't work in these games. Alan's comment is a subtle ridicule of the question. Lisa's exclamation that it is male oriented, insinuates that men are particularly fond of aggression and violence, and don't look for other ways out. This branches into a discussion of male and female strategies for solving problems. The structure of the following exchange is echoed elsewhere in the data:

- Lisa: maybe if there'd been women fighting we would have come to a more agreeable arrangement
Dan: if women had been fighting they would have used much nastier weapons than guns and things they would have REALLY been at each others throats

Lisa makes an indirect dig at men by making a statement about women. Dan immediately follows up on it by correcting her statement, and making it negative. Compare with the following example:

EXAMPLE FOUR

- Jen: [turns tape over and begins recording again]
 Lisa: maybe we should rewind it and see if its picking it all up
 Jen: nah it doesn't really matter it's just it's just
 Meena: it'll pick me and Lisa up at least
 Jen: I just need it to inspire me really
 Dan: [to Meena] oh well who else MATTERS from the sounds of things
 Lisa: that's all the women we're the most intelligent conversationalists
 Dan: no no + ACTIVE not intelligent + ACTIVE conversationalists

Of course this is not the only strategy used to make digs at the opposite sex. Speakers grasp opportunities as they become available, as in example five:

EXAMPLE FIVE

- Chris: [reading Meena's Ezibuy catalogue] how come there's only like two pages of men's um wear?
 Barney: cause men aren't dumb enough to buy from ezibuy

The examples show a friendly animosity between the two genders, and could be seen as punctuating gender differences (or perceived gender differences), and maintaining gender divisions.

In his article "On joking relationships", Radcliffe-Brown identifies an essential component of joking relationships:

In the joking relationship...one basic determinant is that social structure separates them in such a way as to make many of their interests divergent, so that conflict or hostility might result. (1952: 103)

The main division within the group is clearly that of gender. Abuse also reflects other divisions within the group. Sub-groups within the group seem to form

easy targets. Students and disc players are sub-groups which are often singled out for abuse.

Topics of jocular abuse

Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1975: 309) note that there is always a value statement made in insults. They say something about the values and expectations of the speaker, and of the society in which they live.

An analysis of the topics of abuse proved most revealing. Hypothesis (x) predicted that women would receive abuse of a more personal nature than would men. This was clearly confirmed. Of the sixty examples from men to women, sixteen of them were of a sexual nature – twenty-seven percent. The men on the other hand received only two instances of such abuse, and these were both direct retaliation to abuse the male had initiated. Even more interesting was the fact that rather than perceiving these comments as instances of abuse, the men treated them as compliments. Consider the following example.

EXAMPLE SIX

- Dan: [speaking to Lisa about Meena]: the other night she just couldn't get away from the fact that she was horny and wanted to tell everybody:
 Barney: she gets like that sometimes doesn't she
 Meena: [to Dan]: what you mean I'm getting as bad as you?:
 Dan: yeah
 Barney: in fact a lot of the time she gets like that there are two modes + just after and just before

Being horny and telling people is something that Dan seems proud of, but he also feels it is something to hassle Meena about. There is clearly a double standard at work. In example seven, when Meena is speaking of something she is clearly proud of and considers an accomplishment, Dan turns the tables on her by offering a lewd joke one which Meena doesn't latch on to at first:

EXAMPLE SEVEN

- Meena: i'm the only person in this room who freestyled at nationals and came second in the women's division
 Dan: let's face it Meena always comes second
 Meena: yeah i know that's cause Sue Willis always beats me + except at distance
 Dan: we were actually making sexual innuendos well I was

The situation is in fact reminiscent of that noted in Spradley and Mann's (1975) article "The Cocktail Waitress" which was discussed in the introduction. Attention is consistently drawn to the women as sexual objects. This does not only occur between fully integrated members – all three women are at some stage the recipients of similar comments.

Men are abused more about things they do (or can't do). Dan often cooks for the group and is consistently hassled about the results – particularly his cheese sauce. One night when Dan complained about this constant hassling, Meena replied "come on..if I didn't hassle you about your cheese sauce, I'd have to find something more personal to hassle you about." This is an interesting comment, considering Meena herself is often the recipient of very personal abuse. The following example is typical:

EXAMPLE EIGHT

- Jen: [turns recorder on, the first night of taping]
 Meena: jesus it's still floury Dan even on tape [laughs]
 Dan: aw you're not taping that are you? do you have to tape Meena criticizing my cooking?
 Lisa: why does the-
 Meena: it's normal everyday //conversation\
 Lisa: /wooden spoon\\ have a hole in the middle of it?
 Meena: so it stirs better
 Dan: [yells]: YEE-AH: that water's hot
 Alan: grandstander
 Meena: it's actually Dan's cooking he eroded a hole in the middle of it

- Dan: it's actually Meena's tongue + you know how people like to tie cherry knots in everything to show they've got a flexible tongue well Meena just carved that

Meena answers Lisa's question with a slur on Dan's cooking, Dan answers it by referring to Meena's "flexible tongue".

This situation coexists with the illusion of equality. The men consider themselves SNAGS, and believe sincerely that they treat the women as equals. I myself, a member of the group for over a year, while occasionally annoyed at sexist comments, was not aware of the extent of the comments, nor the paucity of such comments aimed at men.

Sexuality aside, other topics of abuse showed clear differences in both perceived behaviour, and the expectations that men have of women, and women have of men. Interpreting the abuse of women in terms of the values expressed, men must not be smelly, bald, fat, immature or sexist, but should have muscles, be well-dressed and be able to cook and catch a frisbee. The abuse of men reveals that women should not be boring, fat, stupid, bitchy, wingy, talkative or buy their clothes from a clothes catalogue, but they should be able to add, run and jump.

Strategies for jocular abuse and support strategies

Direct, scathing abuse is generally unacceptable. The abuse should ideally be indirect and have some humour value. Examples are often wordplays, or clever answers to straight questions. Lisa is given advice on the art in example nine. Dan is learning to delay – a trick in which one balances a spinning disc on one finger.

EXAMPLE NINE

- Dan: [trying to delay]
 Lisa: oh i can see YOU'RE really good at it
 Chris: you know that bit of the exponential curve that's basically flat? he hasn't reached that stage yet
 Barney: there's a point at which you master it and Dan's still as far away from it as he was when he started
 Dan: that's right [delays near Barney's head]
 Barney: watch it + i've got a headache

- Lisa: how many fingers are you using there?
 Dan: [drops disc]
 Barney: too many by the looks
 Dan: i could use all of them
 Barney: no you couldn't, you'd do no better than if you used one
 Dan: i find it much easier to use more actually
 Lisa: well that's why you're so useless at it [everyone laughs]
 Barney: NOT so complimentary + yeah
 Chris: don't be so obvious + give him a hard time but don't say flat out ++
 Dan you're hopeless
 Barney: we're all trying to booster his confidence here [everyone laughs]

Lisa starts by making a direct sarcastic comment to Dan. Barney and Chris both support her, making witty remarks about Dan's inability to learn the trick. Barney's "watch it...I've got a headache" is a dig at Meena, who complained several times about her head one night, and then had a disc dropped on it. It put her in a bad mood and she's been hassled ever since. Lisa is clearly getting into the spirit of things and trying hard to join in the abuse. She is congratulated by Barney for her next very direct remark, but Chris corrects her, revealing one of the "rules" about how one should insult. It is important not to be too direct and obvious.

As in the above example, those who initiate abuse are often supported by other members. Sometimes the recipient is also defended. Men and women seem to use different strategies to support others. The men are generally competitive, the women are more often collaborative and supportive. In the following excerpt Meena is being teased about the Ezibuy catalogue which arrived for her that morning.

EXAMPLE TEN

- Dan: anyway who wants to hear about the Ezibuy catalogue
 Meena: you guys have all read it you've seen it more than i have + i didn't
 even go through it properly
 Barney: HA she's waiting until she's alone
 Meena: i was alone when i opened it
 Barney: and you restrained yourself + i'm impressed

- Dan: no it's that she lingered on each page and didn't get very far before
 she was interrupted
 Chris: she she gives herself five pages + you know + everyday
 [Dan and Barney laugh]

Dan initiates the abuse by reference to the Ezibuy catalogue. Barney and Chris both join in and support him. They each try to outdo the other in thinking of reasons why Meena may not have studied the catalogue. They are collaborating in hassling Meena, but competing amongst themselves.

When a woman provides support for abuse, she is more likely simply to agree with the statement, and perhaps add to it or build on it, rather than providing a different alternative. In the next example, Meena and Lisa collaborate to tease Dan about his cooking.

EXAMPLE ELEVEN

- Lisa: this is delicious
 Meena: even though the cheese sauce is floury
 Lisa: and the meat wasn't peppery enough and i'm sure the + oh no [to
 Meena]: you cooked the pasta didn't you?: + oh + that was alright
 Meena: the pasta's actually quite good i think

Lisa immediately jumps in and adds support to Meena's statement, even though she has already said she thinks the meal is delicious. She does so by adding to Meena's comment, carefully insulting the food that Dan cooked – as opposed to that cooked by Meena.

Eder (1990) found that amongst her 10-14 year old girls there were constant changes in allegiance during ritual insulting, and took this to be a sign that the girls did not use the insults to establish hierarchies. Most literature on insults between males shows an element of status negotiation. Both the men and the women in my sample constantly switch sides. The men, however, appear to view the activity as much more competitive than the women. Tannen (1990: 147) notes:

Much of what has been written about women's and men's styles claims that males are competitive and prone to conflict, whereas females are cooperative and given to affiliation.

My data suggests that, even in insulting, women are supportive, and men competitive.

Reactions to abuse

Drew (1987) notes that most people give serious replies to teases and correct them. Recipients usually respond defensively and only play along in a small minority of cases. In my sample there are marked differences in the way men and women receive the abuse. Table 6 shows the way abuse was taken in those cases for which it was possible for the victim to respond.

Table 6
Reactions to abuse

	Retaliate		Ignore		Object		Agree		Correct		Total
M-W	6	14.3%	19	45.2%	13	31%	0	0%	4	9.5%	42
W-M	9	25%	14	38.9%	4	11.1%	2	5.6%	7	19.4%	36
M-M	0	0%	8	53.3%	0	0%	5	33.3%	2	13.3%	15
W-W	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3

The most common strategy for receiving abuse is quite simply not to comment. The recipient may not say anything, or they may laugh, then continue the conversation. The figures show that women are much more likely than men to object to the abuse – to express indignation. This is probably a direct reflection of the different topics of abuse that men and women receive, and shows that women are clearly not completely comfortable with the situation. In all three instances of abuse between women, the recipient objected. This suggests that abuse from another woman is unexpected, and therefore perhaps particularly cutting when it occurs. Abuse from another woman seems to carry more weight than similar abuse from a man.

Men are more likely to defend themselves by correcting the statement, or to retaliate with another insult. This is a further example of the male tendency to be more competitive. Another strategy the men use, which is not employed by the women at all, is to agree with the abuse and play along with the abuser. This strategy is used particularly when the men are being teased by other men. This may be a reflection of the "mateship culture" discussed by Jane Pilkington (1992). It can be "cool" and "masculine" to behave in certain ways and have certain attributes which are regarded in the wider community as undesirable.

In example twelve Barney plays along with Dan's assertion that he is stupid. The statement is clearly meant in jest, as everyone present knows that Barney is far from stupid, so it is safe for him to play along with it. Socially, it is much more acceptable to claim you are stupid than to claim the opposite.

EXAMPLE TWELVE

Meena: i even made notes about what we were doing last time
 Dan: good you can read them out for the people who weren't here
 Barney: i was here last time and I still don't remember
 Dan: OK + for the people who weren't here and the congenitally STUPID
 Barney: yeah + never want to be excluded from something

When Meena is accused of stupidity in example thirteen, she whoops her indignation.

EXAMPLE THIRTEEN

Barney: you got two as well Meena
 Meena: yeah i know that's why i put us up to one [drawls]: TEN: + i've had three glasses of wine in half an hour, you can't expect me to add two numbers together
 Barney: i didn't expect you to WITHOUT the wine
 Meena: WHOO OOH

It is interesting to speculate on why women do not use the agreement strategy in this situation.

Conclusion

The abuse analysed in this paper, unlike that discussed by Kuiper (1990), does not have one clear function. Instead it serves a number of purposes. For everyone, it offers a strategy to express group membership and solidarity, while marking and maintaining gender divisions. For the men, it provides a vehicle for competition and status negotiation, and an opportunity to express their power over women, by drawing attention to the women's sexuality.

The men in this study tend to use jocular abuse more than the women, and the men tend to abuse the women more than the women abuse the men. But more important in many ways is the fact that those who are most integrated into the group, regardless of gender, are the most frequent targets of abuse. Moreover, fully integrated members avoided directing abuse at peripheral group members, regardless of gender. Nevertheless, gender divisions are salient, as reflected in the fact that men abuse women more often than they abuse other men and women abuse men much more frequently than they abuse other women.

Previous studies have indicated that there are often exchanges of jocular abuse amongst men, which act primarily as solidarity markers, whereas cross-gender abuse is usually of a sexual nature, and serves to express male dominance. The data collected for this project confirms past observations that jocular abuse seldom occurs between females, but shows that in mixed gender interaction, both the functions described above co-exist. The data also revealed that women tended to support other women in using abuse, while men tended to compete with each other. Indirectness and humour were highly valued in jocular abuse strategies, regardless of gender.

This analysis reveals the patterns identified in the investigation of just one group. It is unfortunate that such data is so difficult to collect. Until much more data of a comparable nature is collected, it will be impossible to tell the extent to which personality factors and group composition have affected these results. All of the aspects of jocular abuse discussed in this paper warrant further investigation and discussion, and many questions have been left unanswered. However, it is clear that solidarity, integration and gender are all important variables for the analysis of jocular abuse.

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APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

The following symbols have been used in the data extracts in this article. These are based largely on the transcription conventions developed at Victoria University for the Wellington Corpus of Spoken English. No punctuation is used in the extracts and initial capitals have only been used for proper names.

Intonation:

- ? signals rising or question intonation
 - hyphen indicates an incomplete or cut-off utterance

Stress:

YES capitals indicate emphatic stress

Paralinguistic and other non-verbal features:

descriptions of paralinguistic and non-verbal features are contained in square brackets. If the feature is concurrent with speech, or describing speech, the relevant speech is placed between colons, eg:

Meena: [replying to Lisa]: i tried that once and it didn't work:

Alan: [silly voice]: I wonder if it wants to be my friend:

Pauses:

- + pauses of up to one second
 ++ pauses of up to two seconds

Simultaneous Speech:

Simultaneous speech is contained in slashes, as in the following example:

Dan: i mean can you imagine if a soldier in Waterloo on the French side said oh you English people let's be friends what //would of what would\
 Meena: / the whole of \\history

would have been changed perhaps

Consonant cluster reduction in New Zealand English¹

Janet Holmes and Allan Bell

Abstract

Consonant cluster reduction occurs in all dialects of English which have been studied and New Zealand English is no exception. Focussing specifically on *-t,d* deletion, an analysis of 4665 tokens provides evidence that the linguistic constraints which characterise New Zealand English are predominantly the same as those which characterise American English: the influence of the following phonetic segment and the grammatical status of relevant elements are paramount. In terms of social factors, consonant cluster reduction, a vernacular feature, is unsurprisingly more frequent in working class and male speech, and it decreases with age. Though there are no overall ethnic differences, an interesting departure from the usual pattern of a decrease in consonant cluster reduction with age was apparent in the speech of middle aged Maori men.

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Introduction

Consonant cluster reduction (CCR) has been described as "the most studied variable in the English language" (Bell 1982: 160). Patrick (1991: 171) characterises it as "a showcase variable for variationist sociolinguists", pointing to the fact that research on this variable has set standards of description in regional, ethnic and social dialectology (Labov, Cohen, Robins and Lewis 1968, Wolfram 1969, Labov 1975), as well as providing the incentive for developing new methods and models of analysis (Neu 1980, Guy 1980, 1991a, 1991b), and extending our understanding of the processes of language acquisition (Labov 1989) and language change (Romaine 1984). Focussing specifically on "*-t,d* deletion", Patrick himself examines the extent of similarities between the patterns established in previous studies and those he found in Jamaican Creole

¹ This paper has benefitted greatly from comments by Robert Sigley, who also assisted with the Varbrul analysis. Laurie Bauer also made many useful comments for which we are very grateful.

mesolectal speech (Patrick 1991). Khan (1991) extends the varieties examined to include Indian English.

The only previous published study of consonant cluster reduction in New Zealand English is Bell's (1977) analysis of the language of newsreaders. He analysed consonant cluster reduction for 21 news readers from six Auckland radio stations, focussing on the effects of audience on speech style. We report here on the way that this variable patterned in the conversational data collected in the Porirua (Wellington) social dialect survey. We have considered the effects of both linguistic constraints and social influences and compared our results with those of earlier surveys where appropriate. The results confirm the stability of patterns of consonant cluster reduction in English-speaking communities throughout the world.

Defining the variable

Different analyses of CCR have varied in terms of what they have included in their consideration of this variable. Labov et al. (1968), for example, consider clusters ending in /s/ and /z/ as well as those ending in stops. The vast majority of studies focus, however, on word-final clusters where the second member of the cluster is a stop. This has also been our approach in this study. We also included CCC clusters ending in a stop.

Bell (1977: 323) identifies 23 consonant clusters where the second member of the cluster is a stop, but notes that not all researchers include all types in their analysis. Wolfram (1969), for example, omits clusters which lack homogeneous voicing, claiming that CCR only applies "when both members of the cluster are either voiced or voiceless" (Wolfram and Fasold 1974: 130). However, Bell (1977) found no difference in behaviour between clusters with or without homogeneous voicing. He describes Wolfram's position as "indefensible, since the very common cluster /nt/ reduces in the same manner and at the same frequency as other clusters" (1977: 324). We have therefore included these in our analysis of the Porirua data. This is also consistent with Labov's observation (1972: 217) that clusters such as /lt/ should be covered by the CC reduction rule. However, Labov et al. (1968) exclude all final /nt#/ and /nd#/ sequences followed by a vowel, due to possible application of the American English nasal flap formation rule. Since this rule does not apply in New Zealand English, these clusters are also included in our analysis (cf Patrick 1991: 172)

There has been continuing debate about whether analysis of CCR involving the remaining clusters should focus only on alveolar stops, or whether /p/ and /k/ should also be included. For instance, Fasold (1972: 58ff) provides a complex argument (involving considerations of homogeneous voicing) for analysing all clusters with final /t,d/ with the addition of /sp/ and /sk/, a position which takes account of similarities in the behaviour of the /st, sp, sk/ clusters. Guy (1980) and Patrick (1991), on the other hand, focus only on /t,d/ deletion.

Our final decision was to confine attention to clusters ending in /t/ or /d/. Additional clusters appeared to add a great deal of complexity to the analysis for the sake of a small number of relatively infrequent examples, without sufficient compensating benefits (cf Guy 1980). Most studies agree that /t, d/ deletion is the most fruitful to focus on in terms of isolating sociolinguistic patterns, and all analyses provide information on the patterning of this variable. Labov et al. (1968: 124), for example, a study which examines a wider range of clusters, nevertheless treats clusters ending in -t,d separately, commenting that this is "the largest unit which can be treated by a single rule".

Our analysis thus concentrated on CC and CCC clusters which ended in a final alveolar stop. Focussing on clusters ending in /t/ or /d/ in our New Zealand corpus facilitated comparison with the majority of overseas studies of this variable.

Identifying the variants

Classifying instances of deletion vs retention of consonant clusters is by no means as straightforward as it might appear. As Bell (1977: 325) puts it

Deletion is not a simple matter of either/or, but involves decreasing levels of realization for the final stop.

A number of researcher have commented on the difficulty of identifying presence or absence of the stop before a homorganic stop in the following word. Wolfram (1969: 58) considered it was "impossible to perceive from the tape recordings whether the final stop was absent or present" in this environment. Neu (1980: 38) comments similarly:

it is not always clear whether both or only one of the alveolar stops is present in the realized form.

Bell notes that "the two stops tend to merge into one" (1977: 325), but because he was analysing formal news style where such distinctions are more likely to be retained, and he was exploring a hearer-oriented sociolinguistic model, it seemed reasonable to consider instances with following homorganic stops in his analysis. He treats the stop as deleted if it is followed by a homorganic sound unless there is evidence of its presence. Most other researchers exclude these forms from the analysis (eg Wolfram 1969, Fasold 1972, Guy 1980, Neu 1980), as we have done in this study.

Identifying the constraints

Because CC reduction is such a well-studied variable there has been a great deal of discussion about the relevant linguistic constraints which should be considered in any analysis. Indeed, it is often used as a paradigmatic case to illustrate the importance of taking account of linguistic as well as social constraints when analysing a sociolinguistic variable (Wolfram and Fasold 1974, Wolfram 1991). A number of phonological and grammatical factors have been considered in different studies: eg. homogeneous voicing, grammatical status of the final stop, length of the cluster, stress etc. While it is obviously important to include any factor which might be important as an influential constraint on the frequency of CCR, every additional constraint adds to the complexity of the analysis, and thus requires justification. A discussion of the factors we took into account follows.

Two linguistic constraints have been universally included in all earlier analyses: (1) a grammatical constraint, namely, the grammatical status of the final stop and (2) a phonological constraint - the nature of the following phonetic segment. We will discuss these two constraints first.

Grammatical status of the final stop

Though consonant cluster simplification is a phonological process, it clearly intersects with grammatical processes. The most obvious point of intersection is in the marking of tense. Final /t/ and /d/ in English frequently represent the past tense and past participle morphemes. Hence many consonant clusters involve a verb which ends in a consonant followed by /t/ or /d/: eg *kissed*, *hugged*.² There are many other words, however, where the /t/ or /d/ has no

² On the basis of a preliminary analysis, Guy (1980: 7) found no reason to separate past participle and past tense forms with final /t/ or /d/. Our analysis

morphemic status: eg *list, mint, mind, pond*. This distinction between monomorphemic lexical items on the one hand, and items where /t,d/ signal past tense on the other, has proved consistently important in earlier research, and these forms were coded separately.

There are a number of further forms which must also be considered. Some irregular verbs signal past tense using both a /t/ or /d/ and a vowel change: eg. *told, left, slept*. Guy (1980: 5) calls these "ambiguous" verbs; Patrick (1991) refers to them as semi-weak or double-marked verbs. These are generally distinguished and coded separately from the regular past tense forms. We included with this group the form *went*.

Another group of words which we decided deserved separate status in the analysis were words where the consonant cluster appeared at the end of the second morpheme in a bimorphemic word: eg. *oldest, sexist, government, weekend*. While we could find no discussion of the status of such forms in the literature, it seemed potentially misleading to classify these with monomorphemic forms such as *list*.

Following previous analysts, we excluded the frequently occurring form *and*. *And* occurs so frequently and has so many different phonetic realisations that it could easily skew the results of any analysis (See Labov 1980: xvi, Neu 1980). Labov comments:

In our various reports on -t,d, we had neglected to report that we had excluded *and*, since it is very common and shows deletion at a high level. Neu [1980] demonstrates the kind of distortion that results from including *and* in the main data set (Labov 1980: xvi)

On the other hand, we included *just*, another frequent item, but coded it separately in order to monitor its effect. Labov (1975) found that *just* had a high deletion rate, while Neu (1980) reported that it did not behave differently from other monomorphemic items and did not justify separate treatment.³ It therefore seemed worthwhile monitoring its effect in our New Zealand data.

also added to this group those forms which signal past tense or past participle by devoicing the final alveolar stop: eg *built, sent*.

³ Wolfram (1969: 58) included only the first three occurrences of frequently occurring words "in order not to skew the data with too many tokens for one particular type".

Finally we coded instances of /t/ where it realised the *n't* morpheme separately for similar reasons (cf Labov 1989: 90).

Summarising the constraints in order:

J	<i>just</i>
N	part of <i>n't</i> morpheme
M	part of stem/monomorpheme (except <i>just</i>)
D	part of second morpheme in multimorphemic word: eg- <i>est, -ment</i>
+	suffix in semi-weak /double marked verbs: eg <i>told, left, went</i>
#	past tense or past participle suffix

There are a number of relevant phonological constraints to be considered. By far the most important, as indicated above, is the nature of the phonetic segment which follows the consonant cluster.

Phonological constraints

1. Nature of the following phonetic segment

All previous analyses distinguish between a consonant cluster followed by a following vowel vs a cluster with a following consonant. Many go further and specify the type of consonant involved. Bell (1977: 328), for example, distinguished following obstruents, liquids, and glides, following vowel and pause. Guy (1980: 7) makes similar distinctions. We adopted this classification to give the following possibilities.

Following phonetic segment is

K	obstruent, nasal
L	liquid /l, r/
G	glide /w, j/
V	vowel
P	pause

A number of further phonological factors have been considered in previous studies. The next most important potential influence on the level of CCR is the type of segment preceding the final consonant.

2. Preceding segment

The preceding segment has proved to affect the probability of CCR in earlier research. As with the following segment, the most relevant classification is by manner of articulation. Labov et al. (1968) distinguished between obstruents (stops and fricatives) vs sonorants (nasals and liquids). Wolfram (1969) also distinguished between stops and fricatives. Guy (1980) used a five way analysis which has been adopted here.

S	sibilants /s, z, ʃ, ʒ, ʒ, ʒ, ʒ /
F	non-sibilant fricative
P	stop
N	nasal
L	lateral /l/ ⁴

The three constraints discussed so far are the most powerful influences on CCR. In addition we considered two further phonological constraints: stress and length of cluster.

3. Stress

A distinction was made between stressed and unstressed syllables in this study. The analysis distinguished two degrees of phonetic stress which were determined auditorily. Primary and secondary stress on a full vowel were classified as stressed; full vowels with no stress, and reduced vowels were classified as unstressed.

Stress is a factor which has not been widely analysed in studies of consonant cluster reduction. Fasold (1972) found it to be relatively low-level constraint in his study of Washington speech. Guy (1980) reports that a preliminary non-computerised analysis of his Philadelphia speakers showed stress was a very minor effect in his study and so he excluded it. It seemed worth considering stress in the New Zealand data because rhythm is a feature which it has been suggested may distinguish Maori and Pakeha varieties of New Zealand English, and contrasting patterns of phonetic stress would contribute to rhythmic differences.

⁴ Post-vocalic /r/ occurred in the speech of just one speaker. Following Guy (1980: 8) it was treated as a vowel for the purposes of this analysis; there were no cases of deletion after /r/.

4. Length of cluster

The final linguistic constraint considered was length of cluster, with a distinction made between CC and CCC clusters. Guy (1980) comments that this too is a minor constraint with examples being rare and he did not analyse these quantitatively. It seemed worth including in this first analysis of New Zealand English.

Other constraints have been considered by earlier researchers, eg articulatory complexity of cluster, but as Guy says, the limited increase in accuracy they permit do not justify "the great increase in complexity of the coding and computer analysis" (1980: 9).

The data

The data used in the analysis of consonant cluster reduction was collected as part of the social dialect survey of Porirua undertaken in 1989-1990, and described in Holmes, Bell and Boyce (1991). Porirua is a town of about 46,000 inhabitants, situated about 20 km north of Wellington, the capital city, with an ethnically mixed population, and an above-average proportion of people from lower socioeconomic groups. We used a non-random sample of speakers mainly from lower socioeconomic groups and stratified primarily by gender, ethnicity and age. In our 'working class' sample of 60 speakers, equal numbers of both genders and of Maori and Pakeha⁵ speakers were chosen, divided into three age groups (20-24, 40-49, 70-79 years). A small 'control' group of 15 middle class speakers (Pakeha women, three age groups) was added to enable some comparison for any effect of social stratification. Speakers were categorized as working or middle class largely according to their occupation, with education serving as a secondary indicator of socioeconomic stratification. The total sample of 75 speakers gave an acceptable minimum of five speakers per cell of the sample.

The sample design allowed for the consideration of a range of social parameters including social class, gender, age and ethnicity. The discussion of the results of the analysis will examine the relevance of each of these in accounting for the distribution of consonant cluster reduction.

Speakers were located through following community networks out from contact persons in Porirua, a procedure particularly appropriate for approaching the

⁵ Pakeha is a term used for New Zealanders of European (usually British) origin.

Maori community. The four interviewers all came from the Porirua area and were selected to match their informants by gender and ethnicity. The interview schedule elicited detailed demographic information and included several reading tasks, but focused on encouraging maximally informal speech. About 15 minutes of casual conversation was transcribed from the tape-recordings of each of the 75 speakers, giving a total of some 20 hours of transcribed relatively informal interaction. This material provided over 4500 consonant clusters for use in the analysis of consonant cluster reduction.

Results

A total of 4665 consonant clusters were analysed. Of these 39% were reduced and 61% were unreduced. We will first discuss the extent of influence of linguistic constraints on the likelihood of CCR, and then turn to a consideration of the social distribution of this vernacular feature of English.

Linguistic constraints

Though there are slight differences between dialects in the ordering of constraints, the first two linguistic constraints discussed above have been consistently and strongly confirmed in all the American studies which have examined consonant cluster reduction, namely

- (1) following consonant vs following vowel
- (2) presence vs absence of a preceding past tense morpheme boundary

These are the primary influences which have been identified in American English dialects, with grammatical status a greater influence in dialects closer to the European American standard (Neu 1980), and the following segment more influential in "African American, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Appalachian Englishes" (Patrick 1991: 173).

In our Porirua data, the nature of the following segment was the primary constraint, though the difference between the two constraints was not great (27.8% difference due to following segment vs 25.9% difference due to presence vs absence of past tense boundary). The extent of this difference is not affected by excluding *just* from the analysis (the relevant figures become 22.3% vs 20.4%).

Following phonetic segment

There is a clear and significant distinction between the effect of following consonant vs following vowel in the Porirua data.

Following consonant: 55%
Following vowel: 26%

In all earlier analyses of CCR, the nature of the following phonetic segment accounts for quite a wide range of variation. Fasold (1972), for example, reports levels of CCR ranging from 83% in the context of a following consonant to 25% for a following vowel. Wolfram (1971) reports a range from 70% in the context of a following consonant to 17% when the cluster is followed by a vowel. Neu (1980: 45) notes that

a following consonant favors deletion significantly more than does a following vowel, the difference being 35.7% deleted /t,d/ when a consonant follows versus 15.8% when a vowel follows, with no overlap in the confidence intervals.

The contrast between following vowel and consonant also proved important in Bell's Auckland data, with a remarkably wide range: CCR was as high as 83% before an obstruent for one newsreader compared to 0% before a vowel (1977: 329).

Table 1
Porirua data: % CCR according to following phonetic segment

	%	No	Varbrul factor weight
K	56	923	0.68
L	55	105	0.65
G	53	142	0.57
V	26	273	0.34
P	17	90	0.21

N= 3706

Note: a Varbrul factor weight above 0.5 indicates that this factor favours CCR. A score below 0.5 indicates that the factor disfavors CCR. A score near 0.5 indicates little effect.

A more detailed analysis of the phonetic features of the following consonant has also proved important in many studies. Guy (1980: 7) comments that one would predict that obstruents would favour CCR and vowels would disfavour it, with

liquids and glides in between, a pattern consistent with the effects of the relative sonority of different sounds (Gimson 1980). Labov (1975: 45) reports a regular grading from heaviest to lightest in the order obstruents, liquids, and glides, vowel, pause. This was the pattern we found in the Porirua data (see table 1).⁶

Others have reported slight variations on this pattern. Fasold (1972), for example, reports that for his Washington speakers, pause was similar in effect to consonant. Indeed, Guy (1980: 27) finds a sharp difference between New York and Philadelphia White communities: for New York City speakers a following pause is more like an obstruent in its effect, while for Philadelphian informants it inhibits CCR even more than a following vowel. As Guy (1990: 27) comments, while the relative effects of consonants vs vowels is consistent across all studies, the effect of a following pause is "highly variable". So while the consonant-liquid-glide-vowel constraint hierarchy might be universal, as Labov has suggested, the pause seems to vary with different speakers and dialects (Guy 1980: 27). Indeed Guy describes the place of pause in the hierarchy as "dialectally arbitrary" (1991: 234). Variation with style also seems plausible. There is apparent support for this observation in the available New Zealand data, though it is no more than a slight variation in the relative ordering of the effect of pause and vowel. Table 2 compares Bell's New Zealand newsreaders with the Porirua interviewees.

Table 2
% CCR according to following phonetic segment

Porirua interviews (1991)		New Zealand newsreaders (Based on Bell 1977: 331)	
	%		N
K	56	63	1234
L	55	30	89
G	53	13	268
V	26	1	690
P	17	4	307

While the pattern is generally the same, the Porirua interview data and the newsreaders data differ in the extent of CCR and in the relative effects of pause

⁶ Unless explicitly stated, analysis is based on the working class sample of 60 speakers.

and vowel. The Porirua data, not surprisingly since it is more conversational, generally involves a much higher level of CCR, though the dramatic effect of a following obstruent on the percentage of CCR in newsreaders' English is worth noting.

With respect to the relative effects of pause and vowel, the Porirua data follows the pattern reported in Labov (1975: 45) of a regular grading from heaviest to lightest in the order obstruents, liquids, and glides, vowel, pause. In this interview data, following pause is the lightest environment (17% CCR). This lines up these New Zealand interviewees with Philadelphians rather than New York City dwellers on the issue of relative effects of the following articulatory constraints (Guy 1980: 27). However, Bell's New Zealand radio announcers demonstrated the alternative ordering of pause favouring reduction more than a vowel.

This is an intriguing finding in view of Labov's (1980: xv) report that "this abstract trait is geographically distributed: the closer to New York City a town is, the higher the pause factor; the closer to Philadelphia, the lower it is". It might be thought that this American trail of geographical diffusion raises interesting questions for New Zealand researchers, but for the fact that Bell's data included Wellington as well as Auckland newsreaders, so there is no basis for a geographical contrast within New Zealand.

An alternative explanation for the difference between Bell's findings and the Wellington patterns lies in style differences, since Bell's (1977) data involved radio newsreaders while the Wellington data is the most relaxed data obtained in a social dialect interview. If this were the case, however, one would surely expect, without any other evidence, that a following pause would inhibit newsreaders' reduction of consonant clusters more than it would affect interviewees' pronunciation in conversational style. Yet overall, this is not the case. Only one of Bell's 21 newsreaders distinguished markedly between these two environments, treating pause more like a consonant promoting CCR than like a vowel inhibiting it when reading on the more commercial stations.⁷

⁷ The fifteen year gap between Bell's Auckland study and the Porirua survey seems unlikely to be a relevant factor in view of the stability of the CCR variable over time suggested by the lack of variation in the data from different age groups described below.

Finally, however, it must be remembered that the relative difference is very small in the New Zealand data. It is not the case that following pause behaves more like an obstruent than a vowel in inhibiting CCR in Bell's data, as in the New York data. As table 2 demonstrates, and Bell notes quite explicitly (1977: 339), overall a following vowel and pause are more similar in their effects on CCR in his sample of New Zealand English than following pause and consonant.

It is also worth noting, for the benefit of future researchers, that the analytical effort involved in making fine divisions between different types of following consonants are probably not justified on the basis of the findings in this study. Consonants can be combined with minimal loss of information.⁸ A contrast between following consonant, vowel and pause seems likely to be adequate for most purposes.

Grammatical status of the final stop

The morpheme boundary constraint is also well-attested in earlier research. As Bell (1977: 327) notes, it has been confirmed for all social classes, ethnic groups, ages, genders and styles in American social dialect research. In their study of the speech of Black gang members and working class adults from Harlem, for example, Labov et al. (1968: 128) report a range from 5% CCR, when the cluster marks past tense and precedes a vowel, to 98% in monomorphemes before a consonant. Wolfram's Detroit data confirms this pattern. Although it does not include group sessions or casual speech, CCR scores nevertheless range between 6.8%, when the cluster marked past tense and preceded a vowel, to 97.3% in monomorphemes before a consonant.

Despite the widespread relevance of this constraint in the American studies, Bell (1977: 327) found that the morpheme boundary did not act as a constraint in his newsreaders' data. He suggests that perhaps "the morpheme constraint does not operate in New Zealand English", and recommends wider testing of this proposal (Bell 1977: 327-8). It was therefore a constraint we were keen to investigate in our survey of a wider range of New Zealand speakers.

The pattern which emerged from the Porirua conversational data was consistent with that found in overseas studies. CCR was much more likely when a

⁸ The only exception is the interaction between the following segment and the grammatical status of /t,d/. Obstruents tend to reduce more in monomorphemic words than glides do.

monomorphemic word was involved than when the final consonant followed a morpheme boundary.

Table 3
Porirua data: % CCR according to grammatical constraints

	%	No	Varbrul factor weight
J	69	381	0.73
M	44	468	0.56
N	42	446	0.45
D	36	39	0.41
#	23	61	0.36
+	20	61	0.38

N= 3706

As table 3 demonstrates, CCR is most likely when the relevant word is monomorphemic, with *just* by far the most favoured environment for reduction. (This contrasts with Neu's results for a much smaller sample where *just* did not behave markedly differently from other monomorphemic forms.) Other monomorphemic words (M) provide the next most favourable environment for CCR. The Varbrul factor weight for bimorphemic words such as *oldest* and *sexist* (D) indicates these have a different effect on the likelihood of CCR from monomorphemic words. It is also worth noting that *n't* does not always behave in exactly the same way as monomorphemic words. It resists reduction in some contexts where it is common for monomorphemic words. There is little difference, however, between forms involving the *n't* morpheme and bimorphemic forms, justifying the decision by some previous researchers not to analyse them separately.

When the final element signals past tense, CCR is significantly less likely, whether this involves semi-weak verbs like *slept* or regular past tense forms like *talked*. These two sets of past tense morphemes pattern almost identically in disfavouring CCR. (Incidentally the fact that adults tend to treat these categories similarly has been widely observed (cf however Guy 1991b), while children tend to treat semi-weak verbs as monomorphemic forms (Labov 1989: 92)).

Preceding segment

Turning to the phonetic nature of the first member of the cluster, this is reported as having an effect in some American studies (eg Labov 1975: 45; Fasold 1972: 70).

Guy (1980: 8) notes:

The previous studies have all indicated that the preceding consonant in the cluster also influences the probability of final /t,d/ deletion. Deletion generally seems to be more probable after /s/ than after any other consonants.

Bell (1977), however, found no frequency difference between, for example, preceding sonorants and obstruents, strident and non-strident consonants. This was another constraint which therefore seemed worth examining in our New Zealand data.

The Porirua data did provide some evidence of an effect from the features of the phonetic segment preceding the final segment, ie the first consonant in a CC cluster, the second in a CCC cluster. It is also worth noting that while we used a five way analysis, following Guy (1980) and the principle of making more rather than fewer distinctions in this first analysis of New Zealand social dialect data, there is some justification in the pattern of the results for the reduction to four categories made by Guy in a later paper (1991: 232), where he combines stops and non-sibilant fricatives. As table 4 reveals, these two categories are not significantly differentiated by frequency of CCR in our results.

Table 4

Porirua data: % CCR according to preceding phonetic segment

	%	No	Varbrul factor weight
S	56	631	0.66
N	38	791	0.45
F	26	28	0.53
P	22	48	0.49
L	18	35	0.33

N= 3706

A combination of sibilant plus /t,d/ clearly favours CCR most strongly. The Varbrul factor weight indicates that other preceding fricatives provide the next most favourable environment for CCR. (The Varbrul factor weight takes account

of such factors as the number of tokens of a particular variant, and in this case half of the tokens of /s/ involved the item *just*. The differences between S and F are minimal once *just* is excluded.)⁹ Stops have little effect while nasals and liquids disfavour CCR in this data. There is undoubtedly some interaction here with the /l/ vocalisation process which is currently well established in New Zealand English. Vocalisation of /l/ means we are no longer dealing with a consonant cluster. (Our impression is that /l/ vocalisation, especially before /t/, favours retention of the final consonant, often in the form of a glottal stop.)

Stress

Stress has not proved an important factor in CCR reduction in previous studies: Fasold (1972) identifies it as a fourth level constraint and Guy (1980) describes its effect as "minor". If stress had any effect, one would expect that unstressed syllables would favour CCR. This is the direction of the difference found in this study between the likelihood of CCR in stressed vs unstressed syllables. CCR occurred in 46% of unstressed syllables (Varbrul factor weight: 0.624) compared to 40% of stressed syllables (Varbrul factor weight: 0.457). The effect is small but highly significant. In other words, there was a small but significant tendency for CC reduction to be favoured in unstressed syllables.

Length of cluster

The length of the consonant cluster had little effect on the overall rate of CCR. As Guy (1980: 9) comments, one would expect a higher probability of CCR with triple clusters than those with double clusters. However, he did not examine his data quantitatively as CCC clusters were "somewhat rare (and predominantly past tense verbs)". There were 114 instances of CCC clusters in our data (3% of the total), so they were not common in this sample either. However, the direction of CCR was not that predicted on length of cluster alone. Only 35% of CCC clusters were reduced, compared to 42% of CC clusters. This suggests that other factors, such as the phonetic features of the following segment and the grammatical status of the relevant item, were more important in accounting for the amount of CCR in clusters of different lengths. Further analysis confirmed this.

⁹ The results represented by such tables are as much a reflection of grammatical class membership as phonological environment. The Varbrul factor weight does not deal well with this inter-relationship.

Overall, then, our results for the effects of linguistic constraints on CCR reflect those of overseas studies. The over-riding influences on the extent of CCR are the nature of the following phonetic segment, with consonants favouring reduction much more strongly than vowels, and the grammatical status of the relevant lexical items, with monomorphemic forms favouring CCR more strongly than those involving tense markers. While other linguistic factors, such as the phonetic features of the preceding segment also contribute to the likelihood of CCR, their influence is considerably less significant. The small differences noted between the New Zealand English data collected from Auckland radio newsreaders by Bell (1977), and this more recent Wellington sample seem most likely to be due to differences in the style of speech involved in the different samples. We turn now to a consideration of the effect of social factors on the extent of CCR in New Zealand English.

Social constraints

Previous research on CCR has identified a range of potentially relevant social factors including social class, gender, age, ethnicity, style, and the extent of "racial isolation" (Wolfram 1969). Bell (1977) considered the effect of the social characteristics of the speaker's audience. In the Porirua survey we focussed on social class, gender, age, ethnicity, and social network. Once again, our results largely reflect the kinds of patterns reported overseas.

Social class

Social class has consistently proved the most significant social variable involved in consonant cluster analysis. Wolfram's (1969) study of Detroit Black speech showed that social class had a consistent effect on the rates of CCR in his data. There was a regular increase in the amount of CCR as the social class of speakers moved from upper middle through lower middle to upper working and lower working. Moreover, this regularity held within each of the two major linguistic constraints. The amount of CCR used by Black speakers from different social classes ranged from 6.8% for the highest social group (in bimorphemic clusters followed by a vowel) to 97.3% for the lowest social group (in monomorphemic clusters followed by a consonant).

As one would expect then, there was a clear and significant distinction between the amount of CCR among the working class informants compared to

the middle class informants in the Porirua data.¹⁰ The score for the working class was 40% (Varbrul factor weight 0.59) compared to 28% CCR for the middle class group (Varbrul factor weight 0.39). This class contrast is consistent across all age groups, but, interestingly, young middle class women, in particular, use significantly more CCR than their elders (Chi-square test: $p = 0.001$). Age grading may be more marked in the speech of this group because pressures to conform are proportionately greater as they get older, a point discussed further below. The gap in the amount of CCR used between middle aged middle class women and middle aged working class women (41% vs 22%) is very much greater than that between young women from each class (43% vs 38%).

Gender

Gender is another social variable which has produced consistent results in different social dialect surveys which have examined women's and men's use of CCR. As with many other sociolinguistic variables, women tend to use fewer vernacular forms than men. Clear gender differences in CCR were identified in the Detroit dialect survey, for example, with men deleting final /t,d/ considerably more frequently than women (Wolfram 1969). Comparing what he calls "the most socially diagnostic environments for monomorphemic and bimorphemic clusters", namely, when followed by a vowel, Wolfram (1969: 77) reports a range of CCR from 3.4% for Black upper middle class women to 39.0% for Black lower working class men for bimorphemic clusters, and 21.9% for Black upper middle class women compared to 79.1% for Black lower working class men for monomorphemic clusters. The greatest divergence between women's and men's usage in the Detroit Black data is found in the speech of the lower middle class group.

The patterns among American White informants are generally not so extreme. Indeed, Fasold (1972) found no differences between male and female rates of CCR, but Neu (1980) reports that the rate of CCR varied significantly with speaker gender in her small sample (8 men, 7 women). The men were more likely to simplify final clusters ending in /t,d/ than were the women (31.2% vs 24.1%). Neu (1980: 52-53) comments:

¹⁰ It is important to bear in mind that all class comparisons in the Porirua data involve only the Pakeha women, since this was the only group for which a middle class sample was collected. A chi square test gives a significance score of 0.001 for this class contrast.

If Trudgill's explanations of the observed differences in the use of linguistic variables among men and women are correct and applicable to American society as well as British, we might expect to see a neutralization of this distinction as sex roles and attitudes toward them become more flexible in Western society.

There is little sign of such neutralization in the New Zealand data. The men in our survey used significantly more CCR than women. Though the difference in the proportion of CCR is apparently small, with a score of 44% CCR for women compared to 39% for men, the Varbrul analysis indicates that gender has a significant effect. Indeed, using the Varbrul factor weight as an indication, gender is the most important social variable of all in this New Zealand data. The difference between women and men is observable in all age groups, with men consistently using a higher level of CCR than women.

It is also worth noting the overall relatively high levels of CCR for both genders in this New Zealand data, especially compared to Neu's (1980) study (24% vs 31%). This is not surprising however, given that her small sample consisted of highly educated informants, whereas the Porirua sample included a large working class component. It is also worth noting that the Porirua results confirm the widely reported observation that gender roles tend to be more sharply defined and polarised in the working class.

Age

There is not a great deal of data reporting the extent of CCR in the speech of different age groups. One would predict, given the fact that CCR appears to be a stable linguistic variable, that it would follow the standard age graded pattern suggested by Chambers and Trudgill (1980: 92), where older and younger people tend to use more vernacular forms than those in between who are under most social pressure to conform. The New York data reported in Labov et al. (1968) reflects this pattern with Black teenage gang members reducing consonant clusters more than working class Black adults from Harlem.

Wolfram (1969: 78-79) examined three age groups, namely, 10-12 year olds, 14-17 year-olds and 30-55 year olds. His data suggested social class may interact with age graded patterns of CCR. The pattern for different age groups was not consistent across social classes in the Detroit Black community. While middle class Black younger speakers use more CCR than older speakers, there was little

patterned age differentiation in the working class data. This would be consistent with the suggestion made above that social pressures underlie the more conformist behaviour of the middle-aged. Such social pressures seem more likely to evoke a response in middle class than working class speakers.

CCR certainly shows some age grading in our New Zealand data. As one would expect, in general, younger people use more CCR than middle aged and older people (43% vs 36% vs 37%). This supports the pattern referred to above where older people tend to use more standard forms than younger people. There is some age grading for all environments, but, interestingly, it is particularly marked for *just*. Younger people tend to use *jus'* rather than *just* considerably more often than older people. For young Pakeha middle class women, in particular, *jus'* is almost categorical (88% CCR), with one speaker using 100% CCR. (Note, however, that because the number of tokens per speaker is small, categorical use does not differentiate this speaker significantly from the rest of her sub-group). This evidence on the pronunciation of *just* by young people confirms the wisdom of the decision to treat *just* separately, since it patterns differently from other monomorphemic words here.

As mentioned above, young Pakeha women, especially those from the middle class ($p < 0.001$), used a higher percentage of CCR than middle-aged and older women, a pattern which supports the suggestion that the stable age-graded curve suggested by Chambers and Trudgill may be more typical of middle class than working class speakers. But the pattern is evident to some extent in the speech of all groups except that of Maori working class males. See table 5.

The contrast between Pakeha and Maori men is intriguing. The pattern for Pakeha men illustrates the age-graded curve almost perfectly; this group uses least CCR in their middle years ($p < 0.001$). Maori men, by contrast, use *more* of the vernacular CCR in middle age, a relatively unusual pattern, especially for a linguistic feature such as CCR which is generally regarded as a stable variable. This suggests the pressures to conform to Pakeha norms of standard English are experienced least by middle aged Maori men. It is interesting to speculate about why this should be. Perhaps, for instance, employment opportunities for this group are somewhat different than those for their Pakeha peers. Or in middle age they may feel more confident and less vulnerable to the social pressures of a society run by Pakeha.

Table 5
Porirua data: % CCR according to age, gender, ethnicity and class

	Young	Middle	Old
Pakeha women			
middle class	38	22	23
working class	43	41	37
Maori women	38	34	39
Pakeha men	52	35	46
Maori men	45	51	40

Total	1602	1562	1501

N=4665

In considering the interaction of age with other social variables, we have introduced some discussion of the relevance of ethnicity in patterns of CCR. This is the next variable to be considered.

Ethnicity

Ethnic differences are often reflected in speech, but the particular linguistic features which signal ethnicity differ between communities. Wolfram contrasted White and Black speakers from the upper middle class and found that Black speakers consistently used more CCR than White speakers: eg Black speakers used 51.0% CCR in monomorphemic clusters compared to 38.7% for White speakers in the same context; Blacks used 22.6% CCR before a vowel compared to 11.5% by White speakers in that environment. It appears then that greater use of the vernacular form serves as an ethnicity marker in Black American speech.

There were, however, no overall ethnic differences in the level of CCR in the New Zealand data. The CCR score for Maori informants (41%) was almost identical to that of Pakeha informants (42%). Clearly, CCR is one vernacular feature which is not ethnically significant per se in New Zealand English.

The only point at which ethnicity seemed a relevant factor on our data was identified in the interaction between age, gender and ethnicity which was discussed in the previous section. As table 5 demonstrated, Maori men contrast with Pakeha men in using more rather than less CCR in middle age. Maori

women, on the other hand, do not differ significantly from Pakeha women in the general pattern of CCR they demonstrate. Indeed, overall, they use somewhat less CCR than Pakeha women, except in old age. Differences between Maori and Pakeha are therefore concentrated in the contrast between middle aged men, which suggests that factors other than ethnicity are involved.

Our analysis also allowed us to take account of whether a syllable was stressed or not, a factor which we surmised might interact with ethnicity, since it has been suggested that Maori people use different patterns of stress in English than Pakeha. However, this turned out not to be the case: stress had no effect on this result.

Integration into different communities

The degree to which a person is integrated into their local community has been measured in different ways in different speech communities. Milroy (1980) used network analysis to establish the extent and kind of social contacts people had with others in the Belfast community. Wolfram (1969) included a measure of "racial isolation" in his analysis of Detroit speech. This consisted of an independent index of the areas of contact between Black and White Americans in the population under study. This proved an interesting means of measuring contact between different ethnic groups. Wolfram's index comprised three different components: residential isolation (ie based on the proportion of Black people in the area an informant lived in), educational isolation (based on the amount of racial mixing in the school an informant attended), and peer group isolation (ie the ethnicity of an individual's friends and acquaintances).

Using this measure, six Black informants were clearly differentiated from the rest of the informants in terms of the greater extent of their contact with White peers. In the discussion of CCR, Wolfram (1969: 80-81) notes that the linguistic patterns of these informants resemble those of their White peers more closely than those of their Black peers. His data allow comparison between upper middle class White speakers and upper middle class Black speakers with these different levels of contact with Whites. The differences are very marked. For example, the amount of CCR in monomorphemic contexts used by upper middle class White speakers is 11.0%. The CCR rate of Black speakers who mix with White speakers is very similar at 12.5%, compared to 29.0% for those with predominantly Black peers. (Wolfram points out, however, that these figures are based on a small sample and that there is little difference between adult White and Black speakers.

The difference is mainly due to the extremely high level of CCR (45%) used by three young Black informants with mainly Black peers.)

Wolfram's racial isolation index is the converse of a Maori Integration Index which we developed in order to measure the extent of an individual's integration into the Maori community (Bell, Holmes and Boyce 1993). Indeed two of the components of Wolfram's index (residential area and ethnicity of social contacts) are identical to criteria we identified as relevant for our Maori Integration Index. However, perhaps not surprisingly since ethnic differences in rates of CCR were minimal, there was no real difference in the rates of CCR among those with different Maori integration scores in the Porirua data. There was overall no evidence of any systematic correlation between levels of CCR and different MII scores.

Wolfram found that the tendency to mix mainly with one's own vs the "other" ethnic group was reflected in the rates of CC deletion of *young* Black Detroiters aged between ten and seventeen. The Porirua study did not include a group of pre-adolescents and teenagers, so it is possible that the behaviour of younger informants might show some differences in rates of CCR which relate to degrees of integration with the Maori community. However, it is important to note that, in general, ethnicity was not a significant variable so this is not a very likely scenario.

Conclusion

Consonant cluster reduction is an interesting process because of its wide applicability, both linguistically and socially. It can be seen as part of the general tendency in Indo-European languages to lose information at the end of words, as well as evidence of universal tendencies or generalizations about language: eg the tendency for languages to have unmarked syllable structure CVCVCV, the generalization that CVC syllables are more common than CVCC, and that full morphemes are less likely to be deleted than parts of morphemes (Guy 1980: 10).

Consonant cluster reduction is also socially widespread. It appears to occur to a greater or lesser extent in the speech of all native speakers of English in a wide variety of social contexts. Guy (1980: 11) comments that it is "quite general among all English speakers". While the precise levels of CCR differ between social groups and speech communities, the ordering of the constraints is

remarkably uniform. In all speech communities which have been examined CCR is more common before consonants than vowels, and more common in monomorphemic words than bimorphemic words.¹¹ With minor qualifications relating to dialect variation, Guy suggests

it is a stable variable rule that is uniformly compelling on all speakers, and that any indications to the contrary would be due to insufficient data (1980: 34).

The analysis of this variable in the Porirua data demonstrates that these patterns are generally confirmed in this first analysis of a social spectrum of New Zealand speakers. Not only is CCR more common before a consonant than a vowel, but the precise consonants which follow have the same effect as they do in those dialects of American English which have been studied. And, also as in overseas studies, CCR was much more likely when a monomorphemic word was involved than when the final consonant followed a morpheme boundary. In this study, stress had a small but significant effect, so that clusters at the end of unstressed words were more likely to be reduced than those in stressed words. Other phonological constraints such as the phonetic nature of the first segment of the cluster and cluster length were considerably less significant in determining the likelihood of CCR.

In terms of social factors, social class and gender are clearly the most significant factors in the New Zealand data, as in many overseas studies. Indeed the relationship between CCR and social class is quite remarkably uniform across speech communities. Working class New Zealanders use more CCR than middle class New Zealanders, and men use more CCR than women. Age grading is also apparent in the data, as in American social dialect research, supporting the perception of CCR as a relatively stable age-graded feature of vernacular New Zealand as well as American English. Interestingly, the word *just* is almost categorically reduced to *jus'* in the speech of young people. If this was a change in progress we would infer lexical diffusion with *just* the leading environment of change. This was particularly clear in the speech of middle class Pakeha women and working class Pakeha men. However, it seems more likely in the light of overseas evidence that we are dealing with a regular age graded feature, and that young people's CCR usage will decrease with age. The familiar pattern of increasing conformity to social norms with age was very clear in the amount

¹¹ Guy (1980) demonstrated that these regularities applied even at the individual level provided an adequate sample of speech was analysed.

of CCR used by these groups. Middle aged Maori men, on the other hand, appeared to be responding to different pressures. It may be that the employment opportunities of this group are rather different from those of their Pakeha peers and that this has some influence on their susceptibility to pressure to conform to standard speech norms.

Overall, however, it seems clear that CCR is not a feature distinguishing between the Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders in this sample. There are no significant differences in the levels of CCR in Maori and Pakeha working class speech; this provides a marked contrast with American English where CCR is much higher in Black dialects. Nor do the results of this analysis show any effect from people's degree of integration into the Maori community.

Consonant cluster analysis has been much studied - especially in the United States. This first analysis of its distribution in New Zealand English has largely confirmed the generalisations established in studies of English elsewhere. In terms of linguistic constraints, we can add stress to the well-established effects of following phonetic segment and grammatical status, and note the evidence that the frequently occurring word *just* is best identified separately from other monomorphemic words.

In terms of social constraints, while most results reflected expected patterns, it is worth noting that an examination of interactions between age, gender and ethnicity revealed an unexpected pattern which was not apparent on initial analysis. It seems likely that consonant cluster analysis will continue to be not only a touchstone for social dialectology, but a continuing source of potential insight into the complex internal patterns of community interaction.

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Language maintenance and shift in the Italian community in Wellington

Camille Plimmer

Abstract

This paper reports on patterns of language maintenance and shift among members of the Italian community in Wellington. It examines the reported language proficiency, language use patterns and language attitudes of sixteen members of that community. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The results reveal a reduction in language proficiency and use among members of the second generation of the Italian community in Wellington compared to the first generation, and the dominance of English compared to Italian in all domains for all participants. With respect to attitudes, Italian and Italian language maintenance is generally viewed very positively, though Italian dialects are considered less prestigious than standard Italian by most. The community as a whole enjoys a positive self-image. This would seem to augur well for language maintenance efforts, but it is clear that such efforts need to be increased if Italian is to survive to the third generation in Wellington.

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Introduction

The maintenance of one's own language is a major factor in developing a strong sense of identity, of knowing 'where one comes from', which in turn contributes to self-confidence and positive attitudes (Waite 1992: 16).

This paper reports on a study of maintenance and shift in the use of Italian and Italian dialects in the Italian community in Wellington (ICW). In the past few years there have been several studies of patterns of language maintenance and shift among different ethnic communities in the Wellington region. Pat Adlam (1987) reports on the Indonesian community; 'Anahina' Aipolo (1989) focussed on the recently arrived Tongan community; Mary Roberts (1990) researched the Cantonese Chinese community in Wellington, and Maria Verivaki (1990)

describes patterns of language maintenance and shift among the close knit Wellington Greek community. Smaller studies have also looked at the language maintenance efforts of Sri Lankans in New Zealand (Daly 1990), and Samoans (Pilkington 1989) and Polish people (Neazor 1991) in the Wellington area.

These studies were all undertaken in slightly different ways due to the distinctive characteristics of each community, but the main findings are comparable. In general, the longer a community has been established in New Zealand the more evidence there is of language shift from the community language to English. Attitudes to community languages are generally positive, though communities differed in terms of their awareness of the danger of language loss for community members over time.

During my last year in college I was an exchange student in Italy. During this year I learnt Italian and I became interested in the linguistic situation in Italy. Upon my return to New Zealand I studied Italian at university and my interest in the interaction between accents and dialects grew. This interest in Italy led to my making contact with the Italian community in Wellington. In the light of the studies referred to above, I decided it would be interesting to investigate similar issues in relation to the ICW. In particular I wanted to investigate

- (i) whether Italian is still used in the ICW
- (ii) if so, which variety of Italian is used
- (iii) the attitudes of members of the ICW towards Italian and the notion of language maintenance.

Though my study would necessarily be small, it seemed worthwhile since no previous research has asked such questions in New Zealand. The only previous research on Italian in New Zealand was undertaken by Kinder (1987) who examined the language of the Italian community in Turangi during the 1960s construction of a hydro-electric dam. His focus was on transference markers and the phonological and syntactic features of the community's Italian as it came into contact with English. In Australia, Clyne (1985) used census data to trace patterns of language maintenance and shift among the larger Australian Italian population, but no similar study has been possible in New Zealand because there is no equivalent census data available. My study is therefore the first to examine the use of Italian by members of the Italian speech community in Wellington.

Factors influencing language maintenance

Giles et al. (1977) provides a useful model for the analysis of language maintenance and shift, identifying three groups of relevant factors which may influence language shift: status factors, demographic factors, and institutional support factors.

Status factors

Status factors include the economic and social status of community members in the wider society, the sociohistorical status of the group reflecting its history and the status of its language relative to other languages used in the wider community. Minority group members often have low socio-economic status and this tends to encourage shift towards the majority language, command of which is seen as a means of improving this situation. The status of a community language both within the community and in the larger host society is also a relevant factor in predicting the likely rate of language shift. Languages with high status or which are highly valued are better placed to resist shift. A valued language is also more likely to be used regularly in the home. The home is often the last domain of a community language and is therefore a very important one.

Demographic factors

Demographic factors include the size of the group and its geographical distribution, as well as considerations such as the prevalence of intermarriage. It is often assumed that the larger the group the easier language maintenance will be, since people will have more chance to use the community language. However, this is not universally accepted. Grosjean (1982: 108), for example, argues that if a group is small and close-knit, the leaders will be able to control the group better, and this will aid maintenance. Milroy's (1980) research on social networks also suggests that close-knit communities tend to emphasise group norms including linguistic norms. Clearly, then, the relative importance of factors such as the size of the group and its cohesion may well vary from group to group.

Pilkington's (1990) study of language patterns in the Samoan community provides evidence that marrying outside the community generally contributes to language shift. Despite a positive attitude towards the Samoan language, it was not used in homes where one of the partners was not a Samoan as much as it was in homes where both partners were Samoan. Verivaki (1990) also found

this pattern in the Greek community where intermarriage is often strongly opposed and young people still sometimes return to Greece to find a partner.

Institutional support factors

This factor refers to the extent to which a community language is represented in institutions such as government, church, education and the media. A community language which enjoys institutional support in such areas has a much greater chance of being maintained than a language which has no recognised legal status, and which is not used in church, school or in newspapers and on television.

Most of the Wellington communities which have been investigated do not enjoy government support for language maintenance efforts. However, they generally use the community language in their own religious services and community social events. Many have also established community schools, usually funded and supported by the community members. Community schools that either use the language as a medium of instruction or teach it as a second language can make a useful contribution to language maintenance. Neazor (1991), for example, reports the importance of the Polish language community school which provides third generation children with a chance to learn Polish. Recently many language nests or preschools where the community language is used as the medium of instruction have sprung up around Wellington. The Maori community has led the way in this area and it has obtained some degree of institutional support from the government in its efforts to maintain Maori.

These factors provide a useful means of interpreting the evidence on patterns of language maintenance and shift among the ICW.

Italian and the Italian community

The Italian language

Italian is a Romance language which exists in many different social and regional varieties. The main distinction relevant to this paper is between the dialects and more formal standard Italian. The formal standard can be understood throughout Italy but Italian dialects are so different from one another that some are mutually unintelligible, especially those from different ends of the peninsula. They are rarely written. In this paper I will use the term "Italian" to refer to the standard variety and "dialect" to refer to other varieties.

When Italy was unified in 1861 most people spoke only their dialect. Italian was spoken by an estimated 2% of the population. Since 1861 the shift away from the dialects towards standard Italian has been massive. Nowadays most Italians speak Italian in some form and many, especially in urban areas, claim that it is the only language they know. Two important factors that have contributed to this shift have been the spread of education and the extent of internal migration after the second World War.

Although standard Italian is the prestige form, different regional accents of Italian also have prestige. In general, the closer an accent is to the Tuscan accent the higher prestige it has. This is because standard Italian was largely based on the Florentine dialect spoken at the time that Dante wrote his Poem, *La Divina Commedia*. Dialects have less overt prestige than Italian in general, but in recent years there has been a movement to revitalize the dialects and their prestige appears to be growing (Burnley 1972).

Italians in New Zealand

The first Italians to travel to New Zealand came with Captain Cook in the Endeavour in 1769 (Ballara 1975: 7). The first settler, Salvatore Cimino, is documented as being in Wellington in 1842, but it was not until the 1870s that the numbers began to grow. In 1878 there were 538 Italian-born people living in New Zealand.

Subsequent Italian migration followed, in the main, a pattern of chain migration (Burnley 1972: 9). Chains began from northern Italian provinces, between 1900 and 1914 and were still active in 1970. During the inter-war period there was a large influx with most people settling in the Hutt Valley and Wellington (Burnley 1972: 20). Another chain stemmed from Tuscany with immigration to market gardens in Nelson and the Hutt Valley (Laracy and Laracy 1973: 17). The two largest chains came from Stromboli, an island off the Sicilian coast, and the province of Naples, more particularly Sorrento or Massalubrense.

After the second World War a small group of refugees and war brides came to New Zealand. Kinder (1987) reports on 500 Italians who came to work on a hydro-electric complex near Turangi in the late 1960s. However most of these people have subsequently returned to Italy. Clearly, then, the Italian community

in New Zealand has fluctuated in numbers, but today is relatively stable at around 3000¹.

The Italian community in Wellington

Most members of the Italian speech community in the Wellington area live in Island Bay, a suburb to the south of Wellington city centre. Many businesses there are run by ICW members, including various businesses related to the fishing industry which in the past was the main area of employment for the ICW.

The main focus of social activities of the Italian community in Wellington is the Garibaldi Club, which was established in 1882. The early establishment of this club shows how long the ICW has been active. The Garibaldi Club runs social afternoons every Sunday where members can get together, relax, play indoor bowls and other indoor social activities - and speak Italian. In past years there was a concern that the younger members of ICW were not taking a great part in the Garibaldi Club activities and a special effort was made to include them when planning for the new premises was in progress. This effort was rewarded and the result has been a wider age range of people attending the club afternoons. This gives everyone more opportunity to speak Italian. The Garibaldi Club also has two soccer teams that are made up of ICW members,

Closely linked to the Garibaldi Club is the Circolo Italiano. This is a group of people interested in promoting the culture and language of Italy. The Circolo Italiano runs Italian language classes for adults and these are attended mainly by non-Italians. Italian language classes for adults are also run at Wellington High School and the Centre for Continuing Education at Victoria University of Wellington. Victoria University also has undergraduate courses in Italian and a steady trickle of students over the years have been of Italian descent. Often ICW members begin these classes knowing their dialect but little standard Italian.

A number of community based activities also contribute to language maintenance. St Francis de Sales school in Island Bay runs children's Italian classes on a Saturday morning and these are well attended by ICW members. The Italian Embassy supports the ICW by paying for a teacher for these classes. The St

¹ This figure was obtained from the Italian Embassy. Obtaining accurate figures for the size of the community is difficult since the Census records only those born overseas and does not distinguish finely enough between European groups.

Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Island Bay holds mass in Italian once a month. There is an Italian language broadcast on Radio Access every Sunday for half an hour.

It should be clear from all this that the Italian community is an active community with strong network ties (Milroy 1980). It should also be clear that Italian language and culture are valued since a variety of active steps are taken to maintain them.

Method

Though I could speak Italian and was interested in Italian culture, I was nonetheless an outsider in the Wellington Italian speech community. This status turned out to have some advantages. People did not assume I knew relevant facts or historical information and they were very willing to tell me anecdotes and supply me with information about the Italian community. My knowledge of Italian was important as an indication of good faith; it provided an acceptable rationale for my interest in the community.

Designing the questionnaire

Having talked to some members of the community in a preliminary way, I decided to devise a questionnaire and ask a selected sample of members of the Italian community to fill it out. I intended to be present while they did this in order to elucidate anything which seemed obscure and to assist where necessary. I chose this method because, without extensive experience of interviewing, I was not confident of my ability to direct conversation using a simple list of questions or interview schedule. The questionnaire method guaranteed coverage of all the relevant questions and had the additional advantage of being easier to process for comparing results.

After consulting a range of research, I devised a questionnaire which seemed appropriate to the Italian community in Wellington. It was very much influenced by Maria Verivaki's (1990) questionnaire used with the Greek community since this seemed most relevant. There are in fact many similarities between the Greek community and ICW. Both communities began arriving in New Zealand around the same time, both followed a pattern of chain migration, and both came from Southern Europe.

My original questionnaire was checked and modified after discussions with other class members and a pilot interview was conducted. For example, I moved the background information section (which asked for personal details on education, age etc) to the end of the questionnaire, and began with the questions on language ability and use. This gave more obvious face validity to the questionnaire and left questions which might seem intrusive to the end, allowing time for some trust and rapport to be established.

The final questionnaire contained four sections. The first focussed on language ability. People were asked to report on their language abilities in English, standard Italian and Italian dialect. They were asked about their ability to understand and speak all three, and their ability to read and write standard Italian and English. I also asked about the language varieties spoken by other members of their families. Language ability was self-reported because it would have been too difficult to administer a test or to judge for myself on the basis of a conversation. Past studies (e.g. Roberts 1990) suggest that this is a reasonably reliable way to gauge people's ability especially if only intra-group comparison is involved.

The second section of the questionnaire related to language use. This gave participants the opportunity to state how often they used each language, Italian, Italian dialect and English, in different domains such as in the home, church, in shops, with friends and so on. Participants occasionally listed one variety as the one they "always" used, and a second variety as one they "sometimes" used. By discussing responses with informants I found that when they selected this combination, they were interpreting "sometimes" as including "rarely". Clearly a choice such as "sometimes" is ambiguous and could be interpreted to include both "relatively often" and "relatively rarely". This is always a problem when devising concise questions and interpreting responses accurately.

The third section surveyed attitudes to language using a series of statements the participants ranked 1-5 depending on whether they strongly agreed or strongly disagreed with a proposal. The statements were based on those used in Aipolo (1989) and Verivaki (1990) and included both positive and negative statements towards both Italian and dialect: eg "Italian is a beautiful language," "I want my children to learn an Italian dialect", "Knowing Italian is of no use to anyone in New Zealand".

The final section of the questionnaire sought personal information about the respondents such as place of birth, age, education, occupation and community involvement. Participants were told that their anonymity would be protected and that this section was included only to permit the correlation of language variables and social variables.

I gave the questionnaire to sixteen members of the ICW. Each person was interviewed individually so that they could ask questions if there were problems. The participants were eight men and eight women with four of each sex interviewed from the first and second generations. The sample design was therefore as follows:

	Female	Male
1st generation	4	4
2nd generation	4	4

Administering the questionnaire

The questionnaire was written only in English for several reasons. Firstly I expected that many of those I would be interviewing would be either dominant in English or monolingual English speakers. Secondly, among older people I expected that most, if not all, would speak a dialect of Italian as their dominant language. This meant no written form was available. I was, however, prepared to translate or explain questions into Italian if the need arose.

I contacted my informants through a friend who was a member of the Garibaldi Club. I was made very welcome at their Sunday social afternoons and there I managed to identify and talk to people who fitted my preferred sample design.

Though ideally I would have liked to conduct all interviews in people's homes, it became clear that this was impracticable given the amount of time available. Nine of the sixteen interviews therefore took place at the Garibaldi Club spread over several consecutive Sunday afternoons. One participant was interviewed at their place of work. The rest of the interviews were done in people's homes. Most people filled in the questionnaire themselves with assistance from me

when questions were unclear. A few asked me to fill it in and sat beside me as we worked on it together.

Results

Participants' backgrounds

I was dependent on the goodwill of participants to obtain responses to the questionnaire in this small survey. It was not therefore possible to control for social variables beyond those selected for investigation, namely generation and gender. The second generation on average were younger than the first generation group, and most were around the age of twenty. The first generation ranged between 45 and 60+.

The educational level of participants in the second generation group was higher than those in the first; the second generation group were mainly tertiary students while none of the first generation informants had more than some secondary education. Almost everyone in the first generation was, or had been until they retired, in some type of paid employment. Economic constraints on new immigrants meant that women often needed to work outside the home.

Nine participants came from, or their parents came from, the Naples region. This is testimony to the strength of the Massalubrense immigration chain. The next largest group of three participants had their origins in Stromboli. The more recent immigrants are more scattered and from the North of Italy.

Language ability

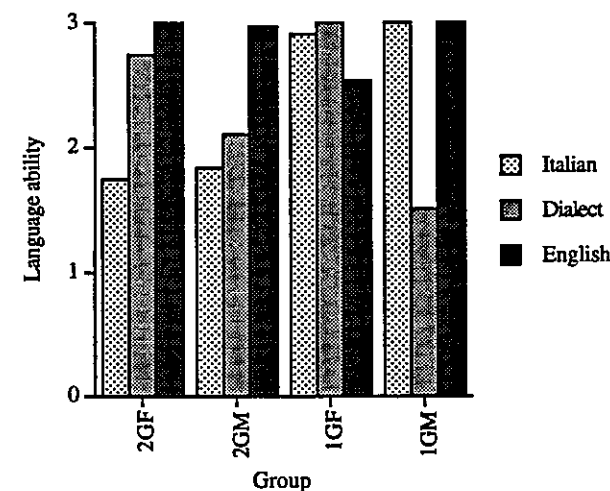
The reported language ability in the ICW was relatively high in all three language varieties surveyed. The results were tabulated by giving a score of 0 for no reported ability, 1 for minimal ability (eg greetings), 2 for some ability (eg simple conversation) and 3 for fluent ability. No one reported no knowledge of Italian or dialect, and all reported high fluency in English. One might perhaps have expected a correlation between level of education and ability in English, but in fact there was no relevant correlation between level of education and reported language ability.

Another factor which was considered in relation to language ability was the length of time spent in New Zealand for first generation participants. This varied from eight to fifty-four years. Though I was born in New Zealand, and he

was not, one participant told me, "I've been here longer than you. I'm more of a kiwi than you are." But, in fact, figures on length of time in New Zealand did not appear to be related to levels of reported ability in English. In fact the participant who had been here the shortest time reported excellent ability in English. The relevant factor appeared to be his age at immigration which was below ten years of age.

The most relevant factor correlating with language ability was clearly generation. Figure 1 shows the results for each generation and gender group in relation to oral forms of the languages. 2GF refers to second generation females, 2GM to second generation males, 1GF refers to first generation females and 1GM to first generation males.

Figure 1
Reported oral language ability
by generation and gender



Reported ability in English is high even for the first generation groups, though it is interesting to note that the first generation men report higher proficiency than first generation women, a pattern found in other communities too (see Holmes 1993). Perhaps, the most interesting aspect of these results is the reported

proficiency in Italian compared to dialect. The low figure for ability in a dialect in the first generation men's group is influenced by the fact that two men reported no ability at all in a dialect. One of these men was a relatively recent immigrant, arriving in New Zealand only eight years ago. The other was from northern Italy. The decline in the use of dialects, especially in northern Italy may well be a relevant factor in both cases. These results contrast with those of Bettoni and Gibbons (1988) for Australia. They comment that there is no such thing as a homogeneous Italian speech community, since most Italians in Australia speak dialect rather than standard Italian. If my results are reliable, they suggest that standard Italian and dialect are both used in the Wellington speech community.

It is interesting to note, however, that the second generation report higher proficiency in dialect than in Italian and this is especially true for the women. As mentioned above, most informants come from southern Italy and they use the Neapolitan dialect. For these families it is dialect which is used in the home, and it is dialect that their children have learned best. The pattern of higher language maintenance by second generation women is again a familiar one (Holmes 1983). It is also interesting to note however, that limited ability in standard Italian is also reported by second generation informants.

Figure 2 shows reported ability in the written forms of language. Dialect is not included because it is normally not written. Figure 2 shows rather more clearly the shift away from Italian by the second generation groups. While ability in writing and reading English is high over all four groups, the ability to read and write Italian is minimal in the second generation. The decline in the ability to read and write Italian compared to English in the second generation is a very clear indication of the extent of shift towards English. There are few differences between women and men, though, as with oral proficiency, first generation men report somewhat higher ability in reading and writing English than first generation women.

Language use

When we turn to examine reported patterns of language use, the shift towards English is rather more evident. The results were analysed for domain, gender and generation. A score of 0 was given when the participant reported never using a language, 1 was allocated for a report that they sometimes used a language and 2 points were given if the participants reported always using a

language in a particular domain. The scores were then averaged and the results over different situations are shown in figure 3.

Figure 2
Reported reading and writing ability by generation and gender

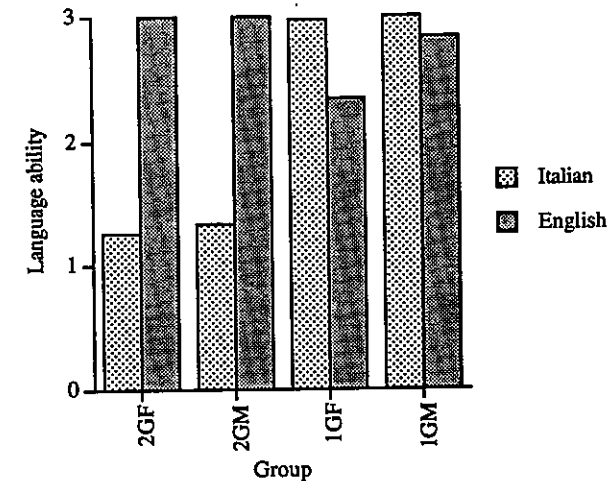


Figure 3 reveals that over every domain English is used more often than either a dialect or Italian. The only domain where a dialect came even close to English was in the home. Italian is used least in all situations except church, where standard Italian is felt to be more appropriate than dialect. Several people reported using Italian dialect at a fish and chip shop in Island Bay where the proprietor is Italian. Others reported using it when they didn't want the shop assistant to know what they were saying. But on the whole it is clear that English dominates in most domains, with dialect next and Italian used very little indeed.

Figure 4 shows the patterns of use of different varieties for the different groups being examined over all domains. Though there are differences between groups, the overall pattern of English as the dominant language is clear. For all groups except the first generation males, the dialect is used next most often, and standard Italian least often. Interestingly, first generation males report that they

Figure 3
Language use by situation

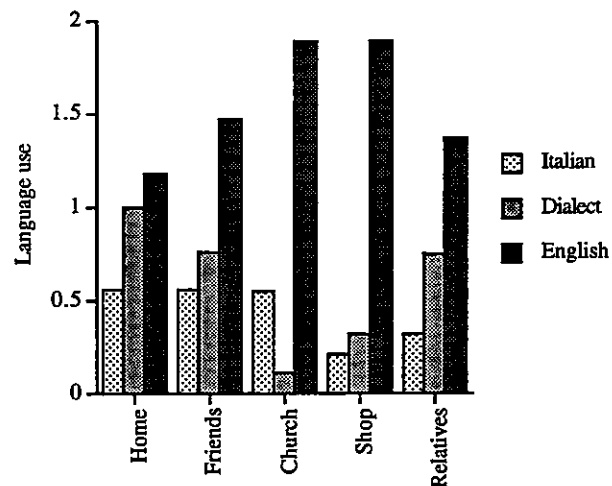
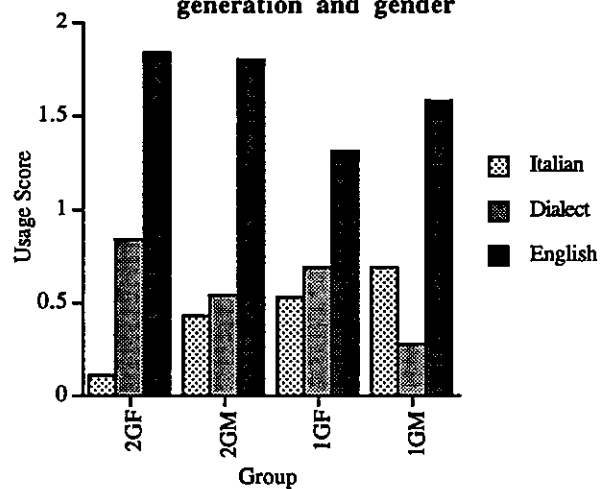


Figure 4
Language usage by generation and gender



use standard Italian more often than Italian dialect. As I noted above, however, this is a reflection of my small sample which included two males who were more proficient in Italian than dialect. In most situations, of course, the choice would be restricted by the linguistic repertoire of the person being addressed and my questionnaire was not sufficiently detailed on this point. It was reflected, however, in comments from informants such as "it depends who I am talking to".

Attitudes to language

Analysis of the responses to the attitude questions involved grouping responses according to whether they were positive or negative towards standard Italian, Italian dialect and Italian culture. Numeric values 1-5 were assigned to each response, averaged these for each question and then for each group of respondents. The lower the score the more positive the attitude. The results are presented in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
Attitudes to learning and using standard Italian
(1 = very positive)

Group	Positive Statements	Negative Statements
2GF	1.55	4.25
2GM	1.65	3.66
1GF	1.6	2.92
1GM	1.8	3.09

The results provide a consistent picture. A low score on positive statements correlates with a high score on negative statements. Table 1 shows that second generation women express the strongest negative views about losing Italian and the strongest positive views about maintaining it. This is a pattern which has been noted among women in other minority ethnic communities (see Holmes 1993). It is also clear that the second generation in general appear to hold stronger views about language maintenance than members of the first generation. This may reflect the common finding that it is only in the second or third generation that people become aware of the danger of language loss (eg Fishman 1991).

Table 2
Attitudes towards dialect compared to Italian
(1 = very positive)

Group	Dialect	Italian
2GF	2.625	2.25
2GM	2.75	3.00
1GF	3.625	1.25
1GM	3.25	1.75

Table 2 compares attitudes towards Italian dialect compared to standard Italian. Once again the lower the score the more positive the attitude. Overall people did not express such positive views in these questions and the patterns are quite different for each generation. The first generation reports decidedly more positive attitudes towards standard Italian than towards the dialect, while there is no such a distinction in the responses of the second generation. This may reflect the contact which the first generation have had with attitudes in Italy where the standard has great overt prestige. Interestingly, second generation women had the most negative attitudes towards Italian dialect, despite the fact that they reported using it more often than the standard. This downgrading of the dialect seems to indicate the extent of the overt prestige of the standard for these women. Their use of the dialect no doubt reflects the preferences and linguistic proficiency of their interlocuters and the appropriateness of the dialect in the domain where it is most commonly used, the home.

Finally, all groups expressed very positive attitudes towards Italian culture and they considered that preserving it was very important.

Discussion

This research project provided a great deal of information about the ICW, partly through discussion with speech community members at the Garibaldi Club and

elsewhere, and partly through the interviews and questionnaires completed by a small sample from this community.

Using the framework outlined in the introduction, the information collected through participant observation, and the interviews and questionnaires can be interpreted in terms of its implications for language maintenance and shift among the Italian community in Wellington.

Status factors

The members of the ICW I interviewed seemed to have a positive self-image and regarded being Italian positively. All participants in the survey reported that they liked to be Italian and to be recognized as Italian. Though the ICW itself is not a very visible or high status group in the wider New Zealand society, Italian shoes, clothes, and cars are considered prestigious and are valued and admired in New Zealand, and Italian food is considered attractive. "Italian designed" and "Made In Italy" are positive phrases used to advertise goods. This no doubt contributes to the positive view of themselves and their culture reported by members of the ICW. Belonging to a group widely recognised as having "style" and "class" clearly contributes to a positive self-image.

The questionnaire responses also revealed a very positive attitude towards maintaining standard Italian within the community. Even participants who reported not knowing Italian expressed positive and supportive views about the importance of maintaining it. Overall, the attitudes expressed within the Italian community augur well for language maintenance, provided some steps are taken to make it possible for second and third generation Italians to learn the language. Although the second generation express positive attitudes to both dialect and Italian, it would seem most realistic, given the resources available to focus attention on making standard Italian available more widely.

Another factor that is important is the attitudes of members of the wider Wellington community to the Italian language. Negative attitudes towards speakers of other languages were once widespread in New Zealand society. One elderly participant recounted a story of how he and his friend were told by a man on the bus: "You're in New Zealand now. Why don't you speak English?" Fortunately, this attitude towards other languages has changed in recent years, a point noted by a number of informants. The fact that a large number of Italian classes are offered in the region shows that non-Italian New Zealanders are

interested in learning the language. The healthy size of the Circolo Italiano, whose membership is mainly non-Italian, further reflects the general high regard for and interest in Italian culture. These positive attitudes towards standard Italian in the wider community could usefully support efforts towards Italian language maintenance within the ICW.

Demographic factors

Though it is not a big community, the ICW is large enough for efforts to maintain Italian to have a reasonable chance of success. There are enough people to talk to, and domains where Italian can be used, to make language maintenance feasible. A number of different Italian dialects are used among members of the ICW, but it was clear that there is a large enough majority from the Naples region to suggest that the Neapolitan regional dialect could have a reasonable chance of being maintained, based on numbers of speakers alone. However, judging from the attitudes towards the dialect, especially among the first generation women, it is likely that these crucial members of the ICW would not have dialect maintenance high on their list of priorities, compared to maintenance of the standard. The priority given to standard Italian is also reflected in third generation enrolments in community language classes which teach Italian.

The attitude questions included a statement "The Italian community in Wellington is close-knit". It has been suggested that a close-knit community is likely to support language maintenance if this is something the group as a whole favours. Though responses to this statement were not very high (the average score was 2.5 indicating that most people selected "agree" or "no opinion"), the impression an observer gets is somewhat different. There is a great deal of contact between group leaders, for example, and speech community members tend to be in contact with each other on a regular basis. Many of the ICW live in the same geographic area, and several respondents commented that "everybody knows everybody else's business" here. It is certainly true to say that if a member of the ICW wants to talk Italian or a dialect to someone, finding someone to speak to is not a difficult task.

The frequency of intermarriage is another relevant aspect of the community's demographic profile. On the whole, intermarriage has not been common among first generation Italians in Wellington. It seems likely to increase, however, over time, and this will inevitably increase the likelihood of shift to English in the

family. One second generation participant in my sample was from a marriage between an Italian New Zealander and a non-Italian New Zealander. This participant reported complete shift to English in the childhood home. Community language maintenance is widely recognised as being very difficult in homes where the partners come from different language backgrounds. The majority group language is almost always favoured in these circumstances.

Institutional support factors

There is very little official institutional support for Italian language maintenance in New Zealand society. A number of adult Italian classes in the Wellington region provide opportunities for adults to learn or maintain Italian, but this is obviously a very limited level of assistance to the ICW.

The language school run at St Francis de Sales school in Island Bay, however, is an important within-group support for language maintenance. It is definitely helping teach Italian to members of the third generation. The classes offered by the school teach standard Italian and not a dialect, and on the whole this seems to reflect the wishes of the community, and their attitudes to the dialect compared to the standard as described in the previous section. Although there are some moves to recognise the value of dialects in the Italian education system, these have had limited success and the prestige of the standard remains paramount. Clearly these values have been carried to New Zealand and pervade the ICW. Italian is more highly valued than dialect, and it therefore seems sensible, given limited resources, to focus language maintenance efforts on standard Italian.

Language maintenance efforts also receive support from the involvement of community members in social events where it is appropriate to use Italian. Every participant, except the one from a mixed marriage, reported that they attended Garibaldi Club events. The Garibaldi Club is obviously an important focal point for the whole community, and, judging by the amount of Italian and dialect I heard there during the interviews, it is an important domain for retaining the language. As a community institution, the Garibaldi Club undoubtedly fulfils a supportive role for language maintenance within the ICW.

If Italian is to be maintained among the ICW, institutional support for language maintenance efforts will be required from the wider society. The prevalence of English undermines efforts to maintain Italian in any domain, even the home.

One participant reported that after her first day at the state kindergarten she came home in tears because she couldn't understand the other children. This prompted her mother to begin using more English at home. This is consistent with the results reported above which showed that, although Italian and dialect continue to be used more often in the home than in any other context, there has been a significant shift even in this domain over time. If a community seriously wants to maintain the community language, great efforts are needed to use it in as many domains as possible, but especially in the home (Fishman 1991). And for this to happen, institutions such as schools and pre-schools must be supportive of such language maintenance efforts.

One final relevant point which emerged from the interviews was the fact that members of the ICW do try to keep contact with their "homeland". Almost all those I interviewed had visited Italy at least once and usually more often. This contact is important for many reasons: it gives people a chance to use and practice the language, and it keeps them up to date with linguistic changes. One participant described a number of new words she had learnt on such a visit, and commented that she had also noted the increasing number of borrowings from English. In New Zealand she had not been sure of the status of borrowings from English. She did not want to sound old-fashioned - a distinct risk without regular contact with the Italian language as spoken in Italy. She found the visit home reassuring and felt it helped restore confidence in her ability to use Italian.

Conclusion

This paper has described some aspects of the patterns of language maintenance and shift apparent in the Italian community in Wellington. Many older ICW members speak a dialect, but they also speak Italian, and they can use either to communicate with other speech community members. The fact that many members of the ICW come from the same region of Italy also supports language maintenance, since the dialect of this region can be used widely among the group. Nevertheless, the results of this study have shown that the first generation informants report being fluently bilingual, and that by the second generation there is significant language shift to English. The brief reports I collected on the knowledge of Italian among the third generation suggest that Italian and dialect use is fast disappearing, even in the home.

Other factors suggest that if steps were taken quickly, language maintenance could be successful, at least in the short term in the ICW. Standard Italian has prestige, it is viewed positively, and people express positive attitudes towards the language itself and the idea of language maintenance. Though the dialects are not rated so highly, they are nevertheless rated positively, rather than downgraded. Another relevant factor is the prestige of the Italian language and culture in the wider New Zealand society. Things Italian are valued. This is a factor that is often overlooked, but because members of ICW interact with the wider community every day, this variable is very important.

This survey was very small involving participant observation and interviews with sixteen members of the Italian community in Wellington. Further research with a larger and more representative sample is sorely needed. It would also be interesting to study more extensively the dialect situation in Wellington - the range of dialects in use, attitudes towards them and changes that have occurred in the dialects and standard Italian since they were first used in Wellington. Code-switching is common and is another area where research is needed. In the meantime, I hope that this small study of the proficiency, patterns of use and attitudes of one small section of the Italian speech community in Wellington will assist in drawing attention to the need for support for their efforts to maintain Italian.

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