

**Wellington Working Papers in
Linguistics**

Number 8 1996

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P.O. Box 600
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Published 1996

Printed by Printing Services Department
Victoria University of Wellington
P.O. Box 600
Wellington
New Zealand

ISSN 1170-1978

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No laughing matter: gender and humour support strategies¹

Jen Hay

Abstract

Most literature on humour assumes that laughter provides the most appropriate support for humour. Research into gender differences in humour support have therefore concentrated on laughter. Such studies tend to show that women laugh more than men in conversations and in response to humour, and so conclude that women are more supportive of humour than men. This paper argues that counting instances of laughter is a misleading approach to investigating humour support. A number of support strategies are available, and laughter is not always the most appropriate. A range of alternative support strategies is described. It is also easy to make a hash of attempts at humour: there are certain pitfalls a speaker must avoid to maximise the chances of humour's success. The question of who is more supportive of humour is more complicated than many researchers assume.

Introduction

We often groan at the punch lines of jokes we find particularly bad or corny. From the joker's point of view, a groan is far preferable to total silence. It acknowledges the attempt at humour, and displays understanding, if not overwhelming appreciation. Telling jokes is just one form of the wide range of humour we employ in our day to day interactions. A reaction from our audience that implies acknowledgement and understanding of the humour is one way of supporting the humorist's face. This paper surveys a wide range of strategies which can potentially serve as humour support.

There is a solid body of literature which indicates that women tend to use more supportive conversational strategies than men. We would expect then, that women would also be more supportive of humour. Several investigators have

¹ I am indebted to Janet Holmes for her valuable guidance at all stages of this project.

claimed that this is so, based solely on accounts of laughter. In this paper I claim that the issue of humour support is more complicated than most researchers assume.

The first section of the paper reviews literature in the area of humour support and demonstrates that assuming laughter to be the sole humour support strategy can be misleading. Next, some alternative humour support strategies are described and exemplified. The third section describes types of humour which do not require explicit support, and the final section outlines a number of reasons why some attempts at humour may fail.

The process of establishing what should be counted as humour is seldom entirely objective. Definitions tend to focus on either speaker intention (Winick 1976, Pizzini 1991) or audience interpretation (Berger 1976). As I was interested in humour support and failed humour, a definition of humour based on audience interpretation was not a viable option. For the purposes of this discussion, then, humour is defined as anything the speaker intended to be funny. Background knowledge, tone of voice, audience reaction, and verbal clues were used to infer speaker intention.

Laughter as humour support

Research in humour has proliferated for some time now, spanning a wide range of disciplines. There are varying approaches to the subject: some researchers concentrate on developing theories explicating what makes humour funny (Freud 1905, Keith-Spiegel 1972, Suls 1972, Raskin 1985), and many researchers have investigated written humour or canned jokes (eg. Attardo 1993, Zhao 1988, Davies 1982, Berger 1976). A canned joke is context-free and re-useable, as opposed to spontaneous humour (Douglas 1968). Several of those who have focussed on spontaneous humour have done so using questionnaires, surveys or elicitation techniques (eg. Crawford and Gressley 1991, Hampes 1992, Neuliep 1991, Fink and Walker 1977). And many researchers have attempted to taxonomise types or functions of humour (eg. Martineau 1972, Collinson 1988, Linstead 1985, Monro 1953, Zijderveld 1983, Feigelson 1989).

Only recently have researchers turned to spontaneous, spoken humour as it occurs in the context of natural conversation. Studying the dynamics of conversational humour offers new challenges in data collection and analysis.

Norrick (1993: 2), for example, claims that in order to understand how joking can simultaneously express aggression and build rapport, we need to view joke-telling, punning and teasing in relation to power, solidarity and distance, and in the light of the principles of politeness and cooperation.

For a full understanding of the dynamics of conversational humour, we need to understand not only isolated humorous utterances, but also their place and effect within a wider conversational frame. One crucial element of any humorous frame is the support, or lack thereof, provided by the other conversational participants. Most literature on humour, and on strategies for supporting it, assumes that laughter is the normal and most appropriate support for an attempt at humour. Coser (1960) observes that to joke and not hear anyone laugh in response is similar to initiating a handshake, only to have one's outstretched hand ignored. Norrick (1993: 23) claims joking and laughter are an adjacency pair, and includes this assumption in the criteria he uses to identify instances of humour for his research. If a laugh or "aw" or snide comment follow a recognisable joking structure, he claims "it seems reasonable to say the speaker was joking, teasing, playing with words, being sarcastic, or something similar" (1993: 8). Norrick insists on these explicit signs that something is funny for an extract to be included in his corpus of humour. He admits that laughter can be used for purposes other than to support humour, but does not consider that other support strategies may be available, or even more appropriate, for certain types of humour.

Kotthoff (1986: 23) investigates spontaneous conversational joking, and postulates a number of gender differences. She hypothesises:

Frauen werden aktiv für die Gesprächserfolge ihres Gegenübers.
Mit ihrem Lachen leisten sie Beziehungsarbeit. Männer tun dies
(vor allem für Frauen) weniger.

*Women actively encourage the success of the speaker. They
provide support through laughter. Men do this less frequently
(especially for women). [My translation].*

Again, Kotthoff's hypothesis seems to imply that laughter is the primary means for supporting humour. She does not consider possible alternative strategies. There have been a number of studies which indicate that women do, indeed, laugh more than men. Dreher (1982, cited in Kotthoff 1986) studied four conversations and found not only did women laugh more than men, but both the men and the women laughed more in support of male speakers than female speakers, thus providing support for Kotthoff's hypothesis. Bogaers (1993)

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found that more laughter occurred in all-female conversation, as did Easton (1994). Makri-Tsilipakou (1994) found that women laughed more in mixed conversations than men, which meant that it was usually men who found themselves enjoying the benefits of affiliative laughter.

McGhee (1979:183) claims society sets different standards regarding humour for men and women. In particular, there is an expectation that men will be the initiators of humour, and women the responders. This pattern is generally explained by reference to male dominance, and the different roles males and females are expected to play in conversation. More specifically, Pizzini (1991: 483) explores humorous remarks between doctors and patients, and comments:

In our culture this (societal) structure requires that women be passive and receptive: men make the jokes and women laugh at them.

Using entertaining anecdotal evidence, Barreca (1991: 5) discusses gender issues relating to humour usage and support. She reminisces:

Nobody said we should giggle at his jokes only if we found them funny; we had to giggle at his jokes even when we thought they were dull, insulting or dumb.

Kramarae (1987: 52) makes a similar point.

Women are often put in the situation of having to choose between laughing at jokes that they do not think are funny ... or risking becoming an outsider in many female/male social groups.

This explanation no doubt has some truth. Much research has found that women are generally more conversationally supportive than men (eg. Aries 1976, Edelsky 1981, Fishman 1983, Maltz and Borcker 1983, Coates 1986, Preisler 1986, Holmes 1995), and this would lead us to predict that women would be more supportive of humour than men, even when they do not find the humour funny. The quotations above also suggest that women must provide this support in order to be accepted.

Example (1) is an excerpt from a mixed gender conversation.² The men joke, the women laugh. The group has been discussing the words their parents used for

² All of the transcripts in this paper were collected for the research described in Hay (1995). The speakers are all New Zealanders of European descent, aged between 18 and 35 with some tertiary education. I am particularly grateful to my friends, who agreed to tape their conversations, and to the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English and Anita Easton, for allowing me access to their data.

their private parts when they were young. The group is laughing because BM's parents called his penis "Colin", and this had led to some embarrassment when he joined the Boy Scouts' organisation. A sequence hypothesising worse names follows. It is initiated by GM who suggests that "car" would have been an even worse name, and then the two males, GM and BM, joke for some time about various words and the confusion that could ensue. The two women are laughing almost constantly, whereas the men laugh relatively little. Given the subject matter one may be tempted to interpret the women's laughter as embarrassment rather than humour support. It is clear from the tape, however, that the women are not embarrassed by the subject. The group speaks openly and freely about a range of sensitive issues during the taping, and in this excerpt the women show no sign of embarrassment. They are merely enjoying the humour. In this and subsequent examples, male speakers have pseudonyms ending in M, and female pseudonyms end in F.

Example (1)

- JF: [ha ha ha ha ha] that's brilliant /[ha ha]\ your [h] parents were=
 AF: / [ha ha ha\
 JF: /=very cruel
 GM: well i mean you could have called it they could have been really cruel and called it something like a car
 AF: / [ha ha ha ha\
 JF: / [ha ha ha ha] you wouldn't have been-
 BM: or a television
 AF: [ha ha ha]
 GM: hey have you heard how HUGE /they ()\
 AF+JF: / [laugh\
 GM: =/i mean you really SCREW s\
 BM: /twenty four inch colour television\
 All: [laugh]
 BM: remote CONTROL twenty four inch colour television
 AF+JF: [laugh loudly]
 GM: with with um s- stereo sp[h]eakers or one of those silly things that tilts in different directions
 AF+JF: [still laughing - right through GM's speech]
 BM: what are you going to do with black and white portables
 AF: [ha ha ha ha ha]
 GM: with cars they have hoods AND ()
 BM: yeah

AF: [h h huh]

GM: and as for television watchers

BM: mm + television critics

In this example the women are supporting the humour with laughter, and the males are laughing less frequently. But can we conclude from this that the men are not supporting each other in their attempts at humour? Surely by picking up on GM's wit, and pursuing it further BM is supporting GM in his attempt at humour. He must think the quip is funny, or he would not develop the line of humour himself. Together they spar, both competing, and jointly developing the theme, and in doing so expressing a commonality in their sense of humour, solidarity and support.

To assume, then, that laughter is the sole means of supporting humour, is to obscure a great deal. There are a number of available support strategies, some more explicit than others, and in some circumstances, laughter may not be the most appropriate. The general finding that women laugh more than men tells us only that women laugh more. We cannot generalise from this to claim that women are more supportive of humour than men, without exploring alternative functions of laughter, examining alternative support strategies, and exploring the possibility that some of these may be used more often by men than by women. This paper is an initial step towards the goal of exploring the range of humour support strategies. I highlight some of the methods used to support humour, and some reasons why humour may not be supported, and I indicate the direction in which I believe future research in this area should lead.³

Humour support strategies other than laughter

Contributing more humour

In the example discussed in the previous section, the men supported each other by developing a theme and contributing more humour. The humorous frame is maintained. To contribute to a humorous frame is to acknowledge that one exists, and thus implicitly acknowledge the previous speaker's humour. Example (2) is an extract from a discussion between four males. There is very little laughter, and yet a humorous frame is maintained throughout. Most of the

³ The analysis stems from recorded conversations, and so includes only those support strategies evident from recordings. It is clearly possible to support humour non-verbally through smiles, facial expressions and other body language.

humour consists of insults, and there is a play on words towards the end of the sequence. The speakers are clearly enjoying themselves, and there is no indication in any of their voices or reactions that they feel their humour is being rejected or ignored. By maintaining a humorous frame and sparring and bouncing humour around, the men support each other's humour.

Example (2)

- CM: cause she didn't want you there that's all i mean come on a MALE in a kitchen (that can right rid of you)
- TM: if /(they had girls they would've had)\
- NM: /clarence didn't count [ha]\=
- MM: /=no of course not
- TM: he's not male he's barely human=/
- MM: /=yeah
- TM: i don't know how they get that much body odour in a female but i guess it's possib[h]le
- MM: he's not even human at ALL thank you very much
- CM: oh that's okay thank you /very much ()\
- MM: /a bloody insult /saying () is human\
/got kling on aspirations remember\
NM: probably got kling on genes in him but we won't go into that
- MM: not wearing my jeans
- TM: enough of that=/
- NM: /=yes

Sometimes maintaining the humorous frame, or playing along with a "gag" initiated by the first speaker can in itself provide very solid support. In example (3) DF identifies an ambiguity in CF's comment, and pretends to mistake CF's intended meaning of *pulse* = 'heart beat' for *pulse* = 'legume'. BF does not immediately pick up that DF is being funny, and so CF agrees with DF in a perfectly serious voice, and continues with the gag. CF could not sound more serious in her reply, yet this provides strong support for DF's humour. Her words indicate that she appreciates DF's humour, and together they fool BF into thinking they are serious.

Example (3)

- CF: i mean i've got bad feeling in my hands anyway
- BF: have you
- CF: like i can never feel pulses or stuff like like you know

- DF: pulses what like beans? like beans? you mean
 BF: NO
 DF: pulses you mean /kidney beans\ and the like
 CF: /yeah\
 CF: and lentils=
 BF: /=oh does she [h]=/
 CF: /=i find it really hard to feel lentils
 BF: [ha ho]

Irony is a type of humour which often invites the audience to join in, and support the speaker by maintaining the ironic tone. Irony, for the purposes of this paper, is any instance in which the speaker says the opposite of what they mean, or something different from what they mean for humorous effect (Haverkate 1990: 77). In example (4) PM expresses mock disgust at having to spend time at Waipuna Lodge, all expenses paid, for his work. AM and BM support the irony with more irony, offering PM mock sympathy for his upcoming "ordeal". No laughter occurs, yet the humour is clearly supported.

Example (4)

- PM: yeah but i i [tut] absolutely disGUSTed i've got to spend two days in
 waipuna lodge
 AM: /[tut] oh mate\
 BM: /[(drawls): aw:\ how sad

Fantasy humour is often supported by more fantasy. Fantasy is the construction of humorous, imaginary scenarios or events. This is usually a collaborative activity, in which the participants jointly construct a possible (or impossible) series of events. Speakers will jointly construct long and involved scenarios. The funniest contributions will be explicitly supported with laughter, but most are supported only by more fantasy. Speakers usually incorporate or build on humour offered by the other participants, and so the humour has by no means failed. In (5) the speakers speculate about what could have happened if PM had responded to the advance made by a model the previous evening. They jointly construct the scenario.

Example (5)

- PM: um but yeah that could have been the one could've been rich lived a life
 of sin
 DM: /she could have set me with the ()\
 ()\

- GM: /she could have she could have been\ in the women's weekly man oh i
 could have seen like you know pat and maybe

(1 sec of everyone speaking at once)

- PM: unnamed friend yeah [ha ha] yeah i was that unnamed friend
 GM next larry forensky or whatever tough man REAL man sort of thing
 DM () make their song and everything [ha] in the charts /[ha ha]\
 GM: /[yeah]\ un=
 DM: /=write a book=
 EM: /=[oh ho ha ha]

Building on humour introduced by a previous speaker is clearly an alternative to laughter as a means of expressing humour support.

Echo

Humour can also be effectively supported by echoing the words of the speaker. A member of the audience will repeat the words in appreciation, often as if savouring the humour. In (6) AM repeats CM's words in a tone that indicates he appreciates them and finds them funny.

Example (6)

- CM: /=too many brain cells in his beer vat now
 AM: yeah /in his beer vat yeah\
 CM: /[(laughs)\

Example (7) is similar. RM is describing a vegetarian restaurant crawl. One of the restaurants had unexpectedly changed their menu and begun to serve meats, and so he had eaten fish as part of the crawl.

Example (7)

- TM: fish? they don't serve f- fish do they=
 RM: /=oh yeah they serve all meats=
 TM: /=oh have they sort of /um\
 DM: /[ha ha]\=
 LM: /=[ha ha] [imitates RM's intonation]: all meats:

RM's humour is supported through laughter, but LM also supports the humour by echoing RM's words.

Offer sympathy or contradict self-deprecating humour

For some humour, laughter could actually be an inappropriate response. Jefferson (1984) notes that if humour is used in troubles-talk, then laughing could indicate that you find the speaker's unfortunate situation funny. The speaker can laugh at their own problems, but in general, the appropriate response to such humour seems to be an offer of sympathy. In example (8) TF tells of a woman she met just before she had her baby, and laughs at the fact that the woman was neurotic about little things that were not going to be ready when her baby was born, which seemed ridiculous in comparison with TF's half finished house. Rather than laugh at TF's situation, the others offer sympathy.

Example (8)

TF: this woman um was saying to me just before he was born now [high voice]: oh we haven't got the nursery ready: [h]and yeah we [h]haven't done this and /we haven't done\ that i said=

WF: /drawls]: oh god:\

TF: =FUCK we've only got half a bloody house=

BF: /=yeah=

WF: /=yeah=

Similarly in example (9), CF is not confident about an upcoming judo tournament in which she is part of a team with a friend of hers who is very good. She jokes that they will be a mixed ability pair. Rather than laugh, which would indicate that she agreed the skill difference was large, JF assures CF that she will do fine.

Example (9)

CF: mixed ability pair [laughs]

JF: you will it'll be fine...

In example (10) BM tells an anecdote about his ears, and AF and DF assure him that his ears look okay.

Example (10)

BM: a hard time /right\ Mum used=

DF: /yeah\

BM: =to tell me when i was a child that if i was born a generation ago they would've put a big band around my head [laughing]: (you know to keep them there):=

AF: /=but your ears aren't that bad

BM: no no

DF: you've got quite a big head so it sort of balances it

If DF and AF had laughed at BM's anecdote, it might have indicated that they agreed that his ears seemed big. On the basis of the transcription alone DF's comment could be interpreted as an underhand insult, but there is no indication in her voice that it is intended as such. They respond appropriately to BM's humour.

Overlap and heightened involvement in the conversation

A speaker can show enthusiasm and appreciation for another's humour by indicating excitement, by using overlap or other means of signalling general involvement in the conversation. In example (11) the group are speculating about reasons why a friend acts strangely when with a particular woman. VF supports RF's hypothesis by completing her sentence.

Example (11)

RF: cause SHE'S gone + i bet you've never been laid in your life or- or maybe she's INterested in him and so he's trying to look

VF: /worldly\

RF: /experienced\

This section has reviewed a variety of means other than laughter which are appropriate for supporting humour. The next section discusses instances of humour which do not require support.

When explicit support is not needed

There are some types of humour which do not always need explicit support. The speaker does not necessarily expect the audience to respond in any way, and so when there is no laughter or other form of support, the humour has not failed.

The humour is a support strategy itself

Some follow-up humour supports humour initiated by another person. When humour is a support strategy itself, then it does not need further explicit support from the audience. Example (12) provides the end of an anecdote in which BM describes his experiences of nitrous oxide from when he was at secondary school.

DF's humour directly supports BM's anecdote, and so does not need support itself.

Example (12)

BM: cause it does i mean light- light- lightening fixes nitrogen + not necessarily nitrous ox[h]ide but i mean i didn't know the difference

DF: [ha ha ha ha] you didn't really CARE did you [ha]

CM: remember you used to get those little capsules

DF: /yeah\

BM: /oh right\

Irony

There are a number of examples of irony which are not explicitly supported in any way, and for which the speaker does not seem to expect support. Norrick (1993: 72) suggests irony may be an unmarked form of talk for some speakers. It is true that some speakers use irony extensively, and irony can differ from other forms of humour in that it can sometimes be a flippant way of expressing quite a serious meaning. When speakers use irony, they do not always expect explicit support from the audience. Example (13) occurs after an explanation about something which the speaker had originally expected the audience to know. TM had asked for clarification, and once a relatively obscure explanation was received said:

Example (13)

TM: yes oh silly for not knowing

The other speaker then continued with his story. Support was not offered, nor apparently expected. TM was merely using irony to make a point.

Failed humour

Of course, not all instances of humour are supported. For most of the examples of apparently unsupported humour in my corpus, it was possible to identify a reason for the humour's failure. In this section I discuss "mistakes" that are sometimes made when attempting humour.

Insufficient contextualisation

Zajdman (1991) carefully documents ways in which a canned joke can be introduced into discourse. Not only jokes, but all humour must flow from the previous conversation, and in some way fit neatly in. If an attempt at humour is not relevant, or somehow removed from the situation, it may go unsupported. In example (14) SM has been telling an anecdote about a group of intellectually handicapped people who had come to see a play he was acting in. They had laughed a lot which, SM suggests, is probably why the audience laughed so much that night as well. GM then attempts some fantasy humour about taking such people to the bathroom. GM does not manage to make the humour flow naturally from SM's story and, uncontextualised, the attempt at humour seems unfunny, and is not supported.

Example (14)

SM: [huh] it was re[h]ally /funny [ha]\=

HM: /[ha ha ha ha]\

SM: =tha[h]t's probably what the audience were laughing not at /us but\ yeah [ha]

HM: /[sighs]\

GM: wouldn't like to take some of the group of a few people out to the bathroom

SM then changes the subject completely.

Being too late or reviving "dead" humour

Groups often latch on to formulas or develop a theme of humour which can result in lengthy routines. Once the conversation moves on, however, the humour dies. It can be revived, but again, only in a particularly relevant context. In example (15), EM is only a few seconds late with his humour, but nevertheless, the conversation has already moved on, and the humour fails. MM says he has a tape of sound effects which would have been funny to play onto the tape they are making. The conversation moves on to the fridge, from which CM has just fetched a beer. EM then contributes some humour on the theme of sound effects. But his contribution is too late, and is not supported.

Example (15)

MM: i knew i should have brought my tape recorder which has sounds to play back at them

CM: tell you what alan's fridge is a lot better stocked than our one is [ha]=/

EM: /=[ha ha]

- DM: was=/
 CM: /=[laughs]: was=/
 MM: /=[ha ha ha]
 EM: i can do some [whistles] feedback [ha ha] [inhales] [clears throat]
 CM: [looking at tape-recorder] miles to go
 DM: [yawns]

EM is clearly conscious that his humour has failed. He inhales and clears his throat to cover the silence and his embarrassment. Clearing the throat seems to be a relatively common strategy for coping with failed humour.

Assuming too much background knowledge

Appreciation of funny anecdotes about people generally requires knowledge of the subjects of the humour. The type of humour which relies on such knowledge generally overlaps with sections of gossip. Jane Pilkington (1994) points out that gossip has a "limited sphere of interest". If the audience is not familiar with the protagonists, the gossip will usually be unsuccessful. Many funny anecdotes rely on this familiarity. In example (16) SF tries to joke about what a strange couple Tessa Davies and Tim Dapple make. The audience is not familiar with Tim Dapple, SF makes no attempt to further identify him, and so her attempt at humour does not work.

Example (16)

- SF: tessa daves is going out with tim dapple can you think of a BETTER couple
 TF: i /can't remember\ tim dapple but i know=
 JF: /who's he\
 TF: =i've heard the name and i know him
 SF: both being total bloody weird[ho]os

Assuming too much knowledge can also derive from specialist areas of knowledge. An audience clearly will not respond to humour which relies on specialist knowledge they do not have. One of the speakers in example (17) is a linguistics student. When GM jokes that there are some words he would never use in an essay, AF jokes that she would like to transcribe them and discuss them in an essay. None of the others are linguists and so do not understand her reference to "elision" or why AF finds this funny. The humour therefore fails.

Example (17)

- GM: i don't know there are still some words that i won't use in an essay that i use in every day life like + bugger me with /a wooden spoon\ i=
 AF: /[ha ha ha]\
 GM: mean /i've yet to\ see an essay that you=
 BM: /yeah i know but\
 GM: =[tut] to quote citizen ropespierre /bugger me\
 JF: /[ha ha ha]\
 GM: =with a wooden spoon send him to the guillotine it's just i mean
 AF: i'd quite like to transcribe it and say this was said fast [h]and that there was elision there [h]
 BM: but i mean in in in a twenty one hundred word essay or something it's not uncommon to only use four hundred different words
 AF: m m

Misjudging relation between speaker and audience

Some humour requires a certain solidarity or understanding between the speaker and the focus of the humour. Teasing can reinforce solidarity if it occurs within what Radcliffe-Brown (1952) terms a "Joking Relationship". Within such a relationship individuals routinely tease and insult each other. This serves a number of functions, and is primarily a strategy for expressing solidarity. People who have a joking relationship will often insult each other, with the understanding that it is all in play and serves to further solidarity.

Only a select group of people will have the right to tease a particular person. As Chiaro (1992: 5) notes: "Tacit rules underlie where, when and with whom it is permissible to joke." If someone misjudges a relationship, for example by assuming a joking relationship where none has previously existed, then the humour is likely to fail. In example (18) the group is trying to figure out why JF had been absent from a geography trip at school some years ago. Earlier in the conversation JF had joked that whenever she goes away on holiday she seems to get sick, often, she implied, because she was drunk. It is acceptable for JF herself to joke about this, but when SF tries to tease her about it in this extract, it goes unsupported. There is no evidence that a joking relationship exists between JF and SF, and SF appears to have over-stepped the mark, erroneously assuming a relationship with JF which would allow her to tease her about such matters. Because this relationship does not exist, the humour fails.

Example (18)

- SF: cause it was at COLLege=/
 JF: /=how come i didn't go=/
 SF: /=yeah it was in geography=/
 JF: /=i must have been sick=/
 SF: /=you must have been sick you must have been on holiday
 /or s-\ [ha ha]
 TF: /maybe the sixth form and\ seventh form joined or something cause I
 did it in seventh form

Negatively teasing someone present

Teases which attack personal characteristics, or seem to make genuine criticisms serve to increase or maintain the speaker's power. In negatively teasing someone present, the speaker places the audience in a bind. They can either support the tease, and thereby indicate to the butt that they agree with the speaker, or they can refrain from supporting the humour, thereby supporting the focus of the tease. In example (19) BM teases AM that he will be "killed" in an upcoming tournament they are both involved in. The audience does not respond to the humour. To do so would be to explicitly take sides.

Example (19)

- AM: doubles so we're going to have a doubles um wee tournament with you
 and kim
 BM: [laughs] we'll just fucken /kill you\
 AM: /we got \ a hundred and twenty two million
 CM: [high pitched]: what:
 DM: that's an extra ball eh
 BM: not bad

Trying to gain membership of exclusive sub-group

Within a group there will often be smaller exclusive sub-groups. Such groups may have established joking routines. To successfully join such a routine when one is not a group member is usually challenging. Miriam Meyerhoff (1994) discusses this concept in terms of network ties, suggesting that the way interlocutors communicate with each other is by means of shared network ties which create sociolinguistically meaningful links between individuals' shared social identities (Meyerhoff 1994: 80). To successfully participate in a routine, one must have access to the appropriate network tie.

In example (20) DM and LM are quoting from their favourite TV programme. This is a humour routine they often use together. AM has seen the episode in question and tries to join in, recalling a funny part of the program that he had liked. LM replies with a non-committal "yeah", and the two continue with their routine. AM does not have access to the appropriate "network tie" and so is not permitted to participate in the routine.

Example (20)

- DM: the powdered toastman er men and stimp [quotes]: quick man
 /cling tenaciously to my buttocks\
 LM: /[quotes]: cling tenaciously to my buttocks:\=/
 TM: /=okay fine
 DM: [quotes]: what? [drawls]: dome:: /[ha ha ha=/
 LM: / [h h h ha ha=/
 DM: /=ha ha ha ha ha\
 LM: /=ha h\
 AM: yes i quite like the go[h]ing backwards bit that f[h]un=
 LM: /=yeah
 DM: [quotes]: wind intensity too great=/
 LM: /=[h huh]=/
 DM: /=[quotes]: can't hold on:

Disrupting serious conversation

Humour is often disruptive. Chiaro (1992: 114) points out that evaluation following the joke, whether verbal or non-verbal, will distract participants from whatever discourse had preceded the witty interruption.

This distraction is usually tolerated, but sometimes the audience will withhold evaluation or support so that the serious conversation can continue without further interruptions. In example (21) MM has an important reason for wanting to know whether the person under discussion has finished his thesis. CM's wordplay is therefore not responded to and serious conversation continues.

Example (21)

- MM: oh is he f- officially finished?
 TM: i /don't know\
 NM: /he's finished his-\
 CM: ye[h]ah one way or the other he's finished[h]
 MM: better talk to p- pat about what she wants me to do then

Portraying oneself inappropriately for one's status or gender

There are certain expectations about what certain people can joke about, and how we should portray ourselves. If we put ourselves across in a way that violates society's expectations or norms then we sometimes will not receive support. In Hay (1995) I present data which indicate that men more than women, tend to portray themselves as experienced with sex, drugs or excessive amounts of alcohol. That men joke about this indicates that, within these groups at least, some members consider these to be positive traits for a man to have. Women tend to joke or boast about these things less frequently. This may indicate that it is "cool" for a man to have experience in such matters, but "uncool" for women. The following excerpt is from a mixed conversation, and follows a discussion of dentists and methods of pain relief.

Example (22)

- BM: remember the gas though
 DF: i never had anything like that
 AF: i had gas for the baby tooth=
 BM: /=yeah
 AF: and yeah and then i had these injections for these molars
 BM: that was GREAT=
 CM: /=mm=
 DF: /[ha ha ha]
 AF: the gas i c- yeah i can remember i had yeah i had these baby teeth pulled out in hamilton cause that's where i went to school /secondary\ school and i remember walking=
 BM: /yeah\
 AF: down hamilton east [ha] and blimmen dazed going back to the convent you know [ha] i was hmmm [ha ha] ()
 DF: that's nitrous oxide eh=
 BM: /=yeah=
 DF: /=yeah
 BM: [tut] i'd just been doing fifth form science [clears throat] and i came out and i said [deep voice] : lightening makes this stuff: [ha]
 All: [laugh]
 BM: cause it does i mean light- light- lightening fixes nitrogen + not necessarily nitrous ox[h]ide but i mean i didn't know the difference
 DF: [ha ha ha ha] you didn't really CARE did you [ha]

The group reminisces about experiences they had with nitrous oxide at the dentist. BM jokingly comments: "that was GREAT" at which DF laughs. AF then tells an anecdote about walking back to the convent in a daze after having gas. The audience does not support the humour in her anecdote, instead clarifying a technical point. Finally, BM tells an anecdote about when he had nitrous oxide in fifth form. This is met with a lot of laughter. The fact that it seems generally more "cool" and acceptable for men to have experience with, and have enjoyed drugs than women may explain why BM's comments on this topic are supported, but AF's anecdote is not.

Conclusion

Most literature on humour assumes that laughter provides the most appropriate support for humorous comments. Those that have investigated gender differences in humour support have therefore concentrated on laughter. Such studies tend to show that women laugh more in conversations and in response to humour, and so conclude that women are more supportive of humour than men.

Counting instances of laughter is a misleading approach to investigating levels of support for humour. There are numerous humour support strategies available, some of which provide stronger support than others. The context will, to some extent, dictate the most appropriate support strategy, and this will not always be laughter. Possible strategies for supporting humour including contributing more humour, echoing the humour, offering sympathy or contradicting self-deprecating humour, and using overlap or other strategies to show heightened involvement in the conversation.

There are even some instances of humour for which explicit support does not seem to be required at all. Irony is one type of humour for which support does not seem so crucial. And if the humour is itself supporting other humour, it does not require further explicit support.

There are certain pitfalls a speaker must avoid to maximise the chances of humour's success. Humour should be sufficiently contextualised, timely, and not assume background knowledge without warrant. The relation between the speaker and the audience must be delicately judged, and the speaker must be aware of any existing sub-groups within the group. Negatively teasing a participant places the audience in a bind, and increases the chances that the

humour will not be supported. The humour should also not disrupt a serious conversation, or portray the speaker inappropriately for their status or gender. Finally, however, it must be acknowledged that humour is extremely unpredictable. Even if one of the above violations occurs, the humour may still be supported. And if none of these things go wrong, other factors may interfere and the humour remain unsupported.

The issue of who is more supportive of humour is therefore a more complicated one than many researchers recognise. It is likely that men and women may favour different strategies for supporting humour, and these strategies may provide varying levels of support. The literature certainly indicates that women tend to laugh more than men. Women and men may also withhold support for different reasons and to different extents. We could hypothesise that women may be more forgiving of the violations discussed in the previous sections, and so support the humour anyway. It is probable there is also a large amount of variation from group to group.

Research on humour support needs to move beyond counting laughter. We now need to closely examine the distribution of humour support strategies, identify the types of humour men and women support most, and identify the reasons for which they tend to withhold support. Holmes (1984) points to the limitations of comparisons involving raw frequency counts, and emphasises the importance of considering contextual factors and focussing on function rather than form. Humour support is yet another area of conversational research where quantitative research has raised more questions than it has answered. Conversations are dynamic and intricate interactions. Counting often helps pinpoint interesting areas for investigation, but we need to be careful not to generalise too far from the results, or let numbers cloud our vision.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions

The conventions used in the examples in this paper are a simplified version of those developed for the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English.

(hello)	Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
?	Rising or question intonation
-	Incomplete or cut-off utterance
YES	Emphatic stress
[sneezes]	Paralinguistic feature
[silly voice]	Paralinguistic feature
[laughs]	Paralinguistic feature
+	Pause of up to one second
.... / \ ...	Simultaneous speech
.... / \ ...	
and= /	Latching of speech between speakers
/ =then	

**The management of interaction
in the television interviews of Maggie Barry**

Gary Johnson

Abstract

This paper examines how Maggie Barry, a TV interviewer, managed interaction in eight television interviews. First a number of measures of interview style are established, including speech rates, turn taking strategies, the extent of referential content and affective meaning, and the structure and illocutionary force of the interviewer's question forms. Average turn length was found to be longer in interviews in which women participated. The interviewer tended to interrupt more if interviewees interrupted, and she posed a greater percentage of question types with negative affect in interviews with male participants. Question type was found to be the most reliable predictor of the tenor of an interview. By establishing a profile of the interviewer's style it was possible to discover how the affective meaning of an interview is constructed. The analysis suggests that categorical statements on gender behaviour should be avoided because the socially constructed norms of gender appear to restrict the possible combinations of affective meaning and interlocutor sex.

Introduction

This project is an investigation of the interaction patterns of a prominent television front person with her interviewees. The primary aim of the study is to distinguish variation in language use patterns that is context dependent from variation that derives from some gender construct. A second aim is to investigate gender as a dynamic construct. These two aims derive in part from Edelsky and Adams' comments:

To study women and men in interaction and to account for gender as both omnirelevant and also relational requires situating that interaction (1990: 187).

Whenever an individual's gender role is being defined or redefined - and this may be constantly - it will be so, not in isolation, but in relation to others' gender

identities and the opportunities available to her or him. Opportunities are constrained by institutions (eg. sex stereotypes concerning occupational suitability) and contexts (eg. television protocol). Language use varies not only according to where a person speaks but also because of that bundle of traits which comprises the speaker's gender identity in relation to the gender identity of the interlocutor.

The data under examination are the more formal interview segments on the current affairs programme *Primetime* presented by Maggie Barry (MB). One common reason for researchers analysing media language is the "accessibility of media as a source for some language feature they want to study" (Bell 1991: 4). The current project was no exception. Moreover, as Nordenstam comments:

[in the interview] both the role relations between the participants and the topics of conversation are fairly controllable factors (1992: 75).

The readily available interview data, summarised in Table 1, thus comprised the basis for the analysis.

The data consist of eight interviews conducted on *Primetime* by Maggie Barry, collected over three weeks (14/6/93 - 2/7/93). All the interviews with female participants and most of the interviews with male participants were included in the corpus. Interviews between news reporters and Maggie Barry and overseas guests and Maggie Barry were excluded from the corpus. In the text, each interview is identified by a single letter code followed by the sex of interviewees (eg. eFM). Participants are identified by their initials (eg. KG and PR). (See Appendix 2 for a full list of the abbreviations used in this paper.) Portions of interviews cM and dM had been edited out before being broadcast, and a pre-recorded segment had been inserted part way through interview bM. None of the other interviews appeared to have been edited.

Background

I will first discuss how Maggie Barry is perceived by media commentators, and how she herself perceives the role of interviewer, before reviewing research on the language features which are the focus of the analysis.¹

¹ Winter (1993) analyses the political interviews of two Australian media personalities. The approach Winter takes is similar to the analysis presented here, but came to the author's attention after the data collection and main analysis had been completed in late 1993.

Table 1
Analysis of interviews by participant role/occupation and sex²

Interview code	Participant Sex	Name Code	Name	Role or Occupation
a-h	F	MB	Maggie Barry	Interviewer
a	M	RR	Ross Robertson	Labour MP for Papatotetoe
	M	MD	Mike de Ryter	Arcade Operator and Distributor
b	M	BB	Bill Birch	Minister of Health
c	M	SN	Sam Neill	Actor
d	M	IM	Ian McPherson	Director, Health Information Service
e	F	KG	Karen Guillard	Coordinator, College of Midwives
	M	PR	Philip Rushmer	GP and Obstetrician
f	F	MR	Moir Ransom	Consultant, Marriage Guidance
	F	SS	Shona Solomon	Coordinator, DPB Action Group
g	F	ST	Sandra Toone	National Director, Women's Refuge
h	F	FO	Fran O'Sullivan	Editor, National Business Review

DPB = Domestic Purposes Benefit

A profile of the interviewer

In much sociolinguistic research, background information is collected at the time of the interview. In this way we build a social profile of the informant to draw

on in any subsequent interpretation of their linguistic behaviour. As the data were collected in the public domain and the participants are unknown to me, a professional profile of Barry was built up from interviews she has given and reviews she has received. Opinions of her skills as interviewer are generally highly complimentary, as the following comments illustrate.

Colleagues rise up and call her political interviews blessed (Cohen 1990: 28).

² By "sex" I intend "biological sex", and by "gender" the "socially constructed categories" based on biological sex (Coates 1986: 4). Though the definitions are taken from Coates, she refers to both concepts as "sex" to avoid confusion with grammatical gender.

She is an extremely competent broadcaster, cool under pressure and a searching interviewer, who, while maintaining an assertive pace, is never discourteous (Keith 1990: 79).

Others are less convinced of her personal warmth, however.

Maggie Barry is a tough customer. On one level she's friendly, bright, informed, enthusiastic, a seamless conversationalist. Just beneath that, she's a bit of an iceberg. Not a nasty iceberg, just a cool hard one not to be crossed or approached too closely (Riley 1991: 87).

Riley's comment may be an instance of the individual being called to account for doing gender inappropriately.³ His cool response may not be evoked by Barry's personality, but because her role of "public prosecutor" is at odds with predefined gender roles. An awareness of the ramifications of transgressing such boundaries may have led her to adopt interaction strategies that avoid condemnation.

She learnt how to interrupt politicians and then pause, so the interruption would not seem rude or rushed (Campbell 1992: 26).

Barry herself links the cooperativeness of her interviewee with the distribution of power:

...there's no point in getting angry about [evasive interviewees].
You just have to bring it back to where you're in the position of power, that's all (Campbell 1992: 26).

The control of others' contributions to the discourse and the effect this has on the affective orientation of the exchange is treated in my analysis of Barry's question types (see below).

In pursuing the aims of the study I chose to look at two variables - speaker switches and speech rates. My objective was not to arrive at quantitative statements of the type "women use more of form X than men", but to discover whether the interviewer's interactional strategies varied in different interviews. Where variation occurred, I wanted to identify the contributing factors and, most crucially, to discover if gender was one of those factors.

Interruptive Forms and Turn Taking

Fundamental to many studies of interruption and turn taking is the assumption that only one speaker will be talking at any time (see Edelsky 1981: 396-397).

³ Edelsky and Adams (1990: 185) after West and Zimmerman (1987: 146).

Though this is an inadequate model to describe all types of conversation,⁴ it captures the codified structure of the prototypical interview: interviewer question, interviewee answer, question, answer,...question, answer, closing statement by interviewer. Here one speaker at a time is equated with one turn at a time. Edmondson defines the (single speaker) turn as:

...both the opportunity to assume the role of speaker at a particular point of time in a conversation, and...what is said or done during the time for which the speaker role is continuously held by one individual (Edmondson 1981: 7).

For the purposes of analysis the turn is defined as "...one speaker's contribution to a conversation, up to the point in time where the floor is yielded to another participant" (Laver 1994: 116). In practice, a turn in an interview is nearly always equivalent to a speaker either asking or replying to a question.

The potentially most disruptive type of speech is an interruption. In the excerpt from interview aMM, RR's move in line 2 disrupts the question answer pattern. The interviewer's question does not occur after MD's turn in line 1 nor after the next two turns in lines 2 and 4. (See Appendix 1 for an explanation of the notation used.)

Excerpt from interview aMM

1 MD: There is none all the evidence is that this is not the case at all

[Question from interviewer expected here]

2 RR: No well I //don't acc- I don't\ accept that=/

[Question from interviewer expected here]

3 MD: /Er and the parents\ \

4 MD: /=The parents er con- ... [41 words] ... it appears in election year have found a //nice little scapegoat\

[Question from interviewer expected here]

5 RR: /No I- I- I-\ I don't... [107 words] ...is graffitied all over the place=/

⁴ Edelsky (1981: 417) comments that such problems are introduced when attempting to generalise the characteristics of "non-conversations" to conversations.

6 MB: /=Okay but what about...

If we define the floor as "the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/space" (Edelsky 1981: 405) then in the example cited above MD's turn violates not only the one-at-a-time ethic, but also the turn-and-turn-about etiquette of interviews, a part of the "acknowledged what's-going-on". The perception of this utterance as an interruption must be made with reference to the norms governing the discourse in progress, that is:

The interpretation of an utterance as an interruption depends on a complex of facts, including the status of the speakers, and the perceived relevance of the utterance... (Stubbs 1983: 186).

The analysis is further complicated in that interruptions are neither restricted to a single form or set of forms, nor are they mono-functional.

...there are no simple criteria that one can use to determine reliably whether or not an interruption constitutes an attempt to seize the floor (James and Clarke 1992: 294).

When analysing interruptions I have adopted the approach of Stubbe (1991: 53). By rejecting an a priori, one-to-one form-function relationship, she negates the claims of researchers such as West and Zimmerman that incursions primarily act

...to disrupt turns at talk, disorganize the ongoing construction of conversational topics, and violate the current speaker's right to be engaged in speaking (1983: 105).

Tannen (1991: Chapter 7) makes the point that interruptions may be a feature of "rapport-talk" for some speakers and cultures who engage in a "high-involvement" style. By assuming an interruptive form is necessarily disruptive in function we may merely be applying:

...the ethnocentric standards of the majority group to the culturally different behavior of the minority group [in Tannen's example Californian Christian and New York Jewish speakers respectively] (Tannen 1991: 208).

Unfortunately, in stating her case, Tannen does not make it clear that in a culture where asynchronous turn taking is the conversational norm, then interruptions will constitute a violation for that culture regardless of the norms operating in other cultures.

Speech Rate

Experimental results suggest that voices with speech rates below the norm are evaluated as less benevolent and less competent, while voices with speech rates above the norm are evaluated as less benevolent but more competent (Brown 1980 and studies cited therein; Ng and Bradac 1993: 44-45 and studies cited therein). A small psychology experiment by Sik Hung Ng (reported in Turner 1994) found that judges rated as more influential those who spoke faster and louder and interrupted more often (hence gaining more turns at talk and producing a greater amount of speech). The interdependence of speech rate and interruptions is also evidenced in more natural speech. Bardovi-Harlig investigated the relationship between interruptions and changes in speech rate in three spontaneous conversations. Her conclusion was that

increasing the rate of speech is a combat strategy used by both the interrupted and interrupting speaker in order to claim or retain the speaking turn (Bardovi-Harlig 1981: 4).

Speech rate can be measured in several ways. The inclusion of silent pauses differentiates speaking rate, in which the pauses are counted, from articulation rate, where the pauses are omitted (Laver 1994: 539). Speaking rate is the speech rate used in this study, and includes silent pauses, filled pauses and prolonged syllables to give the overall tempo of a speaker's turn (Laver 1994: 539).

The units most commonly employed to measure speech rate are either words or syllables over either minutes or seconds. Words per second was chosen as the most suitable rate for this study. The motivation for choosing seconds rather than minutes was the brevity of the interviews, ranging from 2 minutes 31 seconds to 6 minutes 20 seconds (see Table 2). Words were chosen rather than syllables to simplify analysis. When speech rates are compared across different text types, syllables - not words - must be counted. Otherwise the differing word lengths of the text types will falsify the speech rates obtained (Tauroza and Allison 1990: 91, citing Pimsleur et al. 1977). The data in this study derive from a single source and thus interference from differing word lengths between texts is largely avoided.

Referential and Affective Meaning

In a number of articles Holmes has discussed the notions of affective and referential meaning as they relate to gender (Holmes 1984, Holmes 1990a: 33-34) and to Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness (Holmes 1990b: 260-265, *passim*; 1991: 209). The referential meaning of an utterance is the information it

conveys (Holmes 1990a: 33), while the affective meaning "involves the speaker's attitude to the hearer in the context of utterance" (Holmes 1984: 349). Though interview topic and interviewee status will contribute to the affective meaning of an exchange, the interviewer has the defining role in how amicable it will be. Only the interviewer has the institutionally granted power to employ tactics such as the adversary technique "in which an interviewer deliberately challenges the interviewee's position in order to probe and provoke a lively debate" (Davis 1985: 54). Though an interviewee can be deliberately uncooperative, unless there is just cause, such a strategy risks an adverse audience response.

The current affairs interview is regulated in the same way as "broadcast news talk", "according to strict rules and public conventions which define its referential or ideational functions as paramount" (Davis 1985: 51). The interviews studied vary in the degree to which negative and positive affect is displayed, yet all have a high referential content. The expression of interpersonal warmth and confrontational distancing is thus always subordinate to the transmission of information. The transmission of personality however, (particularly the interviewee's, but also the interviewer's personality or persona) is an essential goal of the interview, a goal that news talk need not fulfil. The balance between the referential and the affective in any given dialogue will create different impressions in the audience's mind, realised by different interactive strategies. Gender may affect this balance because one's gender identity is a significant component of personal identity, at least in the (stereotypic) perceptions of others.

Method of analysis

Speech rates and turn lengths (in words and seconds) were calculated for each participant, and their turn taking manoeuvres categorised for interruptive form and function. The interviews were arranged on a two dimensional plot according to my interpretation of their referential content and affective meaning (no formal criteria were used). Finally, Maggie Barry's questions were classified by form and affective function as a way of formalising my intuitions.

Speech Rates

The language features used to measure variation quantitatively are the amount and rate of speech. The amount of speech was calculated from the transcripts by excluding all notational features to give number of words (w). Each turn (t) was timed in seconds (s) using a stopwatch. Speech rates are calculated as words per

turn (w/t), words per second (w/s) and seconds per turn (s/t). Words per second per utterance is the speech rate used in Figures 2 and 3. (Utterances include both intra-turn talk and turns.)

Turn Taking

Interruptive and speaker switch forms are analysed and categorised according to whether they are within another's turn or between turns. I developed a taxonomy, based on Beattie (1981: 15-21), Nordenstam (1992: 86-89), Stubbe (1991: 52-57) and West and Zimmerman (1983), to cover all turn taking and attempted turn taking manoeuvres present in the data.

The opening and closing utterances in interviews were disregarded for the purposes of analysis. The excluded speech was either Maggie Barry introducing the guests and the interview topic, or her brief summary and/or closing statement at the interview's end. Because the introductory and closing utterances had been edited out of some interviews (eg. cM and dM), all such utterances were removed from the analysis to avoid biasing the sample. Given that these continuity segments were primarily addressed to the absent audience (not the interviewee/s), they did not constitute part of the interaction proper, which was the focus of the study. For the purposes of analysis the start of each interview was the first question Maggie Barry asked.

Intra-turn talk

(1) Back channels opening and closing (BCs o/c) are defined by Edelsky and Adams (1990: 177) as "short intrusions into the ongoing turn of another speaker". They appear in these data only at the opening (eg. "good evening") or closing (eg. "thank you") of an interview.

(2) Turn Competitive Incomings (TCIs) are defined by French and Local (1983: 18) as "one type of overlapping interruptive speech...in which one speaker comes in clearly prior to the completion of another's turn and can be heard as directly competing with the other for possession of the turn". A speaker repeating the same word or phrase within another's turn in an attempt to usurp the floor is counted as a single TCI. In the example "//th- there is\.../=there is none..." [aMM], the utterances before the latch ("//th- there is\") are counted as a single TCI preceding a successful floor take beginning with the same phrase of the TCI ("/=there is none"). Where the speaker changes the content of the attempt, each new phrasing is counted as a different TCI: eg. in "//I re\...//yeah\...//of cour-\\" [bM], each of BB's three attempted floor takes is counted as a separate TCI, even though they occur within a single turn of Maggie Barry's.

Inter-turn talk

- (1) Smooth Speaker Switch Paused (SSS+) is a non-overlapped turn take with a short pause between speaker and auditor turn. (See Beattie 1981: 19-20).
- (2) A Latch is a (SSS+) without a pause between the speakers' turns.
- (3) Overlaps are simultaneous speech on a turn boundary. The overlap occurs on the first syllable of the incoming speaker and the last syllable of the outgoing one.
- (4) A Silent Interruption (Silent INT) is a turn take where the interrupted speaker has paused before completing his or her turn, though after a complete utterance (eg. "//The\ minister didn't accept that" [eFM], where the "The" is simultaneous with the previous speaker's "[intake]"). PR's final utterance was grammatically complete but the accompanying intonation and kinesics indicated that he, at least, considered his turn unfinished. (See Beattie 1981:19-21).
- (5) A Butting in Interruption (Butting INT) is a floor take preceded by two or more syllables of simultaneous speech. Note that this differs from Beattie (1981: 19, 21) who defines a Butting INT as an unsuccessful rather than successful speaker switch. I have reserved the term TCI to refer to unsuccessful attempts. (One example of a Butting INT is "//But is there an extravagan\gance in this do you think?" [eFM], where Maggie Barry's overlapping speech initiates a successful speaker switch.)

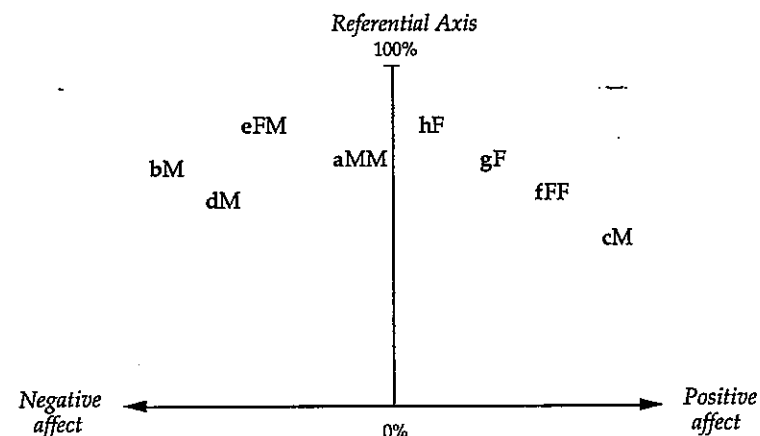
Plotting Interviews for Affect

In Holmes (1990b) a model is developed to allow the location of interactions on a graph, while retaining the "interdependence of elements in interaction" (253). In Figure 1 negative affect has been incorporated into the model devised by Holmes (1990b: 260) allowing both cooperative and combative interactions to be plotted together. Each interview is plotted in a two dimensional space representing the information content and tone of the interview. Referential content is marked on a scale of 0 to 100% on the y-axis while negative to positive affect is represented as a continuum on the x-axis.

Interviewer Questions

To formalise my impressionistic plotting of each interview, I analysed Maggie Barry's speech by question type. My aim was to develop an independent measure of interview type by examining both the form and function of her questions. (See Coulthard 1985: 129-134 on the interpretive problems created

Figure 1
Interviews plotted for referential content and affective meaning



when a function is realised by many forms, or vice versa.) Categorising the interviewer's speech in this way takes account of Maggie Barry's role as the person "institutionally responsible for the conduct of talk" (Cameron 1992: 20). It is she who allocates speaking rights and constructs the nature of the floor on behalf of both the "absent mass audience" and the media as an institution (Bell, 1991: 96).⁵ (Cf. Maggie Barry's quote above regarding the positioning of power within an exchange.)

According to the prototypical structure for an interview, described in the section on interruptive forms and turn taking above, each turn of Maggie Barry's is expected to include a question. In reality questionless turns were possible ranging from a comment with negative affect: "I'm amazed Minister you were unaware of this" [bM], and a (by definition) positive compliment: "You're so modest and self effacing about it" [cM].⁶

Even when the expected question form occurs, the hearer may be more or less strongly compelled to either agree or disagree with its proposition. As Cameron

⁵ When Maggie Barry interviews as a media journalist she replaces to some degree her own 'I' with the "institutional I" of a large-scale and inflexible 'cultural bureaucracy'" (Davis 1985: 52).

⁶ As the emphatic stress in the first quote indicates, Maggie Barry is being heavily sarcastic. In the second quote, from interview cM, Maggie Barry reveals a great admiration for SN.

notes, "Some [question] forms are more conducive than others" (1992: 18). Conducive or "leading" questions are those "which generally indicate the speaker's point of view on the questioned proposition" (Lane 1990: 234). A hierarchy can be developed on this basis.

Form of Interviewer Questions

Questions are categorised into the following classes based largely on Lane (1990: 23-45) and Quirk et al. (1985: 806).

- (1) Tag Question, Face Attack (TAG Q). Here a tag question is used as a confrontational device which "functions to...strengthen the negative illocutionary force of a face attack act" (Holmes 1990b: 263). I am not suggesting that the form alone encodes this meaning. In the example "But you're not going to be doing anything about the negative aspects of these health reforms are you?" [dM], the tag reinforces the negative proposition (in both the grammatical and affective senses) "you won't do anything".
- (2) The Hypothetical Question (HYPO Qs) conveys the speaker's expectation that the posed hypothesis is true. In comparison to other, less loaded, question types, the hypothetical question has the force of a strong assertion.⁷ For example, the question "One wonders should Doctor Troughton go?" [bM], implies that Doctor Troughton ought to volunteer his resignation.
- (3) Declarative Questions (DEC Qs) are identical to declarative statements except in intonation. They state the proposition as a truth that the hearer then has to either confirm or deny (with extra effort): eg. "So midwives aren't worth as much as doctors in your view?" [eFM].
- (4) Polar Questions (POLAR Qs) anticipate an affirmation or negation of the question's proposition: eg. "Will you be sending your own children along then?" [cM].
- (5) WH-Questions (WH Qs), structured using a member of the closed set of *wh*-interrogatives, expect an answer selected from an open set of logically well formed replies: eg. "Who will these analysts be?" [hF], has the set of options {the Auditor General, Treasury Officials...}.
- (6) A Disjunctive Question (DISJ Q) anticipates as its reply one of the options contained within the question. In logic a disjunctive syllogism has the structure "either *p* or *q*" (Kelley 1988: 221): eg. "Will you be...congratulating yourself...if there is a movement in polls...and similarly reprimanding yourself...if there is no...greater public understanding?" [dM]. The two options are either a rise in

⁷ See Greenbaum and Quirk (1990: §4.31) on hypothetical meaning; on rhetorical questions see Quirk et al. (1985: 825) and Greenbaum and Quirk (1990: §19.37).

government popularity or a fall in its popularity. The question is so phrased that to agree with the proposition of the subordinate clause implies an agreement with the proposition of the main clause, and as such it is a highly conducive one.⁸

(7) Restatement of the Question (re). A question may be restated when the addressee fails to respond adequately. As such it is highly conducive, an open challenge to the addressee's right to enact the topic change and an enforcement of the interviewer's authority to manage the interaction.

Function of Interviewer Questions

Besides differing levels of conduciveness indicated in the surface form, questions will also differ in their illocutionary force (the intended effect of the speech act). Indeed the same form may signal quite different speaker intent in different contexts. The classification of illocutionary force has been kept to a simple three way division. Negative affect is symbolised by [-], positive affect by [+] and an affectively neutral or referential question with [=].

Both form and function thus contribute to the maintenance or reduction of asymmetry between interviewer and interviewee, depending on the interactional goals. To avoid the criticisms levelled at measurements of conduciveness based purely on syntactic form, contextual information has been used to classify questions' affective meaning. The surface form is then used to subdivide these broad categories.

Results

Speaker Rates

Table 2 presents information on speech rates. The first column contains interview and participant codes. "Total turns" refers to the total number of turns for each speaker and the interview as a whole, excluding opening and closing utterances (as discussed in section on turn taking above). The next two columns contain word and time totals. Columns five and six list the mean length of turn (MLT) measured in words and then seconds. In the last column is the mean speech rate in words per second.

⁸ Cf. the oft-cited example "Have you stopped beating your wife yet?" (Kelley 1988: 125; Palmer 1981: 40). Kelley labels this a "complex question".

Table 2
Word counts, times and speech rates by participant and interview

Code	Total turns [t]	Total words [w]	Total seconds [s]	MLT (w/t)	MLT (s/t)	Mean (w/s)
MB	5	135	35	27	7	3.9
RR	4	276	85	69	21.3	3.2
MD	5	270	70	54	14	3.9
aMM	14	681	190	48.6	13.6	3.6
MB	16	443	114	27.7	7.1	3.9
BB	15	818	266	54.5	17.7	3.1
bM	31	1261	380	40.7	12.3	3.3
MB	11	241	61	21.9	5.5	4.0
SN	11	581	191	52.8	17.4	3.0
cM	22	822	252	37.4	11.5	3.3
MB	9	300	77	33.3	8.6	3.9
IM	9	269	74	29.9	8.2	3.6
dM	18	569	151	31.6	8.4	3.8
MB	12	264	77	22	6.4	3.4
KG	7	471	137	67.3	19.6	3.4
PR	7	336	127	48	18.1	2.6
eFM	26	1071	341	41.2	13.1	3.1
MB	9	353	93	39.2	10.3	3.8
SS	5	465	125	93	25	3.7
MR	4	311	92	77.8	23	3.4
fff	18	1129	310	67.7	17.2	3.6
MB	6	257	69	42.8	11.5	3.7
ST	6	466	166	77.7	27.7	2.8
gF	12	723	235	60.3	19.6	3.1
MB	6	176	42	29.3	7	4.2
FO	6	486	136	81	22.7	3.6
hF	12	662	178	55.2	14.8	3.7
Mean	19	865	255	45.2	13.3	3.4
Total	153	6918	2037			

A comparison of average amount of speech per turn (mean length of turn w/t and s/t) shows that women consistently have higher mean turn length, whereas men display lower means (except RR, w/t = 69, s/t = 21.3). Similarly Maggie Barry produces, on average, longer turns when interacting with female interviewees than with male interviewees.

Maggie Barry's speech rate clusters around 3.9 w/s. All her rates lie within the range 3.7 - 4.0 w/s except for interview eFM where her speech rate is slower at 3.4 w/s and for interview hF where it is faster at 4.2 w/s. The majority of interviewee speech rates are in the range 3.0 - 3.9 w/s. Only PR at 2.6 w/s and ST at 2.8 w/s are outside those parameters. Both PR and ST's rate of speaking is noticeably slow, even though Maggie Barry appears to accommodate her own speech rate to theirs. Her two slowest speech rates occur in eFM (at 3.4 w/s with KG and PR as interlocutors) and gF (at 3.7 w/s with ST as interlocutor).

For each interview the number of words in each utterance, the number of seconds in each utterance, and the number of words per second in each utterance were plotted against an utterance number. This permitted graphs to be constructed which facilitated comparisons between different interviewees. Speech rate was plotted against utterance number, rather than turn number because opening and closing utterances were included in the graphed data. Only two of the 24 graphs have been included here: words per second against utterance number for interviews bM and dM (Figures 2 and 3). These are the graphs which most clearly indicate a cross participant effect. The first utterance in interview dM is not Maggie Barry's, as one might expect, but the interviewee's, because the interview was pre-recorded (IM, utterance number 0 = 4.0 w/s; Maggie Barry, utterance number 1 = 6.8 w/s). The mean speech rate for interview bM is 3.3 w/s, for dM, 3.8 w/s.

Turn taking

Table 3 collates the data on intra- and inter-turn talk. The frequencies have been ordered so that the disruptive effect (or negative affect) of the form increases from left to right. Both raw scores and percentages are given for individual participants and for each interview as a whole. Intra-turn talk is not included in total turns. Percentages have not been calculated for the intra-turn talk, as turn competitive incomings are not counted as turns (nor are they timed), and because back channels opening and closing are transitory floor holdings. Only opening back channels have been counted as turns because the two closing back channels of "thank you" (in fff and gF) are more in the nature of minimal

Figure 2
Speech rate (in w/s) plotted against utterance number (interview b)

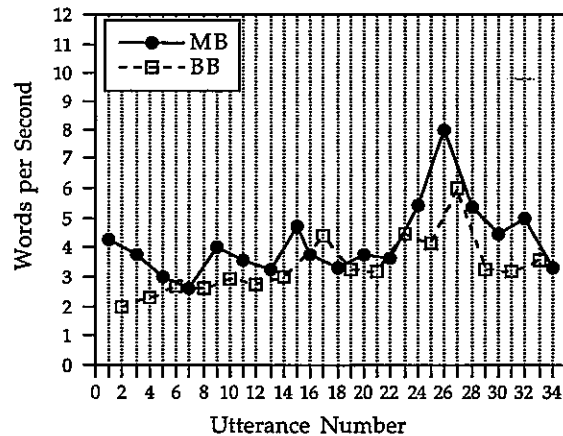
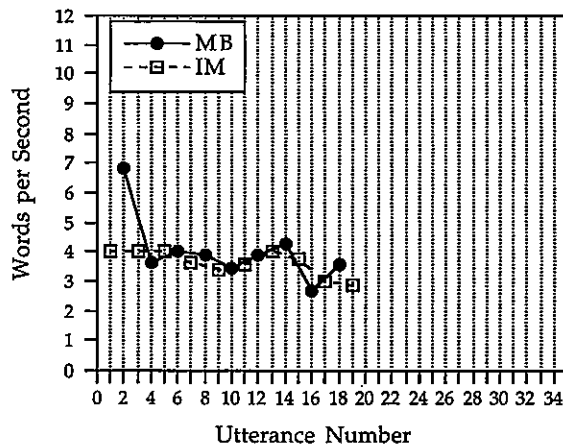


Figure 3
Speech rate (in w/s) plotted against utterance number (interview d)



feedback than floor holding turns. Minimal feedback though noted in the transcripts is excluded from the analysis because (i) it was not always possible to identify who had uttered the feedback, and (ii) judging from the muffled quality of some of the feedback, participants' microphones had been turned down for portions of the interview, thus making the data collected incomplete.

Smooth speaker switches paused were the most common method of turn taking, accounting for 62% of the speaker switches. The two types of interruption, silent and butting in, account for only 10% of the speaker switches. If we take smooth speaker switches paused, latches and overlaps to be non-disruptive turn taking forms, and silent and butting in interruptions as disruptive⁹, a comparison of the two groups of forms can be used as an indication of the tenor of an interview. Only non-disruptive forms occur in interviews dM, fFF, gF and hF. The remaining four interviews, aMM, bM, cM and eFM, contain 12-19% disruptive interruptive forms. There are two riders to these statements. Firstly, in dM there is a turn competitive incoming from IM. In the other interviews with only non-disruptive forms there are no turn competitive incomings. Secondly, all the disruptive forms in cM were produced by SN, who was being interviewed in a remote studio in Sydney. His four butting interruptions may originate in mistimings caused by a time lag in communications, coupled with the absence of kinesic clues from Maggie Barry, rather than in deliberate attempts to regain the floor.

Interview bM is notable in that 13 turn competitive incomings were produced, 11 of these from the interviewee, Bill Birch, then Minister of Health. Overall turn competitive incomings were an infrequently employed strategy: only two other interviewees used them, MD in aMM (TCI = 4), and IM in dM (TCI = 1).

Questions

Table 4 displays the interviews in a hierarchy based on the conduciveness of the questions posed by Maggie Barry. Interview cM (where Maggie Barry talks to actor Sam Neill) has been classified as the most solidarity building. The friendliness is due in part to the positive politeness inherent in Maggie Barry's complimenting SN (+COMPLIMENT), where the norm would seem to demand a question. (See Holmes 1990b: 265 on compliments as "positively affective speech acts which serve to increase or consolidate solidarity between the speaker

⁹ Disruptive to the extent that the speaker's turn is considered, at least on external evidence, to be incomplete (see section on inter-turn talk).

Table 3
Turn taking by individual speaker

Interview information		Intra-turn		Inter-turn									
Code	Total turns	BC o/c	TCI	SSS+		Latches		Overlaps		Silent INT		Butting INT	
	$\Sigma(t)$			N	/ $\Sigma(t)$ x100	N	/ $\Sigma(t)$ x100	N	/ $\Sigma(t)$ x100	N	/ $\Sigma(t)$ x100	N	/ $\Sigma(t)$ x100
MB	5					4	80%	1	20%				
RR	4	1		1	25%	1	25%			1	25%	1	25%
MD	5		4	1	20%	4	80%						
aMM	14	1	4	2	14%	9	65%	1	7%	1	7%	1	7%
MB	16		2	5	31%	7	44%			2	12.5%	2	12.5%
BB	15	1	11	4	27%	9	60%	2	13%				
bM	31	1	13	9	29%	16	53%	2	6%	2	6%	2	6%
MB	11			7	64%	4	36%						
SN	11			6	55%	1	9%					4	36%
cM	22			13	59%	5	23%					4	18%
MB	9			8	89%	1	11%						
IM	9		1	6	67%	3	33%						
dM	18		1	14	78%	4	22%						
MB	12			7	58%	1	8.5%			3	25%	1	8.5%
KG	7			5	71%	1	14.5%			1	14.5%		
PR	7			7	100%								
eFM	26			19	73%	2	18%			4	15%	1	4%
MB	9			9	100%								
SS	5			4	80%	1	20%						
MR	4	1		4	100%								
hFF	18	1		17	94%	1	6%						
MB	6			6	100%								
ST	6	1		6	100%								
gF	12	1		12	100%								
MB	6			6	100%								
FO	6			3	50%	1	17%	2	33%				
hF	12			9	75%	1	8%	2	17%				
N	153	4	18	95	62%	38	25%	5	3%	7	5%	8	5%
%	100%				62%		25%		3%		5%		5%

speech acts which serve to increase or consolidate solidarity between the speaker and addressee".) This transgression clearly marks cM apart from the other interviews, where positive affect, if shown, is displayed less overtly.

The shaded area encloses a diagonal grading for affect, with maximal negative affect contained in the top left hand corner and maximal positive affect in the bottom right. To achieve this grading, two of the question types in interview cM have been excluded (=DEC Q, =POLAR Q, shown in italics). The bulk of questions in cM (75%), however, are of the least conducive type.

The most common questioning strategies are POLAR Qs, WH Qs which together comprise 71% of the total question types. Apart from DEC Q at 18% of total question types, all other types occur only once or twice in the data (<3%). Note that in interview hFF, where the interviewee is being asked for her expert opinion, all five questions are POLAR Qs with positive affect. All other interviews utilise more than one type of question.

Discussion

A cursory consideration of the results suggests that interviewee sex directly correlates with a number of variables.

- The mean length of turn, s/t is greater in interviews with female participants than with male participants. Ranking the interviews according to mean length of turn, s/t of the interviewees (see Table 2), provides the following results.

Women	gF 27.7	hFF 24.1	hF 22.7
Mixed sex	eFM 18.9		
Men	bM 17.7	cM 17.4	aMM 17.2 dM 8.2

- Most female interviewees take longer turns than male interviewees, based on mean length of turn, w/t (see Table 2). The exception is KG (w/t = 67.3) who has a slighter shorter mean than RR (w/t = 69).

Women	SS 93	FO 81	MR 77.8	ST 77.7	(KG 67.3)
Men	(RR 69)	BB 54.5	MD 54	SN 52.8	PR 48 IM 29.9

The same observation holds true for mean length of turn (s/t), and the same exception applies: KG (s/t = 19.6) has a slighter shorter mean than RR (s/t = 21.3).

Women	ST 27.7	SS 25	MR 23	FO 22.7	(KG 19.6)
Men	(RR 21.3)	PR 18.1	BB 17.7	SN 17.4	MD 14 IM 8.2

Table 4
Interviews graded by question type and affective meaning

Interview code	bM	dM	eFM	aMM	gF	hFF	fff	cM	Total types
Form/Function									
- COMMENT	13								2
- TAG Q		12.5							1
- HYPO Q	13								2
- re DEC Q	7								1
- DEC Q	40	37.5	8						10
- re POLAR Q			8						1
- POLAR Q	27		34						8
- re WH Q		12.5	8						2
- WH Q		25	8	40					5
- DISJ Q		12.5							1
= DEC Q								12.5	1
= POLAR Q					50			12.5	4
= WH Q			17	40					4
+ POLAR Q					33	100	22	50	13
+ WH Q			17	20	17		78		11
= COMMENT								12.5	1
+ COMPLIMENT								12.5	1
Total types in interview	15	8	12	5	6	5	9	8	68

• Interruptive forms that violate turn taking rules occur more frequently in interviews with male interviewees than in ones with only female participants (Table 3). In addition there is a tendency for Maggie Barry to interrupt more if interviewees interrupt.

• Maggie Barry poses a greater percentage of question types with negative affect in interviews with male participants (except cM), than in ones with all female participants (Table 4).

From this evidence one might conclude that, in the context of an interview, women will speak more, for longer and with fewer interruptions than men will. However attractive this interpretation appears, it disguises two important factors. The first is that the different interviews are conducted with different interactional goals, and with differing degrees of confrontation. Every interview involving one or more male participants (except cM) is aligned towards negative affect, those involving women towards the positive pole. This raises the question: "Are all female interactions by nature facilitative, and conversely are interactions involving men by nature confrontational?"

Though this certainly appears to be the case, it should be noted that in interviews aMM, bM, and dM (all with male interviewees), at least one guest was either a politician or a civil servant, whereas in interviews fff and gF (both with female interviewees), the guests were spokespersons for community agencies. The remaining two interviews (excluding eFM which has both a female and a male interviewee) were hF, essentially an interview between colleagues and cM. In the former interview, FO, the editor of a business magazine, had been invited in her role as expert to talk about new fiscal legislation. In cM, Maggie Barry interviews the male lead of the recently released movie *Jurassic Park*. SN's role was not to defend unpopular political decisions, but to talk about uncontroversial aspects of the film and his role in it. This last interview (cM) provides the exception to the principle given above. Though the crude maxim women equals facilitative, men equals confrontational may hold true in the majority of cases, it must be qualified to allow that the level of positive affect in an interview cannot be consistently and solely a reflection of interviewee sex.

Looking again at the results, this time focussing on the interaction, not between speaker sex and the observed variables, but between the affective meaning of the interview and the variables, what patterns emerge? The plotting of interviews against referential and affective axes (Figure 1), though based solely on a subjective assessment, corresponded with surprising accuracy to the ordering given in Table 4 based on formal criteria. Comparing this plot with the data in Table 3 and the mean length of turn, s/t for the interview as a whole (Table 2, column 6) suggests the following factors influence the use of interruptive forms by Maggie Barry.

Factors which favour Maggie Barry's use of smooth speaker switch paused and/or latching are:

either +AFFECTIVE

(ie. interviews cM, fff, gF and hFF)

or -AFFECTIVE combined with a low mean length of turn, s/t
(ie. interview dM).

Factors which favour Maggie Barry's use of interruptions are:

-AFFECTIVE combined with medium mean length of turn, s/t
(ie. interviews aMM, bM, eFM).

Mean length for the 8 interviews was 13.3 s/t. Medium mean length of turn is in the range 11.5-17.2 s/t. Low mean length of turn is below 11.5 s/t.

+AFFECTIVE is to the right of the y-axis in Figure 1, -AFFECTIVE to the left.

Interviewer interruptions are more likely with longer turns taken in confrontational exchanges (ie. medium mean length of turn, -AFFECTIVE) where a moderating influence is required to ensure unsanctioned topic shifts do not occur (ie. interviews aMM, bM, eFM). In a facilitative setting (ie. +AFFECTIVE), in which the adoption of the adversary technique is redundant, Maggie Barry interruptions are absent (ie. interviews cM, fFF, gF and hFF). In such non-confrontational exchanges much longer turns are permissible (interviews fFF, gF and hFF have the three highest mean length of turns). Similarly shorter turns (ie. low mean length) will reduce competition for the floor, and call for less interviewer moderation of interactional behaviour, even though the interview may be confrontational (ie. interview dM). This is reflected in Maggie Barry preferring non-disruptive turn taking forms - smooth speaker switches paused (89%) and latches (11%).

From the above model we would predict interview aMM to favour Maggie Barry's use of interruptions, because it has a medium mean length of turn at 13.6 s/t and is plotted as -AFFECTIVE. Yet though the interviewees in aMM violate turn taking rules, Maggie Barry does not (RR = 1 Silent INT, 1 Butting INTs; MD = 4 TCIs). However, in interview aMM, Maggie Barry never uses smooth speaker switches paused, but only either latches (80%) or overlaps (20%). For this reason the grouping of factors with variables remains plausible.

The two graphs in Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the interviewee effect on Maggie Barry's interaction pattern. In interview dM, plotted in Figure 3, IM and Maggie Barry seem to mirror each other's speech rates, while maintaining a fairly even pace (who follows whom is a chicken and egg conundrum). Interview bM, plotted in Figure 2, shows a similar result - this time with a much wider variation between the speech rates of the interviewer and the interviewee but still with a noticeable tango effect.

The loose threads of form and function are woven together in the grading of interviewer question type in Table 4. The application of stringent (and replicable) techniques in the analysis of affective meaning (compared to Figure 1) has benefits in ensuring subsequent interpretation is soundly based. The difference in the ranking outcomes is slight, nonetheless:

Interviews ranked on objective criteria (Table 4)

bM dM eFM aMM gF hF fFF cM —

Negative affect ←————→ Positive affect

bM dM eFM aMM hF gF fFF cM

Interviews ranked on subjective criteria (Figure 1)

The correlation between this ranking and the other language features is less straightforward. The types of turn taking strategies employed by Maggie Barry will predict a similar but not identical ordering with regard to affective meaning to that predicted by question type (Table 4) or intuition (Figure 1). Maggie Barry uses 100% smooth speaker switches paused in interviews fFF, gF and hF, yet in cM she uses 64% smooth speaker switches and 36% latches. Maggie Barry interrupts in both interview bM and eFM, yet interruptions constitute a greater percentage of total turn types in eFM than bM. On interruptive forms produced by MB alone, one would expect aMM to show less affect than dM, yet this is not the case.¹⁰ These discrepancies back up Stubbe's (1991: 53) assertion, referred to above, that there can be no a priori, one-to-one form-function relationship when analysing interruptions. In addition multi-party exchanges (ie. aMM, eFM, fFF) may possess a group dynamic which is markedly different to that of two party exchanges.

Conclusion

The aim at the outset of this study was to isolate situational factors affecting language patterns from gender influenced variation. This was achieved only to a limited extent. During the period of data collection women appeared as guests on *Primetime* much less frequently than did men. There is little to suggest that this bias is atypical. Except for KG in interview eFM women were never interviewed in a confrontational manner. As a consequence, comparisons

¹⁰ For Maggie Barry in interview aMM, latches = 80%, overlaps = 20%, for Maggie Barry in interview dM, SSS+ = 89%, latches = 11%.

between interviews for which the situational factors were controlled were impossible.

Ideally, the analyses and findings of this small study should be applied to and tested on a larger data set. A more comprehensive sample would include more interviews in which men are interviewed on uncontentious topics (eg. like cM), more interviews in which women are interviewed on contentious issues (eg. like KG in eFM), as well as more multi-party interviews (eg. like aMM, eFM, fFF). Constructing a profile of another, or several other interviewers would allow comments such as Keith's (1990: 79) that Maggie Barry maintains an "assertive pace" to be put in context of other interviewer's speech rates and interaction patterns.

The main finding from this study was that it is possible to uncover how the affective meaning of an interview is constructed by close analysis of the interaction patterns of the interviewer. A profile of the interviewer's interaction with a range of interviewees talking on a range of topics has been established. This profile captures some of the dynamism of the subtle changes which take place in managing the interaction of a news interview. Question type was found to be the most reliable predictor of the tenor of an interview. While turn taking strategies and the rate and amount of speech are important indicators in analysing the construction of affective meaning, they are not mono-functional indicators. The same interruptive form or speech rate may represent both involvement and detachment, and therefore cannot be analysed independent of context.

In her summary of Cameron (1992), Bull states the strong null hypothesis: "There are no context-independent gender differences in language" (1992: 9). While the results obtained cannot reject this hypothesis in that no clear gender patterns emerge which are not situated in the context of differential power relationships as expressed by the affective meaning of each interview, neither do the results wholly support the claim. Without sufficient cross interview comparability (women in an argumentative setting, men in a supportive one) the data set remains incomplete and inconclusive. Indeed, my inability to gather a full set of comparable interviews may be a significant finding in itself, as regards gender. It may be that the socially constructed norms of gender restrict the possible combinations of affective meaning and interlocutor sex. Part of the construction of gender and gender relations may be the very limitations on potential forums for interaction between interviewee and interviewer.

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APPENDIX 1: NOTATION

The interviews were transcribed using a system based on Stubbe (1991: 122-123). The notation should be interpreted in the light of the definitions given in the section on turn taking.

Simultaneous speech

1: //speaker one\

2: /speaker two\\

Latched speech

1: speaker one=/
 2: /=speaker two

Hyphens (-) indicate truncated words. [intake] is an audible breath.

Underlined syllables show emphatic stress.

Question marks (?) indicate question intonation.

Capitals have been used at the beginning of utterances to improve readability.

No other punctuation has been used.

Transcriber's annotations appear in square brackets.

Turn allocation is designated by the speaker's initials in the left margin, followed by a colon.

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**Maori English and the bus-driving listener:
a study of ethnic identification and phonetic cues**

Shelley Robertson

Abstract

This paper reports the results of (i) an investigation into the ability of working class people to distinguish between Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders on tape, and (ii) the relationship between the accuracy of listeners' ethnic identifications and the occurrence of specific linguistic cues in their speech. Thirty Wellington bus-drivers were played tapes of six speakers of New Zealand English to determine whether they could identify the ethnicity of the speakers. The results suggest that, while speakers were classified as Pakeha more often than as Maori, some Maori speakers use a variety of English which is ethnically marked, and recognisable by some listeners. Moreover, Maori speakers were more accurately identified in less formal speech styles providing support for the suggestion that features of Maori English characterise a particular style or register of New Zealand English. A number of phonetic features of the stimulus excerpts were analysed, including initial voiceless stops, word final /z/, syllable-timing, high rising terminal intonation contours, and rate of speech. Correlations were found between the occurrence of a number of these features and accurate identification as Maori, suggesting some of these features may act as salient markers of ethnicity.

Introduction

Maori English, a variety of English spoken by some Maori, has been the subject of much discussion by linguists in recent years. Richards (1970) proposed a distinction between Maori English 1, a standard Maori pronunciation characterised by "purity of vowels", and Maori English 2, which is distinguished from Pakeha English by lexical, syntactic and phonetic differences. Richards' Maori English 2 is the variety which is generally intended when people refer to Maori English (ME), and it is phonetic features of Maori English 2 which are the focus of this study.

Educationalists have blamed the low academic achievement of Maori school-children on ME, and comedians have created stereotyped versions of ME, which have been highly successful because of the general public's recognition of it, and their generally negative attitudes towards it. Many acquaintances with whom I discussed my research referred to ME as "corrupted English", "bastardised English", and just plain "speaking badly". In spite of this high level of interest from both linguists and non-linguists, there has been relatively little systematic research into features of ME, or even into who speaks it, or for what purposes.

Other ethnically marked varieties of English have been the object of research by linguists for some time. In America, parents of Black children who were not doing well at school took the school to court (Labov 1982). They claimed that the school was not adequately providing for their children's educational needs, by failing to take account of the fact that the children spoke a different dialect to their teachers. Evidence from sociolinguists proved that the children did indeed speak a distinct dialect, and that their failure in school was due to their teachers' attitudes towards their speech, rather than features of their speech itself.

Similar systematic study of ME is required to establish its existence as a distinct variety of English, in no way inferior to other, more prestigious, varieties spoken in New Zealand. This article is based on the results of research which aimed primarily to examine whether ME exists as a recognisable variety of English, and aimed also to attempt some description of its phonetic features, and to explore attitudes towards ME compared with other varieties of New Zealand English (Robertson 1994). This paper reports the results of the listeners' ethnic identification of speakers from tape recorded excerpts of their speech, and the findings of the phonetic analysis of the excerpts.

Method

Thirty Wellington bus-drivers were played tapes of six speakers of New Zealand English (NZE) to determine whether they could identify the ethnicity of the speakers, and to elicit the listeners' evaluations of the speakers for five characteristics, including three solidarity-based traits, and two status-based traits.

Selecting the speakers

The tape samples used in this study were selected from interviews collected in the social dialect study of the Porirua speech community (Holmes, Bell and Boyce 1991).

The original study included 60 working class speakers, in three age groups (20s, 40s, 70s); both female and male, and two ethnic groups, Pakeha and Maori. A group of fifteen middle class Pakeha females were added for comparison purposes. So a sample of speakers differentiated by gender, age, ethnicity and social class formed the potential database for this present study.

In order to minimise the possible non-linguistic features to which listeners could be responding, it was decided to control the age, gender, and class of the speakers, varying only the ethnicity. Donn Bayard (1991a: 22) notes that the results of his attitude study may have been distorted by "confounds of accent with speaker gender, and - to a lesser extent - with age of speaker". To minimise the possibility of such confusion, I selected speakers differentiated only by ethnicity. Consequently, careful consideration had to be given to which single age-group, socio-economic class, and gender would be used for the stimulus tapes.

A language variety with low prestige is more common among working class speakers. Since ME appears to be a low prestige variety (Bayard 1990, 1991a, 1991b, Huygens 1979, Wilson and Bayard 1992), it seemed preferable to use only working class speakers for this study.

If ME features result from interference from the Maori language, then older speakers would perhaps be more likely to use ME, since older speakers are more likely to be native speakers of Maori. However, one of my hypotheses was that ME is a register of NZE, used by Maori, and by Pakeha with strong ties into a predominantly Maori social network, as a marker of solidarity. Hewitt (1982), in his study of white adolescent creole speakers in Britain, notes that adolescents often use ethnically marked varieties of a language as an in-group identity marker. For this reason I decided to focus on younger speakers. I also believe that younger (and non-Maori speaking) speakers use ME for a different reason than do older (Maori-speaking) NZE speakers. Ethnically marked varieties of a language can function as ethnicity markers in the same ways as a minority language does, in situations where the speakers do not speak their own minority language. The current Maori cultural renaissance, particularly among younger people, combined with the fact that there are extremely few young native speakers of Maori, could lead to greater use of ME among these speakers. There has also been suggestion that ME is on the increase, particularly among younger speakers (Gordon 1991).

The media stereotype of a ME speaker is often male (eg. Billy T. James), so using the speech of young males would perhaps have been the most obvious choice, as it is in the speech of young males that one could expect to find a high number of ME features. However, the young Pakeha males in the Porirua project data were not very communicative, and their tape-recorded interviews were marked by pauses and mono-syllabic responses. There were therefore numerous differences between the Maori and Pakeha young male speakers, such as talkativeness and apparent friendliness, which could have biased the listeners' reactions to them. For these reasons it was decided to use only young female speakers. Because of problems encountered while selecting the final sample of speakers (discussed fully in Robertson 1994), it was necessary to widen the age range, and two middle-aged speakers were included as well.

The selected speakers included three Maori and three Pakeha women, aged 20-29 and 40-49 years. A 'Maori-sounding' Pakeha speaker, and a 'Pakeha-sounding' Maori speaker were included to test the hypothesis that not all Maori speak ME, and not only Maori speak ME.

The speakers were coded as follows:

1YP(M)	young 'Maori-sounding' Pakeha speaker
2YP	young Pakeha speaker
3MP	conservative middle-aged Pakeha speaker
4MM	middle-aged Maori speaker
5YM(P)	young 'Pakeha -sounding' Maori speaker
6YM	young Maori speaker

Extracts of conversation (CONV) and reading passage (RDG) style were used for all but one speaker (6YM), giving a total of eleven tape samples. (The content of the conversational extracts was as comparable as possible in tone and topic.) This allowed a comparison of style, to test the hypothesis that ME would be more apparent in conversational style, because of its probable function as a solidarity marker, as discussed above.

Selecting the listeners

The listener sample comprised thirty Wellington bus-drivers. This group was chosen because they were presumed to be more familiar with Maori speakers than the mostly Pakeha students who had typically been the subjects of earlier studies (Abell 1980, Bayard 1990, 1991a, 1991b, Gould 1972, Harrison 1975, Huygens 1979).

If ME is a register used by speakers as a marker of solidarity in informal situations, then ability to recognise it is likely to reflect degree of exposure to it. ME seems also to be closely linked with lower socio-economic status. Consequently, the selected listening group comprised a sample of working class listeners, including people from a range of ethnic groups, and for whom the speakers could easily represent members of the listener's own social network.

Collecting the data

For collecting listeners' reactions to the taped extracts, a one-on-one interview was preferred over a group experiment situation for practical reasons, and to ensure that relevant background information was collected from each bus-driver. The intention was to examine features of the listeners themselves, to determine whether the listeners' age, gender, ethnicity or degree of integration into a Maori social network affected either their ability to recognise Maori speakers, or their attitudes towards the speakers.

Although I aimed to interview a minimum of five bus-drivers from Maori, Pakeha and Non-New Zealand backgrounds, and equal numbers of male and female drivers, the constraints of the social network approach used to contact informants, and the relatively small size of the sample group, meant that this was impossible. The final sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Listener sample of bus drivers

Ethnicity	Female	Male
Maori	4	5
Pakeha	7	9
Non-New Zealander	1	4
Totals	12	18

Results

Ethnicity

Listeners were asked to identify the ethnicity of the speakers. Because this was an open question, and listeners' responses were not restricted to a small set of options from which they had to choose, a variety of responses was obtained. For the purposes of analysis these were classified into four groups: (i) Maori (ii) Pakeha (iii) Maori/Pakeha (which included only those responses which indicated that the listener believed the speaker to be half or part Maori, and half or part Pakeha) (iv) Other (a range of different responses including non-New Zealand ethnicities, non-Maori Polynesian, uninterpretable responses, and 'no guesses').

It was expected that 2YP and 3MP would be identified predominantly as Pakeha, and not as Maori by many listeners, and that 6YM and 4MM would be identified most often as Maori since their speech sounded most 'Maori' to me and my pilot judges. I did not anticipate that the percentage of Maori identifications for these two speakers would be as high as the percentage of Pakeha identifications for 2YP and 3MP, since previous studies have found that listeners are not particularly skilled at accurately identifying Maori speakers (eg. Gould 1972, Huygens 1979). I had no preconceptions about the results which could be expected for 5YM(P) and 1YP(M). I was unsure whether listeners would confirm my impression of these speakers, or accurately identify 5YM(P) as Maori, and 1YP(M) as Pakeha.

It should be noted that the accuracy of ethnic identification was not the primary focus of this study, since it was acknowledged that not all Maori speakers, and not only Maori speakers use ME. Those speakers for whom the listeners' ethnic identifications were predominantly incorrect are most interesting, since it is these results which are most relevant to the hypothesis that ME is not confined to those who are ethnically Maori. The speakers' perceived ethnicity is of more interest than their actual ethnicity. Figures 1 and 2 show the percentage of listeners who classified each speaker as Maori, Maori/Pakeha and Pakeha in both reading passage and conversational style.

The 'Maori/Pakeha' category was treated as 'Maori' for the purposes of the following discussion, and was included with the 'Maori' results on the figures, although distinguished from them. This was because Maori was considered to be the marked category in relation to Pakeha, and identification of a speaker as Maori, even if only

as half-Maori, was considered more important than the half-Pakeha identification inherent in a 'Maori/Pakeha' classification.

As predicted, 2YP and 3MP were identified as Maori by the vast majority of listeners. 4MM and 6YM were identified as Maori by at least 50%, and as many as 87%, of the listeners. There was a higher level of accuracy in identifying these two speakers as Maori than has been observed in previous studies (eg. Gould 1972, Huygens 1979).

Speakers were identified as Pakeha more often in Reading Passage style than in Conversation, while there was a tendency for the reverse to be true of Maori classifications.

On the whole, the number of listeners who classified a speaker as Pakeha was greater than the number of listeners who classified a speaker as Maori. This suggests that Pakeha English (PE) is the unmarked or default category.

The ethnicity of the listener had some effect on ethnic classifications. Maori listeners tended to identify speakers as Maori more often than did Pakeha or non-NZ listeners. Non-New Zealanders were less accurate at identifying all speakers as New Zealanders (eg. identifying them as Pacific Islanders, European etc) than either Maori or Pakeha listeners.

Age showed little effect, although the 50+ group was more accurate in identifying one Pakeha speaker (1YP(M), albeit contradicting her 'perceived ethnicity'), and there was a tendency for Maori classifications to increase with decreasing listener age.

Male listeners were slightly more accurate in identifying Maori speakers as such. Females were more likely to identify the two young Pakeha speakers as Maori.

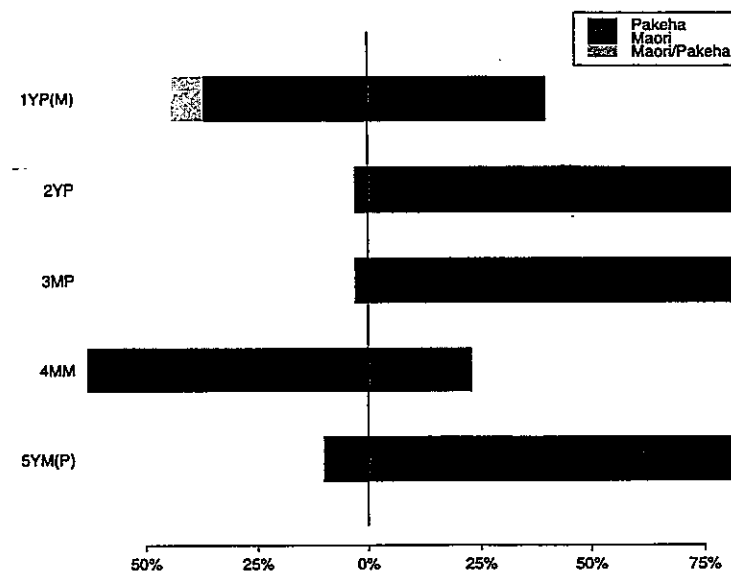


Figure 1. Listeners' classification of speakers as Maori, Maori/Pakeha and Pakeha in RDG (30 bus-drivers)

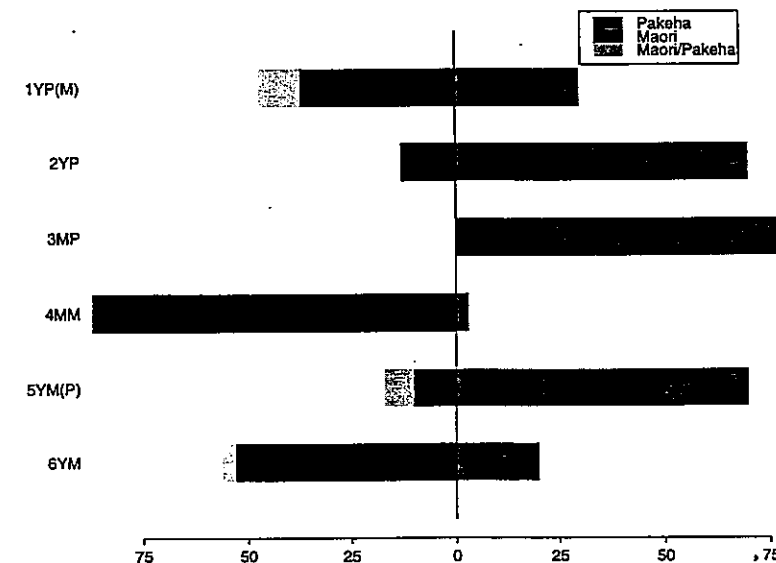


Figure 2. Listeners' classification of speakers as Maori, Maori/Pakeha and Pakeha in CONV (30 bus-drivers)

Phonetic analysis

A second aim of this study was to relate listeners' identification of speakers to specific linguistic cues in their speech. In particular, I wanted to describe phonetic features which occurred in the speech of those identified as Maori. When a speaker is consistently identified as Maori, it is reasonable to assume that listeners are responding to specific linguistic features of their speech. Those features can then reasonably be regarded as features of ME.

In order to identify phonetic features of ME occurring in the stimulus tapes, all tape samples were phonetically analysed. The following seven features which the literature on ME had suggested as distinctive of ME were selected for detailed analysis: unaspirated initial voiceless stops, devoicing of final /z/, syllable-timing, high rising terminal intonation contours, slow rate of speech, monophthongisation of the GOAT vowel, and non-standard realisations of dental fricatives. The frequencies of occurrence of particular phonetic features were then related to the results of the ethnicity identifications made by listeners. This procedure made it possible to identify the most salient markers of ME occurring in the stimulus tapes.

Although tape excerpts were analysed for all seven phonetic features identified in the literature as markers of ME, no instances were found of two features (namely, monophthongisation of the GOAT vowel, and non-standard pronunciation of the dental fricatives). The results for the remaining five phonetic features which showed some correlation with identification of speakers as Maori are discussed next.

Unaspirated syllable-initial voiceless stops

Many people with whom I discussed this project suggested that unaspirated initial voiceless stops were characteristic of ME. I could not, however, find any mention of unaspirated stops in the literature on ME, although Benton's (1966) observation on the interchangeable use of /t/ and /d/ in Maori children's speech may be a reference to this feature.

There were 8 instances of this variable in RDG style excerpt, and speakers produced between 2 and 12 tokens in CONV style. There were five possible variants - aspirated, unaspirated, affricated, flapped and glottal.

1YP(M) and 4MM produced far more non-standard variants in RDG style than other speakers. There was a greater number of unaspirated tokens in CONV than in RDG

style; all speakers except 3MP produced at least one example of this variant. Again, 1YP(M) and 4MM produced the greatest number of unaspirated stops in CONV style. The other speaker who was identified as Maori by a significant number of listeners, 6YM, produced too few tokens of this variable to make generalisations.

It is possible that non-standard pronunciations of unaspirated voiceless syllable-initial stops could be a feature of ME, rather than specifically unaspirated variants. However, the results do support the suggestion that unaspirated variants occur more often in ME than in PE.

Devoiced word-final /z/

Benton (1966) noted that the Maori children in his study had a tendency to merge /s/ and /z/. Holmes and Bell (in press) suggest it is a feature common to all speakers of NZE, while Bauer (1986) suggests it is a feature of the speech of younger New Zealanders.

Realisations of this variable were grouped into three possible variants: voiced (not fully voiced, but standard NZE /z/), partially voiced, and voiceless. There were 6 instances of this variable in the RDG style excerpt, and speakers produced between 1 and 8 tokens each in CONV style.

Only 1YP(M), 4MM and 5YM(P) produced voiceless tokens in RDG style: that is, all Maori or 'Maori-sounding' speakers. There was a higher level of devoicing in CONV than in RDG style. All speakers showed at least partial devoicing in CONV style, but only two speakers, 1YP(M) and 4MM, produced completely devoiced variants. 6YM produced too few tokens to generalise.

Devoicing of /z/ would appear to be another potentially salient marker of ME, as it occurred to a greater extent in the speech of those who were most often identified as Maori. It also occurred more often in CONV than in RDG style.

Syllable-timing

Bauer (1986, 1994) has commented that ME is characterised by syllable-timed rhythm:

Maori English is most easily recognised by its pronunciation, in particular by the voice quality and the rhythm. The rhythm is more syllable-timed than that of other varieties of NZE, with more full vowels in unstressed syllables (Bauer 1994: 414).

This feature has also been observed by Holmes and Bell (in press) and Benton (1966).

As Bauer suggests, the extent to which ME (or NZE) is syllable-timed can be measured by counting the number of vowels in unstressed syllables which are realised by the full form of the vowel. Using this measure, Ainsworth (1993) compared newsreaders on different radio stations, and found ME, as spoken on *Mana News*, was more syllable-timed than RP on the BBC, or other varieties of NZE (which were more syllable-timed than RP).

In this study, 1YP(M) showed the highest number of retained full vowel forms, followed by 4MM and 5YM(P), and then 2YP and 3MP. In CONV style, 6YM showed the highest number of retained full vowel forms, followed closely by 1YP(M), and then 5YM(P), 4MM, 2YP and 3MP.

These results indicate that full vowels used in unstressed syllables (a measure of syllable-timing) show some link with identification as Maori, although age may also be a relevant factor. The younger speakers were more likely to retain full vowels in unstressed syllables than the middle aged speakers. This supports the suggestion that NZE in general shows a tendency towards syllable-timing, which may be increasing (Ainsworth 1993, Bauer 1986).

High Rising Terminals

The high rising terminal is a feature of general NZE which is stereotypically associated with Maori speakers, as well as with Pakeha women. Compared to PE, ME is characterised by a higher frequency of HRTs. Analysing the speech of ten young working class women, Allan (1990) found that Maori speakers used more HRTs than Pakeha speakers. Using data from the 75 interviews collected in the Porirua Social Dialect Survey (Holmes, Bell and Boyce 1991), Britain (1992) found that HRTs were used most frequently by younger Maori speakers, although they were also used frequently by young Pakeha women. However, Britain found age to be a more significant factor than ethnicity, with younger speakers using more HRTs than middle aged and older speakers.

The analysis of the tape samples revealed no HRTs in RDG style. This was not unexpected, since speakers' personal involvement in the story was minimal, and HRTs function to develop "closer relationships between the speaker and the hearer", and allow them to "participate in the exchange of personal experiences" (Britain 1992: 82).

A total of only 6 HRTs were produced in CONV style by only three speakers - 1YP(M), 5YM(P) and 6YM. These three speakers were all young, and either 'Maori-sounding', or Maori. However, 4MM produced no HRTs on the tape samples, but was still identified as Maori by more listeners than any other speaker. This suggests that the use of HRTs was not the most salient marker of ME of those analysed in this sample.

Speech Rate

Wilson and Bayard (1992) suggest that speakers with a relatively slow speech rate will be identified as Maori more often than speakers with a relatively fast speech rate. While a slower rate of speech has not been suggested as being a feature of ME as such, it may contribute towards a speaker being identified as Maori, so this feature was also included in the analysis.

In RDG style, 5YM(P) had the fastest speech rate of 3.6 words per second (words/sec). This was followed by 2YP and 3MP with 3.24 words/sec, then 1YP(M) with 3.06 words/sec, and 4MM with 2.89 words/sec. There was some link between a slower speech rate and identification as Maori in RDG style, since the speakers who were most often identified as Maori, 1YP(M) and 4MM, had the slowest speech rates.

The same could not be said of CONV style. At 4.27 words/sec, 6YM had the fastest rate of speech in CONV style, followed by 1YP(M) with 3.7 words/sec, then 2YP and 4MM with 3.5 words/sec, 5YM(P) with 3.35 words/sec, and finally 3MP who had a speech rate of 3.11 words/sec. There is thus no correlation between a slower speech rate and identification as Maori in CONV style - if anything the reverse may be true.

It is interesting to note that the tape samples used by Wilson and Bayard involved a reading passage, rather than conversational style. My study thus confirmed their finding that, in reading style, speakers with a slower speech rate will be identified as Maori more often than speakers with a faster speech rate. It is not altogether obvious why a reversal of this trend occurs in conversation. One possible explanation of the association between a slower speech rate and identification as Maori in RDG style could be that Maori are perceived to be less comfortable with the task of reading aloud. However, there is no obvious explanation for why (or indeed if) talking faster was perceived as being a feature of Maori speakers in CONV style.

Conclusion

The results of this study reveal noticeably higher levels of accuracy in identifying two of the Maori speakers, 4MM and 6YM, than do previous studies. The listeners used in this study were working class people who are more likely to be in daily contact with a variety of Maori people than are university students. The results suggest that people such as bus-drivers are better able to recognise Maori speakers than are college or university students. While data collection is more difficult when not taking advantage of the captive audience which a university or college provides, the benefits of this approach have proved worthwhile. It is useful to collect data from a group who represent a wider section of the New Zealand community.

The results provide some support for the hypothesis that ME is a style or register used by speakers for expressing solidarity or ethnic identity. They suggest that features of ME are likely to be more obvious in informal styles such as conversation, than in more formal styles such as a reading passage. Speakers were more often identified as Pakeha in RDG style than in CONV style, while there was a tendency for the reverse to be true of Maori classifications. This is another important factor which future researchers should take into account in their methodological design.

On the whole, speakers were classified as Pakeha more often than as Maori, which suggests that PE is the default, or unmarked, category (for most listeners), and ME is the marked variety, just as the ethnic category Maori itself is marked in New Zealand in relation to Pakeha. Speakers 1YP(M), 4MM and 6YM cluster together in that they were perceived as Maori, while speakers 2YP, 3MP and 5YM(P) cluster together in being perceived as Pakeha. This supports my original assessment of 1YP(M) as 'Maori-sounding' and 5YM(P) as 'Pakeha-sounding', and confirms the suggestion that a speaker's 'perceived ethnicity', based on voice cues alone, may contradict their actual ethnicity. This result also confirms the proposal that not all Maori speak ME, and not only Maori speak ME.

Phonetic analysis of the tape samples identified several features which were salient markers of ethnicity. Unaspirated stops were associated with identification as Maori, although other non-standard variants of initial stops were also associated with Maori speakers. Devoiced /z/ occurred more in the speech of speakers identified as Maori. HRTs were linked with identification as Maori, although they were more strongly linked with younger speakers than with speakers perceived to be Maori. Syllable-timing correlated to some extent with the identification of a

speaker as Maori, although once again age was perhaps a more significant factor than ethnicity in accounting for higher frequencies of syllable-timing. A slower speech rate was associated with identification as Maori in RDG style, but not in CONV style, where the reverse pattern occurred. Two further features which have been associated with ME, namely, monophthongisation of the vowel in GOAT, and non-standard pronunciation of dental fricatives, did not occur in the speech samples.

Unaspirated syllable-initial stops, and devoiced /z/ were both more frequent in CONV than in RDG style, while HRTs occurred only in CONV style. This provides further support for the suggestion that these are salient features of ME, since speakers were perceived as Maori more often in CONV style than in RDG style. Thus these features showed some correlation, not only with the speakers most often perceived as Maori, but also with the speech style in which the speakers were more often identified as Maori.

Little attention has been paid to the issue of the kinds of social and stylistic contexts in which Maori English is most likely to occur. This study demonstrates that its use is linked at least to style, with features of ME being more apparent in conversational than in reading passage style.

Although there is obviously no clear-cut distinction between the speech of Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders, it does appear that some Maori speakers use a variety of English which is ethnically marked, and recognisable by some listeners. There has been some suggestion that ethnically marked varieties of a language become more widespread and more highly valued when the ethnic group develops an increased awareness of, and positive attitude towards its own identity. This is particularly the case where the group's own native language is under threat. It remains to be seen whether the current Maori cultural renaissance will result in Maori English becoming more strongly differentiated from Pakeha English.

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Gay men, femininity and /t/ in New Zealand English¹

Ben Taylor

Abstract

This paper examines the pronunciation of /t/ by New Zealand gay men, straight men and straight women, with a view to testing Lakoff's (1975, 1990) claim that gay men's speech is comparable to or imitative of that of women. Analysis of tokens of intervocalic and final /t/ suggests that a fricative or affricate variant of /t/ may be prestigious for both straight women and gay men, while straight men have an aspirated variant as their prestige form, and also use more voiced and glottalised variants of /t/ than either straight women or gay men. Although gay men and straight women use the same prestige forms, the results give no clear indication that gay men are imitating straight women.

Introduction

As a consequence of the recent explosion of interest in the sociology of sex, sexuality and gender it has become apparent that conventional ideas about gender do not provide completely satisfactory explanations of the ways in which we become and remain gendered people. Recent papers (in particular Eckert 1989) have pointed to a need for sociolinguists to question their own assumptions about the nature of gender.

Many researchers attempt to draw a theoretical distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender, but previous research has been based on the tacit assumption that sex and gender correspond neatly in practice, so that once a person's sex is known their gender should be predictable and *vice versa*. While this approach may simplify for the researcher the task of placing subjects in gender categories, it is theoretically naive. Gender cannot be treated simply as

¹ This paper is based on research that I conducted for a sociolinguistics term paper in 1995. Many thanks are owed for their support and ideas to the staff and postgraduate students in the Department of Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington, and especially to Janet Holmes. Thanks also to all those who participated in the original project.

the social correlate of sex, since the latter is generally fixed and well-defined, while the former is extremely fluid. We each discover our gender identity and learn a gender role as an individual; furthermore this awareness of our gender is not fixed but develops throughout our lives as we negotiate our place in the world and our relations with others. In short, gender is not a commodity but rather a process.

Men's experiences of being male in a Western society are extremely diverse, as are women's experiences of being female. Generalisations about the typical female or male are useful primarily as points of reference from which researchers may begin to explore the variation *within* each sex, and the effects of this variation on individuals and on "society". Closely tied to this concern is the question of what is meant by such words as *masculine* and *feminine*.

Perhaps the most obvious "gender-deviant" people in modern industrial societies are those that are often called *queer*.² Certainly gender theorists have seen the relevance to their field of the study of diverse sexual identities. Sociolinguists have been much slower to see the relation between sexual identity and gender, and sociolinguistic research of the past has generally not treated sexual identity as a possible influence on language behaviour. This is so despite a number of common stereotypes of the speech of queer people, and especially of gay men. In recent years a small number of sociolinguists have made the first moves towards describing and analysing the linguistic behaviour of lesbians (Moonwomon 1985), gay men (Gaudio 1994), and transsexuals (Knight 1992). It is my intention in this paper to make a small contribution to this body of knowledge. My focus is on the distribution of affricate and fricative variants of /t/ in medial and final positions in New Zealand English. My hypothesis is that such variants are favoured by gay men and straight women, but not by straight men.

² A note on terminology: *Queer* is a term which is being reclaimed by gay men, lesbians and bisexuals in order to affirm and celebrate diversity. Its use is not accepted by all and there is disagreement as to whether it includes transsexuals, transvestites, paederasts and sadomasochists. This is less a linguistic quibble than the result of an ongoing debate over how our communities should be delimited. I favour *queer* in the present paper, using *gay* only in reference to men, and avoiding *homosexual* where possible. Likewise I favour *straight* over *heterosexual*.

Literature review

Linguistic behaviour of gay men

Surprisingly little research has been conducted on the linguistic behaviour of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. Although several important collections have appeared within the fields of communications, media studies and cultural criticism (notably Chesebro 1981 and Ringer 1994), previous *linguistic* studies are few in number and those that relate specifically to gay men's language (eg. Farrell 1972, Rodgers 1972) have focused almost exclusively on the slang of gay male subcultures, examining the development and maintenance of terminology for social and sexual behaviours peculiar to gay men.

Although it is true that there are numerous slang terms that are used almost exclusively among gay men, it is also true that gay men do not talk exclusively about queer culture, nor exclusively to other gay men. Since gay slang is unlikely to be used in these nonqueer contexts, the heterosexual majority is generally not familiar with such terms, and for this reason gay slang terms do not form the basis of a stereotype of gay men's speech.³

Probably the most widely held stereotype of gay men's language involves pronunciation. The speech characteristics attributed to gay men include lisp, "dynamic" intonation and a high-pitched voice. This perception of gay men's speech is part of a general stereotype of the "swishy fag" which also involves physical mannerisms (posture, gait, manual gestures) and psychological characteristics (emotionality, passivity). These attributes may be united under the broad label of *effeminacy*, a term which reflects the common perception of gay men as being like women.⁴ Indeed, according to Joseph Hayes (1978: 299), "[t]he most firmly entrenched stereotype about lesbian women and gay men in Western culture is that of cross-gender identification". (See also Kite and Deaux (1987) and Storms (1978) for a discussion of the role that presumed feminine identification plays in perceptions of gay men, and Bernard and Epstein ((1978) for an examination of the role "femininity" plays in gay men's identities.)

³ It is interesting to note that the use of certain words is associated with gay men; these words are of the kind cited by Lakoff (1975) as characteristic of women: *divine* and *fabulous*, for example. But these words are familiar to most people, whereas many gay slang words are simply not used outside of gay contexts. How many straight people know the gay meaning of *fish*, *rimming* or *tearoom*?

⁴ I use the term *effeminacy* for lack of alternatives, since words such as *camp* carry other connotations (Tripp 1990).

Popular wisdom, then, suggests that gay men's speech patterns are somehow comparable to those of (straight?) women. But does the stereotype of "effeminate" speech correspond to the reality of gay men's linguistic behaviour? Before this question can be answered it must be established precisely how gay men talk. Sociolinguistic research of the past has failed to do this.

Phillip Smith (1985) devotes some 180 pages to issues of gender differences in language, sex recognition by voice, intonation and voice quality, masculinity and femininity, androgyny and gender roles, yet does not consider how queer people might fit into such patterns.

Jennifer Coates' (1986: 76-7) treatment of gay men involves only a brief mention of a 1976 British television interview in which a Cockney woman said that her grandson would be branded "queer" if he spoke with a "la-di-la" accent. Since the context in Coates' book is a discussion of standard varieties it seems likely that the woman was defending the Cockney accent by invoking the much-discussed association of vernacular forms with masculinity (cf. Trudgill 1972).

Robin Lakoff (1975, 1990) mentions gay men on several occasions, if only to regurgitate the stereotype of effeminacy. In reference to her list of the features of "women's language", she claims:

Men sometimes use them, either with different meanings or for individual special reasons. (Gay men imitate some of them) (Lakoff 1990: 204).

Lakoff does not specify precisely which features gay men use, nor does she say what counts as an "individual special reason" for such usage. Her attitude seems to be that women use "women's language" as a result of their status as a group, while gay men's speech habits are motivated by their individual neuroses. Are we to assume that being gay is "individual" and "special" enough to cause a man to use features of "women's language"? If so, should we not also say that women use such features for individual and special reasons (albeit the same ones as other women)? Perhaps gay men use the same features as women, but with different meanings (as Lakoff suggests is possible). In this case can it really be claimed that gay men *imitate* women in using those features? Such a view turns on the assumption that women and femininity are phenomenologically prior to gay men.

According to Lakoff, "women's language is not being adopted by men, apart from those who reject the American masculine image (for example, homosexuals)"

(1975: 10).⁵ It seems that gay men are unable or unwilling to be "real men" and therefore imitate women. This implies that women's use of "women's language" is more natural and more original than gay men's: the latter can never be "feminine", only "effeminate".

Lakoff falls into the same trap as feminist writers such as Frye, who feel that male effeminate behaviour (and especially drag) "is affected and is characterized by theatrical exaggeration" and that it is "a casual and cynical mockery of women" (Frye 1983: 137). It is perhaps understandable that those who wish to celebrate "feminine" values and behaviours would prefer to think that these "belong" to women, and hence that effeminate men are stealing them. But if gender norms are learnt then surely all people are capable of learning them. Gay men's manipulation of conventionally "feminine" symbols is no more superficial than women's. This line of reasoning is succinctly expressed by queer theorist Judith Butler, who sees gender as a performance rather than an immutable part of the human psyche:

[G]ay is to straight not as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy. The parodic repetition of "the original" ... reveals the original to be nothing other than a parody of the idea of the natural and the original (Butler 1990: 31).

Seen in this light Lakoff's claims seem rather naive. However, rather than dismiss them entirely, current researchers should reinterpret them in terms of these new, more sophisticated models of gender and attempt to test them on that basis. It should also be borne in mind in the present context that Lakoff's (1975, 1990) books are about *women's* usage, and as such do not contain any theorising about gay men's language. By the same token it must not be assumed that Lakoff's claims about "women's language" apply equally to all women: she does not ask what features might characterise the speech of lesbian women, for example.

Perhaps the only linguist to attempt a precise description of gay men's pronunciation is David Crystal (1975). Since his description seems not to be based

⁵ Evidently Lakoff was oblivious to the rapid growth of the clone culture among gay men in America in the mid-to-late seventies. At that time the trend for gay men was to grow a moustache, wear blue jeans and develop a tanned, muscular body - hardly a rejection of masculinity. This refutes the ridiculous notion that gay men deliberately make themselves feminine in order to attract other men. Styles of dress and behaviour are more a function of what is fashionable and acceptable in a given community than of psychological disposition. It is unfortunate, then, that no research was ever conducted to ascertain whether the "butch shift" (Segal 1990: 149) among gay men in the seventies produced a corresponding change in their speech styles.

on actual data from gay speakers, one must assume that it is in fact another version of the stereotype (albeit a very detailed one):

[A] "simpering" voice, for instance, largely reduces to the use of a wider pitch-range than normal (for men), with *glissando* effects between stressed syllables, a more frequent use of complex tones (eg. the fall-rise and the rise-fall), the use of breathiness and huskiness in the voice, and switching to a higher (falsetto) register from time to time (Crystal 1975: 85).

Crystal is primarily concerned with describing the speech in question and therefore does not discuss why some men might use it, nor how it is perceived by listeners.

Rudolf Gaudio (1994) attempts to answer the latter question by analysing the pitch patterns of "gay-sounding" and "straight-sounding" voices. Four straight and four gay men were tape-recorded while reading two passages aloud. Excerpts from those passages were played to an audience of 13 raters, who were asked to judge, among other things, which speakers sounded gay and which straight, and how masculine each speaker sounded. Ratings on the gay-straight scale were largely accurate: all straight speakers rated significantly on the "straight" side of the scale, and all gay speakers rated significantly more "gay". Furthermore, there was a clear correlation between "straight" judgements and "masculine" judgements. However, acoustic analysis (based on measurements of fundamental frequency) revealed no consistent pitch or intonation differences between the straight men's voices and those of the gay men that could account for the accuracy of the judgements.

Gaudio offers no explanation for this discrepancy and concludes that more research needs to be done. He also suggests that researchers look at other areas of pronunciation, such as sibilants, vowels and voice quality, and at the use of standard and nonstandard forms (1994: 54). It should be pointed out that if voice quality is involved, fundamental frequency may not be the best measure of variability; hence in Gaudio's data there may have been significant variation in the frequencies of certain vowel formants, for example.

The question of standard forms in the speech of gay men has been explored in passing as part of a social dialect survey of Ottawa (Fai 1988). It was hypothesised that gay men would, like women, use more standard variants than straight men. However, the reverse was found: for the variable (-ing) the gay speakers used vernacular [-ɪn] more than the straight speakers. Fai attributes this difference to

supposedly stronger social networks among gay men than among straight men. It would be wiser, however, to question the validity of results based on such a small sample (three straight men and two gay men).

It is also unclear on what basis gay men are deemed in Fai's work to have denser social networks than straight men, particularly if Lesley Milroy's (1987) criteria based on occupation are used. Indeed, if, as the stereotypes suggest, disproportionate numbers of gay men work in service employment as hairdressers, waiters or airline stewards, their social networks should be loose and uniplex. Gay men who work in other types of employment are likely to be minorities in those situations; they may well be pressured to conform to the speech habits of their (straight) coworkers, but why should they overshoot the mark, especially in relaxed conversation with other gay men? If gay men's linguistic behaviour is influenced by their social networks it may well be aspects of those networks other than those related to employment that have the most effect. In that case it may be necessary to modify the criteria used to determine the density of social networks.

In sum, very little has been established about the speech habits of gay men; where they are mentioned at all they are usually framed as poor imitations of women, and where gay men's speech has been examined on its own terms, results have been inconclusive at best. Furthermore, while it is commonly assumed that gay men are somehow more "feminine" than straight men, there have been very few attempts to explain precisely what this means, or why it should be the case. Naturally this leaves a great many questions to be answered.

/t/ as a sociolinguistic variable

There has been a recent flurry of research into pronunciation of /t/ in New Zealand English (Bell 1977, Bayard 1990, Holmes 1994, 1995, Vine 1995). Vine (1995: 11) contrasts the recognition of pronunciation of /t/ (and especially T Voicing) as a significant sociolinguistic variable in New Zealand English with the lack of research on T Voicing in North America, where [ɾ] is seen as virtually categorical intervocalically, and in Britain, where sociolinguistic research has concentrated on the occurrence of [ʔ] for /t/.

Vine's own work (a social dialect study of women from Wanganui) shows clear age stratification for the use of [ɾ], with young women voicing 66% of intervocalic /t/s, middle-aged women 31% and older women only 19%, which suggests that T Voicing is increasing in New Zealand English.

Janet Holmes (1994) reports similar findings based on data from the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English. Her paper also shows that T Voicing is generally favoured by men over women, and by lower-class over middle-class speakers, which suggests that [ɾ] is a vernacular form.

Allan Bell (1977: 350) notes the potential for variation within the voiceless realisations of /t/, and even mentions a continuant variant (although he describes it as a *frictionless* continuant). However, his analysis contrasts all voiced realisations with all voiceless ones, hence his data reveal little about the distribution (sociolinguistic or otherwise) of such pronunciations.

These studies focus on the opposition between application of the variable rule of T Voicing (whether resulting in a voiced stop, a flap or complete elision) and retention of a prestigious voiceless form. Variation within the voiceless pronunciations remains largely unexplored. One study which does examine voiceless realisations of /t/ is Horvath's (1985) social dialect survey of Sydney. Although one must be careful about extending results from Australian English to New Zealand English, there seem to be some interesting parallels.

One of the sociolinguistic variables that Barbara Horvath examines is medial /t/. Besides looking at application of the T Voicing rule, she also divides voiceless variants into two kinds: the first is an ordinary aspirated [t^h]; the second Horvath describes as "extremely aspirated, even affricated" (101). This variant is symbolised in her book as [t^H].

It is very tempting to ally Horvath's description of [t^H] with Laurie Bauer's more general comment on the realisation of stops in New Zealand English:

The normal realisation of the voiceless plosives is for them to be aspirated or affricated. This is true in unstressed syllables as well as in stressed syllables (Bauer 1986: 228).

Since Bauer's description seems to allow for a phonetic equivalent of [t^H] in New Zealand English it would be interesting to see whether there is sociolinguistic variation in its usage in New Zealand English, and whether its distribution is comparable between Australian English and New Zealand English.

In Horvath's data usage of [t^H] is lowest in sociolect 1, which is made up predominantly of lower-class Anglo⁶ males, and highest in sociolect 4, made up of middle-class women, both Anglo and Greek. Although [t^h] follows a similar pattern, the difference between the sociolects is not nearly as striking. This leads Horvath to conclude that "[t]he [t^H] variant of /t/ is the only feature of those investigated which is clearly prestigious; it is associated with females and Greeks" (102).⁷ By contrast, the flapped variant of /t/ is "clearly male" and seems to be preferred by teenagers, which is comparable with Holmes' (1994) results for New Zealand English.

Since Horvath's study did not consider sexual identity as a social variable it is not clear whether gay men could be contributing to the small numbers of tokens of [t^H] that do occur in the predominantly male sociolects. Furthermore, the method by which tokens of /t/ were collected leaves something to be desired: interviewees were asked to count to twenty, ostensibly as a test of the tape recorder. Tokens of /t/ were then taken from the numbers 13-19 for analysis. Not only did this provide a very small number of tokens per speaker; it also did not control for environments since /t/ occurred both intervocalically and flanked by consonants, and stress is variable for each of these lexical items.

Interest in /t/ as a sociolinguistic variable in New Zealand English is mainly concerned with T Voicing, and hence with intervocalic /t/, but there are also a few studies which examine the realisations of final /t/, particularly with regard to the degree of glottal stricture. Donn Bayard (1990), in a study of T Glottalisation among New Zealand schoolchildren, found that use of [ʔt] declined slightly with age, suggesting that it is an innovative form in New Zealand English.

Janet Holmes (1995) reports that [ʔ] is also increasing in use in New Zealand English, and suggests that it has gone from a vernacular variant to a variant with possible prestige functions in word-final position, with the change being led by

⁶ Horvath uses the term *Anglo* to refer to native Australians of British heritage; although terms such as *white* and *Caucasian* might apply to these people, they could also include Greeks and Italians, who are treated as separate social groups in Horvath's analysis.

⁷ Although Horvath does not discuss it in any detail, the [t^h] variant seems to be prestigious for most men; if [t^H] is prestigious for women, it may be that men tend to avoid it. Or it may be that women (and particularly Greek women) are leading a change towards a new general prestige variant, namely [t^H]. This seems to be Horvath's interpretation of the results.

young females. (For older females [t^h] is still the prestige variant.) Variation among the non-glottalised realisations is not analysed.

Since no studies have been carried out on the voiceless non-glottal realisations of /t/ in New Zealand English, there is a dearth of empirical data relating to the effects of linguistic and social factors on the distribution of voiceless non-glottal variants other than [t^h]. The present paper provides evidence to support Bauer's claim that an affricate is a possible realisation of /t/, and shows that a fricative realisation is also possible, these two realisations of /t/ forming a prestigious variant for straight women and gay men.

Method

The linguistic variable

I have been aware for some time that a form of /t/ exists in New Zealand English which has little or no alveolar closure, yet is most definitely coronal. This sound is also quite distinct from [s] in that it is not grooved. I have searched in vain for a discussion of the occurrence of this sound in New Zealand English; although both Horvath (1985) and Bauer (1986) describe affricated realisations of /t/, neither mentions a fricative realisation, and Bell (1977) does not provide data on the distribution of the sound that he describes. Laver (1994: 260) mentions a *flat alveolar fricative* (IPA symbol [θ]), which he says occurs "in many accents of Irish English, as phonetic realisations of /t/ in intervocalic and final position, in words such as *patting* [p^haθɪŋ] and *cat* [k^haθ]".

A fricative realisation of /t/ might be seen as an attempt at a heavily aspirated or affricated /t/ in which the tongue fails to make contact with the alveolum. It is also possible that in producing /t/ the tip of the tongue does make contact with the alveolum, but only very briefly, in which case a tap or flap results. A voiced tap is a possible realisation of a /t/ which has undergone the T Voicing rule. But it is also possible to maintain the voicelessness of /t/ and even to add friction either side of the tap. The result is what Laver (1994: 263) calls a *tense voiceless tapped alveolar fricative* (IPA symbol [t̪]). The auditory effect of this sound is very similar to that of the pure fricative, so that I group these two realisations together under the label "fricative /t/", which I symbolise by [T].

It is my impression that the tapped fricative is the more likely realisation in intervocalic position, while the pure fricative is favoured in final position.

Neither seems to occur in initial position, which is consistent with the assumption that these realisations of /t/ result from lenition. The defining feature of [T] is that it does not have the complete closure characteristic of other voiceless variants of /t/. Affricated /t/, by contrast, does have a complete closure, and is followed by a considerable amount of friction at the alveolum. This is Horvath's [t^H]; I symbolise it here as [t^S] to emphasise the coronal nature of the friction.

For the purpose of analysis the possible realisations of /t/ are separated into six variants, as shown below:

[T]	voiceless flat alveolar fricative or tapped fricative
[t ^S]	voiceless flat alveolar affricate
[t ^h]	voiceless aspirated alveolar stop
[t]	voiceless alveolar stop (released or unreleased)
[ʔt]	voiceless glottalised alveolar stop or glottal stop
[ɾ]	voiced alveolar tap, flap or stop

The question for determination here is whether the choice of [T] or [t^S] over [t^h] carries social meaning, and if so, what that meaning is. Furthermore, it seems to me that the various realisations of /t/ form a kind of continuum (in the order given above) within which the various realisations of /t/ can be grouped together into a number of sociolinguistic variants. Since it is unlikely that all six variants above function as separate sociolinguistic variants, it will be necessary to group some of them together in this way. Hence one of the questions which needs to be explored is whether [t^S] is better grouped with [t^h] or with [T], or treated as an independent variant.

The analysis involves a simple calculation of the proportion of /t/s realised as each of the six phonetic variants described above, as produced in three different speech styles by nine speakers whom I tape-recorded. Since [T] seems not to occur in initial position I limited the analysis to tokens of intervocalic and breath-group-final /t/. Intervocalic /t/ may be interpreted as the onset of a following stressed syllable; therefore I also limited intervocalic environments to those in which stress falls on the vowel immediately preceding the /t/; the following vowel is always schwa in this environment.

It can be very difficult to distinguish aspirated and affricated /t/ when listening to a tape recording, and even in articulatory terms the distinction between them may not be clear cut. This kind of difficulty applies to all the variants examined here to some degree since, as I remarked earlier, they form a continuum of sorts. In assigning tokens of spoken /t/ to one variant or another I attempted to err on the side of caution. If I could not identify a token of /t/ positively as a fricative, I treated it as an affricate, and I treated an unconvincing affricate as an aspirated variant. Even so my judgement of what counts as a definite affricate is inevitably subjective.

The interviews

The interview schedule consisted of three sections: a word list, a reading passage and free conversation. The word list and the reading passage were designed so as to contain fifteen tokens of /t/ for each of the two environments. The word list appears in Appendix One and the reading passage (in modified form) in Appendix Two. I also collected and analysed approximately 30 tokens of /t/ from the conversation I recorded during each interview. Hence I collected a total of approximately 90 tokens of /t/ for each interviewee, and these form the basis of the analysis.

The interviewees were four gay men, three straight men and two straight women. It had been my intention to interview four in each group but this proved impracticable. With such a small sample any results must be seen as suggestive only, and statistical analysis is pointless. I excluded lesbians and bisexuals because I felt I was not in a position to analyse their behaviour, linguistic or otherwise. I do not wish to suggest that lesbians are a mirror image of gay men, and if lesbians do use sex-atypical speech styles, they do not necessarily do so for the same reasons as gay men. Similar considerations apply to bisexuals. The ages of the interviewees ranged from 20 to 34. All were Pakeha (New Zealanders of European heritage) with English as their first language, and all had obtained at least Sixth Form Certificate. All but one were university students and all were acquaintances of mine before I undertook this research.⁸

⁸ Thorne, Kramarac and Henley (1983: 12) remark that "empirical evidence has accumulated to provide complex understanding of the ways in which women and men speak, at least in white, middle-class, heterosexual segments of U.S. society." In attempting to extend this knowledge to include queer people, one must not forget that we are not all men, not all white and not all middle class. An understanding is needed of the ways in which sexual identity interacts with such factors as class and ethnicity before we can make claims about *all* queer people, or, for that matter, about *all* straight people.

I recruited the gay men from a gay social group on campus; I felt that the openness that membership of this group represented was a basic prerequisite for participation, because I expected that a "gay-sounding" speech style was most likely to be exhibited by those who were prepared to be identified as gay, and because their being "out" (ie. openly gay) simplified the issue of confidentiality for me. All four gay men identified as both "gay" and "queer"; none was comfortable with the label "homosexual" because it has a decidedly clinical ring to it, but they accepted that the term could be used to describe them.

Results and discussion

The results of the analysis suggest that there are indeed significant differences between gay men and straight men with regard to the use of variants of /t/. Much less clear is how many sociolinguistic variants are involved and what factors influence the use of each.

Intervocalic /t/

The graphs in Figure 1 show quite clearly that there are two major variants of intervocalic /t/. This is best illustrated by (1.1), in which it can be seen that usage of [T] doubles from 43.7% in free conversation to 90.0% in word list. This strongly suggests that for straight women [T] is a prestigious variant in intervocalic position. The low frequency of [t^h] and [t^s] in intervocalic position in the speech of these straight women suggests that [T] is phonetically conditioned; that is, it is the result of lenition of [t^h] or [t^s].

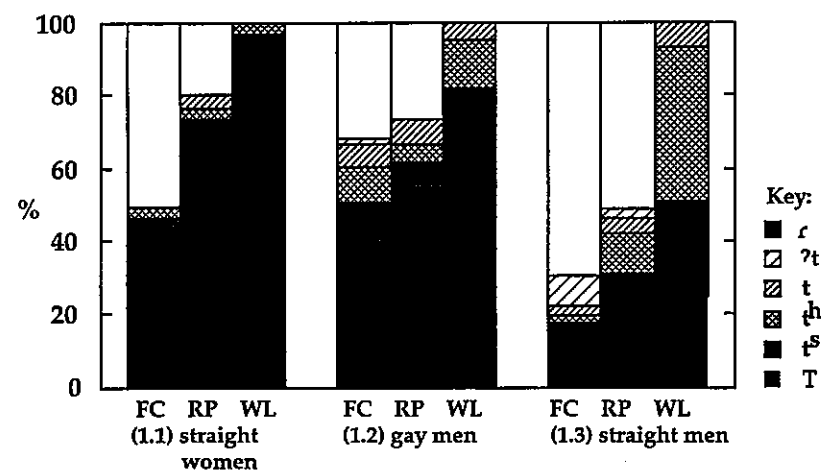
The other major variant, [ɾ], is used most in free conversation (50.4%); it does not occur at all in the word list, which suggests that it is not prestigious. This situation, then, accords with the view that there are two salient variants of intervocalic /t/: a prestigious voiceless variant and a vernacular voiced variant.

The graph in (1.2) reveals a similar pattern among gay men: there is a clear opposition between the flapped variant and the fricative one. However, the middle ground is wider for these gay men than for the women in (1.1). With a small sample size such as this (fifteen tokens), sporadic pronunciations may create large perturbations in the data, and in this case it seems that the occurrences of [t^h] were largely due to a single gay speaker.⁹ It might be claimed

⁹ Since I argued in my introduction that researchers should be more wary of obscuring individual variation I should look at this point for possible reasons why one of the gay men did *not* use [T] and

that [t], [t^h], [t^s] and [T] are all attempts at the same variant and that their distribution is really haphazard; this seems to be the attitude of previous research on intervocalic /t/ (Bell 1977, Holmes 1994), since they collapse all the voiceless realisations into one variant which is then contrasted with voiced variants. If this view is accepted, then it appears that the gay men are using the prestigious variant more in free conversation than the women (65.9% versus 49.6% if [ʔt] is not included under the prestige variant): if gay men are imitating women, they seem also to be hypercorrecting.

Figure 1
Mean results for intervocalic /t/



FC: free conversation
RP: reading passage
WL: word list

However, this approach does not account satisfactorily for the pattern among the straight men. For both gay men and straight women the proportion of /t/s realised as [t^h] or [t^s] is fairly consistent across all speech styles, but both increase dramatically in the word list for the straight men. A bivariate solution cannot explain the difference between the gay and straight men in this regard, nor the difference between styles among the straight men. The lack of a clearly preferred

[t^s]; unfortunately I did not collect enough biographical information to do this. It must also be borne in mind that this man is not necessarily "less gay" than the others; it may be, however, that he has less regular contact with the gay community, or that some other group of his peers strongly favours [t^h] and thus pressures him also to use this variant.

variant in the straight men's word list suggests that [T] is not serving as a prestige form for them in the way that it does for the straight women and the gay men; possibly, there is a tension between prestigious variants.

So how many sociolinguistic variants are there, and which are the prestigious ones? It seems fair to regard [ɾ] as a vernacular variant since it is used to a much higher degree in free conversation than in the word list. Note that it is also used much more overall by straight men than by either straight women or gay men; this is consistent with previous research on T Voicing in New Zealand English (Holmes 1994), and on vernacular forms in general (Trudgill 1972), although that research has had nothing to say about gay men's usage.

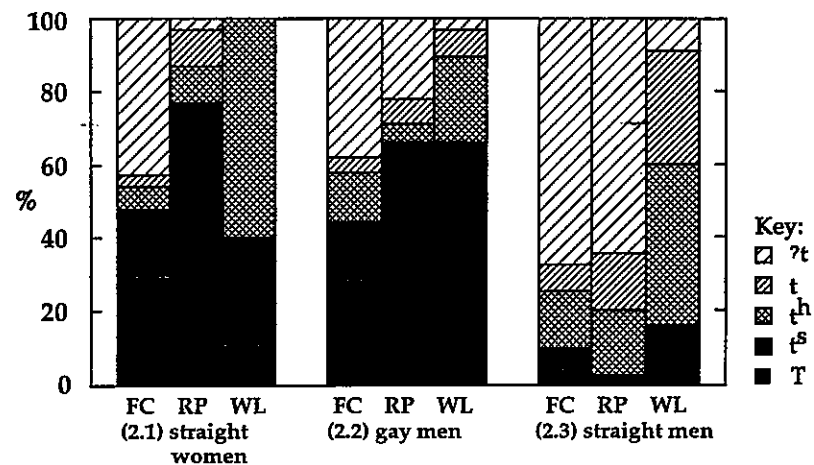
[t^h] seems a good candidate for prestige since it is typically assumed to be the standard pronunciation of /t/ in New Zealand English, and its use does increase for straight men in more formal registers. I have suggested above that [T] is prestigious for both straight women and gay men, but note that straight men use it slightly *less* in the word list than in the reading passage, and much less overall than the other two groups. Again, this suggests the possibility that there are two prestigious variants, [t^h] and [T].

Recall that Horvath concluded that young, middle-class (possibly Greek) women were leading a change toward a new prestige norm in Australian English, namely [t^H]. It is plausible that straight women have introduced [T] as a new prestige form for New Zealand English (at least in intervocalic position). Under this interpretation it would appear that gay men have taken on this prestige form to a large degree whereas straight men are resisting it. The incidence of [t^S] among straight men may reflect the fact that it is midway between the two competing prestige variants in articulatory terms; hesitation between the two opposed types of articulation may result in [t^S] as a kind of compromise.

Final /t/

The distribution of variants of /t/ in breath-group-final position is not as clear-cut as in intervocalic environments. It is clear from the graphs in Figure 2 that [ʔt] is not a prestigious variant: usage by straight men drops from 67.5% in free conversation to only 8.9% in the word list, for example. Unsurprisingly, [ɾ] does not occur at all before a pause, and so is not represented on the graphs.

Figure 2
Mean results for final /t/



FC: free conversation
RP: reading passage
WL: word list

The gay men seem to have the simplest pattern: as in (1.2) there is a curiously high proportion of [t^S] in (2.2), though [t] does not seem to be a variant in its own right. The proportion of [T] is much lower than in (1.2), having given way to [t^S]. The lower proportion of [T] may be a consequence of the lower susceptibility of stops to lenition in final position as compared with intervocalic position.

If [t], [t^h], [t^S] and [T] are taken to be elements of a single variant, then straight women and gay men must be using much higher proportions of this prestige variant than straight men. But this is tantamount only to saying that straight men use a higher proportion of (vernacular) glottal and glottalised variants. This analysis overlooks several remarkable trends in the data. First, the straight women use a very low proportion of [ʔt] in the reading passage (3.3%) while the straight men use a very high proportion (64.4%). Yet in the word list both use less than 10%. Second, straight women's use of both [t^S] and [T] is highest in the reading passage, whereas straight men's use of these variants (as well as of [t] and [t^h]) is lowest in the reading passage.

I suspect the reason for both these discrepancies is that one of the women, as I later discovered, had had extensive speech training and was therefore

predisposed to use highly prestigious forms when reading aloud; the reading passage was also familiar to her as a task requiring a high degree of expression as manifested in exaggerated intonation contours, regular pacing and careful articulation.¹⁰

The idiosyncrasies of the female interviewees do not account for all the patterns, however. If variation between the possible voiceless realisations of /t/ is not related to social distinctions then all three groups should exhibit similar patterns. Yet straight men use less than 3.3% [T] and less than 15.6% [t^s] while these two variants between them account for up to 64.5% of gay men's final /t/s. These variants clearly do not carry the same prestige for straight men as for gay men; where a prestigious variant is required (in the word list for example) it is [t^h] that is favoured (44.4%) by straight men.

It seems that [t^h] also has prestige for the straight women, since they prefer it over [t^s] and [T] in the word list (60.0% as against 30.0% and 10.0% respectively). This seems odd considering my earlier suggestion that the straight women could be leading a change towards [T]. It is of course possible that the change has progressed further in intervocalic position than in final position, but gay men use high proportions of [T] and [t^s] in both environments. Perhaps the gay men have usurped the women's role as leaders of the change, at least in this environment, or perhaps this is Frye's (1983: 137) "theatrical exaggeration"! I do not believe that either of these conclusions is correct, and I shall offer another interpretation below.

At this point it should be noted that the prestigious variant used by gay men and straight women no longer looks like a simple [T]: (2.1) and (2.2) show that [t^s] is also prestigious; indeed, it is preferred over [T] in both the reading passage and the word list by both gay men and straight women. This is consistent with Bauer's (1986) remarks about stops in New Zealand English: they may be aspirated or affricated. In fact, it seems that in the case of /t/ straight men prefer the aspirated variant, while gay men and straight women prefer the affricated variant. Furthermore the affricated variant may be liable to lenition in

¹⁰ There may also be other factors at work in these tokens. Although it is not reflected directly in my data it is conceivable that breath-group-final [T] is induced by the combination of a fall-rise tone with a drawled vowel as frequently occurs in concessive clauses. It may also be that the female interviewee who had had speech training was using a very high proportion of [T] because she associated this usage with the expressiveness required in the reading passage. This usage may warrant further research.

intervocalic position (and possibly, as a result of "drawl", also in final position), and hence becomes a fricative or tapped fricative.

The data presented here seem consistent with a shift towards a new prestige variant, but I do not believe that this is what is happening. If there really is a change in progress, one might also expect to find age grading. My data do not provide useful comparisons by age, but it is my impression that women of all ages use [t^s] and [T]. I am less certain about gay men. It may be that straight women and gay men have nearly completed a change which has been in progress for at least the past few decades, but if this is the case, then straight men are lagging far behind them, and the reason for this is unclear. Therefore it seems more sensible to regard the present state of affairs as involving a reasonably stable opposition between "feminine" [t^s] or [T] and "neutral" [t^h] as prestige variants, with the additional complication of shifts towards vernacular [ɾ] and [ʔ]. The relative stability of this scenario also offers an explanation for the lack of complaints from purists which usually accompany a sound change.

Given the stark differences that these data reveal between gay men's and straight men's pronunciations of /t/, it seems plausible that this variable could be used by listeners to separate one from the other. I attempted to test this hypothesis by playing excerpts from the interviews to an audience of raters and asking them to judge which speakers were gay and which straight. When played full sentences, raters were able to identify the gay and straight male speakers with a fair degree of accuracy. When played isolated words containing either "gay" [t^s]/[T] or "straight" [ɾ]/[ʔ] they were unable to do so. Hence I concluded that although gay men do pronounce /t/ differently from straight men to some extent, this is not salient for (straight) listeners, or at least not as salient as whatever cues the raters attended to in the full sentences. This does seem an odd result, but it should be borne in mind that all the raters identified as straight; gay raters may well be more aware of the significance of this variable. Even so, it is interesting to note that the use of [T] or [t^s] by straight women has also not been remarked upon.

The results presented here raise some tantalising questions about how New Zealand gay men's pronunciation compares with that of gay men who have North American or British accents. Do [T] and [t^s] occur in the speech of these gay men? If not, what pronunciations are characteristic of gay men in those speech communities? Do New Zealand gay men share those other characteristics? What about gay men who do not speak English? Are there any

universals? How accurate are the stereotypes? There is ample room for research on these questions.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that a fricative or affricate realisation of /t/ is indeed a feature of gay men's pronunciation, one which they share to some degree with straight women. The affricate is preferred in breath-group-final position, while the fricative is preferred in intervocalic position, and it seems likely that these two realisations together form a prestigious variant, and that their different distributions are due to phonetic conditioning. The use of affricate and fricative pronunciations of /t/ is quite infrequent among straight men, who prefer [t^h] as a prestige form, and also make greater use of the vernacular variants [ɾ] and [ʔt]. Hence there are two prestigious variants of /t/: [t^h], which is prestigious for everyone but least so for the gay men; and [T]/[t^s], which is prestigious only for the gay men and the straight women. The latter variant might be regarded as "feminine-sounding" if it is accepted that gay men who use it can be characterised as "effeminate". However, all of my gay interviewees, while they believed they could probably be easily identified as gay, rejected the label "effeminate" as inappropriate to describe themselves or as demeaning to gay men.

An interesting question raised by such results is how a variable rule might apply to create these variants. If there is a Leniting rule this would seem to be applicable both to the affricate [t^s] and to the aspirated [t^h], creating the fricative [T] in the former case and the input to the T Voicing rule in the latter. Since [ɾ] is clearly vernacular while [T] is not, it must be the application of the T Voicing rule that creates vernacular variants.

Since this research was conducted on a small scale it must be treated as a preliminary investigation only. More research is needed before these results can be confirmed, and it may be years before a clear picture emerges of the ways in which sexual identity influences linguistic behaviour, and how it interacts with other sociolinguistic factors. It will probably be found that treating "gay" as a single category obscures considerable variation within that category in the same way that categorisation as "female" or "male" does. Future research will have to deal with a bewildering variety of expressions of identity, and with questions concerning the nature of sexual identity and its role in individuals' lives. The

nature and organisation of gay and lesbian communities will also have to be examined. This is a complex and difficult task, but it is a necessary one if sociolinguists are to determine the degree to which sexual identity influences linguistic behaviour.

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APPENDIX ONE: WORD LIST

(Tokens of /t/ in environments other than intervocalic and breath-group-final immediately preceded by a vowel were not analysed; nor were tokens of /d/.)

cure	rights	tower	matter
colt	coughed	serenity	doubt
pulp	pour	ladder	cents
last	coal	total	distant
right	heat	daughter	pot
assume	butter	courtesy	notes
port	letter	lid	hotter
rice	amount	neuter	foot
ride	inundated	hurt	slipped
cord	salt	sit	enter
fire	helter skelter	sound	set
nuclear	rider	later	martyr
art	little	respect	cat
metre	example	bitter	root
great	undoubtedly	bottle	shut
biscuit	time	password	apt
putting	back	hope	detain

APPENDIX TWO: READING PASSAGE

(The reading passage given to interviewees was in standard orthography; in this version capital T or D represents a token of /t/ taken for analysis and the italicised words represent the environment in which it occurs. Tokens of /t/ in environments other than intervocalic and breath-group-final immediately preceded by a vowel were not analysed; nor were tokens of /d/.)

Sometimes I wonder *about my flatmate*. She's the sort of person who does everything *right*, to the point where it gets *quite annoying*. We normally sort our rent out on *Saturday* mornings. We also put in a share of the housekeeping money and we take it in turns to visit our local *supermarket*. Last *Saturday* it was her turn to do the shopping but, for some reason, when I got up she wasn't around. I *knocked on* her door, checked the bathroom and the toilet. There was no sign of her, so I figured she must have gone *out*. *It wasn't* like her at all to do that, *at least not without letting* me know *first*. Maybe she had forgotten. Anyway, I decided not to wait around for her, because I usually found that, in order to avoid *getting* stuck in a crowd, I needed to be in and *out of* the *supermarket* by ten *thirty*, and it was already *late*. I went to get the shopping *list*, which was on a *notepad* on the top of the refrigerator. When I got to the fridge I *noticed* a *bit of* paper attached to the door. *It was a note from* my *flatmate*. It turned out that she had gone to get a *haircut*. I guessed she would be *thoughtful enough to* have put at least her *eighty* dollars' housekeeping money into the *kit* so that I could do the shopping, but, surprisingly, when I looked in the *kit* it was *completely empty*. If I went shopping with what little money I had, I wouldn't be able to afford everything we were supposed to *get*, and I wouldn't have enough money for petrol, so I'd *have to go on foot*. So it was fortunate that I spotted a pot of Marmite and a bottle of gherkins on the table. *At first I thought she'd* left them out *after breakfast*, but then I remembered her once saying that she *hated Marmite*. I wondered what they were doing there. When I *looked again* at the *note*, I realised that I had *not read* the last *bit*. It said: "I've already been shopping and bought everything on the *list*. You owe me *eighty* dollars. We can sort the rent out *later*." Yet again, she had *thought of* everything. as for the *Marmite*, I had asked her to get a *pot*, so she left it out on the table so that I would see that she'd done the shopping. She's so well-organised. I really *hate that!*

REPORT ON RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Interactional Variation in Environmental Interviews

Janet Holmes and Chris Lane

Background

Allan Bell, Chris Lane and Janet Holmes, members of the Linguistics Department at Victoria University, are currently collaborating with Nikolas and Justine Coupland of the Centre for Language and Communication Research at the University of Wales, Cardiff in a project called *Public and Personal Discourses on the Global Environment*. The project aims to investigate how people understand global environment issues. Both private and public discourse will be analysed in order to establish the relationship between people's understandings of environment issues and the information available in their community, especially through the media. The particular focus which has been selected for the first stage of the study is knowledge about the ozone hole and its relationship to the dangers of exposure to increasing ultra-violet light.

As an initial step in exploring this topic, the research team decided to conduct tape recorded interviews with members of the public both in Wales and in New Zealand about their attitudes to sun-bathing, to see what they knew and what they had learned from the media about the issue of the dangers of exposure to the sun, and to find out about their own sun-bathing habits. We designed a two part study which involved

- (a) interviewing a sample of New Zealanders and Welsh people about their sun-bathing habits and knowledge of the dangers of tanning and the causes of sunburn;
- (b) collecting all the information on tanning and the dangers of exposure to ultra-violet light published in magazines and newspapers in the relevant region in the period immediately preceding the interviews.

This research report describes the New Zealand component of the study, and indicates the proposed direction of one aspect of the analysis.¹

¹ We express our appreciation to Jen Hay who conducted all the interviews and to Ben Taylor, our transcriber and research assistant, and to the Victoria University Internal Grants Committee for providing funding for this project.

Method

The interview schedule was designed to be brief and non-intrusive so that people would be willing to answer our questions.² See Appendix 1. Thus the schedule begins with questions which are intended to be non-threatening, asking about people's attitudes to the sun, and then moves on to more personal questions about their own sunbathing habits. The amount of personal information collected about interviewees is minimal; there is just one question asking which of several broad age bands they belong to.

Using a quota sample designed to provide a spread of age groups and even gender representation, Jen Hay interviewed over 80 people at beaches in the Wellington area over the summer of 1994-95. The results provided a useable sample of 61 interviewees, evenly spread for age and gender as outlined in table 1. The interviews were transcribed by Ben Taylor.

Table 1
Interview sample: Wellington

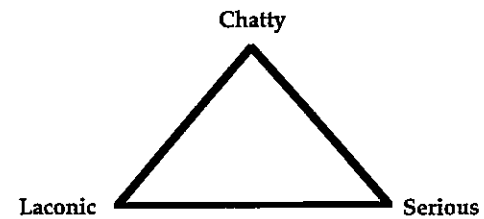
	FEMALE	MALE
Under 30	11	10
30-50	10	10
50+	10	10

The interview data

When we listened to the interview data we noted that the interviews varied quite markedly in the way the interviewees approached the interview task. As Briggs (1986) has pointed out, the interview is a communicative event which different

² The interview schedule was jointly designed by Allan Bell, Janet Holmes, Justine Coupland and Nikolas Coupland.

interviewees may frame very differently. The interactional goal of the interviewer is referentially oriented, but this is not necessarily the case for interviewees. While some approached it very seriously and treated it in a business-like way, others seemed to regard the interview as something of an intrusion and appeared to want to deal with it as quickly as possible; still others seemed to regard it as an interesting entertainment and an opportunity for a chat. Although there are some interviews which shift in approach, most interviewees seemed to take a consistent approach throughout the interview. We developed a triangular model in order to categorise the interviews in ways which reflected these differences: the three points were labelled "laconic", "chatty" and "serious", and we planned to examine each interview for linguistic features which reflected these different categorisations.



Apart from being an interesting phenomenon in its own right, this variation is worth examining because it may have a substantial effect on what sort of conclusions we are able to draw from the interview data about people's understanding of and attitudes to sun exposure, ozone depletion and related issues. Another important reason for examining this variation is that there may be differences between the New Zealand and the Welsh data in this area.

Hypotheses

At this stage, we propose a number of possible explanations for the interactional variation among the interviews.

First of all, we hypothesise that the style of interview is largely governed by choices made by the interviewee(s). The interviewer, Jen, has approximately the same presentation to all interviewees: she is a stranger, she asks a series of scripted questions, she does not venture her own opinions (at least during the interview proper), and she does not model how to answer the questions. She does use follow up questions which may have moved one or two interviewees from a laconic approach towards a serious or chatty one (see below), but on the whole it seems that

she has provided few cues to the interviewees on how to approach the interview. (In the same vein, Hester and Francis 1994: 690-692 discuss how a particular sociological interview is largely structured by choices made by the interviewee rather than the interviewer).

The interviewees' approaches to the interview would therefore appear to be a matter of 'initiative style' (Bell 1984): interviewees choose styles of response which reflect how they frame the interview (eg as a purely information-gathering exercise to be dealt with as efficiently as possible, or as a more generalised opportunity to talk) and/or how they frame the interviewer (eg as a person in a purely information-gathering role, or as someone who may be worth cultivating a social relationship with, even on a temporary basis).

Within this overall hypothesis of interviewee initiative, a number of more specific hypotheses appear to be worth considering:

1. That linguistic features of the interviews reflect the different *orientations to the interview* adopted by the interviewees:

- i) interview as intrusion (on interviewee or on interviewer)
vs interview as opportunity for chat
- ii) referential focus (focus on the information)
vs affective focus (focus on the person and the relationship).

2. That more conversational interviews reflect a greater degree of perceived *solidarity between the interviewer and interviewee*.

Perceived solidarity may be based on (i) similar age (ii) similar gender.

Perceived solidarity may, of course, be based on other factors too, such as perceived similar educational or social background, but since the interview schedule did not collect information on these personal characteristics of the interviewees we can not be sure about these features in general. However, some interviewees did make reference to other grounds for solidarity (see below).

3. That linguistic features of the interviews reflect the participants' perceptions of the *power relationship between the interviewer and interviewee*. So, for example, interviewees who felt they had greater power for whatever reasons may have felt freer to talk and, in particular, freer to ask questions of the interviewer.

4. That linguistic features of the interviews reflect the participants' different *interactional skills* which are related to their gender and age/life experience (and other factors about which we could not know). In other words, different interviewees may have had similar orientations towards the interview, but may have

varied in the skill with which they could, for instance, transform the interview from a formal exchange into a more informal conversation.

Discourse features

In order to investigate these hypotheses we selected a number of features of discourse for further examination.

1. Length of answers to questions
2. Number of people responding
3. Voluntary contributions from respondents: comments, questions
4. Topic drift/elaboration
5. Follow-up questions by interviewer
6. Laughter
7. Pragmatic particles

We classified the interviews impressionistically into the three categories of "laconic", "serious" and "chatty". There was a high level of agreement (about 95%) in our independent initial classifications. Moreover, we both recognised that some interviews were borderline cases, or, using these categories, were inconsistent in terms of interactional approach. The next section provides some comment on each of the discourse features listed above, and reports some preliminary findings for the first two features. Our initial focus has been on features which we expected to distinguish between laconic and chatty interviews: ie. on exploring aspects of the first hypothesis.

1. Length of answers

We expect chatty and laconic interviews to differ very clearly in terms of the length of interviewee's answers to questions. Preliminary analysis suggests this is the case, with the chattiest interviewee providing a total of 1405 words compared to only 72 by the most laconic interviewee. Example 1 represents one extreme of minimal answers in a laconic interview, while example 2 provides an example of an extended answer from a chatty interview. (Transcription conventions are provided in Appendix 2).

Example 1

Interview number: 52 (Laconic)

- Q1 + are you on holiday here at the moment
+ um yep

- so where are you actually from
Hamilton
- Q2 + okay cool + and how important is the weather to enjoying your day
very [laugh]
- Q3 does it matter if it's sunny or
pardon
- Q3 does it matter if it's sunny or not //or
yep
- + why's that
+ because you can do more stuff when it's sunny
- Q4 okay + um when you're on holidays specifically do you like being out in the sun
+ yep
- Q5 okay + and what is it specifically that you like about being in the sun + on holiday
+ [laugh]: I don't know there's: + um ++ the + I don't know the warmth
[laugh]
right
um yeah
- Q6 okay + is it important for you to get a tan
+ mm not really
- Q7 ++ do you think that there are any problems to do with getting sunburnt or being in
the sun
yep
++ like what
oh cancers and stuff like that + wrinkling
- Q8 ++ what sort of advice have you come across about sunbathing and tanning
+ um wearing hats and + suntan lotion and covering up and all that sort of
thing
- Q9 and do you follow it
+ well [laugh]: sometimes:
- Q10 ++ um do you know exactly what it is that makes skin burn in the sun
+ no oh the U V rays + other than that no
- Q11 (yeah) and do you think sunburn's more of a problem now than it used to be
yep
- Q12 ++ do you know why that is
[tut] ozone layer

Example 2

Interview number: 7 (Chatty)

- Q8 right + so what sort of advice have you come across about sunbathing and tanning
and things
oh well they tell you to put sunblock on or + you know and even protect
your eyes and you know the the highest er hours in the day you know
midday roundabout and er ++ for myself it's not so it's it's the little ones now
we got two grandchildren here and //and they
right
know themselves they told me they're not allowed to go in the sea without T
shirts //(rule)

- [laugh]
and that's good isn't it that they and er and (they said) did you bring
the stuff to put on us
you know so [laughter] so um and of course now um there is so much skin
cancer and um
mm mm
[tut] so yeah it must come from the sun from
do you think sunburn's more of a problem now than it used to be
++ yes er well we come from Holland and it was never as sunny as here
mm
but um + I can remember being burned a couple of times but then I was ALL
summer one summer we had a glorious summer in nineteen forty seven and
I was ALL day every day on the beach
right
and um you know after you were burnt
(yeah)
you didn't do it again you just got brown then
yeah
and er and noone knew any better and of course you all like to be brown
+ mm + mm
so er + you know now well they say of course I yeah no no I suppose you
have to believe them that the ozone layer is thinner //and that's
mmm
why you get burnt more + and of course it's proven that there's more skin
cancer here
+ mm
now er in Holland they're the same now
+ oh okay
yep I was surprised actually because I thought it was only here and in
Australia
right
but no in Holland there's exactly the same cover up and er + //and all that
yes but (you)
mm
still go topless [laughter]

Note that the interviewee here answers Q11 by using a personal narrative, which not only provides an answer to the question, but also shows how her abstract knowledge is tied to her own personal experience. We intend to explore further this use of personal narrative and/or abstract knowledge at a later stage of the project when we focus on how people understand and interpret environmental issues.

2. Number of people responding

One feature which appeared to characterise conversational or chatty interviews more often than laconic interviews was the fact that contributions were often made by more than one respondent. This generally turned the "interview" into a different sort of interaction. The interviewer, Jen, always identified one person as the interviewee,

but because people were often sitting in couples or groups, more than one person sometimes answered her questions.

An initial examination of the numbers participating in different interviews showed that this alone was not revealing. There were seven chatty interviews, involving more than one respondent compared to five laconic ones. The "chattiness" of the chatty interviews was obviously not simply attributable to the number of participants.

There were four main ways in which more than one person contributed to the interview: (i) two or more people might offer answers to Jen's questions (ii) a non-interviewee might offer comments or asides on the question or the answer provided by the interviewee, so that a conversation developed between the interviewees (iii) a non-interviewee might ask the interviewee a question, or "redo" the interviewer's question, temporarily taking over the interviewer's role (see Schiffrin 1993) (iv) a non-interviewee might challenge the interviewee's answer and set up a dialogue with the interviewee.

Not all of these patterns resulted in a chattier interview: (ii) and (iii) were the most likely to favour a more conversational and less laconic interview. They are strategies by which those excluded from the interview can become involved, and ways in which they can display their relationship to the interviewee, and their claims on her/his attention (cf Schiffrin 1993: 254). Clearly numbers alone do not tell the whole story. We intend to examine, then, not only how much each person contributes, but the specific kind of contributions they make, and to focus, in particular, on the kinds of interactions which take place between respondents.

3. Topic drift/elaboration

In "chatty" interviews the respondents often elaborated their answers, and developed the topic, introducing personal information which was not strictly required, often drifting away from material of direct relevance to the original question, and sometimes shifting the topic entirely. Example 3 illustrates this.

Example 3

Interview number: 59 (Chatty)

- Q1 *are you on holiday here at the moment*
 um well for two days
okay so where //are you actually
 > I'm at Vic as well
 > *oh okay //okay you're on on holiday from*
 yeah [laugh]

- working you're but not but you're actually from Wellington*
 > um I'm from Otaki
oh //okay
 > so this is my weekend Monday and Tuesday 'cause I came down to
 look for a flat
 > *oh okay //oh good luck [laugh] have you are you*
 yeah
 > *having any luck*
 > + um hopefully we should have one + yeah + () we don't know we find out
 today

4. Voluntary contributions from respondents: comments, questions

Respondents in chatty interviews often made comments to Jen about the interview or asked her questions about herself. Almost all such questions were asked at the beginning (ie after Q1 in the interview schedule) or at the end (ie after Q18).

Example 4 illustrates this pattern.

Example 4

Interview number: 62 (Chatty)

- Q18 *I just need to //get your*
 [laugh]
signature if you don't mind
 oh golly
so that I can use the information that you've given me
 okay ++ just stick that over here
 mhm
 (6.0) now what's the date //twenty fourth
 the twenty fourth
 [horn blows]
 (4.0) there you go
thank you very much
 > I hope that I assisted you in your study
 > //() [laugh] have you had much
 > *oh VERY much so VERY much so [laugh] thanks*
 > luck people um sort of asking people to
people are actually very good yeah //yeah
 yeah
 ++ surprisingly um + //cooperative ()
 yeah
 > well all you have to do is just take that line that you're a student and er ++
 I've had two student sons you know //my daughter didn't er
 yeah
 > ++ didn't go to university //are you up here at
 right

- > Vic are you
yeah
 > + and you're doing a what
I'm doing an MA in linguistics
 > ++ MA in
linguistics
 > ARE you? oh I see
yeah
 > + (and er oh //how)
just coming to the end of it soon hopefully [laugh]
 > how many languages do you speak

5. Follow-up questions by interviewer

Laconic interviewees tended to provide minimal information. Hence we expected that in interviews with less forthcoming interviewees Jen would try to elicit more information: consequently, we predicted the number of follow-up questions would be greater in laconic interviews. The numbers did not support this prediction, however, as table 3 demonstrates.

Table 3
 No of follow-up questions from interviewer

	Laconic	Chatty
Total number of follow-up questions	32	41
Total number of interviews	20	25

In fact, in direct contradiction to our hypothesis, the two interviews where Jen asked most follow-up questions (5 questions in each case) were both classified as "chatty". Looking more carefully, we found that the follow-up questions were not evenly distributed, and we needed to look more carefully at where they occurred. Example (5) is part of one of these "chatty" interviews.

Example 5

Interview number: 63 (Chatty)

- Q9 *so do you foll- I mean do you follow all the advice*
no
 > () *you don't*
no
 > (+ *okay + is that because you're lazy or is it a*

- > *conscious decision not to or what + sorry [laugh]*
um it's probably because I'm lazy
yeah
 > [laugh] *nah it's probably + um I don't know + some people burn a lot easier than some people*
//(like) people with fair skin burn + and
yeah
people with darker skin don't tend to burn as much
right
or you know + I mean I wear it if I'm gonna get burnt +.like I put some on today
 > *okay + but in general you don't have the type of skin that would burn ++ okay*
 Q10 *+ do you know exactly what it is that makes skin burn in the sun*
+ it's the ultraviolet rays
 Q11 *+ and do you think sunburn's more of a problem nowadays than it used to be*
+ um no + //I don't think it is I think it's
no
one of those things that's been focused on like the ozone + //and stuff like that
right
(that you //just)
trees and it- it goes in big circles and suddenly + the ozone hole's gonna be oh my god (it's) you know
 > *so you think there's a lot of hype*
+ yeah

Here at Q9 the interviewee responds minimally twice, but as a result of Jen continuing to press, provides an elaborated answer. So one explanation for the frequency of follow-up questions in the chatty interviews may be that it is precisely these follow-up questions that induce the interviewee to be chatty. In other words, the interviewer may be seen to be using the follow-up questions to persuade the interviewee to change their approach to the interview. At Q11, on the other hand, Jen seems to use a follow-up question to summarise (and perhaps check that she has properly understood) a long and rather obscure answer.

6. Laughter

We hypothesised that laughter would characterise "chatty" interviews and our preliminary analysis reveals that there is definitely more laughter in the chatty interviews than in the serious interviews. However, laughter is a complex phenomenon serving many functions, and this aspect needs further analysis (see Easton 1994, Hay 1995). In the chatty interviews, laughter seems to function as a positive politeness device - a signal that participants are attending to each others' face needs. There is also some laughter in most of the laconic interviews, but it is

often directed at the questions, or accompanies a short and "witty" answer. Frequently it is only the interviewer, Jen, who laughs in these interviews.

7. Pragmatic particles

Because pragmatic particles generally modify and add to the referential content of utterances, we expected that chatty interviewees would make greater use of them than laconic interviewees. Moreover, hypothesis one also suggests that where pragmatic particles differ in their focus on referential vs affective meaning (Holmes 1982, 1995), chatty interviews would include more affectively oriented particles.

Preliminary analysis suggests that this prediction is promising but once again requires refinement. Comparing interview 7, for instance, a "chatty" interview with interview 54, a laconic interview, it is clear that the number of pragmatic particles acting as boosters and attenuators distinguishes the two interviews. However, taking account of the total length of the responses, the laconic interviewee uses proportionately more attenuators. And this appears to be typical of laconic interviews.

Table 4
Attenuators and boosters in two interviews

Pragmatic particles	#7	#54
Lexical boosters:	8	1
Lexical attenuators:	26	13
Total no of words	566	131

Clearly, it is important to look at the function of the pragmatic particles in the discourse context. The greater use of boosters in the chatty interview generally reflects the greater enthusiasm of the chatty respondents, while the laconic interviewees often use attenuators to give a "cool" or "laid back" and relatively unresponsive reply: eg "oh pretty often", "it's fairly well publicised on the radio".

Conclusion

This report provides an indication of the initial direction of our analysis of the responses of 61 interviewees in our environment study. We have developed a

number of hypotheses, and identified a number of discourse features relating to the first of these which we have begun examining both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

In pursuing the remaining hypotheses, we will be examining the effect of the relationship between the interviewees and their "audience", a young female student, in accounting for the solidarity and power relationships reflected in the discourse. For example, the social identity that interviewees most often explicitly frame Jen as is 'student' and they have various solidary ways of relating to Jen in this identity, eg. as 'fellow-student' or as 'a student like my son/daughter'. These perceived relationships may account for the specific approach that the interviewee takes to the interaction.

It will be clear that this research is at a very early stage and we would appreciate comment and useful references from others.

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APPENDIX 1

HOLIDAY-MAKERS' QUESTION SCHEDULE

Interviewee number ...	M / F
1. Excuse me. Are you on holiday here? I'm doing a survey for Victoria University. Do you mind if I ask (one of) you a few questions about your holiday?	
2. How important is the <u>weather</u> to enjoying your day?	
3. Does it matter if it's sunny or not? (a) Why is that?	
4. Do you like being out in the sun a lot during the holidays?	
5. (If yes) Why? What do you like about being in the sun?	
6. How important for you is getting a tan?	
7. Do you think there are any problems to do with getting sunburnt or being in the sun?	
8. What sort of advice have you come across about sunbathing and tanning?	
9. What do you think of this advice? How does it affect <u>you</u> ? <u>Or</u> Do you follow that advice? (a) If person has kids: Do you take any special steps to protect the kids from the sun?	
10. Do you know exactly what makes skin burn in the sun?	
11. Do you think sunburn is more of a problem nowadays than it used to be?	
12. (If yes) Do you know the cause of that? (Probe if possible) (If no) Probe.	
13. Which newspapers have you read in the last month or so?	
14. And which magazines?	
15. Have you read anything in them about sunburn problems?	
16. What about on radio or TV?	
17. Which of these age-bands do you come into? <i>under 20 twenties thirties forties fifties sixties seventies</i>	

Any notes to make (tan, hats, parasols, suncream, dress)?

APPENDIX 2

Transcription conventions:

<i>sunburn</i>	italic text: interviewer's words
ozone layer interviewer	plain text: words of participants other than the interviewer -- in the absence of speaker designations plain text indicates the words of the sole interviewee
A:, B:, C:	speaker designations for participants other than the interviewer (used when there is more than one)
bracketed plain text: transcriber's comments eg:	
[laugh] or [laugh]	current speaker laughs
[laughter]	more than one person laughs
+	short pause, about half a second
++	longer pause, about one second, or longer
(7.0)	pause of indicated number of seconds
ye-	hyphen indicates that word is cut off
// don't yes	simultaneous speech
('cause)	uncertain transcription
()	untranscribable speech
> .	indicates utterance or line of particular interest

BOOK REVIEW

Mary Crawford, *Talking Difference: On Gender and Language*.
 Thousand Oaks, CA, London: Sage, 1995. Pp xiii, 207.

Reviewed by Janet Holmes, Victoria University of Wellington

This is a very informative and readable book on language and gender written by a psychologist from the University of South Carolina who has been involved in gender research for more than ten years. Mary Crawford covers an impressive amount of material in six chapters, without sacrificing analytical depth, and one of the book's strengths is the material she draws on from her own analyses in areas such as humour and assertiveness training.

The introductory chapter describes Crawford's theoretical position (social constructionist) and identifies weaknesses in alternative approaches to gender. Chapter 2 critiques the deficit approach illustrated by Robin Lakoff's *Language and Women's Place*. This material will be very familiar to most sociolinguists. The third chapter documents the influence of the assertiveness training movement and examines research on the social outcomes of acting assertively. Here Crawford draws on her disciplinary background to convincingly critique the hidden assumptions and values about women, race and class which underlie assertiveness training.

Chapter 4 consists largely of a review of the main points of the numerous critiques of Tannen's book *You Just Don't Understand*, which Crawford describes as typifying the "no-fault", apolitical, "two cultures" or miscommunication model of differences between women and men's speech, as well as an evaluation of the less academically substantial best-seller *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. In chapter 5, Crawford draws extensively on her own research into gender and humour, providing a substantial discussion of the social conditions in which people create humour, and the social and political functions of feminist humour in particular. The final chapter argues for a more sophisticated approach to language and gender research, an approach which focusses on interaction rather than isolated speech features, and on function rather than form (a familiar argument to those who have read Coates and Cameron 1989, Coates 1986, Holmes 1984, 1995), and an approach which is theoretically and methodologically pluralist.

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Throughout, Crawford uses a dynamic social constructionist perspective: we behave in gendered ways because we are placed in gendered social contexts (16). She analyses the relationship between language and gender at three levels, the social structural (most familiar to sociolinguists), the interactional (the province of social psychologists and discourse analysts) and the individual (the psychologists' domain). This provides a framework which unifies the disparate material, while offering perceptive insights in a number of areas. So, for example, in relation to the analysis of humour, at the social-structural level, published collections of humour and conceptualisations of humour in the research literature reflect dominant views of gender: eg. they reinforce negative societal stereotypes of women. At the interactional level, conversational humour often functions to maintain gender relations (eg. men tell jokes and women laugh), though it may also subvert them. At the individual level, "we speak of *having a sense of humor*, essentializing it as a stable trait (and one that women are often said to lack)" (129). Taking a social constructionist perspective, Crawford provides an alternative and more "woman-centred" account of gender and humor research at each of these levels.

There are some gaps from a sociolinguist's perspective (eg social dialectology gets short shrift), and there is the familiar insularity often encountered in American textbooks where reference to research outside the USA is rare. Grice is used in a somewhat uncritical and simplistic fashion to analyse the speech act of "assertion", and the illustrative data consists of constructed rather than genuine speech, in artificial situations, a criticism she makes effectively herself in assessing the value of much experimental research.

On the other hand, *Talking Difference* has a number of strengths. It practises what it preaches - "self-reflexive political critique" (177). Crawford consistently illustrates the implications of adopting one explanatory model rather than another by analysing material from different perspectives. Her analysis of a segment of the discussion from a radio talk show on "date rape" is one particularly effective example of this where she demonstrates the negative consequences for women in adopting the miscommunication model to analyse acquaintance rape. The book also provides an expert critique of experimental "analogue" approaches to language and gender in the psychological literature. And it will bring sociolinguists up-to-date with a great deal of relevant material in the psychological and social psychological literature on the relationship between language and gender.

In conclusion, I found this a very stimulating and interesting book and I will be adding it to the reading list for both undergraduate and postgraduate students working in the area of language and gender.

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