Wellington Working Papers in Linguistics

Number 10   1998

edited by Janet Holmes

Wellington Working Papers in Linguistics

Number 10   1998

CONTENTS

The linguistic construction of gender identity

Janet Holmes

Abstract

This paper illustrates a social constructionist approach to language and gender research. Women and men "do gender" in a variety of ways in interaction. Gender identity may be signalled through phonological and syntactic choices associated with the expression of masculinity and femininity. Gender may also be expressed by means of particular selections among pragmatic particles, and more overtly through self-presentation in narrative. Examples are provided using data collected for the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English and the Wellington Language in the Workplace Project.[1]

****

Introduction

In the last decade much language and gender research has moved from a relatively static, essentialist paradigm to a more dynamic social constructionist approach which emphasises the ways in which individuals "construct" their gender identity in interaction. Instead of assigning women and men to pre-determined biological or social categories, and examining the speech features which correlate with those categories, research has increasingly focussed on the

---

ways in which spoken interactions constitute gender performances. We are constantly "doing gender". The way we move and dress, and many aspects of the way we speak are relevant to the construction of our gender identity. As Cameron says,

> one is never finished becoming a woman, or a man. Each individual subject must constantly negotiate the norms, behaviours, discourses, that define masculinity and femininity for a particular community at a particular point in history....... (1995: 43).

Particular ways of speaking are associated with degrees of masculinity and femininity; these concepts are clearly end-points on a continuum, rather than discrete categories. In this paper I will demonstrate that gender identity is a complex construction, and that all levels of linguistic and pragmatic analysis are involved in "doing gender".[2]

Linguistic signals of gender identity

When we examine the ways in which women and men use speech, there is abundant evidence that pronunciation is one important means by which people signal their gender identity. Indeed recent sociolinguistic research in some speech communities reveals that, for some phonological variables, gender is more fundamental than social class - even in class-conscious Britain. So men on Tyneside, regardless of social class, prefer local variants such as glottalised voiceless stops and conservative realisations of particular diphthongs, while women avoid these marked local forms (Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994).

Similarly, syntactic features can be manipulated in the process of constructing a particular gender identity. In a story collected by Jacob (1990) from a working class Maori woman, Geraldine, in which she describes how she won a street fight, vernacular features such as multiple negation and uninflected forms of the

---

[2] A revised version of this paper is to appear in the Scandinavian journal *Moderna Språk*.

copula *be*, are used to construct a tough "masculine" identity. Here is an excerpt from her account.

Example 1   (See end of volume for transcription conventions.)
G = Geraldine (a pseudonym); I = Interviewer

G: hehheh and she goes + she kept tryin' to push away from me I says you
      better put those arms down because that's fightin' material for me hehheh

I: yeah

G: yeah + and she goes oh what have I have I done + she goes um ++ she
      says you can't fuckin' do nothin' to me and I says d'you wanna bet hehheh
      + yeah
      /so that was the end\

I: /is she is she small\ is she a small woman

G: nah she's same size as me

I: yeah

G: but the cops came up behind me eh 'cause they were there when I was
      /doin' it\

I: /yeah yeah\

G: and they come up behind me they says oh I think you better let her go ++
      and they says um (3) it's alright + hehheh you know just let her go she be
      right and I says yeah well if she keeps that up she be dead

I: yeah yeah

Here Geraldine exploits her awareness of male speech norms to achieve her effect. In addition to consistent vernacular pronunciations such as [ɪn] for the (ING) variable in words like *trying* and *nothing*, she also uses vernacular syntax at a level more typical of male than female members of her social and ethnic group (Holmes, Bell and Boyce 1991). She deletes auxiliary HAVE (eg. *you better*), uses multiple negation (eg. *you can't fuckin' do nothin' to me*), and uses uninflected BE in the clauses *she be right* and *she be dead*, These forms contribute to Geraldine's construction of a particularly tough, masculine gender identity for herself as a participant in the events she is recounting.

Discourse analysis and gender identity

Women and men also use components at the level of discourse to construct particular gender identities. Pragmatic particles, such as *you know* and *I think*, *just* and *so*, pragmatic devices such as tag questions, and discourse strategies such as supportive feedback (eg. *yeah*, *mm*) express social meanings such as assertiveness, tentativeness, facilitation, rapport, and solidarity. Speakers draw on these social meanings in their construction of relatively feminine or relatively masculine gender identities. In the following example, taken from our corpus of language in the workplace, Heke, a Maori manager, seeks advice from his senior manager about his management approach. He uses a range of hedging devices (in bold) in this interchange, constructing a relatively feminine identity and emphasising his subordinate status.[3]

Example 2

Heke: actually I- I wanted to- get your advice about that
        I want to do a **bit of a wee sort of** ra ra speech
        at the beginning of **like** of planning day tomorrow
        we ARE stretched people ARE starting to feel the pressure +
        but it's it's just the kind of thing **you know** it's-
        if if we want to be in the business you're gonna have to live with it
        you know that kind of thing ....
        I **just** I do want to say that

Heke here uses a large number of hedging devices in a short period of time, signalling the tentative nature of his suggestions, while at the same time claiming common ground with his addressee by his use of pragmatic devices such as *you know*, *that kind of thing*. Both these strategies are associated with feminine rather than masculine styles of speaking.

---

3 See Stubbe and Holmes (in press) for a fuller discussion of this example.

Turning to more extended examples, we can examine the kinds of gender identity people construct for themselves and others in their narratives of personal experience. As Schiffrin (1996) points out,

> We can say that telling a story provides a self-portrait: a linguistic lens through which to discover peoples' own (somewhat idealised) views of themselves as situated in a social structure (1996: 199).

In the following extract taken from a long narrative we find Helen, a middle class, middle-aged, Pakeha New Zealander, in conversation with a female friend of similar background, constructing rather conservative identities for herself and her daughter, Andrea - namely doting mother and sweet little girl.

Example 3

H: we went and swam at the pool
     Andrea did SEVEN lengths
J: goodness me
H: with a little breaks in between
     but she's never swum a length of that pool before
     /and she just suddenly discovered\
J: /(that's so good)\
H: she could swim a length [laughs]
     and got so keen she didn't want to stop
     she said I'll just do another one and then
J: /that's terrific\
H: /I'll do another one so that\ was so fun
     so she looked like a [laughs]
     Liz was there with her friend John
     and he said /she\ looked like a goldfish you [laughs] know s-
J: /mm\
H: /(there's) a little head ( )\
J: /[laughs]\ (he'd find out when we-) yeah
H: a- a rolling in the water

J: /[laughs] oh\
H: [laughs] and legs sort of sagging in the water o-

and breaststroking away /you know\
J: /good on her\
H: but she was obviously really sort of getting a kick out of the achievement

Helen achieves the construction of Andrea's very feminine identity by a variety of linguistic means, including the effective use of diminutives such as *little* and attenuators such as *just* and *so*, the pragmatic particles *sort of* and *you know*, the adverb particle *away* in the phrase *breast-stroking away*, and the repetition of phrases and syntactic patterns (*I'll just do another one and then I'll do another one*). These components all contribute to Helen's affectionate picture of an endearing little girl swimming gamely away, as does the paralinguistic laughter, and the attribution to an observer of a comment that emphasises how sweet and amusing Andrea's behaviour is. In the process of constructing this picture of her daughter, Helen also constructs herself as a "good mother" who takes responsibility for her children's activities, and, in particular, looks after her little girl by taking her swimming, encouraging her efforts with admiration, and taking pleasure in her achievement.

It is interesting to note that Helen's gender identity as a middle class female is also expressed through her use of phonological variants which are more frequent in New Zealand women's speech than men's. To give just two examples, Helen consistently uses the standard variant of (ING) throughout the excerpt (eg. *rolling, sagging, breast-stroking, getting* etc), and she uses a conservative, aspirated variant of intervocalic /t/ at a level typical for middle-aged middle class New Zealand women (45%).

So talking to a 'straight' middle-aged, conservative friend, Helen focusses on a conservative aspect of her own gender identity - her role as a loving mother - and produces a construction of her daughter as a feminine and endearing little girl. In a different setting, with a different audience, Helen constructs rather

different gender identities for both herself and her daughter - much less traditionally feminine, more challenging and radical identities.

Men's narratives also construct gendered identities which vary along a scale of masculinity-femininity according to the context in which they are told. They often emphasise the narrator's control of the situation, his competence, practical expertise, and so on. These points are illustrated in a long story told by Tom, a middle-aged, professional man, to Gary his friend and colleague about how, after dealing with a range of problems, he eventually overcame the problem of getting his video machine to record a film (see Holmes 1998b). The story is followed by a discussion of the inadequacies of the television company in providing accurate programme information to viewers. In this story, Tom constructs himself as competent and intelligent by describing in detail his achievement in mastering the programming of the video. He describes each step in the process, giving the impression of an orderly, methodical approach to the challenge he faced. For men, then, "doing gender" often involves the narrator presenting himself as in control, knowledgeable, competent or, if things go wrong, as self-aware, sophisticated, and reflective.

Often gender interacts with other social factors such as social class or ethnicity. Some Maori narratives can be distinguished from those told by Pakeha New Zealanders, for instance. The Maori narratives often reflect the narrators awareness of ethnic boundaries, and Maori men tend to present themselves rather less heroically than Pakeha. The following example (from the WCSNZE), with its two compressed mini-stories, is part of a long sequence in which two young Maori men are reliving past shared escapades when they regularly visited the video game parlour.

Example 4
B: and we tried to take spoons remember /[laughs]\
A: /[laughs]\
B: tryin' to wire up the game /eh [laughs]\

A: /[laughs] yeah with a spoon \ it's just you actually think about it eh /[laughs]\

B: /[laughs]\

A: we're the spoons tryin' to fuckin' we were the spoons [laughs] all right oh what eggs man

B: I- I felt like cryin' one time when we lost you know we [laughs] died fuck we got to walk all the fuckin' way home [laughs]

A: [laughs] yeah I'll say we had to walk all the way home

B: fuckin' hell we only got down with eighty cents and that was about bloody four or five games worth

These two men jointly construct a narrative which presents their younger selves as rather "dumb". In the process, they indicate their current level of sophistication, while also conveying a sense of their earlier behaviour as appropriately wild and "crazy" for young city boys.

Conclusion

Much recent sociolinguistic research has adopted a social constructionist approach to the analysis of gender. From this perspective, gender is analysed not as a fixed category but as a dynamic social construction. In this paper, I have drawn on sociolinguistic research being conducted at Victoria University of Wellington to illustrate some of the insights I believe such an approach can offer.[4] I have presented a brief outline of a variety of ways in which New Zealand women and men construct their gender identities through their use of language.

It is important to bear in mind that gender is only one aspect of a person's social identity, and it is an aspect which will be more or less salient in different contexts. In some contexts, for example, it may be more important to emphasise one's professional expertise, one's ethnic identity, or one's age than one's

---

4 See, for example, Holmes 1997, 1998a, 1998b.

gender. Moreover, the contextual relativity of the construction is also worth remembering:

> we may act more or less middle-class, more or less female, and so on, depending on what we are doing and with whom (Schiffrin 1996: 199)

Finally, it is also worth noting that a more dynamic approach to gender identity indicates the possibility of altering social perceptions of what it means to act like a woman or a man. Over time, by adopting behaviours which challenge the social stereotypes, we can change what is perceived of as "appropriate" feminine or masculine behaviour. By "doing gender" differently, we can alter societal gender norms. Social constructionism offers an interesting analytical framework which is capable of accounting for such changes.

****

References

Cameron, Deborah 1995. Rethinking language and gender studies: some issues for the 1990s. In Sarah Mills (ed) 1995. *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.* London: Longman. 31-44.

Holmes, Janet 1997. Women, language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 2, 1: 195-223.

Holmes, Janet 1998a. Narrative structure: some contrasts between Maori and Pakeha story-telling. *Multilingua* 17: 1, 25-57.

Holmes, Janet 1998b. Story-telling in New Zealand women's and men's talk. In Ruth Wodak (ed) *Gender, Discourse and Ideology.* London: Sage.

Holmes, Janet, Allan Bell and Mary Boyce 1991. *Variation and Change in New Zealand English: a Social Dialect Investigation.* Project Report to the Social Sciences Committee of the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. Wellington, Victoria University.

Holmes, Janet, Bernadette Vine and Gary Johnson 1998. *Guide to the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English.* Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.

Jacob, Jenny 1990. *A Grammatical Comparison of the Spoken English of Maori and Pakeha Women in Levin.* MA thesis. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.

Milroy, James, Lesley Milroy and Sue Hartley 1994. Local and supra-local change in British English: the case of glottalisation. *English World-Wide* 15: 1-33.

Schiffrin, Deborah 1996. Narrative as self-portrait: sociolinguistic constructions of identity. *Language and Society* 25: 167-203.

Stubbe, Maria and Janet Holmes In press. Signalling Maori and Pakeha identity through New Zealand English discourse. In Allan Bell and Koenraad Kuiper (eds) *New Zealand.* Wellington: Victoria University Press/Benjamins.

Gossip: its context and its boundaries

Jane Pilkington, Janet Holmes and Chris Lane

Abstract

This paper first discusses some of the distinguishing contextual features of "gossip" and then examines ways in which the discourse boundaries of gossip are marked in the interactions of a small group of young middle-class Pakeha New Zealanders. Three approaches to conversational boundary marking are considered in relation to the New Zealand data. Finally an integrated model for signalling the boundaries of gossip with other conversational style is proposed.

****

Introduction[1]

Gossip, in both its spoken and written forms, has received attention from academics in a range of different disciplines.[2] This research has mainly been concerned with identifying functions of gossip, and the motivations that exist for gossiping (eg. Gluckman 1963, Paine 1967, Abrahams 1970, Fine 1985). More recently, linguists have examined formal linguistic and discourse features of gossip in relation to its functions, and in relation to features of the social context

---

[1] This paper is based on a section of Jane Pilkington's (1994) MA thesis, but it also draws on additional material which was not available at the time she submitted her thesis. This accounts, for example, for the extensive reference to Sinclair and Coulthard's classic (1975) classroom interaction model, rather than Francis and Hunston's (1992) revised version for conversation.

[2] See Pilkington (1994) chapter 2 for a definition of gossip together with a detailed discussion of the criteria used.

in which it occurs, such as participants, setting and topic (eg. Jones 1980, Coates 1988, 1996, Hall 1993).

Social context of gossip

Participants

Gossip typically occurs in relaxed, familiar contexts, between people who know each other well. Jones (1980) notes that people must share a close common bond before they have the right to participate in gossip. Often this bond is established through membership of some common group, such as residents of the same village or neighbourhood, workmates, family members, friendship networks, or a special interest group.

Individuals who are not in-group members will find themselves excluded from gossip. Gluckman (1963) cites a number of examples, including one where an anthropologist found his attempts to join in the gossip of a Welsh village were criticised by the locals because he was not considered a sufficiently integrated member of the in-group. Gilmore (1978) makes a similar point, noting that the amount of time he could spend gossiping with locals was an indication of the extent of his acceptance by the community. Gossip, while freely participated in by in-group members, is generally jealously protected from outsiders.

Place and time

Gossip is an intimate style and tends to occur in relatively private or intimate settings where people feel relaxed, such as in their homes (Yerkovich 1977, Jones 1980). However, gossip also occurs in semi-public settings where people meet regularly, such as local streets (Gilmore 1978, Haviland 1977), the town square, local shops, pubs, bars, or cafés. In such places, those participating in gossip create their own familiar, intimate space within the larger public space (Epstein 1969).

Gossip typically occurs in "time-out", when participants feel free to relax, rather than at times when there is urgent work to do (Jones 1980, Hall 1993, Brenneis

1984, Levin and Arluke 1987). So, for example, the children in Goodwin's studies (1980, 1982 and 1990) gathered on the streets or yards surrounding their houses in the afternoon, and indulged in gossip when school was finished for the day. In Hannerz's (1967) study of an Afro-American ghetto where unemployment among the men was high, there was ample opportunity for the men to gather on street corners to drink and gossip. The men in Brenneis' (1984) study were farmers who would gather at one another's houses and gossip in the evening when their work for the day was complete. The homemakers in Hall's (1993) study tended to gather in the yard of one of the participants during the evening at a time when demands on them from their families were low.

Topics

In general, gossip is concerned with people, events, and values that are important to the particular group of gossipers. So, for example, the neighbourhood women that Hall (1993) studied generally gossiped about local women who had acted improperly in some way. The women studied by Coates (1996) discuss the everyday activities and personal motives of their family and friends. Many researchers suggest that gossip is concerned only with the activities of other people (eg. Tannen 1990a, Gluckman 1963). Some argue, however, that gossip can focus upon events in the gossiper's own life as well as events from the lives of others (eg. Jones 1980, Coates 1988). Most researchers agree that gossip topics are often re-cycled. The same topics tend to recur over a period of time and are examined from new angles, or updated in the light of new events.

Formal discourse features of gossip

While the context and functions of gossip have been widely discussed in the literature, there has been relatively little written about the linguistic or discourse features of gossip (Fine 1985). Discourse features which have received attention include the use of indirectness, linguistic markers of group participation, and specific formulae which typically mark sections of talk as "gossip".

Gossip tends to rely upon strategies of indirectness (Gluckman 1963, Jones 1980, Brenneis 1984). It is characterised by veiled references, and draws upon shared knowledge. This allusive quality of gossip can make it difficult for those who are not in-group members to interpret who, or what, exactly is being discussed. In the Fijian Indian village Brenneis (1984) studied, for example, strategies of indirectness were employed in gossip in order to protect the gossiper from the possible wrath of the person whom they were gossiping about (cf Besnier 1989a, 1989b). Campbell (1964:315) notes that in the Greek community he researched, the men used gossip as an indirect means of insulting and undermining their enemies, thus protecting themselves and their families from the retaliation that more open insults would be likely to bring about. Strategies of indirectness in gossip may also have the function of hiding group tensions from the eyes of the outside world (Gluckman 1963, 1968).

Hall (1993: 61) noted that the women that she studied in the Dominican Republic drew a clear distinction between gossiping (*chismeando*) and criticising (*criticando*). *Chismeando* was not negatively sanctioned by these women, but indulging in *criticando* about other in-group members was frowned upon. These women skilfully used rising intonation as an indirect strategy implying scandalous behaviour, without ever explicitly stating that the "gossipee" (i.e. the person who was the subject of the gossip) had behaved improperly.

Gossip is characterised by linguistic features which reflect the involvement of all participants. Gossipers welcome feedback and participation from their addressees, and addressees encourage the speaker to continue, reassuring the gossiper that they find the gossip interesting (Jones 1980, Coates 1988, 1991). Jointly constructed gossip is also common. Coates (1988, 1991), Pilkington (1992), and Hall (1993) draw attention to the extent to which the women they studied collaborate to produce the text. The gossip they describe is characterised by large amounts of simultaneous speech: the gossipers form "a web of talk" (Hall 1993: 69). Coates (1991) characterises the collaborative turn taking behaviour she observed in the gossip of her British middle-class female informants as "conversational duetting", or like a musical "jam session".

Another linguistic feature which often characterises gossip is the development of a communal rhythm (Brenneis 1984, Coates 1988, 1991, Pilkington 1992, Hall 1993). When several speakers join in the narration of gossip, they often respond to the rhythm established by the previous speakers. Hall and Coates employ musical metaphors to suggest the rhythms employed by the women in their studies. They describe how skilful speaker changes are effected with little, or no, disruption of the established flow and rhythm of the conversation. The effort participants make to prosodically match their incoming turns to the previous turn is further evidence of the way women in particular cooperate to produce gossip texts collaboratively (Coates 1991, Pilkington 1992, Hall 1993). Brenneis (1984) commenting on the rhythmic nature of the gossip of the men he studied, describes it as having a "pulsing feel". He discusses the rhythms of turn switches, but also their competitive edge, suggesting there is an element of friendly competition in the turn switching of the men.

Finally, gossip is often formally signalled in discourse by means of "textual frames" (Bird 1979: 41). Many researchers have described various methods of textual framing employed in the gossip of the groups they studied (eg. Fine 1985, Brenneis 1984, Hall 1993, Haviland 1977, Yerkovich 1977). One example is the use of formulae which check that the gossipee is known to all the participants (Levin and Arluke 1987: 216-217, Yerkovich 1977). Shifts into gossip tended to be marked by the use of a *do you know so and so?* sequence. In these sequences participants would also carefully check that they held similar opinions of the gossipee by employing questions such as what *do you think of so and so?* Once the participants had established that the gossipee was known to everyone, and that their opinions of the gossipee largely coincided, gossip about the person could proceed. Hence such formulaic utterances served as a clear indicator that the talk that was to follow was intended as gossip, and was to be treated as such by other participants. These frames also gave participants the opportunity to negotiate their views about the subject of the gossip. Such framing exchanges

served as an opportunity to elicit a warning that gossip about a particular gossipee might be inappropriate.

Hall (1993) identifies three general formulae used by the woman in her study to signal that they had gossip to impart: *tu no sabes* 'don't you know', *tengo la ultima* 'I have the latest', and *tengo una bomba* 'I have a bomb'. The occurrence of any of these formulae indicates that the following information is to be treated as gossip.

Haviland (1977) and Brenneis (1984) both identify grammatical devices used by gossipers to indicate that what they are imparting is hearsay. The South Americans that Haviland studied used the Tzotzil quotative particle *la* to mark hearsay, while the Fijian Indians that Brenneis researched frequently used the form *bole* (3rd person of 'to say') in order to mark the reported nature of the information they were recounting. Such devices can function as a warning of the potential unreliability of the information (Levin and Arluke 1987), or alternatively as an emphatic device, eg. *I have it on good authority that...* (Fine (1985).

In what follows, one specific discourse feature of gossip is explored in the New Zealand data, namely the use of boundary markers to signal a shift from more general casual conversation to "gossip".

Method and database

The kind of intimate gossip which was the focus of the study occurs in small close-knit groups of friends. Consequently the participants selected for the study were all people between whom a pre-existing friendly relationship existed. Tape-recorded material was collected from six pairs of friends, three male dyads and three female dyads, who were members of a small close-knit network. These tapes contained examples of the dyads gossiping, as well as participating in other conversational styles of interaction. The twelve participants used in the analysis were middle class Pakeha in their twenties, with at least some tertiary education.

They were not only close friends of each other, but also members of Jane Pilkington's own social network, an important point in relation to the elicitation of intimate talk on a tape to which they knew she would be listening.

The people who agreed to collect data were all taught how to use a Sony Walkman Professional tape recorder and unobtrusive lapel microphone in order to record good quality talk. Each pair of friends was asked to record their normal, casual talk, including gossip, until they had filled two 60-minute tapes. They were asked to record "natural" or typical situations in which they normally talked and gossiped. Most of the recordings were made at the home of one of the participants over drinks or a meal, or during a regular visit by the other participant. One pair of friends who worked together on the late shift in a café set up the tape recorder to record during quiet periods late at night when there were no customers. The participants were guaranteed anonymity, and in what follows all names are pseudonyms.

The boundaries of gossip

As noted above, speakers often signal their intention to switch from some other conversational style into gossip. How do New Zealanders achieve such switches?

Out-moding strategies

The most explicit way of signalling a switch to gossip was by the use of specific boundary-marking discourse strategies. A number of these features can be described as strategies associated with "out-modes", and in particular, "conversationally-tied out-modes" (Wilson 1989). Wilson (1989:56) defines out-modes as features which "function to change the status or definition of the developing speech event". The strategies that Wilson identifies as associated with out-modes can be summarised as follows: (1) use of a marker eg. *hey, right, now, oh* etc; (2) use of specific formulae eg. *did I tell you the one about ...;* (3) use of the imperative mood; 4) prosodic marking in terms of a tempo or pitch movement; 5)   change in loudness.

According to Wilson, one or more of these strategies are commonly found at points in conversation where speakers wish to signal a shift from one speech event to another. A shift to gossip within the conversations recorded between New Zealand friends was often signalled by the use of a particular range of such strategies. Specifically, the following six strategies were identified as signals that a speaker was effecting a shift from some other conversational style into the gossip style. Examples from the recorded data are provided with each strategy.

1. Use a prefatory marker of shift

Boundaries between styles were often introduced by "markers" (see Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) of a shift in the discourse, to draw the hearer's attention to the speaker's utterance, and the shift to a new conversational style. Markers such as *oh, well*, and *hey* were frequently used for this function in the data.

Example (1)   (See end of this volume for transcription conventions)
Cath: *well* that's what Rosenthal uses to justify being so hard on his students...,

Example (2)
Linda: *oh* I rang Cherry

2. Use introductory formula

Speakers employed formulaic utterances to introduce gossip sections of conversation. These often built on the hearer's past experiences of gossiping with the speaker. Hearers would recognise the formulaic utterance and be alerted that the conversation was shifting to gossip.

Example (3)
Cath: *did I tell you* that my mother went to a fortune teller....

Example (4)
Sam: *speaking of which* I might go down to Vic House

Note that these formulae are not specific to gossip: they are general devices for introducing new topics or stories, eg. (3) is what Sacks (1992: 10-21) would call a "story preface" and Wilson (1989: 27-28, 38-42) would call a "pre-topic check"; (4) uses a general device for tying a new topic to a preceding one.

3. Identify specific people and events associated with previous gossip

Mentioning a name or event that the participants had gossiped about in the past was a device often used to introduce a gossip topic into the conversation. This strategy alerted the hearer that further gossip about this person/event was about to begin.

Example (5) (Reference to a stolen item previously extensively discussed)
Jean: our *stolen tube*

Example (6)
Lance: I remember *Bev's twenty first* eh

4. Introduce an element of speculation

Gossip sections of conversation were often less concerned with certainties and proven facts than other sections of conversation. Introducing a linguistic signal of doubt or speculation could serve as an indication that the conversation was moving in the direction of gossip.

Example (7)
Anne: that cow thing sounded pretty *suspect* eh

Example (8)
Sam: I *wonder* about Ray's perfect pitch

5. Signal that what follows is hearsay.

Clearly related to the preceding category were instances of shifts into gossip which were marked by a signal that what followed was "hearsay" or reported information rather than personally attested fact. Gossip often focused upon

people who were not present, and concerned events that had occurred when the gossipers were not present. A gossiper's retelling of such an event typically included a linguistic indication that the story being related was second hand.

Example (9)

Liz: well that's what Rosenthal uses to justify being so hard on his students *apparently* because *I was kind of like DIGGING around you know amongst friends like...,*

Example (10)

Rich: *me and Geoff were talking today* about + all the groupies that he's got + all over [laughs] the North Island

Example (11)

Cath: have *you heard from* Jean lately

6. Use marked prosodic devices: change in volume, tempo, pitch, or voice quality
A change in the prosodic features of the speaker's voice could be used to signal to the hearer that a style change was taking place in the conversation. Speakers often indicated the interest that they anticipated a new topic would hold for the hearer by employing prosodic devices such as increased tempo, change in volume or pitch, and so on, when shifting to gossip (cf Brown 1977). These devices can signal the speaker's own interest in the story, simultaneously signalling to the hearer that they should expect to find the information of interest. A jump from a low to a higher pitch level has also been identified as an indicator of a new section of talk (Coulthard, Montgomery and Brazil 1981: 20, 43-44 if the transition is one from "low termination" to "high key" or "mid key" in their terminology). Both functions of signalling interest and indicating a transition may be present in example (12).

Example (12)

Cath: did I tell you that my mother went to a fortune teller.... (increase in tempo and higher pitch compared to preceding text)

While there were examples of gossip boundaries containing only one of the above features in the data, it was common to find shifts to gossip marked by more than one strategy. Example (9), for instance, contains a marker, the mention of the name of a person whom Cath and Liz often gossip about, as well as an indication that the story contains elements of hearsay (eg *apparently*), and it is also prosodically marked by a higher tempo, pitch, and volume than the surrounding text.

Clearly, the young New Zealanders recorded in the sample made use of recognisable "out-moding" strategies to signal that they were about to shift to gossip.

Markers and metastatements in gossip exchanges
Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) provide an alternative approach to the identification of "boundary exchanges". Their focus was classroom interaction and they identified boundary exchanges as structures used by teachers to "signal the beginning or end of a stage in the lesson" (1975: 49). Sinclair and Coulthard analysed these exchanges as potentially consisting of two moves: framing and focusing. Frames are used to indicate boundaries within the lesson, and are realized by markers such as *well, okay, now, right, all right* which are stressed, have falling tone and are followed by silent stress (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975: 40). Focusing moves frequently follow frames; in one type of boundary exchange they are realized by metastatements, and are used to tell the class what is going to happen.

Sinclair and Coulthard note that their model is not designed to deal with less structured interactions, such as relaxed conversation, where there are no clearly recognised roles, objectives, and conventions. Nevertheless, with some modifications this particular aspect of their model could satisfactorily account for

many of the examples of boundary marking between gossip and other styles in the recorded conversations.

In fact, Francis and Hunston (1992) have attempted to adapt Sinclair and Coulthard's model to conversation. They use the term "structuring exchange" rather than "boundary exchange", but their structuring exchanges contain similar elements to Sinclair and Coulthard's boundary exchanges. However, in their model, markers and metastatements are part of the same "opening" move, and there is the possibility of an "answering" move by another participant.

In the following examples, the shift to gossip is clearly marked with an opening move containing both a marker and a metastatement.

Example (13)
Linda: oh shall I tell you some more work goss shall I
Marker= *oh*
Metastatement= *shall I tell you some more work goss*

Example (14)
Mary: oh it was terrible last night
Marker=*oh*
Metastatement= *it was terrible last night*

Example (15)
Sam: now apparently....
Marker= *now*
No metastatement
apparently... = Inform (ie following move)

In examples (13) and (14) Mary and Linda both use markers and then momentarily comment on the discourse itself to offer the hearer a summary of what they are about to reveal. In example (15) Sam uses *now* as a marker and

then moves straight into an inform move without using the optional metastatement.

Classroom lessons and relaxed conversations between friends are very different speech events, and this was evident from the fact that metastatements were much more common in Sinclair and Coulthard's data than in the conversational data. From a pedagogical point of view metastatements are a useful device to signal the point of the interaction and the function of the lesson. They can assist students' learning. A teacher also has more power in controlling the interaction than their pupils; directing the topic in such an overt way is one way in which this power is manifested.

In the recorded friendly conversations, no single speaker has the right to exert more control over the conversation than any other speaker. A unilateral declaration that "we are going to talk about this topic now" is not appropriate in friendly conversation; rather topic changes are jointly negotiated. Hence boundary exchanges in the recorded conversations were often less explicitly marked than those which occur in a classroom context. In conversation one proffers or suggests, rather than declares what the next topic will be.

Example (16)
Linda: oh I rang Cherry
Marker= *oh*
Metastatement?/Inform? = *I rang Cherry*

Example (17)
Harry: yeah I made the mistake of getting horribly drunk last Thursday night and...
Marker= *yeah*
Metastatement?/Inform? = *I made the mistake of getting horribly drunk last Thursday night*

In examples (16) and (17) it is difficult to decide whether the utterance following the marker is a metastatement, or part of the initial inform exchange. Is *I rang Cherry* an instance of the speaker commenting on the discourse? Linda is telling Mary what they are about to discuss, but the fact that she rang Cherry is also the starting point of the gossip she shares about what she discovered during the course of this phone call. These examples suggest that informal conversation differs from classroom discourse in having less clear-cut metastatements as components of boundary exchanges.

As mentioned, the recorded conversations differed from classroom interaction most obviously in that the participants were of equal status. Consequently, it was appropriate for topic shifts to be negotiated rather than declared unilaterally.

Example (18)
Harry: 'cause like + you know Roseanne and Bert
Xavier: yo
Harry: like Bert is going for the....

Example (19)
Mary: because like [tut] that's the first person since Greg has lived here that has
         rung him up
Linda: really
Mary: yeah I don't think he's got any friends...

Example (20)
Xavier: oh did I tell you I um [tut] sent those poems to Toni
Harry: when
Xavier: Valentine's Day

In examples (18), (19), and (20) the first speaker makes an utterance that fits Sinclair and Coulthard's model of boundary exchanges. But the addressee then provides a signal of acceptance or approval of the proposed shift before the first speaker proceeds with the gossip. In the classroom situation, the teacher has the

right to control the discourse so there is little or no negotiation about the direction in which the discourse will proceed. In a conversation, where equal speaking rights obtain (Wilson 1989), an individual speaker does not have the right to this degree of control over the direction of the discourse. Hence, a sequence of marker and metastatement followed by a signal of "agreement" or "approval" is more frequent. This pattern is allowed for in Francis and Hunston's (1992) adaptation of Sinclair and Coulthard's model. In Francis and Hunston's "structuring exchange", a marker and metastatement in an opening move by one participant may be followed by an answering move (by another participant) containing an "aquiesce" act. Thus, sequential models of informal conversation, such as Francis and Hunston's and the Conversation Analysis (CA) model more adequately account for the contributions of second speakers to boundary marking exchanges in everyday conversation.

Pre-sequences in boundary exchanges in gossip

Levinson (1983) summarises a model involving "pre-sequences" suggested by CA researchers. A "pre-sequence" invites collaboration in the action that is being proposed. Levinson distinguishes between specific types of pre-sequences that occur before different actions eg: pre-announcements and pre-requests. While there are differences between the different types of pre-sequences, the general shape remains largely the same and can be summarised as follows:

Position 1:   (PRE-ACTION)
                 Pre sequence first part - checks on the preconditions for the
                 action to proceed
Position 2:   (GO AHEAD)
                 Pre-sequence second part - validates that conditions for the
                 action to proceed are met
     and   first part of second pair - a request to proceed with action

Position 3:   (ACTION)
                 second part to second pair - the delivery of the prefigured
                 action

Position 4:   (RESPONSE)
                     response to action

Distribution Rule :

          A addresses 1 and 3 to B

          B addresses 3 to A

Example (21)

Mary: yeah 'cause- and I told you how Dee rang George up   **POSITION 1**

Linda: no   **POSITION 2**

Mary: oh yeah she was like- rang //George up\   **POSITION 3**

Linda: /'cause she and\\ Ross had broken up...

The CA model is designed to account for examples such as (21) where Mary and Linda negotiate a gossip boundary. The CA model also allows for other utterances to be inserted between the turn positions so that it can account for examples such as the following where, between Position 1 and Position 2, a question and answer sequence occurs:

Example (22)

Linda: OH did I tell you Ryan was in hospital   **(POSITION 1)**

Mary: Ryan?

Linda: Cath and Ryan=/

Mary: /=oh really=/   **(POSITION 2)**

Linda: /=[laughs] yeah he jabbed **(POSITION 3)**

        himself while he was jabbing the old bulls...

In several examples of boundary marking in the recorded data, Position 2 appeared not to be filled. Speakers would often produce an utterance corresponding to the first position of the model and then continue with the story having received no audible GO AHEAD. In a sense the speaker has moved directly from position 1 to position 3, but that means we are no longer dealing with a pre-sequence.

The CA analysis of story-telling sequences (eg. in Sacks 1992: 10-21, Jefferson 1978 and Goodwin 1984) uses the term "story preface". A story preface is normally a single turn-constructional unit, which sometimes works as a pre-announcement of a story, being then ratified by a response from a listener before the teller begins the story, and it sometimes works as a lead in to the story without such a ratifying response.

It is interesting to consider why there were many examples in the conversational data of such "abbreviated pre-sequences" where speakers seemed content to continue without any explicit GO AHEAD. Continuing with a shift in conversational conditions without some kind of GO AHEAD from the other participants would seem to be an instance of the unilateral control which, it has been argued above, is unwelcome in a context where speakers have equal rights.

It is possible that the second position was sometimes filled not by a verbal GO AHEAD, but by some kind of non-verbal GO AHEAD indicating that the other participant was interested. Jones (1980) suggests that pursed lips, raised eyebrows, nods, and other non-verbal devices are common features of female gossip, although she does not provide empirical data to support her claim. The data collected for this study was audio-recorded data. There was no visual record of the interaction and therefore one can only speculate that these non-verbal GO-AHEADs occurred on occasion.

Francis and Hunston (1992:129) in explaining their term "acquiesce", allow for this possibility and also for silence:

    Realized by 'yes' and other terms indicating assent, both verbal and non-verbal. May also be realized by silence, interpreted as a default mechanism whereby failure to protest ... is an indication of acquiescence.

The CA model provides general information about the form of utterances that can fill the different positions. Levinson describes each Position in terms of its general function, and provides a general indication of what is likely to be found in each Position. An integration of these with Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model of Boundary Exchanges, particularly as modified by Francis and Hunston,

offers the possibility of a more comprehensive description of those boundary exchanges which specifically indicate a shift to gossip.

Towards an integrated model of gossip boundary marking

The first step towards integrating the treatments of boundary marking behaviours proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), CA (as summarised by Levinson 1983), and Wilson (1989) is to use a list of formal features adapted from those proposed by Wilson to broaden Sinclair and Coulthard's definitions of what may constitute markers and metastatements. This revised definition of markers and metastatements can then be used to describe what may fill Position 1 in Levinson's model.

1. First the definition of the term "marker" must be broadened. Along with lexical or discoursal "attention getters" such as *but, hey,* and *well* , prosodic markers such as change in tempo, pitch or volume need to be included as exponents of the category "marker": eg. *oh hey have you heard* said at a higher tempo, and louder volume than the preceding text.

2. Secondly, the notion of metastatement needs slight revision. Rather than functioning only as a comment on the story or gossip, we propose that the metastatement appears to be more multi-functional, perhaps serving as the introductory component of the following story/gossip: i.e. more like a narrative "abstract" (Labov 1972). In other words, an utterance which forms part of the story/gossip can also serve as the metastatement, in that it indicates where the speaker wants the discourse to head. The metastatement may contain a summary of what the speaker wishes to communicate with the other participant(s), as well as elements such as the names of the key characters, times and places, and elements that identify the topic for the hearer, or common gossip formulae such as *have you heard,* and *did I tell you about......* This notion of metastatement appears to correspond closely to Sacks's (1992: 10-21) notion of "story preface".

3. Thirdly, the marker and metastatement (or story preface) can be fitted into Position One of Levinson's model.

4. Fourthly, the possibility of a non-verbal licensing or GO AHEAD needs to be included in the options in Position Two .

The revised Position One and Position Two can then be formulated as follows::

Position 1: **Function** = Pre sequence first part - checks on the preconditions for the action to proceed   (PRE-ACTION)
Description = A marker and/or a metastatement. Both may occur, or only one of the two may occur.

Position 2: **Function**=Pre-sequence second part - validates that conditions for the action to proceed are met
<u>and</u>   first part of second pair - a request to proceed with action
                              (GO AHEAD)
Description= spoken feedback (eg. *really, has he,* repetition of some part of the Position 1 utterance) and/or non-verbal feedback (eg. nod, interested look)

This approach accounts for the instances of boundary marking illustrated in examples (18)-(22), and (23) below, as well as the non-sequential examples described above.

Example (23) (comments in bold provide glosses/explanation of the text)

Brett: I told you about that eh how Chuck said haven't seen anybody from the theatre //b- b-\   POSITION 1
[*I told you about that eh ...* **= metastatement containing a common gossip formula,** *Chuck* **= familiar gossipee,**

Lance: /yeah\\ (   )=/   POSITION 2
[spoken feedback]

Brett: /=an-and Chuck turned around and...
                              POSITION 3

Conclusion

Gossip is a style which typically occurs in a relaxed and relatively private setting, during recreational time, or at a time when the participants are free to pause in their work. Participants in gossip generally know one another well and share some sort of bond through common group membership. Frequent topics of gossip include the activities and projected motivations of friends, family and acquaintances. Gossip tends to be linguistically characterised by the use of indirectness, linguistic markers of group participation, and specific formulae which introduce sections of "gossip". This paper has explored in a New Zealand context how a small group of young middle-class Pakeha friends signalled discourse boundaries of gossip in private informal conversations.

Three different approaches to conversational boundary marking proved useful in identifying potential discourse boundaries of gossip as illustrated in the conversations analysed. The speakers in this study marked the shift to the gossip style by "out-moding" strategies similar to those discussed in Wilson's (1989) study of classroom and parent-child interactions. The speakers tended to mark the shift in style by using markers of shift (*oh, well, hey* etc), using formulaic utterances which the hearer would recognise as likely to preface gossip, identifying the topic as relating to people or events which had previously been gossiped about, introducing an element of speculation, signalling that what follows is hearsay, and/or using prosody to indicate that the hearer is likely to be interested in the information that will follow.

The transitions from other styles to gossip also bore some resemblance to the marker and metastatement pattern of "boundary exchanges" described in Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) study of classroom interactions. However, the boundary exchanges used in gossip were often less explicitly marked than in Sinclair and Coulthard's classroom examples. The relaxed and equal relationship between the gossip participants meant that shifts in topic and style tended to be negotiated by both participants, rather than one speaker overtly influencing the direction of

the interaction, as is typical in the classroom where the teacher has more power to control the interaction.

In attempting to describe the way that the speakers in this study negotiated the shift to the gossip style in their conversations Levinson's (1983) description of Sacks's notion of "presequences" also proved useful. This three-position model allowed for the participation of both speakers in effecting the transition to gossip. However, it provided only a very general description of how each of the three positions designated by the model was likely to be realised.

The latter part of the paper attempts an integration of these three approaches to characterising discourse boundaries. The revised model provides detail about what may occur at each position, and takes account of the negotiated aspect of boundary exchanges that results from the equal speaker rights situation in which these examples occurred. The integrated model proposed not only provides a satisfactory description of boundary marking in gossip; taking into account the three perspectives provides a richer description than might otherwise have been possible, and it is a description which is reasonably compatible with the three different approaches, even though those approaches come from different disciplines and are based on very different assumptions. This is perhaps an indication that there are 'real' patterns in the data which can be seen even though looked at from very different angles.

****

References

Abrahams, Roger D. 1970. A performance-centred approach to gossip. *Man* 5: 290 301.

Besnier, Niko 1989a. Information withholding as a manipulative and collusive strategy in Nukulaelae gossip. *Language in Society* 18, 3: 15-341.

Besnier, Niko 1989b. Conflict management, gossip, and affective meaning on Nukulaelae. In Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo and Geoffrey M. White (eds) 1989. *Disentangling: Conflict Discourse in Pacific Societies.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bird, D.A. 1979. *Rumour as Folklore: An Interpretation and Inventory.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Bloomington: Indiana University.

Brenneis, Donald 1984. Grog and gossip in Bhatgaon. *American Ethnologist* 11: 487-506.

Brown, Gillian 1977. *Listening to Spoken English.* London: Longman.

Campbell, John Kennedy 1964. *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Coates, Jennifer 1988. Gossip revisited: language in all female groups. In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds) 1988. *Women in their Speech Communities.* London: Longman. 94-121.

Coates, Jennifer 1991. Women's cooperative talk: a new kind of conversational duet? In Claus Uhlig and Rudiger Zimmerman (eds) 1991. *Anglistentag 1990 Marburg. Proceedings.* Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag. 296-311.

Coates, Jennifer 1996. *Women Talk.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Coulthard, Malcolm, Martin Montgomery and David Brazil 1981. Developing a description of spoken discourse. In Malcolm Coulthard and Martin Montgomery (eds) *Studies in Discourse Analysis.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1-50.

Epstein, A. L. 1969. Gossip, norms and social network. In J.C. Mitchell (ed) 1969. *Social Networks in Urban Situations.* Manchester: Manchester University Press. 117-127.

Fine, Gary Alan 1985. Rumours and gossiping. In Teun A. Van Dijk (ed) 1987. *Handbook of Discourse Analysis. Volume 3. Discourse and Dialogue.* London: Academic Press. 223-237.

Francis, Gill and Susan Hunston 1992. Analysing everyday conversation. In Malcolm Coulthard (ed) *Advances in Spoken Discourse Analysis.* London: Routledge. 123-161.

Gilmore, David 1978. Varieties of gossip in a Spanish rural community. *Ethnology* 17: 89-99.

Gluckman, Max 1963. Gossip and scandal. *Current Anthropology* 4: 307-316.

Gluckman, Max 1968. Psychological, sociological and anthropological explanations of witchcraft and gossip. *Man* 3: 20-34.

Goodwin, Charles 1984. Notes on story structure and the organization of participation. In J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage (eds) *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. 225-246.

Goodwin, Marjorie Harness 1980. Directive-response speech sequences in boys and girls talk activities. In Sally McConnell-Ginet, Ruth Borker and Nelly Furman (eds) 1980. *Women and Language in Literature and Society.* New York: Praeger. 157-73.

Goodwin, Marjorie Harness 1982. "Instigating". Story telling as social process, *American Ethnologist* 9: 799-821.

Goodwin, Marjorie Harness 1990. *He-said-she-said: Talk as Social Organization Among Black Children.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hall, Joan Kelly 1993. Tengo una bomba: The paralinguistic and linguistic conventions of the oral practice of chismeando. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 26, 1: 55-83.

Hannerz, Ulf 1967. Gossip, networks, and culture in a black American ghetto. *Ethnos* 32: 35-60.

Haviland, John Beard 1977. Gossip as competition in Zinacantan. *Journal of Communication* 27: 186-191.

Jefferson, Gail 1978. Sequential aspects of storytelling in conversation. In Jim Schenkein (ed.) *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction.* New York: Academic Press. 219-248.

Jones, Deborah 1980. Gossip: Notes on women's oral culture. In Cheris Kramarae (ed) *The Voices and Words of Women and Men.* Oxford: Pergamon. 193-198.

Labov, William 1972. *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Levin, Jack and Arnold Arluke 1987. *Gossip: The Inside Scoop.* New York: Plenum Press. 216-217.

Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Paine, Robert 1967. What is gossip about? An alternative hypothesis. *Man* 2: 278-285.

Pilkington, Jane 1992. "Don't try and make out that I'm nice!" The different strategies women and men use when gossiping. *Wellington Working Papers in Linguistics* 5: 37-60.

Pilkington, Jane 1994. *Women, Men and Gossip: What's the Story.* Unpublished MA thesis. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.

Sacks, Harvey 1992. *Lectures on Conversation: Volume II.* (Ed. Gail Jefferson). Oxford: Blackwell.

Sinclair, John McH. and Malcolm Coulthard 1975. *Towards an Analysis of Spoken Discourse: The English Used by Teachers and Pupils.* London: Oxford University Press.

Tannen, Deborah 1990a. *You Just Don't Understand, Women and Men in Conversation.* London: Virago Press.

Taylor, Talbot J. and Deborah Cameron 1987. *Analysing Conversation: Rules and Units in the Structure of Talk.* Oxford, New York: Pergamon.

Wilson, John 1989. *On the Boundaries of Conversation.* Oxford: Pergamon.

Yerkovich, Sally 1977. Gossiping as a way of speaking. *Journal of Communication* 27: 192-196.

Interviewing styles on New Zealand National Radio: is Mike Hosking really so outrageous?

Sandra Shearn

Abstract

This paper investigates the contrasting styles of four New Zealand National Radio interviewers. A small sample of listeners was surveyed to gauge their perceptions of features of the different interviewers' styles, as well as the effectiveness, interest and acceptability of the interviews. The interview judged to be the most interesting and effective was conducted by Mike Hosking, but, intriguingly, this was also the interview evaluated as the least acceptable in style. A linguistic analysis revealed that Mike Hosking used more talking time, and interrupted more often than any other interviewer. Moreover, he was the only interviewer to use antagonistic elicitations. Listeners apparently expect a degree of formality and politeness in National Radio news interviews which is not manifested by Mike Hosking. However, the fact that his interview was also judged the most interesting and effective raises interesting questions about what listeners really want.

****

Introduction[1]

Letter to the Evening Post.

......I regard Mike Hosking's presentation as something of an assault, as if he carried some sort of verbal armament, from which words are propelled at high velocity.

In my view, it is too frenetic and pressurised and runs quite counter
to that which goes towards creating a climate receptive for assessing
news of the world, its people and society.

We have enough pressure and thrust in society as it is, without also
injecting it into *Morning Report* in this way.

[Bob Sullivan of Lower Hutt 5/12/94]

Over the last few years there have been numerous articles and letters to the
editor in New Zealand newspapers and magazines about the interviewers on
National Radio. Mike Hosking has been a particular target for criticism, with
regular complaints about his aggressive interviewing style.   Are these criticisms
justified? How well-founded are listeners' complaints? This paper examines the
relationship between listener attitudes and a number of specific features of an
interviewer's interactional style.

Since Lakoff (1973, 1975) proposed that gender-differentiated speech styles affect
attitudes, numerous studies have been undertaken to test her claims. Some
show that evaluations of male and female speech depend less on actual features
than on gender-based stereotypes (Kramer 1977, Street and Hopper 1982,
Cameron 1985). Studies do not always investigate the same features but, even
when they do, results are not necessarily consistent. For example, Kramer (1978)
and Scott (1980) examined the same features, including "dominating speech" and
"talk a lot", discovering similar perceptions about which were male and female
features, but finding contrasting attitudes towards the latter. Gender-
differentiated speech may result from different goals of male and female speakers
(Leet-Pellegrini 1980, Smith 1985) or relate to Tannen's (1990) cultural difference
model of gender differences.

Smith (1985), Carli (1990), and Ng and Bradac (1993) all stress the importance of
expectations which influence perceptions of linguistic behaviour, especially in
relation to the control of turn-taking and interruptions.   Hawkins (1991),
LaFrance (1992), and Bresnahan and Cai (1996) focussed on attitudes to
interruptions in various contexts, with differing results, especially for the role of

gender. However, in general, interruptions are considered a feature of a more
aggressive, masculine conversational style, less acceptable to female listeners and
in female speakers.   Ng and Bradac (1993) suggest that turns gained by
interruption have more influence than others because interrupters tend also to
speak faster and louder (Roger 1989), which makes listeners remember them
better.

Other studies stress the importance of the context of an interaction (Burgoon and
Miller 1985, Bradac 1990, Burgoon 1990, Ng and Bradac 1993), in which the
language is expected to suit the role of each speaker, which may include gender,
and the degree of formality entailed. While few studies have touched on the
specific context of broadcasting, Cameron (1985), Kramarae (1988), and Macdonald
(1995) have found that specific linguistic features, real or perceived, are
irrelevant in this generally male-dominated field.

There is also considerable research on discourse features of interviewers' speech.
As the letter at the head of this section illustrates, listeners complain that Mike
Hosking dominates the talking time, asks aggressive questions, and interrupts
rudely. There is research in each of these areas of discourse which provides a asis
for a study of his interactional style.

Numerous studies of mixed-sex interaction have been carried out to discover
whether men or women speak most. Contrary to folklinguistic beliefs that
women talk much more than men (Spender 1980a; Coates 1986), it has been
found that, especially in public situations, such as broadcasting, women have
often had to struggle to be allowed to speak at all (Kramarae 1982). Men tend to
dominate the talking time, especially in public contexts (Holmes 1995). So, for
example, Franken (1983) found that in mixed teams of television interviewers,
talking to male public figures, the male interviewers always spoke more than the
females.

In a slightly less formal context, Mulac (1989) accounts for his finding (and those
of others) that men talk more than women in mixed-sex dyads by reference to

power differentials and stereotypical expectations. Since more powerful people generally have the right to speak more than the less powerful, and since men have, or are expected to have, more power than women, men are generally expected to talk more and women to listen to them. Hence, whatever the reality, men often behave as if they have superior status or power. Correspondingly, Craig and Pitts (1990) found that, in Polytechnic tutorial groups, status was more important than gender: tutors, male and female, talked more often and for longer than students. However, students of male tutors were more passive overall, and the girls more passive than the boys, whereas students of female tutors were generally more and equally animated.

An important consideration in relation to radio and television interviews, is the relevance of amount of talk to control of the situation. According to Ng and Bradac (1993), those who speak most in a situation will have more control and influence, regardless of pre-existing power differences, although the number of turns is more crucial than the amount of talk. In contrast, Tannen (1993), believes that the person who speaks most is not necessarily the one in control of the situation, and she dismisses studies that simply quantify speakers' contributions to prove that men dominate interactions. She cites the example of an interrogation, but one could also view a news interview in the same light. The interviewer is expected to be in control but not necessarily to do all the talking.

Pearce (1973), Heritage (1985), and Jucker (1986) have done useful analyses of news interviews, showing how this type of interaction differs from normal conversation, especially in the nature of the question-answer sequences. They show how elicitations are often declaratives which reword an interviewee's response or state an opposing view. These are unusual in normal conversation and mostly aimed at the audience (Heritage 1985: 100), but are understood as questions by the interviewee (Pearce 1973: 159, Jucker (1986: 99, 114). Heritage (1985) and Jucker (1986) identify three main purposes in interview elicitations: firstly, accepting an interviewee's response and shifting the topic; secondly,

accepting a response but seeking further clarification; thirdly, challenging an interviewee's response as being, at best, incomplete and, at worst, evasive.

None of this research considers the role of gender, but more recent investigators (Carli 1990, Holmes 1992, Troemel-Ploetz 1992) find a tendency for women to use less aggressive methods of questioning. Holmes (1992) identifies three types of elicitations used in public contexts as "supportive", "critical" and "antagonistic", the latter involving "challenging, aggressively critical assertions whose function was to attack the speaker's position and demonstrate it as wrong". Although this type of elicitation is used the least by all participants, men use it twice as often as women (1992: 138). Troemel-Ploetz (1992: 585) agrees that this is a feature of the male style of interviewing. Holmes (1992: 141) and Troemel-Ploetz (1992: 589) suggest that the "female" style which is more supportive, offering modified criticism, may encourage more cooperative and informative responses. Carli (1990) sees this as a strategy of more value to women, who seem to be able to persuade men more effectively by being more tentative than assertive.

Ng and Bradac regard tentativeness and indirectness as signs of weakness (1993: 115-6), not necessarily associated with gender. They suggest that in a political interview, given time limits and the evasive nature of politicians, interviewers make unmitigated challenges to elicit an "explicit, quotable answer" (1993: 85), although they cite a study by Clayman (1988) which found that most interviewer turns in television news interviews, however challenging, were mitigated in some way.

Another feature of radio and TV interviewing style which regularly elicits comment from listeners is the use of disruptive interruptions. There has been a great deal of recent research in this area, often focussed on investigating whether men or women interrupt the most. Many studies report that where there are gender differences, men disruptively interrupt others more often than women do, and that, more specifically, men interrupt women more that women interrupt men (Holmes 1995: 51-2). On the other hand, Redeker and Maes (1996) found no differences in the occurrence of interruptions instigated by men and

women, although in single-sex conversations women interrupted each other less than men. Gender alone is clearly an insufficient explanation for the varying occurrences of interruptions.

There has also been some discussion of the different methods used to analyse interruptions. James and Clarke (1992) reviewed 32 studies of mixed-gender conversation and found that definitions, methods and results are generally inconsistent. Some researchers simply counted occurrences of simultaneous talk, without examining their function or effect (eg. Smith 1985, LaFrance 1992). Since simultaneous talk may be accidental or even co-operative in function, there are clearly problems with such an approach. Others, such as Coates (1989) and Ferguson (1977), took account of the semantic content of interruptions, or the success or failure of the interrupter to gain the floor, but were judged inconsistent in other aspects of their methodology. James and Clarke (1992) found no completely reliable and consistent method of identifying simultaneous talk designed to achieve dominance, and therefore dismissed all conclusions that men or women use interruptions to different extents.

Studies of British televised political interviews (Beattie 1982, Bull et al. 1992, 1993, 1996), although concentrating on the behaviour of interviewees, throw useful light on the nature of such interactions, and the importance of elicitations and interruptions, but do not consider the role of gender. Winter (1993) investigated televised political interviews in Australia and found the female style of turn-taking management to be markedly more cooperative than the adversarial male style. In New Zealand, Johnson (1996) studied turn-taking strategies, elicitations, turn length and the role of gender in television interviews conducted by one female interviewer, Maggie Barry. The results, although inconclusive, do suggest that audience attitudes towards the effectiveness and acceptability of interviews may depend largely on the nature of the elicitations used.

Method

Selected interviews

In order to investigate the relationship between interviewing style and listeners' evaluations, four interviews were selected as the focus for the analysis, two involving male interviewers, Geoff Robinson and Mike Hosking, and two female interviewers. The initial plan was to compare four *Morning Report* presenters but tapes are only available for six months after a broadcast, and only one female presenter, Eva Radich, had been employed during the six months before the analysis. Consequently, a *Checkpoint* presenter, Mary Wilson, was used for the fourth interview.[2]

In order to control as far as possible for the effect of variation in content, all four interviews involved a male politician. The four interviews analysed were:
- Geoff Robinson (GR) with Phil Goff   12/2/97
- Mike Hosking (MH) with Brian Donnelly   27/5/97
- Eva Radich (ER) with Nick Smith   17/1/97
- Mary Wilson (MW) with Rodney Hide   22/5/97

(The interviewers will henceforth be referred to as GR, ER, MH and MW). The four interviews were carefully transcribed using the Wellington Corpus transcription system (Holmes, Vine and Johnson 1998).

Listener questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed to elicit listeners' reactions to the interviews, and more specifically to discover their opinions of the interviewing styles used by different interviewers. The respondents were asked to make judgments about the interviews on a range of criteria, some relatively objective and some unavoidably subjective. The more objective features were the speed, clarity, pitch, volume, amount, and fluency of the interviewer's talk; the more subjective features involved listeners making assessments of the interviewer's

[2] Mary Wilson has also worked as a presenter on *Morning Report*, and Eva Radich has worked on both programmes. The styles of the two programmes are very similar.

supportiveness towards the interviewees, the interviewer's confidence, formality, verbosity, and objectivity, and the extent to which they kept the interviewees on track and asked appropriate questions. Lastly, the participants were asked to judge the overall effectiveness and interest of the interviews, and the relative acceptability of each interviewing style.

Responses involved circling a number on a five-point scale. For some of the items, such as "speaks too loudly/quietly" the 'ideal' was at the centre of the scale, while for others, such as "keeps interview on track", the ideal was at one end of the scale. This obliged the listeners to read each item carefully. A pilot test reduced repetitive components and the pilot tester made the encouraging comment that the interview topics were all interesting, although the topics had played no part in the selection.

Listeners

The eight evaluators of the interviews were all educated Pakeha, aged between 35 and 55; there were four male listeners and four female listeners. They all heard the interviews in the same order, alternating male and female, beginning with the longest, and with what I anticipated would be the most controversial in the third place. The last interview was the shortest.

Analysis

Amount of talk

In order to compare the amount of talk from each interviewer, I timed the overall length of each interview, from the first interviewer elicitation to the final interviewee response. The respective contributions of interviewers and interviewees within that total were also timed. I calculated the proportion of time taken up by the interviewer turns, the average length and the rate of the turns per second of the total time. I also calculated the length of the interviewee responses to see if they were affected by the various interviewing styles.

Interviewer elicitations

The interviews were then analysed to examine the nature of the elicitations used by different interviewers. Interviewers' questions were first analysed to identify their basic syntactic form i.e. whether they were interrogative or declarative in form or a combinations of these structures, for example, declaratives with tag questions. Jucker's framework (1986: 102-117) was used as the basis for this analysis.

Jucker divides questions into two main types: prefaced and non-prefaced. Prefaced questions are those in which the elicitation is preceded by a declarative or an interrogative main clause relating to a) an opinion that is being sought or something that the interviewee has already stated; b) a speech act required of the interviewee (e.g. *can you tell us...*) or performed by the interviewer (e.g. *can I ask you......*); or c) the veracity of a proposition (e.g. *would it be true to say...*). Non-prefaced questions can be interrogatives of the *yes/no* variety or others (e.g. *how, what, why* etc.); or they can be declaratives, with or without tags. Jucker also identifies small numbers of imperative or moodless questions.

The content and tone of the elicitations were analysed in terms identified by Holmes (1992: 138-40), to see if interviewers' utterances could be interpreted as supportive, critical or antagonistic towards the interviewees.

Interruptions

Taking account of James and Clarke's (1992) criticisms of previous research, I adopted the sophisticated and elaborate framework developed by Roger, Bull and Smith (1988) for analysing interruptions. This system provides a means of distinguishing interruption, defined as the deliberate disruption of normal turn-taking, from other types of simultaneous talk (see Coates 1991, 1996). Using it, I examined the extent to which the interviewers interrupted the interviewees, or allowed themselves to be interrupted. The system is complex, but it provided for all the relevant patterns in the data.

Strict turn-taking is a distinguishing feature of news interviews (Heritage and Greatbatch 1991: 97-8). An interview with just one interviewee provides a clear example of the basic pattern of interaction on which Sacks et al (1974) based their one-at-a-time rule. The interviewer asks the questions and the interviewee responds. At any given moment it is usually clear who has the floor, i.e. whose turn it is to speak and who has the right to complete an utterance

It is important in such analysis to clearly distinguish between accidentally overlapping speech and deliberate disruptive interruption (see Stubbe 1991, James and Clarke 1993). For the purposes of this project the term "overlap" is used for simultaneous speech which occurs when a speaker starts an utterance before the other has finished. The second speaker anticipates that the other speaker is about to finish, but is over-eager to come in, not intentionally cutting the first speaker short and not usually interfering with their expression of meaning. With a disruptive interruption, the first speaker has not finished and is not about to finish speaking, although the second speaker begins talking in a deliberate attempt to gain the floor. The attempt may be successful or not, and may involve more than one utterance in the attempt. Sometimes a second speaker takes advantage of a slight pause made by the first to make a quick interruption before returning the floor. Roger et al. (1988) call this an "interjection". In any given situation, the interactional significance of simultaneous talk is open to interpretation, and must take into account all the variables present.

Results

Perceptions
The results of the survey of opinions about the speaking styles of the four interviewers show considerable agreement about many of the features. Table 1 shows, therefore, only the extent to which opinions deviated from what might be considered a neutral position or the ideal for a particular feature.

TABLE 1   NUMBERS OF VOTES INDICATING A DIVERGENCE OF INTERVIEWERS' STYLE FROM THE NEUTRAL OR IDEAL

Left label	Feature / No.	Left-of-centre bars	Right-of-centre bars	Right label
Too slow	SPEED 1(a)		GR; ER; MH; MW	Too fast
Less than clear	CLARITY 2(b)	GR; ER; MH	GR; ER; MH; MW	Very clear
Too low	PITCH 3(a)		GR; ER; MH; MW	Too high
Too soft	VOLUME 4(a)		MH	Too loud
Too little	AMOUNT OF TALK 5(a)	GR; ER; MW	GR; MH	Too much
Very hesitant	FLUENCY 6(b)	GR; MW	GR; ER; MH; MW	Very fluent
Unsupportive	SUPPORT FOR INTER-VIEWEE 7(b)	ER; MH	GR; ER; MW	Supportive
Too tentative	CONFIDENCE 8(a)	GR; MW	GR; ER; MH	Too confident
Too casual	FORMALITY 9(a)	MH	GR	Too formal
Too concise	VERBOSITY 10(a)	GR; MH; MW	MH	Too verbose

(a) indicates that the central position in the Table is considered the ideal.
(b) indicates that the central position in the Table represents a neutral opinion.

For most of the specific items, 1-15, the ideal position was in the centre (specifically 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 15). For example, item 1 asked for a reaction to the speed with which the interviewers spoke. The left hand side of the table shows that no-one thought that any of the four spoke too slowly, while the bars to the right show the number of indications that they spoke faster than the participants considered ideal. The judgment about the extent to which interviewers deviated from the 'ideal' was, of course entirely subjective.

For the remaining items (ie, 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14) the central position could be considered neutral. In item 7, for example, bars to left of the centre in Table 1 indicate the number of perceptions that the interviewers were too unsupportive, while those to the right indicate perceptions of oversupportiveness. Categories 1 and 2 at one end, and 3 and 4 at the other have been collapsed for ease of analysis.

Table 1 indicates where listeners perceived a particularly large number of "deviations" from the ideal. These were especially noticeable for MH who was thought to speak too fast, too casually, too rudely and to be unsupportive of the interviewee by seven participants. Six listeners thought that he was overconfident and his responses too negative. Even when his negative score was relatively low, for speaking unclearly, at too high a pitch, too loudly, and for talking too much, his score was more negative than that of any other interviewer. On the other hand, more participants thought MH spoke clearly than unclearly, and he was considered the most fluent, and the most successful at keeping the interview on track. His interview was perceived as the most effective and the most interesting, and he received no negative perceptions for these two items. However, opinions were fairly evenly divided about how acceptable his interviewing style was.

The next highest number of negative reactions was to MW, although they were never as extreme as those to MH. Five participants thought that she did not speak enough, and was over-supportive of the interviewee. Other areas where she received more negative reactions than any others were in not keeping the interview on track, being over-polite, too concise, too supportive and not asking

appropriate questions, although opinions were fairly evenly divided on the latter item. MW was considered a very clear and fluent speaker and half the participants thought her objective. Half the participants found her interview not very effective and rather boring, and most were neutral about the acceptability of her interviewing style.

GR produced the most conflicting results since he was rated by different listeners as talking both too little and too much, and as lacking confidence and being overconfident. One person thought that his responses were too negative, but two found them too positive. He was rated by some as the least fluent and the least confident, and as erring on the side of politeness. On the other hand, half the participants considered him fluent, and for most of them he spoke in an ideal manner with regard to speed, clarity, pitch, formality, verbosity and appropriateness of questions and responses. The majority perceived his interview as interesting and acceptable in style, if not so effective as those of ER and MH.

ER received the least number of negative reactions, and in seven of the items none at all. The most negative perception was that she spoke too quickly (three respondents). Her interviewing style was considered the most acceptable and she was a close second to MH in effectiveness, though slightly less interesting than GR and MH.

The item which elicited the most disagreement among the participants was objectivity. Each of the interviewers was considered very objective by some listeners and very involved by different listeners.

Amount of talk

Information on the results of the analysis of the amount of talk is provided in Table 2. The lengths of the interviews ranged from 2'49" to 6', those of the male interviewers being noticeably longer than those of the females. The amount of speaking time occupied by the interviewers ranged from 7% (female - MW) to 24.5% (male - MH), but one of the females (ER) spoke for a greater proportion of

the time than one of the males (GR). Three of the interviewers asked almost exactly the same number of questions, while one of the males (MH) took about three times as many turns, not all of which, however, were fresh elicitations.

Table 2
Amount of talk by radio interviewers

Interviewer	Length of interview	Proportion of speaking time	Number of turns	Range of length of turns	Average length of turns	Rate per second of turns
GR	6'	16.0%	7	1" - 23.3"	8.3"	1:51
MH	5'3"	24.5%	21	0.5" - 11.9"	3.5"	1:14
ER	2' 49"	19.0%	6	1.9" - 7.3"	5.4"	1:28
MW	3' 48"	7.0%	6	2.2" - 3.2"	2.6"	1:38

The length of the interviewers' turns ranged from 0.5" (MH) to 23.3" (GR), the males having the widest range, as Table 3 indicates. The average length of the turns matched the pattern of the proportions of speaking time described above, i.e. a female lowest (MW - 2.6%) and a male highest (GR - 8.3%) although one of the females (ER) spent more time on questions than one of the males (MH). The responses which they elicited ranged widely from a mere intake of breath (to MH), to over a minute of speech (to GR), i.e. the male interviewers provoked the

Table 3
Length of interviewer's turns

Interviewer	Range of length of responses	Average length of responses
GR	8.3" - 71.2"	43"
MH	0 - 26.2"	10.9"
ER	17.4 - 30.6"	22.8"
MW	21.2" - 62.4"	34.8"

most extreme responses. The rate of turn-taking was also more extreme for the males, from one turn per 51" (GR) to one per 14" (MH), while the female rates were similar to each other, and about mid-way between the males.

Elicitations

Even with the apparently exhaustive categories of syntactic forms suggested by Jucker (1986: 103), it was not easy to classify all the interviewers' utterances. To some extent, classification problems reflected the fact that interviewers' utterances were often designed to add background information as well as to elicit a response from the interviewee. See Table 4.

Table 4
Questions by syntactic type

Interviewr	Prefaced			Non-prefaced				Total
				Interrogatives		Declaratives		
	a	b	c	Y/N	wh...	-tag[3]	+tag	
GR	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	7
MH	0	0	0	4	7	10 (2)	1	22
ER	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
MW	0	0	0	1[4]	2	1	2	6
Totals	4	1	3	7	10	13	3[5]	41
% of total	9.8	2.4	7.3	17.1	24.4	31.7	7.3	100
Jucker's %[6]	19.6	5.5	2.1	20.9	19.1	24.7	5.5	

The most conspicuous results were that two interviewers (MH and MW) used no prefaced questions, although Jucker found that over a quarter of questions in the interviews he studied were of this nature. In fact, overall there was little

---

[3] Numbers in brackets indicate declaratives in syntactic form with interrogative intonation.

[4] Actually an either/or question.

[5] All tags are of the sort that Holmes (1992: 140) calls "challenging".

[6] Jucker's percentages do not add up to 100% as he also found a few (2.6%) imperative or moodless 'questions', of which there are no examples in this project (1986: 103).

similarity between Jucker's findings and the results reported here (see Discussion below).

Table 5

Types of elicitation

Interviewer	Supportive	Critical	Antagonistic	Totals
GR	3	4	0	7
MH	1	10	10	21
ER	2	4	0	6
MW	3	3	0	6
Totals	9	21	10	40
% of total	22.5	52.5	25	100

Table 5 provides an analysis of the interviewers' elicitations into Holmes' three categories (1992), "supportive", "critical" and "antagonistic", on the basis of their content and the tone of voice in which they were uttered. The elicitations of three of the interviewers were fairly evenly divided between "supportive" and "critical", with ER leaning slightly towards the "critical", and using no "antagonistic" questions. On the other hand, interviewing Brian Donnelly (BD), MH's elicitations are evenly divided between "critical" and "antagonistic", with only one that could be interpreted as "supportive". This analysis was based largely on MH's tone of voice rather than the wording of his utterances, although insistent repetition, and a tendency to prevent his interviewee from responding at times contributed to the impression of aggressive criticism. In example 1, MH raises the pitch of his voice, adding to the stress on particular words.

Example 1   (See end of volume for transcription conventions)
MH: but the suggestion in this piece is you've got parents here +
          you've got parents no skills no qualifications no experience NOTHING +
          just in front of a CLASSroom

In example 2, MH adopts a rather sceptical tone, turning to mock incredulity and finally to what sounds like exasperation.

Example 2
MH: so you've talked to her about this
BD: well I just- I just listened to that report
MH: you're not in touch with her?
BD: I had no I haven't /been in touch with her\ on this particular issue no
MH: /shouldn't you be?\
BD: pardon?
MH: shouldn't /you be?\
BD: /well in fact\ I only heard about this particular issue + late last night
MH: [louder, more slowly] why are we telling you this? why don't you know as Associate Education Minister?

Interruptions

There were no examples of simultaneous speech in one of the interviews by a female presenter (MW), and there was only one in the other, an overlap, instigated not by the interviewer but by the interviewee.

In GR's interview there were two obvious overlaps, one made by each party. GR interrupted once, and there was one instance where the interviewee tried unsuccessfully to interrupt. One of GR's utterances could be interpreted as an "interjection".

By contrast, MH's interview was conspicuous for the amount of simultaneous speech. Simultaneous speech occurred in twelve utterances and was initiated equally by MH and the interviewee, Brian Donnelly (BD). Trying to categorise the instances of simultaneous speech proved problematical. The instances initiated by MH comprise four overlaps and two interruptions, while those initiated by BD are more complex. They include five instances of overlap, two of which follow other instances of simultaneous speech or vocalisation within the same utterance of MH. On the first occasion (see example 3 below), BD has just been interrupted and appears to be reacting to the interruption or trying to regain the floor, which he succeeds in doing eventually.

Example 3

BD: er + w- we do ++ there- there is um an allowance there

MH: well   clearly not enough or else Kaeo /wouldn't\=

BD: /[drawls]: mm\

MH: =/have to advertise\ for two years to find a /teacher\

BD: /[laughs] \   /yeah\ I mean there are
          allowances...

Example 4 illustrates unsuccessful interruptions followed by an overlap.

Example 4

MH: well when you say the anecdotal evidence it's called the ERO +
          and it's Judith Aitken who doesn't say things she doesn't mean and she
          said would you accept=

BD: well

MH: =surgeons who didn't know what they're doing would you jump on a
          plane with a /pilot\=

BD: /ah   yes\

MH: =that didn't know /how to fly it answer's NO BRIAN\

BD: /a- ah Ju- did Judith Aitken actually...\

The sixth instance of simultaneous talk initiated by the BD, see example 5 below,
provides a problem for the system provided by Roger et al. (1988). BD tries to add
an example to the discussion, but his contribution is barely audible and in no way
disrupts MH, who completely ignores it.

Example 5

MH: but there are two points eh people understand that you've got your music
          teacher /you can't hire your music so\ + you get somebody in and that's=

BD: /or your your Japanese teacher yes yeah\

MH: =fine people understand that and that's what the whole scheme was set up
          for...

There are two examples of interjection. In example 6 below, BD draws breath but
is interrupted before he has a chance to say anything, while in example 7 he
manages one word before MH insists on adding something to his previous
utterance. BD regains the floor by overlapping.

Example 6

MH: how do you get the teacher though + to Kaeo?

BD: [intake]

MH: just 'cause they graduate doesn't mean they want to go there

 Example 7

MH: ...they're nothing more than babysitters they're people filling a space

BD: well

MH: they're /not teachers\

BD: /at this particular stage\ I haven't got evidence to- to support that

The results of the analysis of simultaneous speech are obviously open to complex
interpretation. They are discussed further in the next section.

Discussion

Perceptions

The results described in the previous section make it clear that the interviewing
style of just one of the interviewers, Mike Hosking, is quite distinctive. In terms
of measures of amount of talk, the nature of his elicitations and the number of
interruptions, he differs markedly from the other three presenters. He occupies
an exceptionally high proportion of speaking time, he utters a large number of
quick fire questions, almost all of a critical or antagonistic nature. MH is the only
one to raise his voice to any extent, and he interrupts much more than the
others.

It is not surprising, then, to find that MH is perceived by listeners to be over-
confident, unsupportive, negative in his responses, and less than polite. On the

other hand, at least at first sight, it does seem surprising that he is perceived as producing the most effective and interesting interview. One possible explanation is that interest is aroused by something controversial: listeners are most interested in something dramatic, especially if it makes them laugh, even if, on reflection half of them find the interviewing style unacceptable.

GR scored highly for acceptability of style and interest, but not so highly for effectiveness. This may be related to perceptions of his lack of fluency and tentativeness, although one participant commented that he liked the manner in which GR was "thinking on his feet" rather than just asking pre-planned questions. GR has himself said that he believes that tough questions can be asked without being aggressive.

The apparently contradictory evaluations of objectivity for all four interviewers, presumably reflect different ideas about what the terms "very involved" and "very objective" mean, and about how such attributes are manifested. There was not scope within this project to explore such differences.

Amount of talk

The overall lengths of the interviews were distinctly different. Those conducted by the male interviewers were approximately twice as long as those of the female interviewers. The range of length of speaking terms was also gender-linked but not so straight-forwardly. MH produced the shortest turn and GR the longest. Overall, MH used three times the number of turns that GR did, but they were about one third of the length. Moreover, the length of some of GR's turns can be attributed to the amount of hesitation, which was noticed by some of the participants in the perceptions survey. So, though the male interviewers talked more than the females, the nature of their utterances, and their manner of delivery were, and were perceived to be, different from each other in many aspects.

These findings are consistent with a great deal of evidence in the literature on language and gender that men tend to dominate the talking time, especially in

more formal contexts (see Holmes 1995). For example, Franken (1983) notes this pattern for male interviewers on television and Holmes (1992) reports the same pattern in formal, public seminars.

Focussing on language and power, Ng and Bradac found that those who speak more, and have more turns, have more influence in an interaction, but that the number of turns is more important than the amount of talk (1993: 77). This might explain why MH was perceived as more interesting and effective than GR. MH had three times as many turns, although his interview was a minute shorter than GR's. Support for this interpretation is also provided by the positive evaluation of ER, who had the same number of turns as MW, but in an interview one minute shorter, ER's turns were about twice as long as MW's. ER was perceived by listeners as considerably more effective and interesting than MW.

Elicitations

In terms of the syntactic types of elicitations used by the interviewers, GR and ER were similar in using a range of elicitation types, whereas MW and MH were similar in using no prefaced questions. MH particularly favoured declaratives: half of his large number of elicitations were short sharp statements which were declarative in form. The three tag questions in the data (used by MH) were challenging rather than facilitative or epistemic in function (cf Holmes 1995).

Examining the content and tone of questions proved interesting. Jucker (1986) divided his elicitations into three groups. 75.8% of questions indicated "acceptance of interviewee's response, and lack of insistence and aggression", 19.3% were "challenges, trying to show up implications or intentions of interviewee", and only 4.9% accepted the responses while "seeking further information" (1986: 126-131). These percentages are very similar to those found by Holmes (1992), who also considered the gender distribution of the different types of elicitations. She found that the proportions of supportive and critical elicitations were similar for male and female questioners, but that males used twice as many antagonistic elicitations as females (1992: 140).

The percentages found in this project resemble neither Jucker's nor Holmes' findings. Three of the interviewers, GR, ER and MW asked similar types of questions, and used no antagonistic elicitations at all. MH by contrast used equal numbers of critical and antagonistic elicitations, and only one which was supportive. While it might be expected that these figures differ from Holmes' figures for public seminars, owing to the different context, the way in which the New Zealand interviewers behave differently from the British interviewers studied by Jucker is open to interpretation. Perhaps there is a cultural explanation. (Although GR was born in Britain, he has been in New Zealand about thirty years.)

Since GR, ER and MW asked very similar types of questions, it is possible that GR is out of line in not resembling the other male interviewer, but behaving more like the females. On the other hand, perhaps the norm for New Zealand interviewers is one where gender plays little or no part, and this norm is adequately represented by the three interviewers: i.e. it is MH who is out of line. The investigation into listener perceptions of the interviewers, discussed above, clearly supports the latter proposition. So does the analysis of interruptions.

Interruptions
The results discussed in the previous section demonstrated that there was very little simultaneous speech in the interviews conducted by GR and ER, and none in MW's interview. The female interviewers always allowed the interviewees to finish their responses before putting the next question. This style of interview is not necessarily perceived as the most effective, as shown above.

It is only in the all-male interviews that there are examples of interaction which could be interpreted in terms of a power struggle. Such examples are limited in GR's interview. The small amount of simultaneous speech needs to be seen alongside the high number of instances of "latching", where one speaker takes up from the other very promptly. Hence many overlaps can be interpreted as slightly over-eager moves to take the floor. Moreover, the overall tone of GR's

interview is cooperative. PG is allowed to assert the correctness of his stand in response to GR's critical questions and is allowed to have, on average, longer turns than all the other interviewees, notably four times as long as those of MH's interviewee.

MH's interview is quite different from the others in the amount of simultaneous interruptive speech, and there is more evidence of attempts to dominate the interaction. Although MH might seem to be doing a lot of interrupting, there are in fact only six instances where MH is responsible for simultaneous speech. Five of these could be interpreted as overlaps which occur due to mistake assessments by MH about when BD had reached the end of his turn. Nevertheless, they can equally be interpreted as interruptions.

The semantic content of MH's utterances also supports their interpretation as "dominance-related interruptions" (cf James and Clarke 1992: 90). MH persistently disagrees with BD, and in blunt terms. In the context of a news interview, and compared to the other three interviews analysed, MH sounds argumentative. The overall effect is that MH appears to dominate the interview, interrupting but not allowing BD to respond when he wants to. MH's impatient, persistent manner seems to increase the interviewee's hesitation and inarticulateness. BD's apparent inability to supply satisfactory answers to some of the questions has a damaging effect on BD's credibility, but supplies some drama and humour to the interview. It certainly made most of the survey participants laugh at the climax of the interview where MH slows down and raises his voice (see end of example 2).

In assessing the proportion of overlaps in radio interviews relevance and time constraints have to be taken into account. Interviews on *Morning Report* and *Checkpoint* have to be kept concise given the pressure of other news items, and set times for particular items. Interviewers must keep interviewees on track and be as concise as possible. The shortest of silences on radio sounds very long, and efficient interviewers will do their best to anticipate accurately the ends of interviewee turns in order to avoid over-long pauses. In Britain, Beattie found

that "interruptions are very common in political interviews" (1982: 104), but this style of interviewing does not seem to be the norm for National Radio. Perhaps this is a sign of less pressure or of greater skill. Certainly GR, ER and MW all manage to keep their interviews moving with very few overlaps, and without appearing rude.

Finally, it must be recognised that listeners had ambivalent responses to MH's aggressive style of interviewing. On the one hand they considered it rude, but on the other they considered his interview interesting and effective. Hawkins found that "interrupters are rated as significantly less appropriate in their communication behaviour" and "are also perceived to be less generally attractive" than the people they interrupt (1991: 197-8). Together with the high proportion of antagonistic elicitations, this behaviour may account for the assessments of MH's style as less acceptable than that of others. Holmes (1992) points out, however, that effective challenges can attract admiration. This may account for the fact that the majority of survey participants considered MH's interview the most interesting and the most effective, even though half of them did not find his style acceptable.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated the contrasting styles of four New Zealand National Radio interviewers. Listeners' evaluations of four interviews indicated that the least acceptable interviewing style was characterised by the most talk by the interviewer, a high proportion of antagonistic elicitations, and a large amount of simultaneous talk. However, the relevant interview, conducted by Mike Hosking, was also judged to be the most interesting and effective. Some possible reasons for this apparent inconsistency have been explored in the paper.

The key to the differences between the interviewing style of MH and the others seems to lie in a combination of the specific features of amount of talk, elicitations and interruptions which lead to perceptions that in his role of interviewer MH is too negative, too casual, and too rude. These perceptions are

supported by numerous listeners who have put their complaints in writing, in Letters to the Editor, and in many newspaper articles.

Although this was a very small scale survey, to a large extent it supports the general impression of opinions regarding National Radio interviewing styles created by comments in the print media over several years. A close analysis shows how individual linguistic variables combine to form an overall picture. It is clear from the difficulties involved in this analysis that all such variables have to be assessed in the context in which they are found. One has to take into account the people involved, their individual roles and responsibilities, and the reasons for their conversation, as well as their personalities and the expectations of the listening audience. Context is just as crucial in assessing the effectiveness of language on the radio as anywhere else.

****

References

Beattie, Geoffrey W. 1982. Turn-taking and interruption in political interviews: Margaret Thatcher and Jim Callaghan compared and contrasted. *Semiotica* 39: 93-114.

Beattie, Geoffrey W. 1989a. Interruptions in political interviews: A reply to Bull and Mayer. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 8, 327-339.

Beattie, Geoffrey W. 1989b. Interruptions in political interviews: the debate ends? *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 8: 345-348.

Bradac, James J. 1990. Language attitudes and impression formation. In Howard Giles and W. P. Robinson (eds) *Handbook of Language and Social Psychology*. Chichester: Wiley. 387-412.

Bresnahan, Mary D. and Deborah H. Cai 1996. Gender and aggression in the recognition of interruption. *Discourse Processes* 21: 171-189.

Bull, Peter E. 1994. Identifying questions, replies and non-replies in political interviews. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 13: 115-131.

Bull, Peter E. and K. Mayer 1988. Interruptions in political interviews: A study of Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 7: 35-45.

Bull, Peter E. and K. Mayer 1993. How not to answer questions in political interviews. *Political Psychology* 14: 651-666.

Bull, Peter E., J. Elliott, D. Palmer, and L. Walker 1996. Why politicians are three-faced: the face model of political interviews. *British Journal of Social Psychology* 35: 267-284.

Burgoon, M. 1990. Language and social influence. In Howard Giles and W. Peter Robinson (eds) *Handbook of Language and Social Psychology*. Chichester: Wiley. 51-72.

Burgoon, M. and G. R. Miller 1985. An expectancy interpretation of language and persuasion. In Howard Giles and R. N. St. Clair (eds) *Recent Advances in Language, Communication, and Social Psychology*. London: Erlbaum. 199-229.

Cameron, Deborah 1985. *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Carli, Linda L. 1990. Gender, language, and influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 59: 941-951.

Clayman, Stephen E. 1988. Displaying neutrality in television news interviews. *Social Problems* 35: 474-492.

Coates, Jennifer 1986. *Women, Men and Language*. London and New York: Longman.

Coates, Jennifer 1989. Gossip revisited: language in all-female groups. In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds) *Women in their Speech Communities*. London and New York: Longman. 94-122.

Coates, Jennifer 1996. *Women Talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Craig, D. and M. K. Pitts 1990. The dynamics of dominance in tutorial discussions. *Linguistics* 28: 125-138.

Crawford, Mary 1995. *Talking Difference: On Gender and Language*. London: Sage.

Ferguson, Nicola 1977. Simultaneous speech, interruptions and dominance. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 16: 295-302.

Franken, Margaret 1983. *Interviewers' strategies: how questions are modified*. Unpublished terms paper. Wellington: Victoria University.

Hawkins, Katherine 1991. Some consequences of deep interruption in task-oriented communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 10: 185-204.

Heritage, John 1985. In Teun van Dijk, (ed) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* Vol. 3. London: Academic Press. 95-117.

Holmes, Janet 1992. Women's talk in public contexts. *Discourse and Society* 3, 2: 131-150.

Holmes, Janet 1995. *Women, Men and Politeness*. London: Longman.

Holmes, Janet, Bernadette Vine and Gary Johnson 1998. *Guide to the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English*. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.

James, Deborah and Janice Drakich 1993. Understanding gender differences in amount of talk. In Deborah Tannen (ed) *Gender and Conversational Interaction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 281-312.

James, Deborah and Sandra Clarke 1992. Interruptions, gender and power: a critical review of the literature. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz and Birch Moonwomon (eds) *Locating Power. Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference*, Vol. 1. Berkeley: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California. 286-299.

Johnson, Gary 1996. The management of interaction in the television interviews of Maggie Barry. *Wellington Working Papers in Linguistics* 8: 25-53.

Jucker, Andreas H. 1986. *News Interviews: A Pragmalinguistic Analysis*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Kramarae, Cheris 1982. Gender: how she speaks. In Ellen B. Ryan and Howard Giles (eds) *Attitudes towards Language Variation*. London: Edward Arnold. 84-98.

Kramarae, Cheris 1988. Censorship of women's voices on radio. In Alexander D. Todd and Sue Fisher (eds) *Gender and Discourse: The Power of Talk*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex. 243-254.

Kramer, Cheris 1977. Perceptions of female and male speech. *Language and Speech* 20: 151-161.

Kramer, Cheris 1978. Women's and men's ratings of their own and ideal speech. *Communication Quarterly* 26: 2-11.

LaFrance, Marianne 1992. Gender and Interruptions: individual infraction or violation of the social order? *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 16, 497-512.

Lakoff, Robin 1973. Language and woman's place. *Language in Society* 2: 45-80.

Lakoff, Robin 1975. *Language and Woman's Place.* New York: Harper and Row.

Leet-Pellegrini, Helena M. 1980. Conversational dominance as a function of gender and expertise. In Howard Giles, W. Peter Robinson and Phillip M. Smith (eds) *Language: Social Psychological Perspectives.* Oxford: Pergamon. 97-132.

Macdonald, Myra 1995. *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media.* London: Arnold.

Mulac, Anthony M. 1989. Men's and women's talk in same-gender and mixed-gender dyads: power or polemic? *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 8: 249-270.

Mulac, Anthony M. and T. L. Lundell 1980. Differences in perceptions created by syntactic-semantic productions of male and female speakers. *Communication Monographs* 47: 111-118.

Ng, Sik Hung and James J. Bradac 1993. *Power in Language.* Newbury Park: Sage.

Pearce, Robert D. 1973. *The Structure of Discourse in Broadcast Interviews.* Birmingham: Faculty of Arts, University of Birmingham.

Redeker, G. and A. Maes 1996. Gender differences in interruptions. In Dan I. Slobin, J. Gerhardt, A. Kyratzis and J. Guo (eds) *Social Interaction, Social Context, and Language.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Roger, Derek, Peter Bull and S. Smith 1988. The development of a comprehensive system for classifying interruptions. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 7, 27-34.

Scott, Kathryn P. 1980. Perceptions of communication competence: what's good for the goose is not good for the gander. In Cheris Kramarae (ed) *The Voices and Words of Women and Men.* Oxford: Pergamon. 199--208.

Smith, F. L. 1985. *Perspectives on Radio and Television.* New York: Harper & Row.

Smith, Phillip 1985. *Language, the Sexes and Society.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Spender, Dale 1980a. *Man Made Language.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Street, Richard L. and Robert Hopper 1982. A model of speech style evaluation. In Ellen B. Ryan and Howard Giles (eds) *Attitudes towards Language Variation.* London: Edward Arnold. 175-188.

Tannen, Deborah 1990. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation.* New York: William Morrow, Ballantine.

Tannen, Deborah 1993. *Gender and Conversational Interaction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Troemel-Ploetz, Senta 1992. The construction of conversational equality by women. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz and Birch Moonwomon (eds) *Locating Power. Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference,* Vol. 2. Berkeley: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California. 581-589.

Winter, Joanne 1993. Gender and the political interview in an Australian context. *Journal of Pragmatics* 20, 117-139.

Zimmerman, Don H. and Candace West 1975. Sex roles, interruptions and silences. In Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley (eds) *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House. 105-129.

Interpreting social variation using stylistic continua:

the strange case of relativiser choice[1]

Robert Sigley

Abstract

The social distribution of relativiser choice is analysed in conversational data drawn from the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English (WSC). Findings largely support expectations from the wider textual distribution of the variants in NZ speech and writing: the main variables show few significant differences by age or ethnicity, while higher education predictably favours more 'explicit' variants, especially the prescribed *who* rather than personal *that*. However, Pakeha females unexpectedly use less of the prescribed restrictive personal subject relativiser *who*, and more of the stigmatised form *that*, than Pakeha males. In seeking an explanation for this pattern, the comparability of the data for each demographic cell is evaluated using a general formality index: and indeed, some significant differences are found. On average, Pakeha females produce less 'formal' data than Pakeha males, and younger speakers produce less 'formal' data than older speakers. Such findings have important implications for interpreting observed patterns of social variation in corpus data, and constitute a powerful argument for including stylistic continua in further studies of social variation.

****

Introduction

This paper has two main aims. Firstly, it describes variation in restrictive finite adnominal relativiser choice in three common linguistic environments, in conversational data representing New Zealand English, according to demographic characteristics of the speaker.[2] Secondly, it applies a continuous measure of 'formality' to assess whether the data representing different sets of speakers is really comparable.

This investigation forms part of a larger-scale study of the linguistic, textual and social factors influencing relativiser choice (Sigley 1997c), using a database of approximately 15000 finite relative clauses extracted from 1.6 million words of written and spoken New Zealand English. The overall project analysed the entire million-word Wellington Corpus of Written New Zealand English (henceforth WWC; see Bauer 1993), and a selection of texts collected for the recently-completed Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English (henceforth WSC; see Holmes 1995a, 1996a) and the New Zealand section of the International Corpus of English (ICE-NZ). The present paper focusses on variation within a 310,000-word sample of casual conversation (from WSC category DPC) among peer and family groups, mostly recorded in participants' homes. The speakers were classified by age, gender, ethnicity, and education, using biographical information collected for WSC. Factor effects were modelled in selected environments of variation using GoldVarb 2.0 for the Macintosh.

Additionally, as a means of checking data comparability, a general formality index score was derived from principal components analysis of 29 high-frequency wordform-based counts (Sigley 1997a). A separate score was calculated for each text, and also (within conversation) for the speech of each individual sampled. The highest positive contributions to this index come from counts having inexplicit reference or form (1st/2nd-person pronouns; 3rd-person pronouns; *it*; *do*; generic nouns; 'core' verbs; contractions) or otherwise

associated with involvement (emphatics; interaction markers such as feedback or agreement). The highest negative contributions come from counts with specific reference or increased syntactic or morphological complexity (nominalisations; *by,* marking passives and instrumentals; *of,* marking genitives and partitives; *in*; *the,* indirectly measuring complex noun phrases). The nett effect is that increasingly negative scores indicate increasing formality; and increasingly positive scores indicate increasing informality.

The second section summarises the textual distribution of the linguistic variants, and uses this to make predictions about the social distribution, which are then tested in the third section, presenting the observed social distribution. The fourth section assesses the comparability of the data from different social categories. The implications of these results for interpreting apparent variation in speech data are discussed in the final section.

Linguistic variables

This paper concerns the variable use of *wh*-pronouns, the particle *that,* and Ø (nothing) to mark finite relative clauses attached to a noun phrase, as in (1)-(4).

(1) the dog had bitten a man **who** went to stroke its head (WWC G29 119)

(2) we have been given a production **that** permits of criticism without embarrassment (WWC G45 098)

(3) Look, you've got something Ø they need (WWC L17 224)

(4) this was not something **that** Bolger or his advisers could sensibly risk (WWC G55 154)

The social distribution of these variants has not yet been widely studied, partly because of the immense quantity of raw data needed to obtain conclusive results, but also because most existing studies of spoken usage (eg Quirk 1957, Cofer 1975) have had very limited social representation. Prideaux and Baker (1986: 124) indirectly consider the possibility of class differences in the use of Ø as an object relativiser, by showing that this variable is used in one novel to distinguish the 'voices' of characters from different class backgrounds. Following from that

study, Adamson (1992: 128) attempts a variable-rule analysis of restrictive Ø-relativisation including social class, and reports a significantly higher use of Ø by his working-class informants — though he does not limit his model to object relatives, and so fails to control for several near-categorical environments which themselves show a skewed social distribution. Finally, Ball (1996) compares results from previous social dialect studies and linguistic atlas projects, and confirms a general tendency for personal subject relative choice to be influenced by class or education, with *who* especially preferred by educated middle-class speakers of American English.

As Ball points out, it is not meaningful merely to count total occurrences of each of these relativisers. Firstly, different environments allow different alternations (Table 1): for example, 'nonrestrictive' clauses, and objects of fronted prepositions, require (almost) categorical use of *wh*-pronouns.[3] Secondly, these environments show a skewed distribution across texts: for example, in formal writings subject relatives are four times as frequent as direct object relatives, but in conversation these have roughly equal frequencies (Sigley 1997b: 223).

Thirdly, different prescriptions are applied to different environments, and so not all of these alternations have equivalent social meaning. Three main prescriptions concern us here:

(i)   *that* shouldn't be used with personal antecedents (originally suggested by Lowth 1762: 134, and still current, eg. Dupré 1995: 224);

(ii)   *which* shouldn't be used with restrictive clauses (eg Fowler 1926: 635, Dupré 1995: 67). This prescription has widespread support in the USA, but is largely ignored in Britain, where *which* is favoured in formal writings;

(iii) Ø shouldn't be used in formal writing (Lowth 1762: 137n). This is now a minority position (but still supported by a few guides, eg. Dupré 1995: 433).

---

[3] The actual distinction encoded here is more complex than set-theoretic 'restrictiveness'. Ø and *that* can and do occur in relative clauses that do not delimit a proper subset of reference, but which are relevant to the discourse for other reasons (Sigley 1997c: 123-134).

Table 1

Grammatical description of relativisation

in standard varieties of English (after Quirk *et al* 1985: 366)

Clause function	Restrictive		Nonrestrictive	
Position of 'gap':	personal antecedent	Impersonal antecedent	personal antecedent	Impersonal antecedent
Subject	*who* *that*	*That* *Which*	*who*	
Object of verb or stranded preposition	*Ø* *that* *whom*	*Ø* *That* *Which*	*whom*	*Which*
Object of fronted preposition	*whom*	*Which*		
Genitive	*whose*	*Whose* *of which*	*whose*	*whose* *of which*
Prepositionless adverbial	*Ø, that* *where, when, why...*		*where, when, why...*	

For these reasons, attention is here focussed on three environments of variation:

- restrictive personal subject relatives (*who/that*), as in (1);

- restrictive impersonal subject relatives (*which/that*), as in (2);

- restrictive objects of verbs or stranded prepositions (Ø/overt), eg. (3), (4).

Separate variable-rule models were constructed for each of these binary contrasts.[4] These models contained a wide range of linguistic factors, which will not be discussed in detail in this paper, but which include the following significant influences (over the full dataset):

- effects from **text formality**: more 'formal' texts favour more 'explicit' variants, i.e. personal subject *who* and impersonal subject *which*;

- other effects from **text category**, including a preference for *that* in speech;

- **proximity of the antecedent to the relative clause** favours impersonal subject *that* and object Ø;

- **'strong' quantifiers** (universals, negatives, and superlatives) strongly favour subject *that* and object Ø;

- relative clauses with **pronominal subjects** greatly favour Ø;

- **high antecedent semantic weight** (common nouns or proper nouns) favours subject *wh*-pronouns (and especially, personal subject *who*);

- object Ø is favoured by a **following unstressed syllable** (even where this is not a pronominal subject. Preceding stress has comparatively little effect);

- **longer relative clauses** favour *wh*-pronouns (but this effect is negligible in conversational data, where longer clauses may be marked by intonation).

When comparing raw percentages of object relative choice, it is particularly useful to separate examples with pronominal subjects, as in (3), from examples with nonpronominal subjects, as in (4): this is one of the most significant linguistic factors influencing the choice between Ø and *that*, and is also the most

important confound when comparing texts of different formality levels. (Object relatives with nonpronominal subjects are especially rare in conversation; in the third section, figures are accordingly limited to cases with pronominal subjects.)

Social factor groups

In addition to the linguistic and textual factor groups mentioned above, variable-rule models constructed for the conversational data contained four factor groups describing the speakers, using biographical information from the WSC database.

Age

Speakers were initially separated into 4 age groups: 'young' (16-29); 'middle' (30-49); 'older' (50-69) and 'retired' (over 70). However, the 'retired' group was represented by comparatively few speakers, and produced insufficient data for separate analysis, so was combined with the 'older' category for variable-rule analysis. (NB: the WSC biographical information questionnaire elicited speaker age only to within 5 years, so more detailed age categories than this cannot be used.)

Education (or class)

Although social class is obviously relevant for any variable subject to prescription (such as relativiser choice), it is recognised that in New Zealand "the division is arbitrary [...] social class divisions are by no means clear-cut [...], and the concept must be used with caution" (Holmes 1995b: 132). In the present study, educational status was used by default as a broad indicator of social class, correlating both with class aspirations and (more recently) directly with personal or parental income.

Using WSC questionnaire responses about participants' "highest level of education achieved", a coarse tripartite division was adopted, between 'secondary

---

4 My data contained a few instances of subject Ø (all in presentative constructions such as existentials), which were excluded from the variable-rule models for subject relatives.

or lower', 'some university education', and a group of 'vocationally-oriented' trade certificates or professional qualifications. Unfortunately, it proved difficult to interpret these responses. Firstly, ongoing university students did not consistently refer to that status in answering this question. Where this information was not explicitly provided, but the occupation was given as 'student', I compared responses about age group, and age at leaving secondary school, to infer participants' levels of education: but even so, there was insufficient information to allow a decision for 19 participants sampled.

Secondly, the 'vocational certificates' may have been gained in addition to (other) tertiary qualifications (and again, this may not have been systematically mentioned in answers). In fact, the 37 speakers in this 'vocational' group include 18 with teaching certificates of various kinds, as well as librarians, nurses, accountants and managers, so that the group is quite solidly middle-class, and also heavily biased towards occupations with a high public profile (further favouring standard usage).

Thirdly, some interaction may be expected between the factors of education and age. On the one hand, education differences among the youngest age group are not always meaningful: some speakers are high school students, who may or may not have plans to continue their education. (Even to the extent that education reflects social class, this division may be less relevant for the linguistic behaviour of the youngest age group: Chambers (1995: 47) suggests that speakers' "styles of life, linguistic or otherwise" are "still developing" even up to the age of 30 years.) This also means that "nontertiary" members of this group are slightly younger on average than other "young" speakers. On the other hand, higher education has become increasingly important as a means of gaining employment, so that the average school leaving age has risen over the course of this century; hence the same education categories do not constitute groups of equivalent social value for different age groups.

Gender

The categories of gender (here based simply on biological sex, and encoded as a binary division between females and males) and ethnicity (based on participants'

self-identification, and encoded as a binary division between Pakeha and Maori) are much more easily applied, but also far harder to interpret. As Eckert (1989) and many others note, the biological category of sex is only indirectly related to the relevant social construct of gender which determines linguistic behaviour, although a strict separation of these two dichotomies "cannot be maintained" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 463f). Moreover, the definition of 'gender' may differ considerably in different communities; thus Labov (1990: 242) suggests relevant gender categories can only emerge through cross-classifying biological sex by "a wide variety of social factors". In particular, past studies of variation in New Zealand English have often shown strong interactions between gender and ethnicity. For example, a social dialect survey of Porirua City (Holmes, Bell and Boyce 1991) found that both the discourse particle *eh*, and the syntactic variable of *have*-deletion, were more frequent in the speech of males among Maori, but in females among Pakeha. Thus the gender*ethnicity crossproduct was modelled from the outset wherever possible.

Ethnicity

The relationship between (genetic) race and (social) ethnic identity is equally indirect; thus, to the extent that 'Maori English' is identifiable as a distinct variety (cf Benton 1991, Robertson 1994, Holmes 1997a), Pakeha "whose social network ties are predominantly Maori, or who have positive attitudes towards Maori people, may use [Maori English] as a signal of solidarity" (Robertson 1994: 19f). Ethnicity labels resulting from self-identification data are almost certainly weighted by genetic as well as cultural considerations, and so may not be quite as accurate a predictor of linguistic behaviour as would a more detailed characterisation of the speaker's social network ties (more directly reflecting cultural affiliations). Such a "Maori integration index", based on kinship, neighbourhood, employment, friendships, and attendance on marae, was developed by Boyce (1992: 142-160) to describe the Maori informants in the Porirua investigation (Holmes, Bell and Boyce 1991). Boyce's index was subsequently adapted by Robertson (1994: 160-175) to describe a sample of 30 Wellington bus drivers. However, Robertson found almost total separation of

Maori and Pakeha ethnic groups by index scores; consequently, the simplification inherent in use of self-identification labels for ethnicity seems justifiable.

Overall composition of conversational sample

The Conversation texts were collected between 1989-1994, using the social networks of staff and students of the Linguistics Department of Victoria University. As a result, there is some unavoidable bias in the distribution of speakers across these categories. The majority of Linguistics students are young Pakeha females attending university: consequently, most speakers are in this category, and representation falls with increasing difference from that group. Maori males are particularly poorly represented. When selecting conversation texts for analysis, I corrected for this as far as possible by including all available transcribed texts representing groups other than young or middle-aged Pakeha, while limiting all cells to below 30,000 words. Nevertheless, the bias present in the corpus is still evident in the final sample, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Demographic breakdown of conversation sample

Age	Ethnicity	Pakeha		Maori		
	Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	
	Education					
Young (16-29)	Secondary or lower	17596 16	26800 30	4348 4	2021 3	words samples[5]
	University	29459 41	24688 37	10057 13	6489 6	words samples
	Vocational	776 3	1171 1	1394 1	1193 1	words samples
Middle (30-49)	Secondary or lower	15526 19	10338 13	6529 6	2490 3	words samples
	University	28291 32	12666 15	3630 2	2266 2	words samples
	Vocational	7722 10	5643 5	2238 2	1765 2	words samples
Older (50-69)	Secondary or lower	11009 9	2747 5	3294 12	1668 4	words samples
	University	10438 10	7203 9	556 1	3946 3	words samples
	Vocational	8167 8		4709 3	3505 3	words samples
Retired (70+)	Secondary or lower	7911 8	1136 2	345 3		words samples
	University	883 2	2488 3			words samples
	Vocational	3080 2				words samples

---

[5] A "speech sample" is speech from one individual in one text. All conversation texts involve more than one speaker, and some individuals appear in more than one text. Thus (for example) nontertiary-educated young Maori females are represented in this sample by at most 4 different individuals in at most 4 conversation texts.

The 144 conversation texts analysed comprise 311,251 words of running speech. However, morphosyntactic variables tend to be much rarer than phonetic variables, so that even this large quantity of data produced only 1818 tokens. From these, variable-rule models were ultimately constructed for 304 restrictive personal subjects; 211 restrictive impersonal subjects; and 654 restrictive objects — with only 1 or 2 tokens per speaker on average for each environment.[6]

Predictions based on textual variation in relativiser choice

Variation by text formality and channel

One way to determine how variants are evaluated (or, the extent to which the prescriptions listed above are actually followed) is to plot variant choice as a function of text formality. Table 3 presents this variation in terms of selected text categories representing the full range of formality in the NZ corpora; this data is plotted in Figure 1.

This data indicates overwhelming support for the prescribed personal subject *who* (at over 97% of all potential occurrences in writing); but the other prescriptions appear to be ignored, if not actively rejected. Ø is the default object relativiser in writing; and, as in Britain, *which* is favoured in more formal writings. In general, it can be seen that the most 'formal' genres favour *wh-*pronouns, whereas the most 'informal' genres favour Ø or *that*.

For restrictive objects, formality is less important than channel: writing greatly favours Ø, while dialogues tend to favour *that*. This difference can be attributed to channel-specific processing differences, eg. a speaker's licensing of 'planning pauses' by signalling incomplete turns as in (5), as opposed to a reader's (or writer's) ability to look back at the text.

(5)   yes but they were the type of paintings **that** + um you could- could have actually painted yourself (WSC DPC025 07:10)

---

[6] All models excluded clefts, clauses of ambiguous function, clauses with *wh*-quantified antecedents, and clauses permitting the relativiser *as*. Cited figures also exclude speakers for whom relevant biographical information is missing.

Table 3

Restrictive relativiser choice in selected text categories

(data from Sigley 1997b)

Text category (in order of decreasing formality)	Mean formality index score	Personal subject *that* (opposed to *who*)	Impersonal subject *that* (opposed to *which*)	impersonal object Ø (pronominal RC subject)	Impersonal object Ø (other RC subject)
Official	-13.8	0.0%/ 69	42.7%/ 150	91.7%/ 24	38.1%/ 21
Academic	-11.9	0.7%/ 139	43.2%/ 454	83.5%/ 103	41.3%/ 63
Reportage	-7.6	0.8%/ 123	42.7%/ 157	86.0%/ 43	65.9%/ 41
Fiction	+1.9	3.9%/ 231	72.0%/ 329	89.0%/ 365	56.5%/ 92
Social letters	+3.9	4.0%/ 25	67.5%/ 40	73.5%/ 68	83.3%/ 6
Lectures	+5.7	4.2%/ 24	70.8%/ 89	32.7%/ 55	16.7%/ 12
Interview	+8.8	16.9%/ 71	80.9%/ 68	41.7%/ 60	17.6%/ 17
Talkback	+12.6	32.7%/ 49	86.1%/ 36	45.7%/ 46	40.0%/ 5
Conversation	+18.6	38.0%/ 316	88.3%/ 214	60.8%/ 423	18.5%/ 27

Figure 1

Relativiser choice in selected text categories
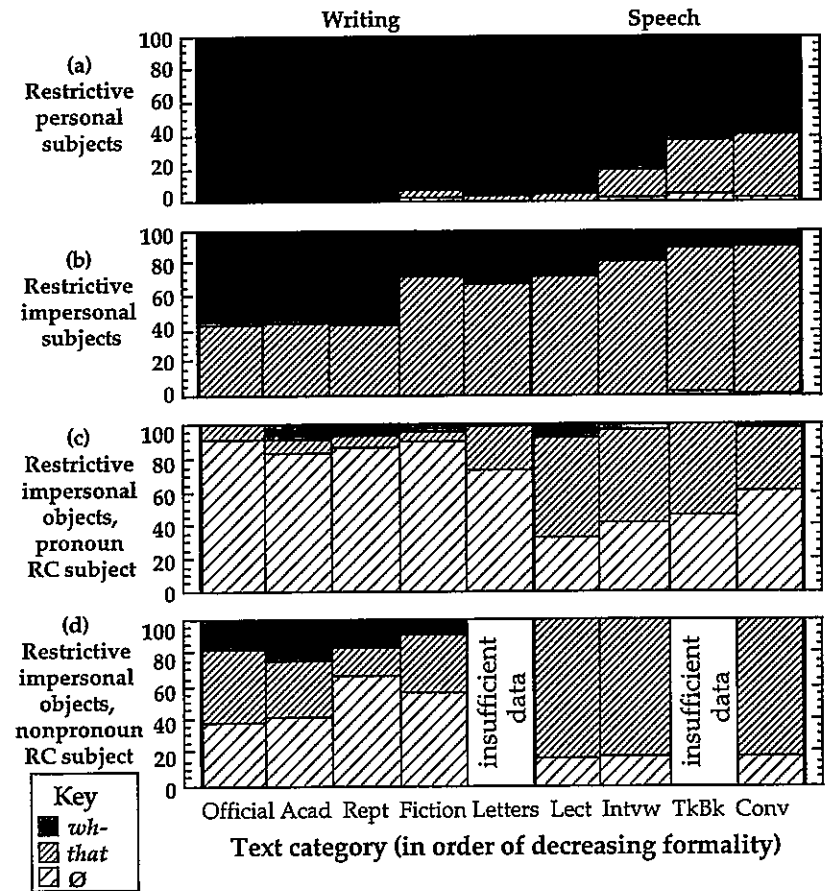
Predictions about social distribution of relativiser choice

The textual distribution shown in Figure 1 indicates that *wh*-pronouns are treated as prestige forms. In particular, the prescribed personal subject relativiser *who* is clearly preferred to *that*, and can easily be interpreted as a socially valued

standard variant. Impersonal *which* is also associated with more formal texts, but less strongly than *who*, and so its status appears more ambivalent. Finally, the alternation between *that* and Ø in object relativisation shows no consistent association with formality, and so we should not expect any strong differences in social evaluation (or, consequently, demographic patterns of use) for this environment. (And indeed, in variable-rule models of just the conversational data, formality is the most significant influence on personal subject relativiser choice, but it makes no significant contribution to the other models.) Accordingly, we expect personal subject *who* to show social patterns consistent with a 'prestige' variant; but we should not expect strong social variation for impersonal subject *which*, and even less so for object Ø.

Stable variables are characterised by the following social distributions:

- **Class:** Members of higher social classes generally use more prestige variants than members of lower social classes (though more socially ambitious groups may use higher frequencies than expected from external indicators of class alone). This trend should also emerge for 'amount of education', to the extent that this is associated with class; additionally, the 'vocational' group (having occupations such as teaching or nursing, in which there is particular pressure to conform to middle-class behaviours) may be expected to show even higher use of 'prestige' forms.

- **Gender:** Stable 'prestige' variants are generally used more by females than males of the same social class (though such gender differences may be ethnicity- or class-specific).

- **Age:** Even if there is no change in progress, some differentiation by age is predictable from differences in activity and interests at different life stages. As a function of their more 'public' lifestyle, the middle age group should show higher use of 'prestige' variants than either the youngest speakers (still not fully integrated into the 'linguistic marketplace', so that prestige forms are less relevant) or the oldest speakers (either retired or else senior enough not to need to use superficial signals of status).

Specifically, then, we expect that personal subject *who* (and possibly, impersonal subject *which*) will be used less by the 'nontertiary' group, and more by the 'university' and 'vocational' groups; used more by middle-aged speakers; and used more by females than by males overall. Conversely, personal subject *that* should be favoured by the 'nontertiary' educational group; by younger speakers; and by males.

Results

Overall factor effects

Education

The model contributions from education are presented in Tables 4 and 5, and the raw percentages are plotted in Figure 2. As predicted, education makes a significant contribution to models for personal subjects (p=0.003), and (more marginally) impersonal subjects (p=0.040), but is not selected as significant for object relativisers (p=0.252). The factor weights reported in Table 4 are also entirely consistent with the predictions of the previous section: the relativiser *that* is least favoured by the 'vocational' group (factor weights = 0.312 and 0.144 for personal and impersonal subjects respectively), and most favoured by the 'nontertiary' group (weight = 0.612 in both environments).

Notably, my finding that education (or class) does not affect frequency of object Ø goes against all previous research and received wisdom about this variant. Possible reasons for this include, firstly, the fact that 'class' in New Zealand is a more fluid concept, and generally not as salient a social variable as in Britain or the USA; secondly, my use of casual conversation (in which minimal influence from prescription is expected) rather than interview data; and thirdly, use of a more comprehensive set of linguistic controls.

Table 4

Restrictive subject *that* by speaker education

Speaker education	Restrictive personal subject *that*			Restrictive impersonal subject *that*		
	% *that*	Total	Varbrul weight[7]	% *that*	Total	Varbrul weight
Nontertiary	45.9%	45/98	.612	90.0%	45/50	.612
University	33.6%	45/134	.499	91.2%	114/125	.568
Vocational	32.1%	18/56	.312	78.1%	25/32	.144
Total	37.5%	108/288	p=0.003	88.9%	184/207	P=0.040

Table 5

Restrictive object Ø by speaker education

Speaker education	% Ø	% *that*	% *w h*	Total	Varbrul weight
Nontertiary	128 (55.9%)	98 (42.8%)	3 (1.3%)	229	.481
University	188 (58.9%)	129 (40.4%)	2 (0.6%)	319	.535
Vocational	46 (56.1%)	31 (37.8%)	5 (6.1%)	82	.417
Total	362 (57.5%)	258 (41.0%)	10 (1.6%)	630	P=0.252

[7] Varbrul weights cited in this paper come from models containing all coded factor groups. Weights above 0.5 indicate that the modelled variant is favoured; below 0.5, disfavoured.

Figure 2

Restrictive relativisers by speaker education

Key
■ *wh-*
▨ *that*
▨ *Ø*

(a) Personal subjects (b) Impersonal subjects (c) Objects of verbs & prepositions

Cumulative percentage of relativisers

nont uni voc EDUCATION   nont uni voc EDUCATION   nont uni voc EDUCATION

(nont = nontertiary; uni = university; voc = vocational)
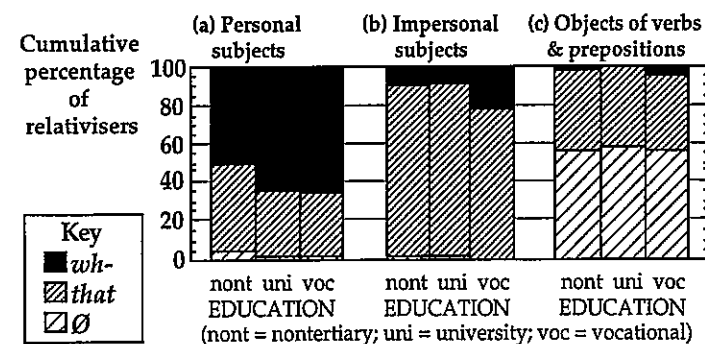
Gender and ethnicity

Variation in subject relativiser choice by gender and ethnicity provides some surprising results (Table 6). Against prediction, Pakeha females use significantly more (stigmatised) personal *that* than any other group (45%; weight=0.652), while Pakeha males use *that* least (28%, weight=0.249). Meanwhile, there is no appreciable gender difference within Maori, and no overall ethnicity effect.

For impersonal subjects, Maori females show apparently categorical choice of *that*, so the ethnicity*gender crossproduct could not be included in that model; instead, ethnicity and gender were introduced separately. Again, the results are unexpected, as females use more impersonal subject *that* than males: but this trend is of marginal significance (it is not selected in the step-up best-fit model, though neither is it rejected from the step-down model). The ethnicity difference (Maori favour *that*, while Pakeha favour *which*) is similarly marginal (p=0.054).

In object relatives (Table 7), Pakeha males favour object Ø (68%, weight=0.621), while Maori males use Ø least (45%, weight=0.342); meanwhile, there is no appreciable ethnicity difference among the female speakers. Equivalently, there is evidence of a gender difference amongst Pakeha but not Maori, though the overall significance of these effects is not high (p=0.015).

Table 6

Restrictive subject *that*, by speaker ethnicity x gender

Ethnicity x gender	Restrictive personal subject *that*			Restrictive impersonal subject *that*		
	% *that*	Total	Varbrul weight	% *that*	Total	Varbrul weights
Maori females	35.2%	19/54	0.436	100%	26/26	Maori=0.923
Maori males	36.8%	14/38	0.439	83.3%	10/12	Pakeha=0.371
Pakeha females	45.0%	67/149	0.652	89.4%	101/113	Female=0.653
Pakeha males	28.1%	18/64	0.249	82.3%	51/62	Male=0.233
Total	38.7%	118/305	p=0.001	89.1%	188/213	

If overt subordinators function to signal a turn continuation and avoid interruption, Pakeha males' higher use of Ø could result from their status as a comparatively powerful group in New Zealand society (less likely to lose their turn as a result of interruption, so without as great a need for strategies that avoid interruption). However, note that Pakeha females favour *that* more than Pakeha males in all three environments. To the extent that both subject *wh*-pronouns and object Ø are more characteristic of written language, while *that* is

characteristic of speech, Pakeha females appear to be consistently using a variant appropriate to conversation, while Pakeha males are using variants more indicative of selfconscious production — which does not fit well with a simple power-based explanation. One further possibility is that, if Pakeha males are less comfortable in this setting, their interlocutors may be more supportive, so that (again) nonconstructive interruptions are less likely, favouring Ø.

Table 7

Restrictive object Ø, by speaker ethnicity x gender

| Ethnicity x gender	Ø (%)	*that* (%)	*wh* (%)	Total	Varbrul weight
Maori females	42 (52.5%)	38 (47.5%)	0 (0.0%)	80	0.426
Maori males	23 (45.1%)	25 (49.0%)	3 (5.9%)	51	0.342
Pakeha females	174 (53.2%)	149 (45.6%)	4 (1.2%)	327	0.470
Pakeha males	132 (67.7%)	60 (30.8%)	3 (1.5%)	195	0.621
Total	371 (56.8%)	272 (41.7%)	10 (1.5%)	653	p=0.015

Age

Differences by age group are small (Tables 8, 9). Age is only selected as a significant influence on personal subjects (p=0.001), and as expected for a stable marker variable, the stigmatised form *that* is least favoured by the middle age group (34%, weight=0.362). A disproportionately high factor weight (0.767) is assigned to the older age group, suggesting that there has also been some change

towards standardisation on *who*:[8] but differences in raw percentages are negligible (G^2(2df)=1.593, p=0.452). There is also some evidence of ongoing loss of subject Ø — which would be consistent with age-grading apparent in Shnukal's (1981) figures for rural New South Wales — but this trend is based on too few tokens to be conclusive. (Both trends could instead reflect an uncontrolled confound between age and 'rural/urban background', resulting from the continued urbanisation of New Zealand's population.) Otherwise, variation in relativiser choice appears overwhelmingly stable (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Restrictive relativisers by speaker ethnicity and gender
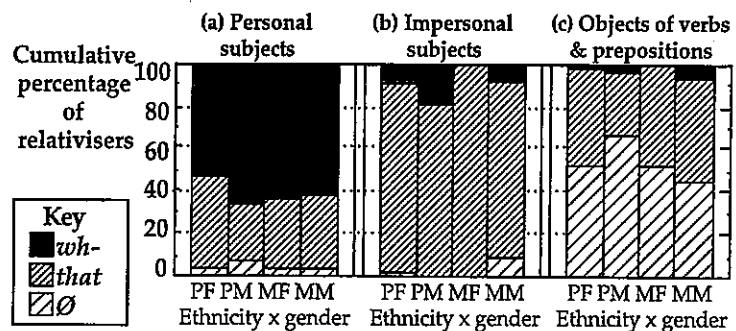
Table 8

Restrictive subject *that*, by speaker age

Speaker age	Restrictive personal subject *that*			Restrictive impersonal subject *that*		
	% *that*	Total	Varbrul weight	% *that*	Total	Varbrul weight
16-29	38.7%	48/124	.407	91.1%	72/79	.361
30-49	34.4%	33/96	.362	91.3%	73/80	.850
50+	43.5%	37/85	.767	82.7%	43/52	.142
Total	38.7%	118/305	p=0.001	89.1%	188/211	n/s

Table 9

Restrictive object Ø, by speaker age

Speaker age	% Ø	% *that*	% *wh*	Total	Varbrul weight for Ø
16-29	60%	38%	2%	264	.491
30-49	53%	46%	1%	231	.489
50+	57%	42%	1%	158	.531
Total	57%	42%	2%	653	p=0.797

Figure 4

Restrictive relativisers by speaker age
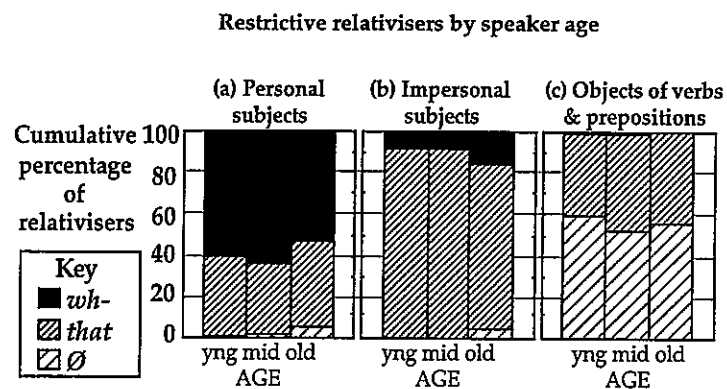
Predictions for education and age are thus largely supported; but the apparent gender effects among Pakeha are unexpected, and require further explanation.

Fuller demographic crosstabulations

One concern arising at this point is that these overall demographic factor effects may be of limited generality. The models constructed assume that these influences operate independently — which is extremely questionable (eg Labov 1990: 221). Accordingly, the variable-rule analysis will now be supplemented with a full demographic breakdown of relativiser choice (with data for object relativisation limited to examples with pronominal subjects as an additional control). The complete crosstabulation is shown in Table 10. However, it is immediately obvious that many cells provide insufficient data for comparison. The worst of the noise has been removed in Figure 5 by ignoring cells represented by fewer than 10 tokens — but the comparisons possible are consequently very limited.

For personal subjects, the most important interaction effect is a tendency for *that* to be especially favoured by older Pakeha females (24/41, or 58.5% overall). This is the largest contribution to the overall tendencies for older speakers, and Pakeha females, to favour *that*; (though Pakeha females nevertheless use more

that than Pakeha males in all three age groups). The 'stable' age-grading pattern emerges for Pakeha males (25.0%; 20.0%; 36.4% *that* for young, middle, and older age groups respectively), and Maori males (58.3%; 11.1%; 33.3% *that*); — but Pakeha females show a monotonic increase in *that* with increasing age (33.9%; 43.6%; 58.5%), more consistent with change in progress, while Maori females show the reverse tendency (60.0%; 25%; 22.2%). These distributions may be generalised as an interaction whereby *that* is favoured by younger Maori, and by older Pakeha. Meanwhile, for education, *that* is favoured by the nontertiary group (and disfavoured by the vocational group) in all subsets represented by sufficient data, though the differences are most marked for older Pakeha females.
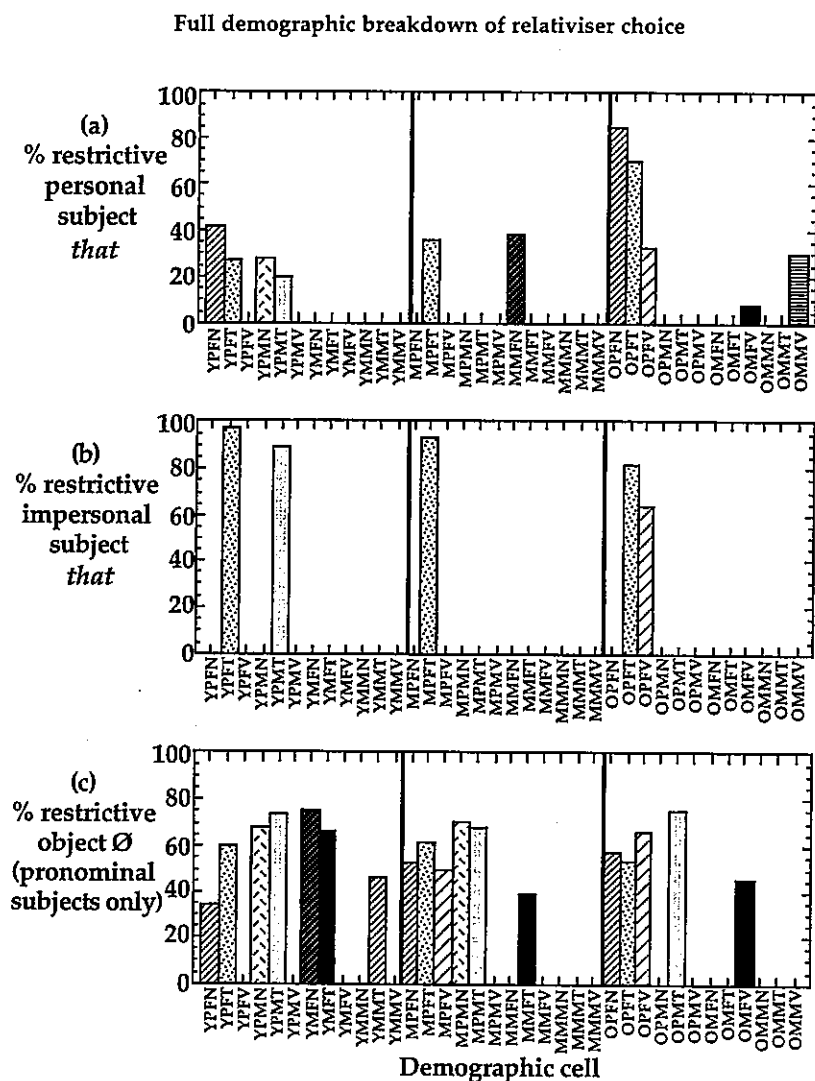
For impersonal subjects, the plot serves as a reminder that the overall figures are based primarily on Pakeha females; and even for this subset, the small numbers of tokens representing each cell ensure that there are no differences that cannot be attributed to chance. Finally, object relativisation shows a consistent tendency for Pakeha males to favour Ø more than Pakeha females (as seen in the overall figures from the third section), and a slight tendency for increasing education to favour Ø amongst Pakeha females (but not in other subsets).

Table 10

Full demographic breakdown of relativiser choice

Demographic cell		Restrictive personal subject *that* (total excludes Ø)		Restrictive impersonal subject *that* (total excludes Ø)		Restrictive object Ø (pronominal subjects only)	
		that/Total	%	*that*/Total	%	Ø/Total	%
Young Pakeha females	Nontertiary	8/19	42	7/7	-	10/29	34
	university	10/36	28	29/30	97	35/58	60
	Vocational	1/1	-	0/0	-	1/2	-
Young Pakeha males	Nontertiary	6/21	29	6/9	-	30/44	68
	university	3/15	20	16/18	89	41/55	75
	Vocational	0/0	-	0/1	-	2/2	-
Young Maori females	Nontertiary	4/8	-	4/4	-	12/16	75
	university	5/7	-	7/7	-	10/15	67
	Vocational	0/0	-	0/0	-	1/1	-
Young Maori males	Nontertiary	1/1	-	2/2	-	1/2	-
	university	5/9	-	0/0	-	6/13	46
	Vocational	1/2	-	0/0	-	1/3	-
Middle-aged Pakeha females	Nontertiary	4/6	-	6/7	-	20/38	53
	university	9/25	36	26/28	93	34/54	63
	Vocational	4/8	-	8/8	-	10/20	50
Middle-aged Pakeha males	Nontertiary	1/3	-	4/4	-	12/17	71
	university	0/8	-	7/9	-	18/25	68
	Vocational	2/4	-	7/9	-	7/9	-
Middle-aged	Nontertiary	5/13	38	4/4	-	3/8	-
Maori females	university	0/6	-	8/8	-	5/13	38
	Vocational	0/1	-	0/0	-	0/1	-
Middle-aged Maori males	Nontertiary	0/4	-	1/1	-	0/1	-
	university	1/5	-	1/1	-	2/5	-
	Vocational	0/0	-	0/0	-	0/2	-
Older Pakeha females	Nontertiary	11/13	85	8/9	89	24/42	57
	university	7/10	70	9/11	82	14/26	54
	Vocational	6/18	33	7/11	64	10/15	67
Older Pakeha males	Nontertiary	1/2	-	1/1	-	5/5	-
	university	3/9	-	6/7	-	15/20	75
	Vocational	0/0	-	0/0	-	0/0	-
Older Maori females	Nontertiary	3/6	-	0/0	-	2/2	-
	university	0/0	-	1/1	-	0/1	-
	Vocational	1/12	8	2/2	-	5/11	45
Older Maori males	Nontertiary	1/2	-	2/2	-	4/4	-
	university	1/3	-	4/5	-	3/7	-
	Vocational	3/10	30	0/0	-	5/9	-

Figure 5

Full demographic breakdown of relativiser choice

(a)
% restrictive personal subject *that*

(b)
% restrictive impersonal subject *that*

(c)
% restrictive object Ø (pronominal subjects only)

Demographic cell

NB: percentages for cells represented by fewer than 10 tokens are unreliable, so are not plotted.

Assessing comparability of demographic group data

The second section established the importance of formality in determining the choice between *that* and *wh*-pronouns. However, the perceived formality of a superficially similar situation (and thus the linguistic response) could vary with participants' group membership.

A specific example of this problem, found repeatedly in past research into New Zealand English, is that males (and particularly, young Pakeha males) seem to find a 'casual conversation' as the sole purpose of a meeting (ie, in the absence of any other reason for gathering, such as a planned activity or game) an extremely marked event. This corresponds with more general observations that "Boys' friendships tend to be based on joint activity, while girls' friendships are based on talk" (Coates 1993: 158). For example, the Porirua survey reported considerable success in eliciting conversational styles in interviews — with the notable exception of "a young Pakeha male whose consistently monosyllabic answers defeated all our interviewer's best efforts" (Holmes, Bell and Boyce 1991: 43; cf also Britain 1992: 92). Similarly, Hay (1995: 42ff), investigating gender variation in use of humour in casual conversation from WSC and other sources, finds evidence that conversation among a group of 4 friends was "less comfortable, or perhaps just more unusual, for the single sex male groups than for the other groups". The [young Pakeha] males in Hay's study "are generally more conscious of the tape-recorder" (1995: 42), make frequent explicit reference to it, and treat the conversation as a task they have to complete, with a fixed goal of providing a certain amount of data, whereas "the mixed and female groups [...] are merely enjoying themselves and chatting normally" (1995: 45). Hay (1995: 187) concludes that

> the most natural settings and environments for groups of males may be quite different from those most natural for many females. There seems no obvious solution to this problem. Either the naturalness of the conversation in the male groups, or comparable settings must be sacrificed.

Secondly, it is impossible in practice to control every relevant situational factor when collecting casual conversation, as the very effort of controlling the situation may create an unnatural event: hence the actual situation sampled might not be the same for all social groups represented in the corpus.

Given these considerations, it is important to check that all social groups defined in this study are in fact returning comparable results. This may be done by comparing the distribution of groups' scores on multivariate textual dimensions such as my formality index (a practice which offers at least a *post hoc* solution to Hay's dilemma). Figure 6 shows the mean formality index scores for each demographic cell in the conversational sample. Mean scores for WSC text categories DGB (Talkback radio), DPF (Telephone conversation) and DPH (Oral history) are also included for reference.

Figure 6

Mean formality scores for demographic cells
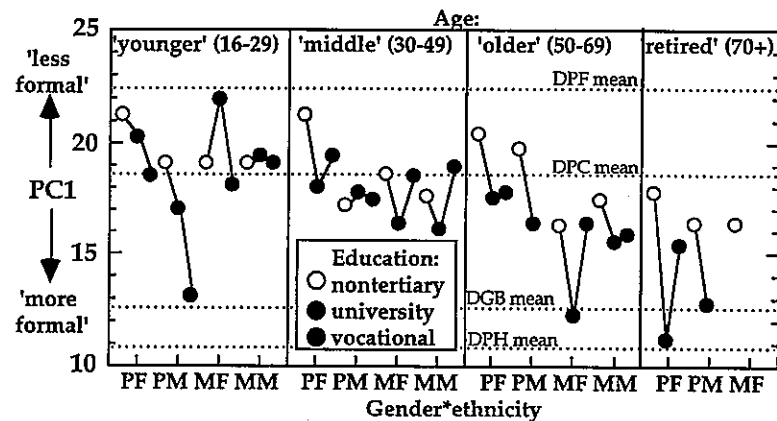
Figure 6 shows no consistent strong difference between education groups in terms of 'formality' as defined here (Kruskal-Wallis H (41 cells, 2df) = 3.60,

---

p=0.165).[9] 'Nontertiary' groups are least formal in 9/14 of the possible matched comparisons (sign test p=0.057);[10] while the other two categories display an interaction with age, with the 'vocational' group being most formal among younger speakers, and the 'university' group among older speakers. This is probably because the 'university' group largely corresponds to current university students among younger speakers, but to professionals with completed university qualifications in other age groups.

Nonparametric comparisons of ethnicity and gender by formality indicate no significant overall effects either for ethnicity alone (sign test p=0.238) or for gender alone (sign test p=0.167). However, there are significant differences between Pakeha females and all other gender*ethnicity groups (sign test p-values against Pakeha males = 0.022; against Maori females = 0.022; and against Maori males = 0.039): in general, the Pakeha females in these samples display more 'informal' speech than any of the other three groups. Thus there is a significant gender difference in 'formality' for Pakeha, but not for Maori. This supports my initial decision to treat ethnicity and gender as a crossproduct rather than as two independent factors in this study.

The Pakeha gender difference is extremely consistent (showing up in 9 of the 10 possible matched-cell comparisons) but its cause is not clear. It may be relevant that Pakeha females make up the majority of the data collectors; but it is not usually possible to identify collectors where they appear as anonymous participants in a conversation, so direct effects from this difference in status cannot be successfully tested. Alternatively, it could be that, because most speakers sampled belong to this demographic group, speakers in this group are statistically more likely to be interacting with interlocutors of the same group (though an initial comparison of texts by an index of 'average similarity of

---

[9] To correct for the uneven distribution of speakers across cells, I have taken the highly conservative step of using the cell as the unit of variation for comparing mean formality scores of speaker groups. Thus significance tests are based on the overall distribution of cell mean scores.

[10] The sign test is a nonparametric equivalent of a repeated-measures t-test, used when comparing two sets of data on matched individuals (here, matched cells). In this specific case it is preferable to Mann-Whitney U, because it allows fully controlled comparisons: eg. gender comparisons are controlled for the effects of age, education and ethnicity.

speakers' produced no significant or consistent formality trends). Regardless, the tendency for Pakeha males to produce more 'formal' data than Pakeha females fits with previous research findings of reticence among (young) Pakeha males. The unexpected gender distribution of personal subject *that* is easily seen as a symptom of this mismatch: Pakeha females use more of the stigmatised form *that* as part of a consistently more informal style overall, while Pakeha males use variants more characteristic of writing than of casual speech, indicating some discomfort with the situation.

Most strikingly, Figure 6 indicates a consistent trend for older speakers to produce more 'formal' speech than younger speakers. The differences between age groups are statistically significant (Kruskal-Wallis H (41 cells, 3df)=13.62, p=0.004; sign test p=0.009 over minimal age comparisons). This may result from slight differences in the typical situation in which these groups were recorded. Even though all these interactions can be broadly classed as casual conversation, and despite the fact that most conversations were recorded in the participants' own homes, several differences arise from the way texts were collected using the social networks of members of the university community.

The youngest speakers recorded are typically university students or their friends; their interlocutors are typically close friends and flatmates (ie, members of the peer group). Older speakers, by contrast, are more likely to be the parents or grandparents of university students, and so are typically recorded in conversation with other adult family members of younger generations. While both situations involve a considerable level of shared information between participants, the nature of that information is perhaps more relevant to the participants' everyday life in the 'peer-group' setting than in the 'family' setting. The conversations representing tertiary-educated Pakeha speakers in the two oldest age groups show an even more marked difference, with a more monologic structure closely approximating the category 'Oral History' (DPH).[11]

---

[11] Some of these texts were subsequently reclassified as Oral History in the final version of WSC.

Alternatively, age groups could possibly differ in **how** they mark (in)formality. My formality index is heavily biased towards lexical markers. Hence the observed difference in index scores could arise if, for example, the older speakers used more syntactic, and fewer lexical, markers of informality. (This might explain their higher use of subject $\emptyset$.) It is not immediately obvious why a difference of this nature might exist; but if older individuals are less often in regular contact with their peer group, that could militate against their use of 'in-group' lexis.

The high Varbrul weight given to older speakers results directly from this confound with formality: older speakers provide more formal speech, but more formal speech typically has a lower rate of personal *that*, so it is anomalous for older speakers to show a **higher** use of *that*. (However, as seen in the third section, this anomaly is actually limited to older Pakeha females, and even there, does not affect speakers in the 'vocational' category.)

Implications for interpreting demographic variation

The comparisons conducted in the fourth section identify two significant 'formality' differences among the demographic subsets of the conversational data in WSC, which, taken together, provide a convincing basis for the unexpected significant gender and age differences in the distribution of (stigmatised) personal subject *that*: on average, Pakeha females provide significantly less 'formal' data than Pakeha males; and younger speakers produce less 'formal' data than older speakers.

These differences are not very large (all of the texts are still recognisable as informal conversations). However, they are extremely consistent, being repeated across a large number of minimal cell contrasts. Additionally, it is possible for small formality differences to produce large frequency variation in stigmatised or prescribed variants (whose distribution may be extremely sensitive to formality). Thus it is important that such differences be identified and accounted for when

attempting to explain linguistic variation. These findings have serious implications for how we should investigate and interpret results, both for other studies based on WSC (according to the specific differences identified here), and more generally for any studies of variation based on corpora or social dialect interviews (as a result of the real possibility that demographic cells are not strictly comparable).

Other studies of social variation in the WSC data

The formality index used here, with its bias towards lexical explicitness, was expressly designed as a potential explanatory dimension for relativiser choice across both writing and speech. As such, it is possibly less reliable for explaining the social distribution of phonological variables. Nevertheless, several studies based on subsets of the WSC conversational data have shown unexpected behaviour by young middle-class Pakeha females which seems consistent with the formality differences identified here. For example, among young middle-class Pakeha, women appear to lead change towards intervocalic /t/-voicing (Holmes 1994), final /t/-glottalling (Holmes 1995c), syllable-timing (Holmes and Ainsworth 1996), and final /z/-devoicing (Holmes 1996b).

In interpreting these trends, Holmes (1997b) suggests that the incoming variants are new standard forms in NZE, since — among young Pakeha — they are apparently supported by middle-class females, a group who generally favour prestige forms, and often also lead early changes from below (Labov 1990: 215ff). This is plausible given the acceptance of glottalling in the emergent British 'prestige' accent known as "Estuary English" (Rosewarne 1994) — though the extent to which this is a model for NZE accents is still unknown. The actual status of each of these variants in NZE is far from clear: /t/-voicing and /t/-glottalling have traditionally been stigmatised, while /z/-devoicing and (more ambiguously) syllable-timing are generally taken as indicators of a particularly low-status variety of 'Maori English' (cf Robertson 1994). Moreover, observed differences by class and style (and by gender among the middle age groups) in these same studies are consistent with continued stigmatisation of these

variants. Holmes suggests, however, a gradual reversal of language attitudes in relation to these variants, created through their adoption by young middle-class Pakeha females, a suggestion consistent with that of others (eg Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994).

There is some support for Holmes' interpretation. All of these variants show an increase in apparent time (suggesting change in progress); and middle-class females often are observed to lead early changes from below (Labov 1990: 215ff). However, the data produced by Pakeha females - and especially, young 'vocationally-educated' (ie, middle-class) Pakeha females - in the conversational component of WSC is not entirely comparable with that of other cells. Holmes' sample differs from mine in limiting conversations to dyadic interactions between demographically matched individuals; but Figure 7 (based on the overlap between our samples, amounting to about two-thirds of Holmes' data) suggests that the same patterns still apply, with young middle-class Pakeha females producing the least 'formal' data.

Figure 7

Mean formality scores for subsets of Holmes' WSC sample

Demographic cell (age*ethnicity*gender*class)
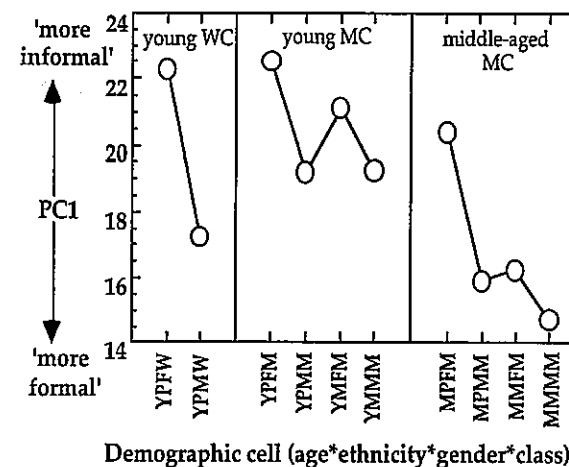
This suggests an alternative explanation for the patterns summarised in Holmes (1997b): the young Pakeha females may not be 'leading change' to any specific new standards, but rather, producing consistently less formal speech phonologically as well as lexically, including higher use of **nonstandard** forms. Thus it is not clear whether there is a real shift in language values in middle-class New Zealand, led by young Pakeha females (as Holmes suggests), or whether we are instead seeing an artefact of the data collection procedure (somewhat biased towards young tertiary-educated Pakeha females). In order to decide between these positions, it will be necessary to obtain more direct evidence of differences in current attitudes (and thus to determine the actual social value of the phonetic and syntactic variants so far investigated) among different demographic groups. This is an area requiring considerable further study; and such evidence is not available from direct analysis of corpora.

More generally, given the consistent age-grading of formality in this data, it is questionable whether the observed age-grading in these phonological variables necessarily indicates change in progress. This remains a problem even if the same apparent-time trend is observed in different datasets, since it appears difficult if not impossible in practice to find exactly matched situations which are also of matched 'naturalness' for different age groups. The only certain escape from this dilemma is to conduct follow-up analyses in real time.

Nevertheless, not all of the patterns apparent in Holmes' data can be reduced to reflexes of formality differences. In particular, young working-class Pakeha males generally show higher use of 'nonstandard' variants than the corresponding group of Pakeha females, despite producing more 'formal' data according to this index. Observed differences for class appear to have no strong stylistic confound, so may also be taken at face value. On this basis, the reversed gender difference among young middle-class Pakeha still appears anomalous. (In my sample, this group shows the largest gender differentiation by formality, which could be sufficient to outweigh the trend for males to favour 'nonstandard' forms; but this explanation appears not to apply to Holmes' sample.)

Perhaps, then, we may consider a compromise position: young middle-class Pakeha females are systematically involved in language change, as Holmes suggests - but in a more global sense, towards more 'informal' conversation. Such a general stylistic change could carry with it increased frequencies of traditionally stigmatised variants, without implying any change in attitudes to these variants. This is in some sense a simpler hypothesis than the assumption that attitudes to all variants changing in parallel are affected independently, and could well be a common mechanism by which change is enacted (which is another pressing reason for further studies to incorporate stylistic continua). However, we have not yet escaped the basic interpretation problem of whether we can assume that processes apparent in our sample correspond to real changes in the wider population: it is simply reintroduced at a more general level. Any proposed 'real' stylistic shift, like any 'real' shift in variant frequency, still requires explanation with reference to the world outside the corpus.

The use of conversational corpora

My results indicate that demographic cells in conversational corpora cannot be assumed to represent fully comparable data; nor is it realistic to expect corpus compilers to produce such a degree of matching. In consequence, when attempting to explain the social distribution of linguistic variants, it will generally be useful to consider dimensions on which the data may not be matched, including unencoded social dimensions (for example, apparent age-grading may reflect real-world population differences in urbanisation or average educational level according to age), but also stylistic dimensions (in this case, 'formality'). For this reason, it will often be insufficient to treat 'style' only as a difference in text category (eg. between 'conversation' and 'interview'): instead, we need a more fine-grained approach in which each text (or each speaker) is assigned a separate score on some stylistic index(es).

This paper has demonstrated the use of stylistic continua (here exemplified by my formality index) to check data comparability, and thus to provide a 'baseline' from which to evaluate observed differences in use for specific linguistic variables. Additionally, it has been suggested that general shifts in acceptable

style may provide a mechanism for change in progress, without necessitating any immediate change in attitudes toward specific variants. Both points strongly recommend the use of stylistic continua in further sociolinguistic research.

I should perhaps close by emphasising that the interpretative difficulties raised in this paper do not constitute an argument against the use of corpora in variation studies — but rather, for the informed use of corpora. This means, firstly, being aware of limitations imposed by the data collection procedure; and secondly, actively testing the often tacit assumption of comparability (for which multivariate stylistic continua such as my formality index seem especially promising). If discrepancies between data representing social groups cannot be successfully controlled in compiling a corpus, they certainly can (and should) be identified when analysing it, so that they may be factored out of subsequent comparisons. In particular, the fact that significant differences have been identified within WSC does not make it a less reliable database. On the contrary, we have a better basis for investigation than we do in corpora where such differences have not been tested.

Conclusion

Relativiser choice in speech is largely determined by text formality, and demographic variation is comparatively unimportant in NZE (though this very fact is interesting in light of previous studies indicating class differences in use of object Ø). However, WSC conversations show some differentiation of social groups by formality. Such differences result partly from the (necessary) way the data was collected, and partly from real-world differences between social groups, and so are inevitable in any attempt to capture informal conversation. This muddies the interpretation of the demographic distribution shown by relativiser choice and other such variables.

Thus it should not be assumed that the data collected for different social groups in any corpus is necessarily comparable. Analysts must determine this before giving any final interpretation to their findings. (Corpus users should especially beware of inferring attitudes from observed usage.) The current investigation

shows the importance of including stylistic continua in sociolinguistic studies, both for comparability checks, and also as a focus of study in their own right. However, problems of interpretation remain, and can ultimately be decided only by reference to data outside the corpus: for example, obtaining more direct evidence of differences in current attitudes among different demographic groups, or follow-up studies tracking change in real time.

****

References

Adamson, H. D. 1992. Social and processing constraints on relative clauses. *American Speech* 67, 2: 123-133.

Ball, Catherine N. 1996. A Diachronic Study of Relative Markers in Spoken and Written English. *Language Variation and Change* 8: 227-58.

Bauer, Laurie 1993. *Manual of Information to accompany the Wellington Corpus of Written New Zealand English*. Wellington: Department of Linguistics, Victoria University of Wellington.

Benton, Richard A. 1991. Maori English: a New Zealand myth? In Jenny Cheshire (ed) *English Around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp.187-199.

Boyce, Mary T. 1992. *Maori Language in Porirua: a study of reported proficiency, patterns of use, and attitudes*. Unpublished MA thesis. Wellington: Department of Linguistics, Victoria University of Wellington.

Britain, David 1992. Linguistic change in intonation: the use of high rising terminals in New Zealand English. *Language Variation and Change* 4: 77-104.

Chambers, J. K. 1995. *Sociolinguistic Theory: Linguistic Variation and its Social Significance*. London: Blackwell.

Coates, Jennifer 1993. *Women, Men and Language* (2ed). London; New York: Longman.

Cofer, Thomas M. 1975. Performance constraints on relative pronoun deletion. *Linguistics* 157: 13-32.

Dupré, Lyn 1995. *BUGS in Writing: A Guide to Debugging Your Prose*. Reading, Mass.; New York; etc: Addison-Wesley.

Eckert, Penelope 1989. The whole woman: sex and gender differences in variation. *Language Variation and Change* 1,3: 245-67.

Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet 1992. Think practically and look locally: language and gender as community-based practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 461-490.

Fowler, H.W. 1926. *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Hay, Jen 1995. *Gender and Humour: Beyond a Joke*. Unpublished MA thesis. Wellington: Department of Linguistics, Victoria University of Wellington.

Holmes, Janet 1994. New Zealand flappers: An analysis of T voicing in New Zealand English. *English World-Wide* 15, 2: 195-224.

Holmes, Janet 1995a. The Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English: A progress report. *New Zealand English Newsletter* 9: 5-8.

Holmes, Janet. 1995b. Time for /t/: Initial /t/ in New Zealand English. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 15: 127-156.

Holmes, Janet 1995c. Glottal stops in New Zealand English: an analysis of variants of word-final /t/. *Linguistics* 33: 433-463.

Holmes, Janet 1996a. Collecting the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English: Some methodological challenges. *New Zealand English Journal* 10: 10-15.

Holmes, Janet 1996b. Losing voice: is final /z/ devoicing a feature of Maori English? *World Englishes* 15,2: 193-205.

Holmes, Janet 1997a. Maori and Pakeha English: some New Zealand social dialect data. *Language in Society* 27: 65-101.

Holmes, Janet 1997b. Setting new standards: Sound changes and gender in New Zealand English. *English World-Wide* 18, 1: 107-142.

Holmes, Janet and Helen Ainsworth 1996. Syllable-timing and Maori English. *Te Reo* 39: 75-84.

Holmes, Janet; Allan Bell, and Mary Boyce 1991. *Variation and Change in New Zealand English*. Wellington: Department of Linguistics, Victoria University of Wellington.

Labov, William 1990. The intersection of sex and social class in the course of language change. *Language Variation and Change* 2: 205-254.

Lowth, Robert 1762. *A Short Introduction to English Grammar, with Critical Notes*. Facsimile edition, 1967. Menston: Scolar Press.

Milroy, James, Lesley Milroy and Sue Hartley 1994. Local and supra-local change in British English: the case of glottalisation. *English World-Wide* 15: 1-33.

Prideaux, Gary D. and W. J. Baker 1986. *Strategies and Structures: The Processing of Relative Clauses*. Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 46. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Quirk, Randolph 1957. Relative clauses in educated spoken English. *English Studies* 38: 97-109.

Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.

Robertson, Shelley 1994. *Identifying Maori English: A Study of Ethnic Identification, Attitudes, and Phonetic Features*. Unpublished MA thesis. Wellington: Department of Linguistics, Victoria University of Wellington.

Rosewarne, David 1994. Estuary English — tomorrow's RP. *English Today* 37: 3-9.

Shnukal, Anna 1981. There's a lot mightn't believe this... variable subject relative pronoun absence in Australian English. In David Sankoff and Henrietta Cedergren (ed) 1981. *Variation Omnibus*. Edmonton: Linguistic Research. Pp. 321-8.

Sigley, Robert 1997a. Text categories and where you can stick them: a crude formality index. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 2,2: 199-237.

Sigley, Robert 1997b. The influence of formality and channel on relative pronoun choice in New Zealand English. *English Language and Linguistics* 1, 2: 207-232.

Sigley, Robert 1997c. *Choosing Your Relatives: Relative Clauses in New Zealand English*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Wellington: Department of Linguistics, Victoria University of Wellington.

The paradox of silence in interaction: an indicator both of power and powerlessness

Lynnette D.L. Sollitt-Morris

Abstract

This paper investigates the functions of significant silence, that is, lack of contributory talk or absence of expected response, in spoken interaction. The analysis goes beyond considerations of amount of talk to examine the relationship between the functions of silence and the social variables gender and power. Silence can be an indicator both of a speaker's power in an interaction and an indicator of their powerlessness. The data used in the analysis is based on tape recordings from meetings of two subject departments at a New Zealand secondary school.

****

Introduction[1]

This paper explores some preliminary ideas on the functions and implications of significant silence in spoken interaction. The topic is timely as there seems to be "a current upsurge of interest in silence" (Jenny Thomas personal communication). Silence in interaction is defined here as the absence of expected contributory talk in an interaction or a lack of response to another's talk where a response could be expected. I focus, in particular on the relationship between silence as a tool or linguistic device for enacting power, and silence as a consequence of others' enaction of power.

I will begin with a definition of "power" in interaction:

---

[1] I would like to acknowledge with thanks the constructive comments and suggestions received from Janet Holmes and Debbie Payne. Thanks also to Bryan Holden for technical assistance.

Power is the ability of a person to influence the talk processes of an interaction and/ or to influence the behaviour of other talk participants in the pursuit of that person's will or goals i.e. it is the ability to achieve one's own goals (based on Owusuh-Ansah 1992).

According to Lakoff (1995: 26) silence in discourse "can be interpreted from both semantic and pragmatic perspectives". Semantic, and essentially non-political, approaches examine the absence of speech "in terms of its contribution to the meaning participants in a discourse construct for it" (1995: 26), as illustrated by conversation analysts investigation of "attributable silences", or "gaps, lapses and pauses". A pragmatic approach views nonspeech as potentially "the result of the process of 'silencing', interactively organised and functional as well as meaningful" (Lakoff 1995: 26). In other words, a pragmatic perspective examines the contribution of differential power to the distribution of silence in interaction.

Analysing the functions of silence, and the implications of those functions for participants in interaction, is inherently more interesting than simply examining the distribution of talk and its social correlates. Kurzon (1995), analysing suspects' silence in the courtroom, distinguishes between **intentional** and **unintentional** silence. Unintentional silence is due to psychological factors such as personal inhibitions, but intentional acts of silence (involving the absence of an expected response) are deliberate. There are two different aspects to intentional silence: intentional silence may be a powerful act where one achieves one's goals, or it may be a powerless act where one is not successful at achieving one's objectives. Silence may be the result of a deficit of contributory talk, or a deliberate withholding of an expected response to a question or comment. But the way silence is interpreted will depend on the social context and the roles and statuses of those involved. So, for example, while in court, a suspect may have a right to remain silent. However, regardless of the suspect's intent, this silence is usually interpreted negatively by listeners in the courtroom such as the judge and jury (Kurzon 1995). In court, the judge and jury (and the police prior to a case reaching court) are the more statusful people and are in a better position to enact power than the suspect. Clearly, intentional silence does not always achieve the goal of enacting power for the perpetrator.

Consequently, an intentional silence (either as a lack of contributory talk or as an absence of expected response) may also in effect be an expression of powerlessness for at least two reasons:

1. because it did not achieve the intended goal: for instance, silence as a subversive act intended to undermine a person with more institutional power by not providing them with information that they may require;

2. because the speaker has been 'silenced' by another's actions which may ironically include another's lack of response to the 'silenced' speaker's own talk.

Silence can thus be viewed both as a tool of the powerful, and as a negative consequence of lack of power for the powerless. The paradox of silence exists because silence can be both an indicator of power and an indicator of powerlessness.

Amount of talk in relation to power

There is an extensive literature on the relationship between amount of talk and the speaker's gender, and amount of talk and the degree of power or status a speaker holds (eg. Adams 1992, Adams and Edelsky 1988, Craig and Pitts 1990, DeFrancisco 1991, Edelsky 1981, Edelsky and Adams 1990, Fisher 1991, Fishman 1983, Holmes 1992, 1993, Holmes and Stubbe 1992, Jesperson 1990 [1922], Leet-Pellegrini 1980, Meyerhoff 1987, Sollitt-Morris 1985, Swann 1989, Tannen 1993). Two particularly comprehensive recent reviews of the literature on amount of talk and gender differences in mixed-sex interactions have been undertaken by Stubbe (1991) and by James and Drakich (1993). Three implicit assumptions are evident in these reviews, as well as many of the sources cited: (i) the assumption that all participants have an equal right to talk; (ii) the assumption that more talk equates with more power; and, contradictorily, (iii) the assumption that when women talk more than men, this reflects their less powerful position. I will discuss each of these assumptions in turn.

Firstly, there is the egalitarian principle that everyone is entitled to an equal distribution of the time available for talk. As stated, this assumption takes no account of social context or social relationships. If the egalitarian principle is a baseline, then participants who produce markedly less talk than other participants can be described as 'being silent'. The second and third assumptions provide different explanations for such silence.

The second assumption introduces status/power as an explanatory factor, suggesting that those who talk more than their fair entitlement must, necessarily, be displaying their greater status and/or greater power. There is plenty of evidence that those in the more statusful or powerful position in asymmetrical or unequal encounters - for instance, doctor/patient, teacher/pupil, tutor/student - generally talk more (and often substantially more) than those in the less statusful position (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997, Bergvall and Remlinger 1996, Craig and Pitts 1990, Fisher 1991, Thomas 1985). Indeed, this is the case in my own research which examined the meeting discourse of teachers within two subject departments, that of a Maths department and an English department in a medium-sized New Zealand co-educational secondary school (Sollitt-Morris 1996).

In this research, six regular meetings from these two core subject departments were audio- and video-recorded. The first department, an English department, was headed by a woman and had seven members in total: five women and two men. The second department, a Maths department, was headed by a man and also had seven members: four men and three women. The second-in-charge, in both departments was a woman. A clear difference in talking time emerged reflecting the status of meeting participants: both Heads of Department, on average, spoke for at least a third of the meeting time, and spoke over twice as long as anyone else in their respective departments. In two meetings, the Head of Department's talk dominated over 40% of the meeting time. In other words, the potential to control and influence the meeting by sheer volume of talk was held and retained by the Heads of Department, the people with the most institutional power over other department meeting participants.

Noting such patterns, some have proceeded to extrapolate to symmetrical interactions, i.e. conversational contexts where the speakers are ostensibly of equal status, and infer that those who speak longest must in fact be in a position of greater power and influence than others in the same conversation. Research in this area suggests, however, that the relationship between talk and power or status is not so simple.

An alternative view (reflected in the third assumption) regards talk as involving effort. Conversation is by definition a spoken interaction minimally dependent on

two people interacting. It can be regarded as a joint construction that is ideally shared equally between participants. From this perspective, the speaker who does most of the talking in a conversation may be regarded as doing most of the conversational "work" (Fishman 1983). Where a speaker fails to elicit even a minimal (verbal or non-verbal) response from their addressee, the conversation will generally founder. To obtain a response the speaker may have to constantly 'prompt' the non-responding addressee, for example by asking questions or by summonsing them by name (Sollitt-Morris 1996). In such a situation, Fishman suggests, it is the non-responder who is exercising power. In other words, where two participants are ostensibly equals and one fails to contribute to the conversation, the person working hardest is often the participant in the less powerful position (see also DeFrancisco 1991). In these contexts, more talk does not necessarily reflect more power. This is the basis for the third claim that in those situations where women do speak more (a pattern found principally in informal situations), this is not an indication of their greater power/status but rather of lack of power. In other words, when men speak more, assumption 2 suggests this is because they are the more powerful participants in the interaction, whereas when women speak more, assumption 3 suggest that this is because they are acting as conversational "facilitators".

The first two assumptions underlie the interpretation of many research results. In reviewing the literature, neither Stubbe (1991), nor James and Drakich (1993) appear to consider the possibility that withholding contributory talk may reflect not lesser status and power, but greater status and power. In other words, the possibility that there may be an inverse relationship between amount of talk and an individual's status is not explicitly discussed. The possibility of influencing talk processes and other people's behaviour collectively, of defining social reality, or imposing a particular "vision of the world" (Gal 1995:178), by remaining silent, is not explored.

Clearly, assumption 1, the implicitly assumed egalitarian principle on which much research in this area has been based, may be an inappropriate assumption in certain contexts, or at certain times within a particular interaction. For instance, in my research data it is a generally accepted convention, and an activity sanctioned by the group, for the Chair in English Department meetings to hold the floor during the "report slot" at the beginning of the meeting. In normal circumstances, no participant would consider that the Chair was unreasonably dominating the talk, or

exercising unreasonable power or influence, by holding the floor at this point in the meeting. Neither could other participants' silence during this period be considered significant. Similarly, there are points in conversations between equals where one person may legitimately hold the floor for an extended period by implicit agreement: i.e. be a socially sanctioned primary speaker. When one speaker is recounting a narrative, for instance, or relating recent experiences of interest to the other(s), their relative silence is not necessarily significant or a reflection of their lack of status or power.

The specific discourse context and content are further important factors in interpreting the contribution of talk to power and status. Bergvall and Remlinger (1996) found, for instance, that although women and men in a male-dominated university class produced a proportionally equal amount of talk, on closer analysis, the women's contributions were often undermined by the men's task divergent behaviours, such as asides, derisive comments, laughter and ad hominem humour.

Researching the relationship between talk, power and gender, then, requires attention to the specific social contexts, and the complex relevant social and discourse factors. Amount of talk or amount of silence, either a great deal or a little, must always be analysed in context (Chan 1992). Researching discourse features of teachers' meetings, I examined the relationship between multiple variables such as status, power, and gender on the one hand, and the amount of talk, and the number and types of questions asked in the meetings on the other, as well as investigating the ways in which the interaction of these variables contributed to the ability of meeting participants to enact power in the meeting (Sollitt-Morris 1996).

The distribution of talk in school departmental meetings

The secondary school department meetings that I recorded were ostensibly meetings between peers, yet there was an undeniable underlying hierarchy. Correspondingly, the interactions were neither entirely relaxed casual conversations, nor predominantly formal asymmetrical talk encounters. The discourse features that characterised the meetings moved throughout between features of formal meeting discourse (such as following an agenda), and features of casual conversation (such as overlapping speech).

I first analysed the amount of talk produced by participants as a percentage of the time they were present in the meetings. I then analysed the number and functions of questions produced by participants as a percentage of the time they were present in the meetings, and as a percentage of the total talk produced by participants. Question usage was selected as a relevant variable for analysis because of its close relationship to amount of talk. Questions are ways of eliciting talk from other participants. Moreover, as with amount of talk, the use of questions has also been postulated both as indicator of a speaker's power (Cameron et al 1989, Fishman 1980, Holmes 1984, Johnson 1980) and as an indicator of their powerlessness (Lakoff 1995, DeFrancisco 1991). Questions are powerful because, as Cameron et al (1989) point out, questioning "obliges the interlocuter to produce an answer ... or to be accountable for its absence" (1989: 86). Alternatively, questions can be regarded as indicators of powerlessness when they are used as devices to elicit conversational contributions from (reluctant) others. Those asking questions can be regarded as taking responsibility for making the conversation work (Fishman 1983, DeFrancisco 1991). So, paradoxically, as with amount of talk, it may be that a high proportion of questions in speakers' talk may be both an indicator of power and of powerlessness.

The analysis of the meeting data reflects the complex social context. Those participants with most status, the Heads of Department, talked most within the meeting (see Table 1), and asked, overall, the most questions (see Table 2). Women, excluding the Heads of Department, talked for longer than the men, but not substantially more.

All things being equal, the more a person spoke in the meetings, or the less silent they were, and the more questions they produced relative to the amount of time they were present in the meeting (see Table 2), the more potential they possessed to influence the meeting processes and to influence others' behaviour. Conversely, the less a person spoke, or the more silent they were, and the less they asked questions, the less potential they possessed vis-a-vis other more voluble speakers. In this case, silence by participants in the subject meetings would seem initially to be a signifier of low status and power.

However, the quantitative analysis indicates that a high frequency of talk and a high proportion of questions do not necessarily equate with high status or high power,

and that low proportions of talk and questions do not necessarily equate with lack of power.

Table 1
Distribution of talk in six meetings

	Pseudonym	Total secs spoken in meeting	Total secs of time present in meeting	% of amount of talk per time present in meeting
ENGLISH DEPT	KAY (HOD)	5012	16727	30.0%
	VAL (2nd)	2406	17665	13.6
	MEG	2151	17665	12.2
	PAM	1877	17665	10.6
	RON	729	9616	7.6
	NED	642	11055	5.8
	ALY	467	15300	3.0
MATHS DEPT	ZEB (HOD)	4379	12038	36.4
	JAN (2nd)	1005	12038	8.3
	ANN	1277	12038	10.6
	LEN	751	11402	6.6
	BET	543	6267	8.7
	TOM	629	9975	6.3
	DAN	673	11790	5.7

Questions are clearly an important tool for enacting the business of meetings. They enable participants to clarify information and ideas, to reach agreement, and to solve problems. They are also powerful devices for engaging others in the business of the meeting, and for "doing power" in meetings. One way a person can increase their ability to influence the meeting processes is by asking a high proportion of questions (especially epistemic modals and facilitative questions), relative to the amount of talk they produce in total. It seems plausible that the number of questions different participants' produce will bear some relationship to the amount of talk they produce, and to the amount of time they were present in the meeting. In the meeting data, this general tenet held, but there was no consistent ratio evident.

Table 2

Percentage of questions

in relation to time present at meeting

	Ranking by proportion of questions	Participants	Ranking by proportion of time they spoke
ENGLISH	1	KAY (HOD)	1
DEPT	2	VAL (2nd)	2
	3	MEG	3
	4	PAM	4
	5	RON	5
	6	NED	6
	7	ALY	7
MATHS	1	ZEB (HOD)	1
DEPT	2	ANN	2
	3	LEN	5
	4	DAN	7
	5	JAN (2nd)	4
	6	BET	3
	7	TOM	6
ENGLISH	1	ZEB (HOD)	1
AND	2	KAY (HOD)	2
MATHS	3	ANN	6
	4	VAL (2nd)	3
	5	MEG	4
	6	LEN	10
	7	JAN (2nd)	8
	8=	PAM	5
	8=	DAN	13
	10	RON	9
	11=	NED	12
	11=	BET	7
	13	ALY	14
	14	TOM	11

Epistemic modal elicitations were the most common questions asked in the departmental meetings, reflecting the kind of "work" done in subject meetings. Low status participants tended to talk less overall, but used a higher proportion of their relatively small amount of talk to ask for clarification than higher ranked participants. Correspondingly, they spent relatively less time putting forward their own ideas, thus reinforcing their low power or influence within the group. High and middle ranked participants, however, sometimes used clarification requests in order to influence the processes of the meeting and others' behaviour. Clarification requests may, for instance, serve as a lead up to a challenge. It should be recognised, then, that the number of clarification requests produced in relation to the amount of overall talk is a relatively crude indicator of status. A more detailed functional analysis would clearly be worthwhile.

Similarly, being relatively silent does not necessarily indicate a lack of potential to influence the meeting processes. A low rate of question production and a low proportion of talk did not necessarily correlate with low status or potential influence. Jan, the second-in-charge in the Maths Department, ranked low on most functional question criteria except challenges, and was mid-ranked in terms of the percentage of time she spoke in the meetings. This might be considered surprising considering she has such high sanctioned status. Analysis revealed that Jan's actual influence in the meeting was considerably greater than suggested by the amount of talk and number of questions she produced. Zeb and other Maths Department participants frequently sought Jan's specific opinion with a specific summons, and appeared to value her opinions. Zeb was more willing and consultative within the meeting with Jan, his 2nd, for instance, than Kay was with Val, her 2nd. Jan appeared to have no qualms about contradicting Zeb and others overtly, and asserted her views forcefully on occasion. And when she made a suggestion or offered an opinion it generally received agreement. Val on the other hand did contradict Kay, but her contradictions were lexically and grammatically mitigated, and did not attract support from others. Sheer quantity of talk, or numbers of questions produced, which might on the surface seem good indicators of a person's ability to influence the meeting processes, or other participants' behaviour, are not necessarily straightforward indications of power.

Discussion

The relationship between any single variable, or combination of variables, and power and/or gender is unlikely to be simple. The significance of the relationships will involve a careful consideration of the context and content of the interaction as Bergvall and Remlinger (1996) point out.

Tannen (1993) has recently queried the idea that women's silence is an indication of their powerlessness and of their oppression by men. Rather, she suggests that "taciturnity itself can be an instrument of power" (Tannen 1993:177). This interpretation is supported by the analyses of husband-wife interactions undertaken by Fishman (1983) and DeFrancisco (1991), where the husbands' lack of response to their wives' comments, and their apparent refusal to engage in their wives' choice of topics, was interpreted as evidence of their control of the interaction.

Tannen (1993) proffers a cultural analogy to explain differences in amount of talk vs silence in interaction. She notes that people from different cultural and subcultural groups may misinterpret the significance of another group's behaviour eg. the length of pauses between and within speaking turns. There is no place for blame, she suggests, when the source of misunderstanding is different rules of interaction. By extension, Tannen suggests differences between men and women in the interpretation of silences and amount of talk should be treated similarly. Silence is not always a sign of powerlessness, and talkativeness is not necessarily a sign of power and dominance. Or, as she says, "silence and volubility ... may imply either power or solidarity, depending on the criteria discussed" (Tannen 1993:178).

Clearly, silence or lack of talk is not necessarily an indication of the participant's lack of power, but Tannen's explanation does not lead to a deeper understanding of the underlying processes at work in interaction. In a large formal group, when those in power do not wish to respond to or acknowledge a response from a less powerful person, they can ignore it, or they can make it appear to be "out of order". It is interesting that the same effect can be achieved by the more powerful participant in less formal contexts, as those studying male-female interaction have demonstrated. Women can be silenced in numerous ways as demonstrated in a range of recent research (DeFrancisco 1991, Gowan 1991, Houston and Kramarae 1991, Lakoff 1992,

1995). These studies demonstrate that women are not only discouraged from speaking, but that, more importantly, what they can say is often controlled; moreover, they appear to bear the brunt of disruptive interruptions which may stop them talking and prevent them from completing what they were saying (DeFrancisco 1991, West and Zimmerman 1983).

Silence can clearly be a sign of empowerment. But it can also be a subversive weapon for those in a powerless position in asymmetrical situations: eg. employer/employee and parent/child (Akman 1994, Gowan 1991, Greif 1980, Kurzon 1992). In a private conversation between intimates, the participants may be simultaneously engaged in other activities such as reading a newspaper, cooking the dinner, or watching the television. In such circumstances, it is possible to appear not to have heard a comment or question, or to be concentrating on something else. This enables the addressee to circumvent the politeness requirements by not replying. In principle, this strategy is available to any participant, and is not restricted to the powerful.

In small semi-formal group, such as a teachers' department meeting, where it is more difficult to use involvement in another activity, or a claim not to have heard, as an excuse for a non-response, participants' comments routinely receive a response, however minimal. In such contexts, a lengthy silence (approximately two or more seconds) was generally interpreted as a sign of disagreement (McLaughlin 1984). Typically, either the first speaker then acknowledges this lack of agreement or, another speaker refers to the original comment that generated disagreement.

Example (See end of this volume for transcription conventions)
Context: Maths Department meeting

Zeb:	yeah well oh we will we'll do that but do we want to have a school based one? + +
Len:	yeah why not?
Zeb:	mm
	(3)
Jan:	but
Len:	but
Ann:	but + +

Zeb:	okay we've got 4A 4B what do you think Jan? We've got 3A and 3B what what would be quite good is if we got all of those together to have .
	(3)
Jan:	I / I you know\ it's an ideal thing but but here it's a bit different =
Zeb:	/auditions\
Jan:	= organisation wise you know whether you're going to have it for lunchtime or ...

Zeb is attempting to organise an in-school maths quiz for the junior forms, but other department participants clearly have reservations as indicated by their lack of immediate response, and the pauses or silences which greet Zeb's suggestions. Hence, silence as a form of resistance is a tool available to the powerless as well as to the powerful.

Gowan, in her ethnographic study of a group of Black American women in an adult literacy programme organised by their hospital employer, found that the women, who worked in the low status position of housekeeper "were outwardly cooperative while resisting in more subtle ways" (1991:446). These "more subtle ways" included silence. Silence included both not speaking and not volunteering information that would be of assistance to others in a more powerful position. For instance, the women made life difficult for a new supervisor whom they did not like when "they would not tell her anything, such as how they did the schedules or other job specifics, but 'let her look it up in the book' instead" (1991:446).

Unfortunately for the women housekeepers, while silence (non-response) was an effective means of resistance, it also tended to confirm for their managers, the erroneous belief that the women were lacking literacy skills (apparently a euphemism for 'ignorant'). Ironically, the management's rationale for operating literacy classes for the women was to reduce the women's apparent dependence on oral means of communication, and to increase their reliance on written forms of communication, and consequently, the management's control over them. The result was, as Gowan says,

> the women perceived portions of the literacy curriculum and the assessment measures as hidden efforts to control rather than as means to empowerment -

a mechanism to keep them silent and invisible rather than a means to free them to speak and be heard (1991: 448).

This example suggests that when working class women remain silent as a deliberate form of resistance, it is likely to be interpreted as an indication of ignorance or even intellectual deficiency and illiteracy by those with more power, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. Indeed, any individual in a less powerful position in an asymmetrical situation whether female or male may be subject to such a negative interpretation of their silence.

High school students may similarly refuse to respond when asked to give an answer or an opinion, not because they do not know the answer or hold an opinion, but because silence is one of the few available means of resistance in the asymmetrical relationship operating in the classroom between students and teachers. Again, such resistance is likely to be interpreted negatively by teachers. It may be regarded as evidence of ignorance or of insolence with corresponding unpleasant consequences for the students.

Silence, then, can be a measure of a talk participant's ability to control talk processes, demonstrating either dominance or resistance, and, may be used as a means of emphasising a person's relative powerlessness in relation to other talk participants. While an individual's deliberate silence may function to control or resist others' attempts to enact power, the likelihood of a successful outcome may be dependent on the position of status or power the speaker holds. Regardless of a speaker's intention, those already in positions of status are in a much better position to enact power and a consequence of this is that they are also in a much better position to interpret speakers' acts of silence according to their own ideological stance, which may or may not match with the speakers'.

Conclusion

This paper has explored some ideas on the functions and implications of significant silence in spoken interaction. Silence in interaction was defined as a lack of contributory talk or absence of expected response to another's talk. I focussed in particular on the relationship between silence as a tool or linguistic device for

enacting power, and silence as a consequence of another's enaction of power. Much research into talk and its relationship to power has assumed that there is a simple correlation between these two variables.

The results of the analysis of teachers' meetings from two subject departments reflected the mixed context in terms of gender, multiple participants and semi-formal situation. Those in positions of sanctioned status, the Heads of Department, spoke most within the meetings, and asked the most questions. Women, excluding the Heads of Department, spoke for longer than the men but not substantially more. Silence in the context of these meetings tended to be associated with low status and higher power. However, it cannot be categorically stated that high frequency of talk and high frequency of questions equates with high status or power, or that low frequencies of talk or more periods of silence, and question production equate with power solely on a quantitative analysis of these two variables. There were indications that people could be relatively silent in the meetings yet still enact power.

Silence may or may not signify or reflect power; it may or may not signify or reflect powerlessness. There is no simple relationship between variables such as amount of talk and power, such that more or less talk can be said to reflect power. Nor can the interplay between multiple variables such as gender, amount of talk, and number and type of questions directly indicate who has more power in an interaction. And it is not possible to make a simple distinction between private and public contexts and relate these directly to social and discourse variables.

We need to look at the egalitarian principle that everyone is entitled to an equal distribution of the time spent talking, on which much earlier research is based. It may not be an appropriate assumption to hold in some contexts, and therefore may obfuscate the picture of who is enacting power and when. Further quantitative and qualitative studies which take careful note of context and the content of interactions in multiple contexts are necessary before we can satisfactorily address such questions as whether silence reflects or instantiates greater or lesser power, if so when it does so, and most interestingly why and how it does so. One thing is clear though, silence is both a tool for the powerful and a consequence for the powerless.

****

References

Adams, Karen L. 1992. Accruing power on debate floors. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholz and Birch Moonwomon (eds) *Locating Power: Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Vol 1. University of California, Berkeley: Berkeley Women and Language Group.

Adams, Karen and Carole Edelsky 1988. Male and female styles in political debates. In Kathleen Ferrara, B. Brown, Keith Walters and John Baugh (eds) *Linguistic Change and Contact: Proceedings of the 16th Annual Conference on the New Ways of Analyzing Variation*. Texas: Department of Linguistics, University of Austin.

Akman, Varol 1994. When silence may mean derision. *Journal of Pragmatics* 22: 211-218.

Bargiela-Chiappini, Francesca and Sandra J. Harris 1997. *Managing Language: The Discourse of Corporate Meetings*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin.

Bergvall, Victoria L and Kathryn A Remlinger 1996. Reproduction, resistance and gender in educational discourse: The role of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society* 7: 453-479.

Cameron, Deborah, Fiona McLinden and Kathy O'Leary 1989. Lakoff in context: The social and linguistic functions of tag questions. In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds) *Women in their Speech Communities*. London: Longman.

Chan, Grace P. 1992. Gender, roles and power in dyadic conversations. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholz and Birch Moonwomon (eds) *Locating Power: Proceedings of the second Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. University of California, Berkeley: Berkeley Women and Language Group.

Craig, D. and M. K. Pitts 1990. The dynamics of dominance in tutorial discussions. *Linguistics* 28: 125-138.

DeFrancisco, Victoria L. 1991. The sounds of silence: How men silence women in marital relations. *Discourse and Society* 4: 413-424.

Edelsky, Carole 1981. Who's got the floor? *Language in Society* 10: 383-421.

Edelsky, Carole and Karen Adams 1990. Creating inequality: breaking the rules in debates. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 9: 171-190.

Fisher, Sue 1991. A discourse of the social: medical talk/power talk/oppositional talk? *Discourse and Society* 2: 157-182.

Fishman, Pamela 1980. Conversational insecurity. In Howard Giles, W. Peter Robinson and Philip Smith (eds) *Language: Social Psychological Perspectives.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Fishman, Pamela 1983. Interaction: The work women do. In Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae and Nancy Henley (eds) *Language, Gender and Society.* Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Gal, Susan 1995. Language, gender and power: An anthropological review. In Kira Hall and Mary Bucholz (eds) *Gender articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self.* London: Routledge.

Gowan, Sheryl Greenwood 1991. Beliefs about literacy: Measuring women into silence/hearing women into speech. *Discourse and Society* 2: 439-450.

Greif, Esther Blank 1980. Sex differences in parent-child conversations. In Cheris Kramarae (ed) *The Voices and Words of Women and Men.* London: Pergamon Press.

Holmes, Janet 1984. Hedging your bets and sitting on the fence: Some evidence for hedges as support structures. *Te Reo* 27: 47-62.

Holmes, Janet 1992. Women's talk in public contexts. *Discourse and Society* 3: 131-150

Holmes, Janet 1993. New Zealand women are good to talk to: Analysis of politeness strategies in interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics* 20: 91-116.

Holmes, Janet and Maria Stubbe 1992. Women and men talking: Gender-based patterns of interaction. In Suzanne Olsson (ed) *The Gender Factor: Women in New Zealand Organisations.* Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Houston, Marsha and Cheris Kramarae 1991. Speaking from silence: methods of silencing and of resistance. *Discourse and Society* 4: 387-400.

James, Deborah and Sandra Clarke 1993. Women, men, and interruptions: A critical review of research. In Deborah Tannen (ed) *Gender and Conversational Interaction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

James, Deborah and Janice Drakich 1993. Understanding gender differences in amount of talk: a critical review of research. In Deborah Tannen (ed) *Gender and Conversational Interaction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jesperson, Otto 1922. The woman. In *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin.* London: Allen and Unwin. Chapter reprinted in *The Feminist Critique of Language* (1990) Deborah Cameron (ed) London: MacMillan.

Johnson, Janet L. 1980. Questions and role responsibility in four professional meetings. *Anthropological Linguistics* 22: 66-76.

Kurzon, Dennis 1992. When silence may mean power. *Journal of Pragmatics* 18: 92-95.

Kurzon, Dennis 1995. The right of silence: A socio-pragmatic model of interpretation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 23: 5-69.

Lakoff, Robin 1992. The silencing of women. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholz and Birch Moonwomon (eds) *Locating Power: Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference.* University of California, Berkeley: Berkeley Women and Language Group.

Lakoff, Robin 1995. Cries and whispers: The shattering of the silence. In Kira Hall and Mary Bucholz (eds) *Gender Articulated.* London: Routledge.

Leet-Pelligrini, Helene 1980. Conversational dominance as a function of gender and expertise. In Howard Giles, W. Peter Robinson and Philip M. Smith (eds) *Language: Social Psychological Perspectives.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

McLaughlin, Margaret 1984. *Conversation: How Talk is Organised.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Meyerhoff, Miriam 1987. Language and sex: research in New Zealand. In Ann Pauwels (ed) *Women and Language in Australian and New Zealand Society.* Sydney: Australian Professional Publications.

Owusuh-Ansah L. K. 1992. Where true power lies: modality as an indication of power in two institutionalised domains of power. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* No 3.

Sollitt-Morris, Lynnette 1985. *Do Sex-based Differences in Language Really Exist? An enquiry into differences in descriptive language.* Unpublished Master's paper, Auckland: University of Auckland.

Sollitt-Morris, Lynnette 1996. *Language, Gender and Power Relationships: The enactment of repressive discourse in staff meetings of two subject departments in a New Zealand secondary school. PhD Thesis.* Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.

Stubbe, Maria 1991. *Talking at Cross-purposes? The Effect of Gender on New Zealand Primary Schoolchildren's Interaction Strategies in Pair Discussions.* Unpublished MA Thesis. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.

Swann, Joan 1989. Talk control: an illustration from the classroom of problems in analysing male dominance of conversation. In Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron (eds) *Women in their Speech Communities.* London: Longman.

Tannen, Deborah 1993. The relativity of linguistic strategies: rethinking power and solidarity in gender and dominance. In Deborah Tannen (ed) *Gender and Conversational Interaction.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Thomas, Jenny 1985. The language of power: towards a dynamic pragmatics. *Journal of Pragmatics* 9: 765-783.

West, Candace and Don Zimmerman (1983. Small insults: A study of interruptions in cross-sex conversations between unacquainted persons. In Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae and Nancy Henley (eds) *Language, Gender and Society.* Massachussetts: Newbury House.

Transcription conventions

The conventions used in the examples in the papers in this issue 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
++	Pause of up to 2 seconds
(3)	Pause of 3 seconds
..../......\... ..../......\...	Simultaneous speech
and= =then	Latching of speech between speakers or between lines for same speaker

Wellington Working Papers in Linguistics (WWPL)

Policy Guidelines

1. The WWPL are a production of the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University of Wellington.

2. The primary objective of the WWPL is to provide an initial avenue of publication for high quality material in the area of linguistics produced by students and staff of the School.

3. Contributions may take the form of papers, reviews, squibs, critical commentary etc.

4. Issues of the WWPL will be produced as opportunity to publish appropriate material arises, with the aim of producing at least one issue per year.

5. Any member of staff (including Research Fellows) may act as editor of an issue of WWPL. Guest editors may be appointed on occasion.

6. The content of the WWPL will usually include material produced by post-graduate students and staff, but, in special circumstances, may include contributions from people outside the School.

7. Copyright remains with the author(s) of contributions. Authors are welcome to publish contributions to WWPL in other journals. It would be appreciated if a re-published article contained an acknowledgment that the article had been first published in WWPL.

8. The School should be informed of issues planned by individual staff members.

9. Authors will receive one free copy of the issue in which their contribution appears.

CONTENTS OF PREVIOUS ISSUES OF WELLINGTON WORKING PAPERS IN LINGUISTICS

CONTENTS: Number 5, 1992
Chris Lane
    Repetitive questioning in courtroom interaction and interlanguage
    communication
Lisa Matthewson
    Talking to the TV: Conversational behaviour of television viewers
Jane Pilkington
    'Don't try and make out that I'm nice!' The different strategies women
    and men use when gossiping
Maria Stubbe
    What's the score? Qualitative analysis in gender research.

CONTENTS: Number 6, 1994
Anita Easton
    Talk and laughter in New Zealand women's and men's speech
Jen Hay
    Jocular abuse in mixed gender interaction
Janet Holmes and Allan Bell
    Consonant cluster reduction in New Zealand English
Camille Plimmer
    Language maintenance and shift in the Italian community in Wellington

CONTENTS: Number 7, 1995
Laurie Bauer
    Is the morpheme dead?
Jen Hay
    The Adjacency Condition and the Atom Condition: compatible
    morphological constraints
Elizabeth Pearce
    V-movement and optionality
Paul Warren
    The sound of desert trains: delay strategies and constraints in spoken
    sentence processing

CONTENTS: Number 8, 1996
Jen Hay
    No laughing matter: gender and humour support strategies
Gary Johnson
    Management of interaction in the television interviews of Maggie Barry
Shelley Robertson
    Maori English and the bus-driving listener: a study of ethnic
    identification and phonetic cues
Ben Taylor
    Gay men, femininity and /t/ in New Zealand English
Report on Research in progress
Janet Holmes and Chris Lane
    Interactional Variation in Environmental Interviews
Book review
Mary Crawford Talking Difference. Reviewed by Janet Holmes

CONTENTS: Number 9, 1997
Diane Massam
    Three Faces of Niuean aki*
Elizabeth Pearce
    DP Licensing and Spec roles in Maori
Elizabeth Pearce
    Genitive Case in the Maori DP
Shizuka Torii
    Two Types of Evaluation Time and Subject Marking in Japanese