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Contents

Editorial

This issue of the Wellington Working Papers in Linguistics has a sociolinguistics orientation, with topics ranging from macro-sociolinguistic issues such as language maintenance and shift and features of different varieties of English through socio-pragmatic aspects of workplace discourse to the distinctive linguistic features and social distribution of text messaging.

The first paper was contributed by Julia de Bres, a postgraduate student of Dutch extraction, and it is based on a study she undertook as part of the work in a Linguistics Honours paper. The study explores the relationships between societal and individual attitudes to minority language maintenance and their correlation with proficiency in the minority language. Though her sample is small, the results are suggestive, identifying the seeds of a pattern of potential language revival among third generation Dutch New Zealanders. The paper by Jeh Sie Tan also has its origins in a project undertaken as part of a Linguistics Honours paper. Jeh Sie explores the complex meanings of the verb *got* as used in informal Malayasian English speech, focussing in particular on the differences between varieties of Malaysian English and Standard British English.

The third and fourth papers in this volume focus on discourse in its social context and especially on workplace discourse. Drawing on material she has helped to collect for the Wellington Language in the Workplace (LWP) Project, Stephanie Schnurr examines how the discursive strategy of humour provides a valuable socio-pragmatic means of integrating the often conflicting demands of constructing gender identity and performing leadership. My own contribution to this volume also draws on the LWP database, examining a specific aspect of workplace discourse, namely how people discursively accomplish mentoring in the workplace.

The final two papers examine the influence of social factors on a different kind of discourse, namely text messaging, identifying some of the linguistic features of this prolific and speedily spreading means of electronic communication. Luke McCrohon is an undergraduate student of linguistics and computer science. His paper discusses samples of text messages from both native speakers and non-native speakers of English to explore the relationship between the use of Txt Speak and social factors. Ann Weatherall is member of the School of Psychology with interdisciplinary interests. Her paper was first delivered in our School Linguistics Seminar Series to which she regularly contributes. Her paper identifies differences in the linguistic forms and the communicative functions of the text messages of two distinct youth groups and draws attention in particular to the dialogic aspects of text messaging.

These papers, with authors from undergraduate through to professorial level, provide a flavour of the wide range of work in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis which is currently being undertaken at Victoria University of Wellington.

Janet Holmes
January 2005

Intergenerational attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand

Julia de Bres

Abstract

This paper discusses the results of an exploratory study undertaken to investigate changes in individual and societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance across three periods of arrival in New Zealand from the 1950s to the present. Eleven representatives of Dutch families of three different periods of arrival in New Zealand completed a written questionnaire enquiring about their level of Dutch proficiency, patterns of language use, and their attitudes and perceptions of societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand in the past and present. An analysis of the resulting data suggests that although intergenerational language shift has so far occurred at a similar rate across periods of arrival, individual and societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance are more positive today than in the 1950s, and these changes in attitude may impact on the degree of Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand.

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Introduction

This paper presents the findings of an exploratory study undertaken to investigate changes in individual and societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand between the 1950s and 2004, and discusses the implications of such changes for the level of Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand.

As used in this paper, the term *language maintenance* refers to a situation where an individual or community in a language contact situation continues to regularly use, and maintain proficiency in, their original language. *Language shift* refers to a "process in which the first language [of a speech community] is (gradually) replaced by the second language in all spheres of usage" (Folmer 1992: 3), and involves "a decline of proficiency at the group level" (Hulsen 2000: 4). *Language attrition* "reflects a decrease in language proficiency at the individual level" (Hulsen 2000: 4).

Although Dutch groups began emigrating to New Zealand in the 1930s, the first real wave of immigration took place in the years 1951-1954, when 10, 583 Dutch entered New Zealand (Folmer 1992: 2). Since the end of the 1950s Dutch emigration to New Zealand has decreased considerably. The 2001 census identified 27, 507 people of Dutch ethnicity in New Zealand, out of a total New Zealand population of 3, 737, 280.[1]

Studies of Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand consistently report that language shift to English has occurred at a very fast rate among Dutch immigrants

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[1] Statistics New Zealand, personal communication (7 October 2004).

(Kroef 1977: 172, 174, Folmer 1992: 15, Hulsen 2000: 28, Roberts 1999: 317).[2] Of the three New Zealand minority language communities she studied (Dutch, Gujarati and Samoan), Roberts (1999: 317) reported that the Dutch showed the greatest degree of language shift, that very few of the New Zealand-born respondents were fluent Dutch speakers, some reporting no speaking ability at all, and that the New Zealand-born Dutch had almost completely ceased to hand on Dutch to their children. Hulsen, Kees de Bot and Weltens (2002: 28) comment that "[the Dutch community in New Zealand] is known for its fast rate of shift to the L2. Within less than three generations, the language shift to the second language (L2) is complete, which has given the Dutch the reputation of being 'invisible migrants'".

Another common finding is that the fast rate of language shift is linked both to individual attitudes of members of the Dutch speech community and to wider societal attitudes towards language maintenance. Of course there are always a number of factors that can be identified as contributing to language shift in any language contact situation. Hulsen (2000: 160) comments, for example, that "[f]actors found to be especially conducive to language shift among the Dutch who migrated to New Zealand during the 1950s and 1960s were the cultural and linguistic similarity with the English language and culture, demographic factors such as a high rate of exogamy and the absence of large concentrations of people of Dutch descent, the socio-political context at the time of migration which was aimed at assimilation, and attitudes towards the[ir] own language and culture". Nonetheless Hulsen *et al* (2002: 28) also observe that "[t]he fact that the Dutch in New Zealand are considered well-assimilated, both culturally and linguistically, may reflect a rather low attitude towards language maintenance". Roberts (1999: 317) found that as a group the Dutch did not support language maintenance activities, and they expressed only weak support for government assistance in this regard. She identified the immigration history of the Dutch as favouring shift, commenting that "the strong assimilationist ethic that prevailed at the time that most of the Dutch came to New Zealand has left its mark very clearly on the community".

Research questions

There is widespread agreement that societal and individual attitudes towards language maintenance in New Zealand have changed since the 1950s. Hulsen (2000: 12) comments, for example, that "the policy of assimilationism of the 1950s and 1960s [in New Zealand] gradually shifted towards multiculturalism in the 1980s and 1990s, entailing a more positive attitude towards community languages other than English". Assuming this is true, I was interested in finding out whether this attitude change is having an impact on the level of Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand.

It is also generally assumed that there is a relationship between wider social attitudes and individual attitudes, and between positive attitudes towards language maintenance and greater levels of language maintenance. Boyce (1992: 19) states, for example, in relation to speech community attitudes,

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[2] Alberdina Kroef (1977) researched language maintenance among the Dutch community in Auckland; Jetske Folmer (1992) studied language shift and language loss in three generations of a New Zealand Dutch family; Madeleine Hulsen (2000) also investigated three generations of Dutch migrants; and Mary Roberts (1999) researched language maintenance among the Dutch, Samoan and Gujarati communities in Wellington.

"Attitudes to language are an important dimension in studying the survival of a language in a language contact context. The conscious and subconscious attitudes of individual members of a speech community impinge on the degree to which that language will be maintained in competition with another. Individuals are also members of groups within a community, and the collective attitudes within a particular community affect language maintenance."

And in relation to societal attitudes, she claims that "[a] minority group language and its chances of maintenance are affected by both the attitudes of individual speakers and of groups within the language contact setting" (2002: 19).

My research questions were based on these two assumptions, namely that:
1) societal attitudes towards language maintenance impact on individual attitudes towards language maintenance within a speech community; and
2) individual attitudes towards language maintenance within a speech community impact on the degree of language maintenance within that speech community.

The specific research questions were:
1) have societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand changed since the 1950s?
2) have individual attitudes of members of the Dutch speech community towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand changed since the 1950s?
3) if so, are these changed attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance affecting levels of Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand?

Methodology

Instrument
The instrument developed for this study was a 56-item written sociolinguistic questionnaire (see Appendix). However, since respondents were asked to answer only one of three sections in part five of the questionnaire, the actual number of questions involved for any respondent was just forty.

As indicated in the appendix, the questionnaire was adapted from those used by Kroef (1977), Verivaki (1990), 'Aipolo (1989), and Roberts (1999) in their studies of language maintenance among minority linguistic communities in New Zealand. It was designed to gather data about the demographic and sociolinguistic background of the respondents, their level of Dutch proficiency, their patterns of language use within and outside the family, and their attitudes and perceptions of societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand. Although the main focus of the study was on attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance, it was also important to collect information on language proficiency and language use, in order to be able to identify correlations between individual language attitudes and levels of language maintenance. However, the degree of detail collected on these topics was not as great as in earlier studies whose main focus had been language maintenance.

One disadvantage of using a questionnaire over an interview is its lack of interactivity. Garrett *et al* (2003: 35), for example, comment that:
"It is [...] often invaluable to be able to exploit the interactive nature of the interview context. Most obviously, it is easy to identify and pursue any differences in interpretation of questions, to encourage respondents to clarify any

unclear responses, to pursue responses in more depth, and spontaneously to take up any unanticipated but interesting points that are raised in the course of the interview."

Another disadvantage common to all direct methods of investigating language attitudes, but one not easily avoided, is the questionable reliability of self-report data. Garrett *et al* (2003: 219) note that:

"...what in particular makes the study of language attitudes a methodological challenge is their latent qualities as constructs. Hence, although one might get apparently 'straight answers to 'straight questions' about attitudes in direct methods, there is often some uncertainty about whether these answers really do express the attitudes the researcher aims at accessing, or whether they have been influenced by other processes, such as social acceptability, acquiescence, and so on."

On the other hand, a questionnaire offers the benefit of uniformity:

Using questionnaires is a relatively uniform procedure, compared with an interview [...]. Whereas an interviewer may (even unintentionally) put questions in different ways to different people and/or on different occasions, a questionnaire is free from these and other interviewer effects (Garrett *et al* 2003: 34).

Moreover, a questionnaire can be administered by distance, an important advantage since I wished to include respondents who lived outside of Wellington. And, of course, a questionnaire represents less of an imposition on respondents than an interview.

Respondents
I selected as the focus of my study three sets of two Dutch families who emigrated to New Zealand when the first generation[3] was in their 20s or 30s, with young children, over three time periods: the 1950s ("the first period"), the 1970s or 1980s ("the second period"), and the 1990s or later ("the third period"). The eleven eventual respondents were all either personal contacts or identified through the friend-of-a-friend method.

Verivaki (1990: 63) notes that "[e]vidence for people's claims about language use with family members can be gained by interviewing different family members of one household, and comparing the data supplied by each family member." I therefore decided to collect information from respondents of as many generations as possible in each family as I felt that this would give a fuller picture of language attitudes within

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[3] Generation is here defined by family relationship rather than place of birth, so that generation 1 refers to the migrating parents, generation 2 to their children, and generation 3 to the children's children. In retrospect I have identified an issue in my choice of participants in that some of the participants grouped under generation 2 were born in the Netherlands (having migrated with their parents at a young age), and some were born in New Zealand. Whether the children were born in the Netherlands or not is likely to have some influence on their Dutch language proficiency (although as the children were quite young when they arrived this may not be significant). In any similar future study I would recommend controlling for this factor by ensuring that the participants' children were either all born in the Netherlands or all born in New Zealand. Verivaki (1990: 10) makes a distinction between "generation 1" and "generation 1b" on a similar basis, where generation 1b consists of "those foreign-born who lived in the foreign country for less than the first ten years of their life before emigrating". In the context of this study, however, I do not consider that the variability in place of birth of the members of generation 2 would have significantly distorted the results. It is my contention that whether or not the children were born in the Netherlands would impact on their language proficiency but not on the language attitudes of their parents, especially if the children were of a young age at time of migration.

each family, give the clearest indication of intergenerational change, and might also give greater validity to the results. All three generations are not however represented in all families or time periods: both potential first generation respondents in one of the families of the first period are no longer alive; as yet there are no third generation members of the second and third periods; and the children in the families of the third period were considered too young to be asked to fill in the questionnaire. The format of the questionnaire did however enable me to elicit secondary information about these 'missing' generations where possible from other generations within the families. Selected characteristics of the eleven respondents are set out in table 1.

Table 1
Characteristics of respondents

Period of arrival in NZ	Family	Date of arrival of first generation	Participating generations	Age of respondent at arrival in NZ
Period 1	Family 1	1954	Generation 1	37
			Generation 2	11
			Generation 3	N/A
	Family 2	1951	Generation 1	
			Generation 2	1
			Generation 3	N/A
Period 2	Family 1	1974	Generation 1	24
			Generation 2	N/A[4]
			Generation 3	
	Family 2	1983	Generation 1	26
			Generation 2	N/A[5]
			Generation 3	
Period 3	Family 1	1994	Generation 1	28[6]
			Generation 2	
			Generation 3	
	Family 2	1996	Generation 1	33[7]
			Generation 2	
			Generation 3	

Grey shaded areas under the column "participating generations" indicate that respondents of these generations were not available for questioning.

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[4] Respondent was born 4 years after parents' arrival in New Zealand
[5] Respondent was born 2 years after parents' arrival in New Zealand
[6] Respondent had one child aged 2 ½ on arrival in New Zealand
[7] Respondent had two children aged 3 and 2 on arrival in New Zealand

Results and discussion

All eleven respondents completed the questionnaire. I organised the responses into two charts, one by period of arrival and one by generation, to enable a two-way comparison of responses. Just the results that directly relate to the research questions are presented and discussed in this paper, and of course, given the small sample, these results can only be suggestive.

Change in levels of Dutch language maintenance
To ascertain level of Dutch language proficiency and use, respondents were asked about their confidence in communicating in Dutch, level of fluency in Dutch, situations in which they used Dutch, visits made to the Netherlands, and involvement in Dutch-related activities.

Language shift
All respondents of the first generation reported that they remained fluent in Dutch, and that they were equally confident using Dutch and English. Most of the first generation said they used Dutch "often" to speak to people (variously parents, partner, children, and other relatives) and "sometimes" to read books and magazines, write in Dutch or attend Dutch-related events. They had all made return visits to the Netherlands at least once, and most several times. All of the respondents' children had also visited the Netherlands. Almost all of the first generation (four out of five respondents) had been or were currently involved in a Dutch community activity, e.g. the Auckland Dutch Dancers, Dutch women's group, Dutch club, preparation of a Dutch exhibition, or the New Zealand Netherlands Foundation.

The level of Dutch proficiency reported by the second generation was more variable, but generally the members of this generation said they could understand Dutch but not speak it, or not speak it well. One second generation respondent of the second period reported being able to understand Dutch but not speak it, and the other reported being fairly fluent in spoken Dutch and said that he could read it but not write it. (This respondent has been living in the Netherlands for the past two years and reported that his Dutch had improved significantly as a result).

The second generation of the third period (as reported by their parents) could both speak and understand Dutch, though the parents commented that "anglicisms have slipped into their Dutch", and that their active vocabulary is limited. All of the second generation were most confident using English. Three of the four second generation respondents used Dutch "sometimes" to speak to parents, grandparents and other relatives, and half "sometimes" to read Dutch books and magazines, watch Dutch movies or speak to people at social gatherings. All respondents of the second generation had been to visit the Netherlands at least twice, and most several times. Only one of the second generation respondents reported being involved in Dutch-related community activities.

Neither of the third generation respondents of the first period of arrival reported any proficiency in Dutch; accordingly they were most confident using English, and there were no situations in which they used Dutch. One of the third generation respondents had visited the Netherlands, and both occasionally attended Dutch-related community

events, such as celebrating the Dutch Queen's birthday, going to Dutch exhibitions and Tulip Day.

Language attrition
Across periods of arrival, the first generation all reported fluency in Dutch, but noted that their Dutch had not developed as it would in the Netherlands (three respondents), and that it was hard to keep up their Dutch in times of high workload (one respondent). In the second generation, a respondent of the first period and a respondent of the second period both commented that their Dutch was better in the past, and a first generation respondent of the third period noted that her youngest child, who had not started school yet, was better at Dutch than her two older siblings, who found it difficult to "tell their school stories in Dutch".

A variety of reasons were given for these patterns. Respondents who reported being relatively fluent in Dutch attribute this variously to:
- keeping in touch with family and friends (4)
- talking Dutch in their home now (3)
- reading material in Dutch (2)
- their age on arrival in New Zealand (1)
- their recent arrival (1)
- Dutch being their first language (1)
- pride in their ethnic background (1)
- a desire to maintain the language (1)
- Dutch being spoken in the home as a child (1)
- visiting the Netherlands as a child (1);
- living in the Netherlands now (1).

Respondents who reported being better at Dutch in the past attributed their language attrition to:
- lack of practice (1)
- laziness (1)
- the universality of English resulting in contact with Dutch friends taking place in English (1);
- being discouraged from speaking Dutch at home as a child (1).

Respondents who never knew Dutch attributed this to:
- their parents not having taught them Dutch (2)
- being too young when they arrived in New Zealand to have learnt Dutch in the Netherlands (1); and
- being the only Dutch family in town on arrival in New Zealand (1).

Another factor not mentioned by respondents but one which may have influenced language maintenance in the second generation is intermarriage (Clyne and Kipp 1997, 'Aipolo 1989: 19). Both second generation respondents of the first period married non-Dutch speakers, as did all eight children of the first generation respondent of the first period.

In summary, the data suggests very similar patterns of intergenerational language shift and language attrition for respondents across all periods of arrival. Respondents of the

first period fit the common pattern of language shift being complete within three generations: "migrants are virtually monolingual in their mother tongue, their children are bilingual, and their grandchildren are often monolingual in the language of the 'host' country" (Holmes 2001: 52). It is too early to say whether this pattern will be repeated for the second and third periods, but it is reflected so far in the first two generations of these periods.

Individual attitudes within the Dutch speech community towards Dutch language maintenance in the 1950s and more recently
Although the patterns of language shift look very similar across different periods of arrival, there is some evidence that individual attitudes towards language maintenance are changing within the Dutch speech community in New Zealand.

Respondents' attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance were ascertained by asking them whether they considered it desirable to speak Dutch, if they had taken (or intended to take) any steps to maintain Dutch, if they thought it important to pass Dutch on to their children and, if so, how they were going about this[8].

Desirability of maintaining Dutch at an individual level
All respondents reported that they would like to be able to speak Dutch (or to maintain it if they already could speak it). Reasons given were more or less evenly spread across generations and time periods and included:
- to communicate with family and friends (5)
- to retain links with their heritage (5)
- to understand their culture (4)
- because it is fun (3)
- to communicate with Dutch people in general (2)
- because it is part of their identity (2)
- to read Dutch literature / magazines (2)
- to work / live overseas (2); and
- because knowing another language gives you a different perspective on the world (1).

As has been widely noted in attitudes research, however, positive attitudes do not necessarily correlate with action. Nicholson and Garland (1991: 405), for example, note in relation to New Zealanders' attitudes towards the revitalisation of the Māori language that "[o]f course, it is one thing to support an idea or situation but rather another to actually do something about it". Similarly, Berardi-Wiltshire (2004: 2), summarising findings from Miranda's (2001) research on the Italian-speaking community in Wellington, notes "there was no correlation between positive attitudes towards Italian and its use and maintenance, and actually, the subjects that have no or low-competence have the most positive feelings about the language". The findings in my study were consistent with these earlier results. Although all respondents liked the idea of speaking Dutch, of those that did not speak it already, none intended to take active steps to learn

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[8] Attitude statements were also included in the questionnaires but the responses were so variable across generations and across periods of arrival that no patterns could be discerned and the results are not included in this paper.

it, and of those who had once spoke Dutch better, only one reported that she intended to take active steps to improve her level of Dutch.

Desirability of passing Dutch on to children
Nor does a desire to maintain Dutch at an individual level necessarily correlate with a desire (and more importantly a commitment) to pass it on to one's children. One first generation respondent of the second period reported that she wished to retain Dutch herself in order to be able to speak to her mother, but she did not see it as important to pass Dutch on to her children. The first generation respondent and both second generation respondents of the first period saw value in speaking Dutch, but had not seen it as important to encourage their children to learn Dutch, one stating:
> "It was more important to take them to the Netherlands for a visit so they could meet their Dutch relations and experience Dutch culture first-hand."
Of course, the reduced Dutch proficiency of the second generation respondents of the first period presumably also acted as factors impeding the passing on of Dutch to their children.

More recent immigrants were much more likely to see it as important to pass Dutch on to their children and to engage in language maintenance efforts aimed at doing so. While the first generation respondent of the first period and one first generation respondent of the second period did not actively encourage their children to maintain Dutch, another first generation respondent of the second period and the two first generation respondents of the third period had taken active steps to encourage their children to learn and maintain Dutch. These steps included taking them to the Netherlands for holidays, speaking Dutch to them at home, encouraging them to talk about school activities in Dutch, giving hints and corrections, and playing naming games in the car or at the dinner table. One of the first generation respondents of the third period explained that she and her partner would go as far as:
> "bang[ing] the table real hard and saying "we speak Dutch in this family when there's no one else around" or "I cannot hear what you're saying" when the children address us in English."

Perceived difficulty of language maintenance
The first generation respondent of the first period referred to the general difficulties of language maintenance, saying that speaking Dutch in the home was "just about impossible. [...W]ith a large family and New Zealand friends all around us, English was spoken so we did not encourage the children to speak Dutch and they soon [...] forgot about it." First generation respondents of more recent periods also acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining Dutch. One first generation respondent of the third period reported:
> "It's getting harder and harder. [...] The children have a love-hate relationship with it because it is really difficult for them sometimes to tell their school stories in Dutch".
As noted above, however, acknowledgment of the difficulties of language maintenance among later periods of immigration has not stopped these respondents engaging in language maintenance efforts.

Language maintenance among the second generation
It is not only the first generation of more recent periods of arrival that appear more committed to Dutch language maintenance. Both second generation respondents of the second period, now aged twenty-five and nineteen, were themselves actively committed

to learning Dutch. One had moved to the Netherlands where he initially made a personal commitment to improve his Dutch by speaking to Dutch people only in Dutch[9], and the other reported that she intended to take Dutch classes, speak Dutch with Dutch friends more often, and move to the Netherlands in the future. The latter respondent had made this choice despite the fact that her mother had not regarded it as important to pass the Dutch language on to her children. The renaissance of interest in language maintenance among respondents of this age is comparable to that reported by Berardi-Wiltshire (2004: 4) for young Italian New Zealanders who are also showing an increased interest in learning the Italian language for reasons that appear associated with the concept of "investment" in ethnic identity. Roberts (1999: 304) also found that:

> "The New Zealand-born Dutch were most likely to support maintaining Dutch as a living language in New Zealand [...]. The responses suggest that issues of language and identity have become more salient for New Zealand-born Dutch than for their parents, who were more likely to be committed to a straightforward concept of assimilation."

The interest of the second generation respondents of the second period in maintaining Dutch represents a clear difference from the second generation respondents of the first period, who seem resigned to their lack of fluency in Dutch. The second generation children of the third period are too young at present for us to predict their future level of language maintenance.

In summary, then, the data indicates more positive attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance among first and second generation respondents of more recent periods of arrival. Although the pattern of language shift is at present consistent across periods of arrival, these positive attitudes and the commitment to language maintenance efforts that accompany them may impact in the future on the level of Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand.

Perceived societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance in the 1950s and more recently

Perceptions of societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance were elicited by asking respondents if they felt that New Zealand was a place that welcomed Dutch language maintenance today, and by asking them to describe any views they had on current societal attitudes in this regard. Respondents born outside of New Zealand were also asked to answer similar questions in relation to societal attitudes at the time they arrived in New Zealand. Although this approach has the limitation that it asks respondents to report on other people's attitudes, it seems reasonable to assume that if respondents were affected by societal attitudes, they would be aware of them and be able to report on them.

Attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance at time of arrival
Respondents of the first period reported that societal attitudes were a factor impeding language maintenance when they arrived in New Zealand. The following quotes are illustrative:

[9] It is necessary to make a special effort since, as this respondent reported, although "the Dutch have a stigma against people living [in Amsterdam] that do not speak Dutch [....ironically] the moment you speak Dutch to them they hear your accent and speak English back, making it very hard to practice."

"Migrants were encouraged to become totally assimilated as quickly as possible and maintenance of language was discouraged." [Second generation respondent of the first period].

"They usually expected us to become like New Zealanders, becoming just like them [...] as soon as possible. The highest praise was that you had become like them." [First generation respondent of the first period].

"New Zealanders were generally xenophobic in those days and unkind to English people [...] as well as Dutch people. Anyone who looked or spoke differently would not be accepted as part of the group. So it made sense not to talk Dutch." [Second generation respondent of the first period].

"I know that people did not like it when we spoke Dutch to Dutch people; of course it was not nice for them not to understand it. New Zealand people on the whole did not find it necessary I feel to maintain it." [First generation respondent of the first period].

By contrast, respondents of more recent periods of arrival mostly felt that New Zealanders welcomed Dutch language maintenance when they arrived. One first generation respondent of the second period stated that "at no time did I experience negative attitudes towards using the Dutch language", and both first generation respondents of the third period perceived societal attitudes to be welcoming, one referring to the "pendulum [...] swinging away from colonial attitudes". One second generation respondent of the second period, however, felt that New Zealanders were not welcoming in this way.

Attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance today
Across periods of arrival, first generation respondents who saw New Zealanders as welcoming Dutch language maintenance when they arrived continue to do so. A first generation respondent of the second period commented:

> "People do recognise my accent and comment on it, but never in a negative way. They are always interested to know which part of Holland I come from or to tell me they know some Dutch people or their friends or partner is Dutch."

Of the first generation respondents of the third period, one thought New Zealanders were "fairly positive about Dutch" and saw it as "something exotic", and the other said:

> "I have not ever heard any negative comments, [on] the contrary the New Zealanders seem to envy us for having another language [...,] people encourage it and are cool about it".

These views were shared by second generation respondents of the second period and third generation respondents of the first period, who variously commented:

> "I think that New Zealanders have no problem with Dutch people maintaining their language in New Zealand." [Second generation respondent of the second period.]

> "New Zealand seems to be more open to its multicultural population and although there may still be some resistance and even hostility towards some ethnic groups in New Zealand I would be surprised if this extended to Dutch New Zealanders." [Third generation respondent of the first period].

A thread that runs through some of the responses is that New Zealanders, although generally welcoming of Dutch language maintenance, may not be particularly interested in it. Hence, some respondents who saw New Zealanders as having generally positive attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance nevertheless stated that:

"In saying that I do not think the average New Zealander really takes notice of it or minds either way."[Second generation respondent of the second period].

"It may not be relevant to many New Zealanders. [...] I can imagine that they would not go out of their way for Dutch language." [First generation respondent of the third period].

This nevertheless represents a distinct change from the reported societal attitudes from the first period of arrival, where New Zealanders were seen as actively opposed to Dutch language maintenance.

The view that New Zealanders welcome Dutch language maintenance more readily today than in the past is not universally held, however. Views were particularly divided among respondents of the first period. So, while one second generation respondent of this period considered that New Zealanders were currently more welcoming, because "New Zealand is more multicultural today than in the days when we first arrived", the other second generation respondent of this period disagreed, stating that "New Zealand is overwhelmingly monolingual". And the first generation respondent of the first period commented that New Zealanders "still do not welcome [Dutch language maintenance] as being necessary". Therefore, two of the three respondents of the first period who felt attitudes were negative when they arrived do not think these attitudes have since improved. The first generation respondent of the second period who felt New Zealanders did not welcome Dutch language maintenance when she arrived also continued to hold this view, stating that New Zealand is "very obviously an English-speaking country where even the native Māori language is barely tolerated by most people".

In sum, respondents do not all agree that societal attitudes are currently more favourable towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand than in the past. It seems possible, however, that the negative societal attitudes towards immigrant languages which predominated at the time of arrival of respondents of the first period may continue to colour people's perceptions in some cases. Certainly the more positive societal attitudes reported by respondents of the third period suggest that a change has occurred.

Link between societal attitudes and individual attitudes within the Dutch speech community

To what extent can societal attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance be seen as linked to individual attitudes within the Dutch speech community in the different periods of arrival?

Caution is necessary since there appears to be a good deal of variation among individuals in this area. One second generation respondent of the second period, for example, implicitly rejects the idea that societal attitudes impacted on her own attitudes towards language maintenance, stating that New Zealanders did not welcome Dutch language maintenance when she arrived but "I never expected that to happen. It was my choice to come to New Zealand, nobody made me come. So I adopted the language spoken here in New Zealand". Nonetheless, some patterns can be perceived among the

Table 2
Perception of societal attitudes
and individual commitment to language maintenance

First period

	Family 1		Family 2	
	first generation	second generation	first generation	second generation
Societal attitudes on arrival	-	-		-
Societal attitudes today	-	+		-
Engagement in language maintenance efforts	-	-		-

Second period

	Family 1		Family 2	
	first generation	second generation	first generation	second generation
Societal attitudes on arrival	+	N/A	-	N/A
Societal attitudes today	+	+	-	+
Engagement in language maintenance efforts	+	+	-	+

Third period

	Family 1		Family 2	
	first generation	second generation	first generation	second generation
Societal attitudes on arrival	+		+	
Societal attitudes today	+		+	
Engagement in language maintenance efforts	+		+	

responses collected. Table 2 correlates respondents' perceptions of societal attitudes at time of arrival in New Zealand and currently, with their individual commitment to language maintenance efforts. A plus sign in the cells referring to societal attitudes indicates that the respondent felt these attitudes to be positive, and a minus sign indicates that the respondent felt these attitudes to be negative. A plus sign in the cell referring to commitment to language maintenance indicates that the respondent is actively engaged in language maintenance activities, and a minus sign indicates that they are not. (Results for the third generation respondents of the first period are not included in these charts. Although these respondents consider New Zealanders to be welcoming of Dutch language maintenance, their Dutch proficiency is non-existent, meaning that they have no Dutch to maintain.)

Table 2 shows that:

- respondents who have consistently regarded New Zealanders as not welcoming Dutch language maintenance are without exception not engaged in Dutch language maintenance efforts;
- the one respondent who saw New Zealanders as welcoming Dutch language maintenance now, but not when she arrived, is not engaged in language maintenance efforts;
- respondents who have consistently seen New Zealanders as welcoming Dutch language maintenance are without exception engaged in language maintenance efforts.

Although it is clearly important to be wary of assuming a direct link between societal attitudes and individual attitudes, nevertheless a correlation can be identified in the data between perceptions of positive societal attitudes towards language maintenance at time of arrival and individual commitment to language maintenance.

Conclusion

This study has examined attitudes to language maintenance among a small group of Dutch immigrants to New Zealand over three generations, and has attempted to link these to respondents' perceptions of societal attitudes to Dutch language maintenance both at the relevant period of immigration and today, as well as to the extent of their own individual efforts to maintain Dutch.

The results of this study suggest that societal and speech community attitudes towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand are perceived as more positive today than in the 1950s, and that these changed attitudes have implications for an improvement in the level of Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand. Although a much larger sample would be required to generalise the results, this is tentatively good news for Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand.

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Appendix

Questionnaire
Parts One and Two were largely modelled on Verivaki (1990) for demographics and language background, and Roberts (1999) for language proficiency. Part Four relating to language use draws on Verivaki (1990), Roberts (1999) and 'Aipolo (1989). The attitude questions in Part Five were adapted from Verivaki (1990), 'Aipolo (1989) and Kroef (1977).

DUTCH LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

Part One: Personal Information
(1) What is your gender?   MALE / FEMALE
(2) In what year were you born?   _____
(3) In which country were you born?   _____
(4) In which country was your <u>mother</u> born? _____
(5) In which country was your <u>father</u> born? _____
(6) Please list the countries in which you have lived and indicate how long you have spent in each country.
    (a) _____ for _____ years
    (b) _____ for _____ years
    (c) _____ for _____ years
    (d) _____ for _____ years
(7) (If applicable) In what year did you move to New Zealand? _____
(8) Are you single or do you have a partner?   SINGLE / PARTNER
(9) If you have (or had) a partner, is (or was) your <u>partner</u>:
    (a) Dutch   YES / NO
(b) If no, please specify your partner's nationality _____
(10) Do you have children?   YES / NO
(11) If you have <u>children</u>, please give the following information about them (where applicable):
    (a) First child: age
                country of birth   _____
                age at time of migration to NZ
                (if applicable)
    (b) Second child: age
                country of birth   _____
                age at time of migration to NZ
                (if applicable)
    (c) Third child: age
                country of birth   _____
                age at time of migration to NZ
                (if applicable)
    (d) Fourth child:age
                country of birth   _____
                age at time of migration to NZ
                (if applicable)
(Please continue over the page if necessary)
(12) Please tick your highest level of education, and circle where it took place
    (a) Primary   _____   THE NETHERLANDS / NEW ZEALAND
    (a) Secondary   _____   THE NETHERLANDS / NEW ZEALAND
    (a) Tertiary   _____   THE NETHERLANDS / NEW ZEALAND
    (a) Other (please specify)   _____
(13) What is your occupation? _____
(14) Please tick which ethnic group you most identify with:
    (e) Dutch
    (f) Dutch New Zealander   _____
    (g) New Zealander   _____
    (h) Other (please specify)   _____

Part Two: Language Background
(15) What was your first language? _____
(16) Was Dutch spoken in your home when you were a child?   YES / NO
    If yes, how often?   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / SELDOM
(17) Do (or did) your <u>parents</u> know
        (a) English only   _____
        (b) Dutch only   _____
        (c) Both English and Dutch _____
        (d) Other (please specify)   _____
(18) Do (or did) your <u>grandparents</u> know:
        (a) English only   _____
        (b) Dutch only   _____
        (c) Both English and Dutch _____
        (d) Other (please specify)   _____
(19) If you have (or had) a partner, does (or did) your <u>partner</u> understand and/or speak Dutch?
        (a) s/he understands (understood) Dutch   YES / NO
        (b) s/he speaks (spoke) Dutch   YES / NO
(20) If you have children, do your <u>children</u> understand and/or speak Dutch?
        (a) they understand Dutch   YES / NO
        (b) they speak Dutch   YES / NO
    If the Dutch language ability varies between your children, please provide further detail below:
(21) If you were born outside of New Zealand, how much English   A LOT / SOME / NONE
    did you know before you came to New Zealand?

Part Three: Language Ability
(22) Please tick the box that best describes your <u>speaking</u> skills now in Dutch and English:

	DUTCH	ENGLISH
Fluent		
Fairly fluent		
Not very fluent		
I can't speak it but I can understand it		
I can't speak it or understand it		

(23) Please tick the box that best describes your <u>writing and reading</u> skills now in Dutch and English:

	DUTCH	ENGLISH
I can write easily		
I can write fairly easily		
I can write with difficulty		
I can't write but I can read		
I can't read it or write it		

(24) Please circle one of the following options relating to change (or otherwise) in your Dutch language ability over time:
        (a) I have never been able to use Dutch
        (b) I was once significantly better at using Dutch than I am now
        (c) I can still use Dutch well
        (d) other (please specify)
(25) Please circle whether you feel most confident using:
        (a) English
        (b) Dutch
        (c) Both the same
(26) Have you learnt any other languages? (please specify languages and degree of fluency)
        (a) _____   BASIC KNOWLEDGE / FLUENT
        (b) _____   BASIC KNOWLEDGE / FLUENT
        (c) _____   BASIC KNOWLEDGE / FLUENT
        (d) _____   BASIC KNOWLEDGE / FLUENT

Part Four: Dutch language use
(27) Please circle one of the following options for each question:
        (a) How often do you <u>speak</u> to someone in Dutch?   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (b) How often do you <u>read</u> in Dutch?   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (c) How often do you <u>write</u> in Dutch?   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
(28) Please circle one of the following options to indicate how often you would use Dutch in the following situations:
        (a) speaking to partner (if applicable)   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (b) speaking to parents   (if applicable)   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (c) speaking to siblings (if applicable)   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (d) speaking to children (if applicable)   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (e) speaking to grandparents (if applicable) OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (f) speaking to other relatives   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (g) speaking to friends   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (h) at social gatherings   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (i) at Dutch-related events   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER

             (for example celebrating the Dutch
             Queen's birthday)
        (j) reading Dutch books, magazines   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
             or newspapers
        (k) watching movies in Dutch   OFTEN / SOMETIMES / NEVER
        (l) other (please specify below)
(29) Have you:
        (a) at any point been a member of a Dutch community organisation   YES / NO
             in New Zealand?
        (b) attended Dutch language classes?   YES / NO
        (c) been involved in any other groups or activities in New Zealand YES / NO
             involving contact with the Dutch language? (please specify below)
(30) Have you visited the Netherlands since you moved to New Zealand   YES / NO
    (or, if you were born in New Zealand, have you visited the Netherlands)?
    If you have visited the Netherlands, please list approximate dates, and indicate how long you stayed:
        (b) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (c) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (d) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (e) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (f) approximate date _____ how long _____
(31) If you have children, have your children been to visit the Netherlands?   YES / NO
    If yes, how often?
        (g) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (h) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (i) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (j) approximate date _____ how long _____
        (k) approximate date _____ how long _____

Part Five: Attitudes towards the Dutch Language

In this part, please answer <u>only the section that applies to you</u>.
        Answer <u>Section A</u> if you have never been able to use Dutch.
        Answer <u>Section B</u> if you were once significantly better at using Dutch than you
        are now.
        Answer <u>Section C</u> if you can still use Dutch well.
If none of the above categories apply to you exactly, please answer under the section that is closest to your experience.

Section A (only for those who have never been able to use Dutch)
(32) Why do you think you have never been able to speak Dutch? Please list any reasons you can think of below.
(33) Would you like to be able to speak Dutch?   YES / NO
    If yes, why?
    If no, why not?

(34) Have you taken any active steps to learn Dutch?   YES / NO
    If yes, please list below.
(35) Do you intend to take any active steps to learn Dutch?   YES / NO
    If yes, please list below.
(36) If you have children, has it been important to you to encourage your   YES / NO
    children to speak Dutch?
    If yes, how did you do this (or how are you doing this)?
(37) Do you think that New Zealand today is a place that is welcoming   YES / NO
    of Dutch people maintaining the Dutch language in New Zealand?
    Please briefly describe any views you have on current New Zealand attitudes towards Dutch
    language maintenance in New Zealand.
(38) If you were born outside New Zealand, did you feel that New   YES / NO
    Zealand was a place that was welcoming of Dutch people
    maintaining the Dutch language in New Zealand at the time when
    you arrived?
    Please briefly describe your experience of New Zealand attitudes towards Dutch language
    maintenance at the time when you arrived in New Zealand.
(39) Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements:
    (a) Dutch is a beautiful language   YES / NO
    (b) Dutch New Zealanders don't need to speak Dutch   YES / NO
    (c) Dutch New Zealanders should try to preserve their culture   YES / NO
       in New Zealand
    (d) Learning Dutch will be useful to Dutch New Zealand children YES / NO
    (e) I like the Dutch language   YES / NO
    (f) I like to be recognised as a Dutch New Zealander   YES / NO
    (g) Being able to speak Dutch is an important part of being Dutch YES / NO
    (h) The Dutch language has a place in New Zealand society   YES / NO
    (i) Dutch New Zealanders should try to maintain their Dutch language YES / NO
    (j) To be fully Dutch, you need to know the Dutch language   YES / NO
    (k) I prefer to think of myself as a New Zealander rather than Dutch YES / NO

Section B (only for those who were once significantly better at using Dutch than they are now)
(40) What reasons do you see for your decreased fluency in Dutch? Please list any reasons you
    can think of below.
(41) Would you like to be able to speak Dutch better than you do?   YES / NO
    If yes, why?
    If no, why not?
(42) Have you taken any active steps to improve your knowledge of Dutch?   YES / NO
    If yes, please list below.
(43) Do you intend to take any active steps to improve your knowledge of   YES / NO
    Dutch?
    If yes, please list below.
(44) (If you have children) Has it been important to you to encourage your YES / NO
    children to speak Dutch?
    If yes, how did you do this (or how are you doing this)?
(45) Do you think that New Zealand today is a place that is welcoming   YES / NO
    of Dutch people maintaining the Dutch language in New Zealand?
    Please briefly describe any views you have on current New Zealand attitudes towards Dutch
    language maintenance in New Zealand.
(46) If you were born outside New Zealand, did you feel that New   YES / NO
    Zealand was a place that was welcoming of Dutch people
    maintaining the Dutch language in New Zealand at the time when
    you arrived?
    Please briefly describe your experience of New Zealand attitudes towards Dutch language
    maintenance at the time when you arrived in New Zealand.
(47) Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements:
    (a) Dutch is a beautiful language   YES / NO
    (b) Dutch New Zealanders don't need to speak Dutch   YES / NO
    (c) Dutch New Zealanders should try to preserve their culture   YES / NO
       in New Zealand
    (d) Learning Dutch will be useful to Dutch New Zealand children YES / NO
    (e) I like the Dutch language   YES / NO

    (f) I like to be recognised as a Dutch New Zealander   YES / NO
    (g) Being able to speak Dutch is an important part of being Dutch YES / NO
    (h) The Dutch language has a place in New Zealand society   YES / NO
    (i) Dutch New Zealanders should try to maintain their Dutch language YES / NO
    (j) To be fully Dutch, you need to know the Dutch language   YES / NO
    (k) I prefer to think of myself as a New Zealander rather than Dutch YES / NO

Section C (only for those who can still use Dutch well)
(48) What reasons do you see for your continued ability in Dutch? Please list any reasons you
    can think of below.
(49) Is it important to you to be able to speak Dutch?   YES / NO
    If yes, why?
    If no, why not?
(50) Have you taken any active steps to maintain your level of Dutch language YES / NO
    ability?
    If yes, please list below.
(51) Do you intend to take any active steps to maintain your level of Dutch YES / NO
    language ability?
    If yes, please list below.
(52) (If you have children) Has it been important to you to encourage your YES / NO
    children to speak Dutch?
    If yes, how did you do this (or how are you doing this)?
(53) Do you think that New Zealand today is a place that is welcoming   YES / NO
    of Dutch people maintaining the Dutch language in New Zealand?
    Please briefly describe any views you have on current New Zealand attitudes
    towards Dutch language maintenance in New Zealand.
(54) If you were born outside New Zealand, did you feel that New   YES / NO
    Zealand was a place that was welcoming of Dutch people
    maintaining the Dutch language in New Zealand at the time when
    you arrived?
    Please briefly describe your experience of New Zealand attitudes towards Dutch language
    maintenance at the time when you arrived in New Zealand.
(55) Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements:
    (a) Dutch is a beautiful language   YES / NO
    (b) Dutch New Zealanders don't need to speak Dutch   YES / NO
    (c) Dutch New Zealanders should try to preserve their culture   YES / NO
       in New Zealand
    (d) Learning Dutch will be useful to Dutch New Zealand children YES / NO
    (e) I like the Dutch language   YES / NO
    (f) I like to be recognised as a Dutch New Zealander   YES / NO
    (g) Being able to speak Dutch is an important part of being Dutch YES / NO
    (h) The Dutch language has a place in New Zealand society   YES / NO
    (i) Dutch New Zealanders should try to maintain their Dutch language YES / NO
    (j) To be fully Dutch, you need to know the Dutch language   YES / NO
    (k) I prefer to think of myself as a New Zealander rather than Dutch YES / NO

Part Six: Further comments
(56)   If you have any further comments (however few or many!) in relation to you and the Dutch
    language, I would be very interested to hear them. Please write anything else you would like
    to say below.

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The use of *got* in Malaysian English

Jeh Sie Tan

Abstract

This study investigates the use of *got* in Malaysian English. Using two sets of informal Malaysian English speech data, a TV talk show (public context) and a phone conversation (private context), a number of functions of the verb *got* are identified, some of which appear to be distinctive to Malaysian English, and one of which has not been previously identified. These distinct types of *got* occurred more frequently in the private context. Self-monitoring and topic are proposed as important factors influencing the use of *got* in these contexts. A small survey using five Malaysian Chinese university students to evaluate the acceptability of the different uses of *got* identified in the speech data supported the analysis, and also indicated that for these educated Malaysian Chinese students, standard English still equates with Standard British English (SBrE).

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Introduction

Standard English in Malaysia: local or external standards?
Public concern in recent years about what is regarded as the declining standard of English in Malaysia raises an important issue: What is *the* Standard English form for Malaysians? Some researchers have chosen to equate Standard English in Malaysia with Standard British English (SBrE) (e.g. Crismore, Yeok-Hwa Ngeow and Soo 1996: 320, Platt and Weber 1980: 48). Studies on Malaysians' attitude toward English also show that SBrE form is widely considered as "the standard" and is highly regarded, whereas Malaysian English (ME) is considered "wrong English" by some (e.g. Crismore *et al.* 1996). By contrast, other researchers have commented on the difficulty of defining Standard English in a society like Malaysia where the language has evolved since British rule to suit local conditions (e.g. Gupta 2004). Wong (1981: 94) even claims that it is no longer "necessary or desirable to aim at a foreign standard of English" since it is "no longer...possible to model Malaysian speech on native-speaker British English". Then again, there are researchers who try to reconcile both extremes by suggesting that Malaysians may have an unofficial standard which is a local variety, while maintaining that the official standard is SBrE (e.g. Platt and Weber 1980: 169).
The issue of defining Malaysian Standard English has been brought to the fore by Newbrook (1997: 236-7), who alludes to the debate between "advocates of a continuing reliance upon exonormative standards ...and those who seek to develop local endonormative standards". He claims that the reluctance to accept a local standard is due to the failure in recognising the existence of the acrolect. Therefore, the term "Malaysian English" is understood to refer only to the mesolects and basilects (Newbrook 1997: 235). Furthermore, those who use the acrolect often mistakenly think

it is no different from SBrE. Newbrook (1997: 235) gives the example of the Singapore/Malaysian acrolectal: *I slept at midnight* ('I fell asleep at midnight'), which he says is "wrongly believed to be, also, SBrE usage". This is important because "the grammatical differences between even the 'least local' (acrolectal)...Malaysian usage and its American/ British/ international equivalents are numerous and in some cases quite major (at times threatening intelligibility)" (Newbrook 1997:237).

At this stage, then, although researchers are working on a one-million-word corpus of ME, there is still is no accepted codification of Standard ME (Gill 2002).[1] And, while it is widely accepted that a useful indicator for identifying a standard form is if it "dominates writing" (Gupta 2004), there has not yet been any analysis of the dominant features of written Malaysian English.

Previous studies of *got*

As indicated above, there appears to be little research conducted in the area of ME grammar, and certainly no detailed study of the uses and meanings of the verb *got*. Several works mention *got* in their overview of ME (or in descriptions of the closely related Singlish[2]) features, but it is given very little space (e.g. Wong 1983: 132; Newbrook 1997: 240; Platt and Weber 1980: 61; Platt 1982: 397). Yet, clearly *got* deserves further attention, since even this meagre literature suggests that there are some types of *got* which are acceptable in SBrE, others which are acceptable in informal native Englishes, and still others which may occur only in ME.

On the basis of the little that has been written about *got* to date, five distinct categories can be identified:

A. *Got* as the past tense of *get* (e.g. *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary* 1995: 705-6)
> What *got* me interested was looking at an old New York Times.
> I *got* a job at the sawmill.

B. *Got* as past participle of *get*[3] (e.g. Biber et al. 1999: 399)
> We have *got* ourselves into a rut.

C. *Got* to denote possession
(1) With subject pronoun (Platt and Weber 1980: 61)
> I *got* two brothers, one sister.

This form is similarly used in informal BrE or American English (AmE) speech, where the auxiliary *have* is omitted (Quirk et al. 1985: 142n; *Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2003). Nevertheless, Biber et al. (1999: 466) found that *has/have got* occurs more frequently in informal BrE than either *got* or *have* alone. Furthermore, *got*-forms are more common in BrE than in AmE (Biber et al. 1999:161).

(2) With subject pronoun ellipsis

According to Melchers and Shaw (2003: 165), "the omission of sentence subjects (and objects) that can be inferred from the context" is a feature of ME. Therefore, theoretically, *got two brothers, one sister* (= *I have two brothers, one sister*) is acceptable in ME. Quirk et al. (1985: 897-8) provide a similar example in informal BrE:
> (Have you) *Got* any chocolate?

D. *Got* replacing existential-locative denotations
This use of *got* has been deemed "peculiar to colloquial ME and not found in informal native Englishes" (Wong 1983: 132, also referred to by Platt and Weber 1980: 61):
> *Got* too many people in the room already. ('There are...')
> *Got* many nice dresses in that shop. ('There are...')

E. *Got* as an auxiliary (with bare infinitive) in the sense of 'have' (Wong 1983: 132-3, cited in Newbrook 1997: 24)
> I *got* go there before.

There is no mention of this form of *got* in either BrE or AmE in the literature that was surveyed (e.g. Biber et al. 1999; Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

Even though earlier studies have briefly mentioned some types of *got* in ME, there is no single work that lists all these different types of *got* which are available to a Malaysian speaker.

The present study

This project aims firstly to investigate the uses and distribution of *got* in informal spoken ME. Two specific questions are addressed:
- What are the different types of *got* available to a speaker of Malaysian English?
- How does the distribution of these types of *got* differ in a private context as compared to a public one? (The criteria for defining "public" and "private" are provided below.)

It was hypothesised that those types of *got* which are most different from SBrE, (e.g. types D and E above) would be used more frequently in a private informal context as opposed to a public informal one.

Secondly, in order to shed light on the issue of whether there are local standards of English in Malaysia that are different from exonormative ones, the acceptability of different types of *got* for speakers of Malaysian English is explored. While I am well aware of the problems this decision raises, for the purposes of this study, SBrE is referred to as "the standard" because it is so well-described and codified.

Method

Speech data

The data used for this study consisted of two recordings: a TV talk show (public context), and a telephone conversation (private context). The length of each recording was approximately 33 minutes. The speakers lived in Kuala Lumpur and were highly proficient English speakers. Even though both sets of data can be considered to be informal, the degree of informality varied due to the influence of the private vs public context. Criteria for "public" and "private" were based on physical setting, intended

audience, and topic discussed (adapted from Brown and Fraser 1979: 35, cited in Giles and Coupland 1991:7).

The talk show was regarded as a public context because it was situated in a café in an upper-middle class area in Kuala Lumpur (Bangsar) and broadcast to a live audience that consisted of young people. Furthermore, the audience was not confined to those present during the live recording, but also included passers-by and those who watched the show on TV. The live-audience was multiracial, including Chinese, Malays, Eurasians and Europeans. The host (H) interviewed three separate groups who worked in the entertainment industry. The interviews were light-hearted, and the speech was clearly targeted at a Malaysian audience since many ME features were used (including distinctive pragmatic particles and code-switching/mixing between languages). For this study, the speeches of H and his interviewees were analysed (all of them were male). H was Malaysian Chinese, but his interviewees were of different ethnicities (Chinese, Eurasian and Malay).

The speaker in the informal phone conversation (M) was a Malaysian Chinese middle-aged company director who had been educated in an English-medium school under the British system. The telephone conversation was regarded as a private context because M was alone speaking in her office to a close friend (same gender and age-group) about some problems at work. Only M's speech was considered for this project since her friends could not be heard.

Examples of *got* in both sets of data were analysed using the categories A – E described above. The distribution of *got* in the different conversations was also analysed.

Survey

A survey was conducted with five female Malaysian Chinese participants from Victoria University of Wellington. They were all from English-dominant speaking homes[4] and regarded English as the language in which they were "most proficient". They had lived in New Zealand between seven months and three years, and were between the ages of 19 and 22. All had regular contact with other Malaysians and they therefore made regular use of ME.

The purpose of the survey was to examine the acceptability of different types of *got* for these Malaysians. In devising the elicitation material, I used examples found in the speech data collected. This meant that the survey examples were not artificially constructed or "made up", but were derived from actual Malaysian speech.

The survey consisted of two sections which asked participants to indicate the acceptability of *got* in: (a) speech, and (b) in writing. For (a), if they found the sentences acceptable, the participants were asked to indicate who they could use the sentences with. In both sections, participants were invited to change the sentence if they found it unacceptable.

Twenty sentences were chosen from the data and randomly ordered in the survey. The sentences were slightly modified in order to eliminate as far as possible any other

[4] Most of these participants came from multilingual homes where English was used alongside dialects of Chinese (e.g. Hokkien, Cantonese). The participants had also attended Malay-medium schools, which meant they could communicate in Bahasa Malaysia as well. Nevertheless, English was the language they used most frequently.

informal ME features besides *got*, while retaining the sense of the sentence. Contextual information was added to some sentences.

Two pilot studies were conducted: one with a Malaysian male subject and another with four Linguistics PhD students. This ensured that the questions could be understood by the participants. The pilot participants also offered useful advice concerning the final survey layout.

The survey was conducted face-to-face for all but one participant, with two follow-up interviews to fill in gaps where people had not provided all the required information. This approach would obviously be problematic with more participants. Moreover, in hindsight, I should have asked respondents to tick *all* boxes when it came to specifying when they could use the sentences in speech. The information collected concerning when they considered they could use the sentences, or how they would change them, provided useful insights into how participants interpreted the word "acceptable". Occasionally participants found it difficult to imagine a context for a sentence (e.g. they could not imagine using the content in writing); this may have affected the results.

Results and discussion

Speech data: categorising instances of *got*

The results were first analysed on the basis of the five categories of *got* described above. However, it became clear that the data included an additional type of *got* which had not been identified in any previous research, namely *got* followed by a Malaysian English particle such as *ah* or *meh*: e.g. "So you have a girlfriend ah? *Got* ah?" This necessitated an additional category. Hence category F "*got* + particle" was added to account for forms which emerged from the data but were not accounted for in previous descriptions. See table 1.

Table 1
Categories of *got*

A	Past tense of *get*
B	Past participle of *get* (with HAVE auxiliary)
C1	*Got* = Main verb HAVE (with subject pronoun)
C2	*Got* = Main verb HAVE (with subject pronoun ellipsis)
D	Existential (usually translated as 'There/ It + BE' in SBrE)
E	*Got* = Auxiliary verb (with bare infinitive)
F	*Got* + Particle (e.g. *ah* or *meh*)

Table 2 provides instances of each category which occurred in the data collected. Examples in category A are acceptable in SBrE while examples in categories B, C1 and C2 conform to informal British English norms; examples in categories D, E and F, by contrast, are distinctively Malaysian forms. Nevertheless, interpretation for these sentences is always context-dependent. For example, HAVE + *got* in sentences (3)–(6)

in table 2 could be read as meaning either "has/have acquired" or "possess/possesses". However, context indicates that it is the latter.

Table 2
Examples of *got* according to category from both sets of speech data.

A	1. I *got* this free.
	2. The thing about how I *got* into it was that I just like entertaining.
B	3. I've *got* some interesting news for all you guys, ok?
	4. We've *got* "Rug Batch" on the show tonight!
	5. He's *got* a fantastic voice.
	6. He's *got* steel between his legs.
	7. Has it *got* any power? [Referring to a pair of sunglasses.]
C1	8. Malaysia *got* a lot of interesting people.
	9. We *got* submarine commanders
	10. We *got* fighter pilots
	11. We *got* VCD seller.
	12. Why we *got* "Big Band" ready already?
	13. We *got* "Ultimate"- M.C. Ultimate from "Teh Tarik".
	14. We *got* JG from "States".
	15. She *got* the wisdom.
	16. My computer *got* problem that last few days.
	17. Your computer *got* problem why you never voice out?
	18. My customer *got* private thing to talk to me.
	19. Sometimes she *got* private matters to talk to customers and another third person cannot be there to hear it.
	20. I *got* another telephone call. [= 'I am on another line']
	21. He *got* no choice lor. [*lor*= signals resignation.]
	22. How to have meeting, he *got* no voice!
	23. She only *got* two weeks holiday.
C2	24. The girls want to know, *got* girlfriend or not.
	25. He pretend *got* no voice lor.
D	26. *Got* more Chelsea fans here, you know.
	27. If she turns back means, *got* chance.
	28. You see, *got* some Chinese! [= 'There is some Chinese blood in you.']
	29. *Got* a bit lah. [= 'There is a bit']
	30. If *got* any personal thing should be after business hour. [= 'If there is any personal matter, it should be discussed after business hour.']
	31. Four of them went to the factory because *got* some customers came to visit.
	32. That day's meeting *got* say such things meh? [= 'Were (there) really such things said at that day's meeting?']
	33. Where *got* time to do all this? [= 'Where is there time to do all this?']
E	34. He said that Betty *got* complain about Cherry.
	35. People are concern over you, ask you whether you *got* take medicine, whether you need to see a doctor.
F	36. So you have a girlfriend ah? *Got* ah? [= 'So do you have a girlfriend? Do you?']
	37. *Got* meh? [Follow on from (31). = 'Were there?/ Is that really so?']

In the sentences in category E, *got* is used as an auxiliary followed by the stem form of the verb (Wong 1983: 132-3, cited in Newbrook 1997: 24). This appears to be a technique for making past time reference explicit, and perhaps emphatic. (34), for

example, could be translated into SBrE either as: 'He said that Betty complained about Cherry' or as '...Betty *did* complain about Cherry'.

As mentioned above, category F was added to those identified in the literature to take account of instances of *got* occurring with a distinctive ME particle. Further research could usefully explore whether are rules governing when this form of *got* is used. Even though sentence (36) suggests that *got* could be functioning as an emphatic marker, for example, this is not the case with sentence (37). A bigger sample is needed to verify the way *got* has been categorised here. Also, further research could compare the frequency and distribution of the main verb *have* with *got*, in order to explore the issue of possible constraints on the use of *got*.

Speech data: distribution of instances of got

The hypothesis that the distinctly Malaysian types of *got* are used more often in a private context as opposed to a public one is supported by the results summarised in Table 3.

Table 3
Distribution of *got* according to category in each speech data.

Category	TV Talk Show (I)	Phone Conversation (II)
A	2	0
B	5	0
C1	7	9
C2	1	1
D	4	4
E	0	2
F	1	1
Total	20	17

It is immediately clear that there is not a single example of the more standard category A and B types of *got* in the private informal context (II), whilst instances of the distinctively Malaysian type of *got* in category E did not occur in the more public informal context (I). The high number of instances of *got* in category C1 (i.e. with explicit subject) in both sets of data suggests that *got* without auxiliary *have* may be a particularly characteristic feature of ME. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that even though subject pronoun ellipsis is a well-recognised ME feature, there are not many occurrences of *got* from category C2 in the data.

The higher frequency of British English-like instances of *got* in context (I) could be influenced by the government's concern regarding the issue of English standards in Malaysia. In (I), the speakers may be more sensitive to the norms appropriate to a public context, which would result in greater self-monitoring in order to use a variety that facilitates international intelligibility. The inverse is true for context (II) where self-monitoring is reduced, apparently resulting in less standardized speech patterns (Giles and Powesland 1975: 124). It is also possible that this informal pattern is especially evident in a relaxed phone conversation between a woman and her close friend (Holmes

2001). On the other hand the number of occurrences of *got* from categories D and F is no different in contexts (I) and (II), perhaps because the participants in context (I) still wish to signal their Malaysian identity to their target audience.

Survey

The survey asked five Malaysian Chinese respondents to assess the relative acceptability of different forms of *got* in speech and writing, and in different social contexts. The sentences used in the survey can be found in the appendix.

Table 4 provides the results of the participants' judgments about relative acceptability of *got* in speech and writing. There was a marked contrast between the acceptability of *got* in the different media: even though, in general, the participants were willing to accept less standard English types of *got* in speech, they were considerably less willing to accept these *got*-types in writing.

Table 4
Acceptability of *got* in speech and in writing, as indicated by the 5 participants

Category:	Sentence:	Speech:	Writing:
A		5*	1*
B		3	0
B		5	5*
C1		3	0
C1		3	0
C1		3	0
C1		4	1
C2		1	0
C2		1	0
D		4	0
D		4	0
D		3	0
D		4	0
E		2	0
F		4	0

* One participant in each of these groups made changes which indicated that *got* was acceptable although some other feature of the sentence was not.

Exploring the acceptability of different types of *got* in different social contexts, table 5 reveals that the survey respondents had reservations about using *got* in speaking with their Kiwi friends or with people with authority or status. Furthermore, the more distinct Malaysian types of *got* (C1), in particular, are only used in speaking with Malaysian friends.

Only one participant thought that sentence (13) could be used with her Kiwi friends as she presumed they would understand her. Nevertheless, the results of her survey indicated that she was not prepared to accept it in writing. Sentence (3) was problematic because of its use of the term "power" to refer to the strength of a pair of sunglasses. The Malaysian pilot subject had no problems with that term, but some of the actual

participants did. They claimed that the sentence would be appropriate (in speech) if one were referring to electricity or machinery power. But they were less prepared to accept the sentence if it referred to a pair of sunglasses. This explains the aberrant result for sentence (3) which had been categorised as similar to a standard English form.

Interestingly, Type-A was not favoured in writing while Type-B was considered perfectly acceptable, suggesting that *have got* is considered more standard by Malaysians than the past tense *got*. This is supported by two instances where *has/have got* (or *'ve got*) were employed by participants as changes to a sentence in part (b) of the survey:

(5)   We *'ve got* fighter pilots in Malaysia.
(10)   She*'s* only *got* two weeks of holidays…

This suggests that *have got* may have become established as a feature of standard ME, as opposed to BrE where it is common only in informal speech (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 112).

Table 5
Contexts in which participants reported they could use *got* in speech

Category:	Sentence:	Malaysian Friends	Kiwi Friends	Malaysian Employer/ Lecturer
A		4	1	1
B		3	-	-
B		5	2	-
C1		3	-	-
C1		3	-	1
C1		3	2	1
C1		4	2	1
C2		1	-	-
C2		1	-	-
D		4	-	-
D		4	-	-
D		3	-	-
D		4	1	-
E		2	-	-
F		4	-	-

Another interesting point is the low response towards accepting C2 sentences (perhaps reflecting the low number of instances of C2 in the speech data analysed). This suggests that *got* replacing the main verb *have* with pronoun ellipsis is not a common occurrence

in ME, although pronoun ellipsis may occur frequently in other types of grammatical structures.

Sentence (10) was considered acceptable by one Malaysian participant. This participant was from Malacca, suggesting that there may be different Malaysian English standards in cities outside Kuala Lumpur, even among those who profess to be proficient English speakers. On the other hand, it may be an idiosyncratic preference. Further research is needed to explore this issue.

Conclusion

This project investigated the use of *got* in Malaysian English. The different types of *got* found in informal speech were categorised, and the distribution of these *got*-types in a private and public context have been described. It was found that distinctively Malaysian types of *got* were used more frequently in the private context examined as opposed to the public context. The extent of self-monitoring and topic were suggested as factors influencing the use of *got* in these contexts. Results also suggest that *got* alone (without HAVE) may be used more frequently in ME speech than in BrE or AmE.

The study also sought to test the acceptability of different types of *got* for Malaysian participants in different contexts. In general, distinctively Malaysian *got*-types are acceptable mainly in spoken interaction, and particularly in informal speech interaction between Malaysians. In writing, there is no indication that Malaysians subscribe to a different (i.e. endonormative) standard of English from SBrE. However, the results do suggest that the perfect aspect of *got* (*have got*) may have become standard in ME, and is commonly used in both speech and writing, unlike in BrE, where it is mainly confined to informal speech.

Proposals for future research have been mentioned throughout this project. A larger and more extensive sample of data and participants is needed before the results can be generalised. Examination of formal written texts could usefully verify the claim that the perfect aspect of *got* has become a feature of standard ME. In this study, the survey participants were confined to the Chinese Malay ethnic group whose predominant language is English. It would be interesting to compare the results with Malaysians from a Chinese-medium background. In addition, the fact that the current participants are studying in New Zealand may affect their notion of what constitutes "Standard English". Hence, research could be conducted with Malaysian students from a similar background in Malaysia. Furthermore, studies may be undertaken to compare notions of Standard English in different parts of Malaysia. Finally, ethnicity remains an important factor to consider when studying language patterns in a multiracial country like Malaysia. Overall, then, it is hoped that this research will serve as a stepping-stone towards further study in the area of Malaysian grammar.

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Appendix

Sentences used in the survey

Sentence Number:	Got-type:	Sentence:
1.	A	I *got* this pair of sunglasses for nothing.
2.	C1	Malaysia *got* a lot of interesting people.
3.	B	Has it *got* any power?
4.	C2	The girls want to know *got* girlfriend or not? [A directing this to B]
5.	C1	We *got* fighter pilots in Malaysia.
6.	C2	The other day he pretend *got* no voice.
7.	D	If she turns back and notices you means *got* chance.
8.	C1	I can't speak on the phone with you right now because I *got* another telephone call. [A is telling this to C while putting B on hold]
9.	D	*Got* more Chelsea football fans here.
10.	C1	She only *got* two weeks holiday and will be going back to university next week.
11.	D	That day's meeting *got* say such things meh? ['meh' serves a a question marker]
12.	B	I've *got* some interesting news for all of you.
13.	D	Where *got* time to do all this?
14.	F	So you have a girlfriend ah? *Got* ah? ['ah' serves as a question marker]
15.	E	He told me that Betty *got* complain to him about Cherry.

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How female leaders use humour to reconcile their professional and their gender identities

Stephanie Schnurr

Abstract

Because leadership is an inherently masculine concept, women in leadership positions often face a double-bind of opposing demands: they are expected to behave in ways that are compatible with the masculine norms of their workplaces (and often professions), while also trying to maintain their femininity. In their attempts to escape this double bind, women leaders skillfully balance their professional and their gender identity when interacting with their colleagues and subordinates. Employing a social constructionist approach, an analysis of the discourse of two female leaders in two New Zealand IT companies illustrates how they portray themselves as feminine leaders within the restrictions of a predominately masculine profession, while also meeting their organisation's expectations. One of the most interesting discursive devices on which these women draw in order to achieve these aims is humour.

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Introduction

The notion of leadership is not gender-neutral. Because, historically, most leaders have been men, leadership is typically associated with masculinity (e.g. Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995, Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban 2003, Sinclair 1998). Consequently, female leaders are often perceived as deviant exceptions to the (male) norm (Trauth, 2002: 114, Ely 1988, Geis, Brown and Wolfe 1990, Heilman, Block, Martell, and Simon, 1989), especially in traditionally masculine professions, such as Information Technology (henceforth IT) which is typically viewed as a domain of "men's work" (Trauth 2002: 101). This gender imbalance is also reflected in the numbers of male and female employees in IT: in New Zealand in 1996 a minority of 21.6% of computing professionals were women (Ministry of Research, Science and Technology 1998), and in 2001 male IT workers in managerial positions outnumbered females by three to one (Statistics on Information Technology in New Zealand 2003).[1] Due to their under-representation, women in IT professions are often viewed as the "odd girls out" (Trauth 2002: 114)

There is also evidence that women leaders are judged as less competent than male leaders (eg Ely, 1988; Geis et al, 1990), and Heilman et al (1989: 41) suggest that women leaders are also associated with such negative attributes as "bitter, quarrelsome, and selfish". Female leaders thus often find themselves caught in a double bind facing

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[1] This number includes not only IT companies but also professionals in IT jobs in non-IT organisations.

the different demands of being professional and being feminine (Alvesson and Billing 1997: 150, Case 1994, Peck 2000). In order to assert themselves in a predominately masculine environment and to escape this double bind, these leaders need to balance their professional and their gender identities carefully as they interact with their colleagues and subordinates throughout their working day.

The aim of this paper is to illustrate how two female leaders from different New Zealand IT organisations portray themselves as good and efficient leaders by reconciling the apparently contradictory demands of 'doing leadership' and 'doing gender'. Among the various discursive strategies that these women employ in order to achieve this, humour is of particular interest.

Constructing Identities
Language use is an important means for constructing social identities (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, Holmes 1997, Holmes, Stubbe and Marra 2003, Bucholtz, Liang, and Sutton 1999, Wodak 1997). Through their discursive behaviour, individuals constantly shape and construct their various complex identities. This assumption underlies the social constructionist approach which views language as "a set of strategies for negotiating the social landscape" and for building identities (Crawford 1995: 17). Social constructionism puts particular emphasis on "the dynamic aspects of interaction, and the constantly changing and developing nature of social identities [and] social categories (Holmes and Marra 2002a: 378). It "explore[s] the variety of ways in which linguistic performances relate to constructing both conventional gendered identities and identities that [...] challenge conventional gender norms" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 3) Professional identities and gender identities are understood as ongoing performances constructed and negotiated through discourse (Bucholtz et al, 1999, Holmes 1997, Holmes et al 2003). This framework is thus particularly useful for understanding how female leaders balance the sometimes contradictory demands of their professional and their gender identity.

Leadership and Gendered Behaviours
In the management and organisational literature, leadership is generally defined as "the ability to influence others" (Dwyer 1993: 553; see also Hede 2001), which may extend over "people, teams, strategy and organisational culture" (Gardner and Terry 1996: 154). Hence, leadership can be viewed as a performance which typically includes the achievement of transactional objectives as well as more relational aspects (e.g. Heifertz 1998: 347). Transactional behaviours "focus on the task to be achieved, the problem to be solved, or the purpose of the meeting" (Dwyer 1993: 572); they typically include setting goals, leading meetings and getting things done. Relationally oriented behaviours, on the other hand, aim to foster group dynamics and create a productive working atmosphere. Taking account of these criteria and considering communicative performance as a crucial aspect of achieving these leadership aims, leadership discourse can productively be viewed as a communicative performance which, by influencing others, advances outcomes for the organisation (transactional objectives) while also maintaining harmony with the team (relational behaviours).

Stereotypically, most transactional aspects of leadership, such as displaying authority and giving directives are associated with masculine styles of behaviours (Case 1988, 1994, Kathlene 1995, Holmes and Stubbe 2003a), while more relationally oriented behaviours, such as reinforcing solidarity and creating a positive workplace culture, are typically associated with femininity (Case 1988, 1994, Fletcher 1999, Holmes and

Marra 2002b, Kathlene 1995). These types of "off-line, backstage, or collaborative work" specifically associated with feminine ways of doing things have been described as relational practices (Fletcher 1999: ix). They often "'get disappeared' – not because they are ineffective but because they get associated with the feminine, relational, or so-called softer side of organizational practice" (Fletcher 1999: 3). In spite of the fact that they are "frequently overlooked" (Holmes and Marra 2002b), it can be argued that all four types of relational practice identified by Fletcher (1999: 85) – "preserving", "mutual empowering", "self-achieving" and "creating team" – describe behaviours which are crucial for a positive and effective leadership performance. But, Fletcher (1999: 74) argues, these rather feminine relational practices constitute "leadership of a different sort" from the traditional (masculine) stereotype of leadership. The suggestion that these behaviours, typically associated with femininity, are desirable for leadership is not widely accepted – instead, more masculine styles of leadership are generally regarded as paradigmatic ways of expressing power and authority: "the language of leadership often equates with the language of masculinity" (Hearn and Parkin 1988: 21; see also Beck 1999).

Humour, Leadership and Identity Display
Leadership, identity and gender are dynamic processes – they are not fixed attributes but rather "something people do" (Roberts and Sarangi 1999: 229). Through their choice of discursive styles, individuals actively and sometimes even consciously construct and shape their gender and professional identities which are intertwined with each other (Beck 1999). Often, individuals draw on and manipulate established norms of numerous discursive styles to negotiate their various identities (see Holmes 2000, Stubbe, Holmes, Vine, and Marra 2000).

Leaders skilfully draw on a range of discursive strategies to achieve their leadership objectives, and one of the most interesting socio-pragmatic device they use to do this is humour. Humour is a valuable leadership tool as it may be utilised to achieve transactional objectives as well as to perform more relationally oriented behaviours (Barsoux 1993, Clouse and Spurgeon 1995). However, humour is not only an excellent means for doing leadership, it also often involves identity display (Boxer 2002: 79; Holmes and Marra 2002b). Hay (1995: 186) notes that "[w]hen using humour [...] speakers perform work on their personal identity. Humour is an opportunity to portray oneself in a certain way." And it can be argued that this discursive strategy is a particularly valuable "component of women's workplace identity" (Holmes in press). Hence, by employing humour when 'doing leadership' leaders often display various aspects of their identity simultaneously.

Methodology

In order to illustrate how female leaders balance and reconcile the apparently contradicting concepts of 'doing leadership' and 'doing gender' in their everyday workplace interactions, three examples of humour are analysed. These short extracts were collected by two female leaders, Jill and Tricia[2], from two New Zealand IT

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[2] Pseudonyms are used for the participants and their organisations.

organisations.[3] They are taken from a larger dataset which was collected for my PhD research.[4] The participants were recorded in a range of contexts, including larger formal meetings as well as shorter one-to-one interactions with their colleagues and their subordinates.

Analysis

Both the women used in this study were identified by their colleagues and subordinates as good, efficient and effective leaders. Jill is one of the founders and the board director of a small IT company, A&B Resolutionz, and Tricia is the director of the IT department in a large New Zealand organisation, Sitcom. The examples discussed here are representative of their interactional behaviour; they illustrate the wide range of different ways in which these two female leaders draw on humour to 'do leadership' and to 'do gender' thereby portraying themselves as female leaders within the boundaries of their predominantly masculine profession.

Jill and Tricia employ humour in a range of functions: they use this socio-pragmatic device both to display stereotypical masculine behaviours, such as being authoritative, and to perform stereotypical feminine behaviour, such as relational practices (Fletcher, 1999). In addition they also use humour as a tongue-in-cheek means to send up feminine stereotypes. Example 1 shows how one of the women leaders, Jill, skilfully employs humour when displaying stereotypically masculine behaviour thereby carefully balancing her gender and professional identity. (The humour is highlighted in bold in all examples.)

Example 1 [ABRBM_01.09:05]
Context: The early stages of a Board meeting. All participants are members of the board and Jill is chairing the meeting. Tessa (Donald's wife) has problems typing the minutes on the computer (ie as she types the minutes should appear on a screen in the room).

1	Donald:	you're sitting too far away from the //receiver\
2	Tessa:	/oh for\\ goodness sakes #
3		how am I going to be able to do this
4	Donald:	eh?
5		oh well I'll do it if you want [laughs]
6	Tessa:	well f- just tell me from where
7	Donald:	no I can't do that
8	Jill:	**okay well**
9		**while while Tessa and Donald**
10		**[laughs]: have a moment: //[laughs]**

11	Donald:	/(well now)\\
12		**I spent the morning getting the phone working [laughs]**
13	Jill:	it works perfectly so well done
		[...]
14		um so I'll go for a quick flick through the agenda er

Jill here opens the meeting, a transactional aspect of leadership, using a display of power and status to get people's attention, a strategy which can be regarded as stereotypically masculine behaviour. This effect is, however, considerably mitigated by her use of humour. Jill first makes a humorous comment about the spat that is going on between Donald and Tessa *'while Tessa and Donald have a moment'* (lines 9-10), indirectly pointing out that they are not paying attention, and thus trying to bring them back to the agenda. However, instead of accepting Jill's criticism and stopping talking, thus making it possible to start the meeting, Donald humorously justifies himself (lines 11 and 12), but Jill does not join in with his laughter (line 12). She does, however, employ teasing humour to pay him a light-hearted compliment *'it works perfectly so well done'* (line 13) again making the point that it is time to start. Using the "corrective potential of humour" (Weisfeld 1993: 157), Jill thus manages to criticise Donald and Tessa while still paying attention to their face needs (see also Zajdman 1995).

However, drawing on humour "to alleviate the impact of authoritative behaviour, especially when [...] 'doing power' most overtly" is not only a strategy frequently utilised by superiors (Holmes and Marra 2002a: 377), it is particularly valuable for women leaders as it enables them to integrate aspects of their gender and their professional identities. It has frequently been noted that women in leadership positions often find themselves in a catch-22 situation "caught between contradictory ideals of being feminine and being managerial" (Alvesson and Billing 1997: 150). They are "expected to be assertive but condemned as castrating bitches when they are" (Peck 2000: 223; see also Case 1994). These opposing demands of women's gender and professional identities may be reconciled and combined by drawing on both linguistic repertoires: a masculine style – often associated with leadership – and discursive strategies ascribed to a feminine style (Holmes 2000; see also Case 1994). Contradictory aspects of these two styles may be resolved via humour.

Holmes et al (2003: 448) found many examples of women in the workplace who introduce "a humorous key into the discussion" after they had been authoritative. This also applies to Jill in the example above: using humour she manages to combine the stereotypically masculine behaviour of displaying power and status with the stereotypically feminine behaviour of considering her addressees' face needs. The humour thus functions "as a means for expressing the complexities of competing professional [and] social [...] identities" (Holmes et al 2003: 449). More specifically, it enables Jill to 'do leadership' effectively (i.e. achieving her leadership objective 'opening the meeting') and to 'do gender' appropriately (i.e. taking into account others' needs), thereby portraying herself as both a woman and a leader.

Example 2 illustrates how Tricia, the other female leader who participated in the study, performs the relational practice of "preserving" by employing humour. According to Fletcher (1999: 85) this stereotypically feminine behaviour can be described as "[s]houldering responsibility for the whole in order to preserve the life and well-being of the project" by, for example, "[a]nticipating and taking action to prevent problems".

The use of humour in this context "provides an ideal means of doing RP [relational practices] at work" (Holmes and Marra 2002b) as the subsequent analysis will show.

Example 2 (SIT02_05.04:00)
Context: Tricia and Daniel, a senior caretaker, discuss how the new programming that Tricia's team has developed will affect people's access to particular buildings (which is Daniel's responsibility).

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1   Daniel:   but apart from that
2             it's this programming worries me a wee bit
3             but I'm sure o- //it's worrying others more
4             [laughs]:so:[laughs] so\
5   Tricia:   /[laughs] [laughs] : that's right : [laughs]\\
6             [laughs] oh no it should be fine
7             Serena said that we're going to be the guinea pigs so
8             //+ um and our lot\ will find holes in anything
9   Daniel:   /yes yeah yeah mm\\
```

In response to Daniel's concerns about a particular programme that Tricia's staff have developed '*this programming worries me a wee bit*' (line 2), Tricia reassures him, '*oh no it should be fine*' (line 6) and then uses a humorous key to add information which seems intended to further set his mind at rest, '*Serena said that we're going to be the guinea pigs so um and our lot will find holes in anything*' (lines 7 and 8). Her humour plays an important role in achieving her aims: humorously describing her own team with the derogatory term '*our lot*' (line 8), she downplays their expertise and thereby minimises status differences between herself and Daniel. Moreover, the humour also provides a valuable means for Daniel to distance himself from the problem and perhaps perceive the situation more objectively (Morreall 1991: 365). Humour fosters "tolerance for novelty, ambiguity and change; divergent thinking; creative problem solving; and risk taking" (Morreall 1997: 364). So we can interpret Tricia's humour as providing Daniel with a different and less worrying perspective on the problem he has raised.

Tricia thus skilfully employs humour to perform behaviours which are often associated with femininity and which tend to get overlooked but which are nevertheless an important aspect of 'doing leadership'. Displaying the stereotypically feminine behaviour of "preserving", Tricia achieves both her transactional and her relational leadership objectives: she reassures Daniel that his worries do not involve serious problems, a strategy which seems likely to ensure his compliance and cooperation concerning the implementation of the new programme. By minimising status differences and taking Daniel's concerns seriously, she creates a positive atmosphere - one which is likely to make him feel understood and valued.

In this instance Tricia skilfully balances her gender and her professional identities by drawing on discursive strategies stereotypically associated with femininity in order to successfully achieve her leadership objectives. By employing elements of a feminine style she successfully integrates aspects of her professional and her gender identities and portrays herself both as a woman and as a (good and effective) leader. Such feminine ways of doing things, and especially aspects of relational practice, are clearly desirable for the performance of leadership (Case 1988, Olsson 1996, Pauwels 2000). But since they are not typically part of the masculine stereotype of leadership, they are often

overlooked and judged as "something less than leadership" (Sinclair 1998: 23; see also Hearn and Parkin 1988, Maher 1997).

The final example illustrates yet another aspect of the ways in which these women leaders employ humour to negotiate their professional and their gender identities: they not only draw on aspects of stereotypically feminine and masculine styles, but they also sometimes make fun of these stereotypes.

Example 3 (ABR01_09.07:48)
Context: Donald is in Lucy and Jill's office and tries to install Jill's computer.

```
1   Lucy:     and you're not gonna have a monitor
2   Jill:     I'm not gonna have a monitor
3             I'm not //gonna have\
4   Lucy:     /now you've got\\ room for a pot plant
5   Jill:     ( ) perfect //there you go\
6   Donald:   /[laughs]\\
7   Jill:     you can tell the (girly) office can't you
8   Donald:   yes //(yeah)\
9   Lucy:     /[laughs]\\
```

This example demonstrates how Jill and her colleague Lucy employ humour as an in-group marker to highlight their gender identities in a predominantly masculine profession. Lucy's amusing suggestion of how to make use of the empty '*now you've got room for a pot plant*' is triggered by Jill's repetition of the fact that she has to live without a monitor for a while. Lucy's humorous comment is ratified by Jill's subsequent utterance and the production of more humour (lines 5 and 7).

Jill's apparently self-denigrating remark '*you can tell the girly office can't you*' (line 7) makes fun of Lucy and herself, constructing them as a distinct feminine subgroup within the otherwise rather masculine environment. This example illustrates that "gender is something that we produce [...] when we participate in work organizations and other contexts." (Alvesson and Billing 2002: 74). It shows Jill actively constructing herself as a woman within the boundaries of the predominantly masculine organisational norms and expectations. Making fun of the special status she and Lucy share, she self-consciously sends up feminine stereotypes, suggesting that Jill knows about being one of "the odd girls out" (Trauth 2002: 114) in this masculine profession, and that she has learnt to deal with it. By making fun of the gender-issue, she also brings it to the forefront and perhaps subversively critiques the predominantly "masculinist" norms of her IT workplace (Baxter 2003).

In this context humour serves valuable functions as it provides an "avenue for a subordinate group to assert their differences while expressing frustration and ambivalence at the effects of marginalization." (Holmes et al 2003: 450) By employing this socio-pragmatic device, Jill makes fun of the discrepancy between her gender and her professional identity and for once does not have to reconcile them.

Conclusion

Because "what counts as leadership, the means of gaining legitimacy in leadership, and so on, are male dominated in most organizations" (Hearn and Parkin 1988: 27; cf. also

Maher 1997), women in leadership positions often find it particularly difficult to portray themselves as effective leaders, and at the same time maintain their feminine identity.

Attempting to resolve this conflict, Jill and Tricia, two IT leaders, skilfully draw on both discursive strategies stereotypically associated with a masculine and authoritative speech style as well as those associated with a more consensus-oriented feminine style. These two successful female leaders display a range of different behaviours to achieve their leadership objectives: ranging from displaying power rather overtly on the one hand to performing relational practices, and even tongue-in-cheek sending up of feminine stereotypes on the other.

Jill and Tricia frequently utilise the socio-pragmatic device of humour to achieve their leadership objectives, and specifically, to reconcile the sometimes contradictory demands of being a leader and being a woman, a contradiction which is especially salient in the traditionally masculine profession of IT. Drawing on humour, the two women leaders are able to perform the various aspects of leadership while avoiding the danger of being perceived either as 'unmanagerial' or 'unfeminine' (Alvesson and Billing 1997: 150). Humour thus provides a valuable tool for them to balance their gender and professional identities and to escape the double bind of opposing demands. It enables the women leaders to 'do femininity' *and* to achieve their transactional leadership objectives, it allows them to be authoritative *and* to be feminine, and it even provides a useful vehicle for them to express their recognition and frustration about the fact that femininity is "marked" in their predominantly masculine working environment.

Jill and Tricia both demonstrate that being a woman and being a leader in a masculine profession are not opposing parts of an unresolvable oxymoron (Holmes, fc), but may actually be successfully combined (Clare 2002). Far from being a disadvantage, the ability to control a more feminine discursive style offers opportunities for accomplishing the complex notion of leadership more satisfactorily. It is, in particular, the ability to combine elements from a relatively feminine style with those of a more masculine style of interaction - the relational as well as the transactional - that helps accomplish effective leadership.

It has been argued that instead of accepting that certain professional domains are masculine, and adjusting to these masculine workplace norms, women, especially those in leadership positions, "should attempt to reconstruct the work and values of the IT [and other male dominated] profession[s] into something less masculine" (Trauth 2002: 102). Tricia and Jill provide paradigmatic examples of two women leaders who are successfully doing this in their everyday work interactions by modifying and sometimes challenging predominantly masculine norms, and offering alternative ways of 'doing leadership'.

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Monitoring, mentoring and managing:
the complexities of workplace discourse

Janet Holmes

Abstract

This paper examines the discourse patterns of three contrasting types of workplace encounter which focus on organisational and intra-organisational boundaries and norms. The first type of encounter centres on the criteria for access to a higher position in the organisation. The second type entails developmental mentoring. The third type of encounter involves more subtle and implicit ways of accomplishing organisational "gatekeeping" in everyday workplace interaction. The discursive strategies used illustrate how power is interactionally achieved in different ways in each type of encounter, indicating the relevance of a range of contextual factors, including the manager's preferred leadership style, and the type of community of practice in which participants are operating.

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Introduction[1]

Excerpt 1
Context: In a regular project team meeting, six IT experts from a large New Zealand corporation are discussing a meeting they plan to attend where people from other teams will be present. Jacob has been seconded to the corporation from an American company.[2]

1 Jac: do you want me to come as well?
2 Call: um hmm /[laughs]\
3 Dud: /don't wear a\ don't wear a [name of American company] tie
4 Barr: [laughs] yeah you can go incognito
5   [general laughter]
6 Jac: hide in the back row
7   [general laughter]
8 Barr: just don't say anything.....

In this short excerpt from a project team meeting, a number of participants make humorous suggestions to a project team member who has been seconded from a different, and "foreign" organisation, about the conditions under which he may accompany them to a large meeting where they will interact with people from other teams. Each contribution elaborates the underlying proposition "you can come to the meeting only if you clearly identify as one of us". In other words, Jacob is being asked

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[1] I would like to express my appreciation to Meredith Marra, Stephanie Schnurr and Bernadette Vine who provided examples and suggestions which helped me develop the framework outlined in this paper.
[2] Transcription conventions are provided at the end of the paper.

to blend in and not advertise that he is a "foreigner" from an outside organisation. This jocular interaction thus nicely indicates the ambiguity of Jacob's insider/outsider status. Inside the New Zealand corporation, he is technically "other", but when the team ventures into a wider arena, he is being told to present himself as a well-established team member. The witty competitive style in which the team members hand out advice on how Jacob should behave is quite typical of the interactions of this project team (see Holmes and Marra 2004). The short exchange focusses explicitly on Jacob's status as an "outsider", and suddenly foregrounds organisational boundaries which have appeared irrelevant in the extensive technical discussion in which the participants have been engaged.[3]

This excerpt serves very nicely to introduce the main theme of this paper, namely, a consideration of some of the complex, subtle, and somewhat less predictable ways in which people "do gatekeeping" in their everyday interactions at work. Drawing on a large corpus ranging from one-to-one discussions between colleagues to large meetings of workplace project teams, the analysis explores how people identify, construct, and monitor a number of different kinds of boundaries in the course of normal workplace talk.

The notion of the institutional gatekeeper is a powerful explanatory concept in accounting for the discursive patterns identified in a wide range of interactional encounters (e.g. Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992, Schiffrin 1994, Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996). The focus in much previous research, however, has been on processes designed to monitor access to an organisation, institution, or even a country (e.g. Button 1992, Drew and Heritage 1992, Eder and Harris 1999, Roberts and Sarangi 1999, Kerekes 2003). Schiffrin, for instance, firmly locates the gatekeeper at the gateway to the institution, defining a gatekeeping encounter as an asymmetric speech situation in which an institutional representative seeks information in order to grant privilege to a person outside the institution (1994: 146). But boundary-monitoring is equally pervasive *within* organisations, and it is interesting to explore the ways in which it is interactionally achieved between people who know each other and work together. Erickson and Schultz's broader definition encompasses interactions where one person has "authority to make decisions that affect the other's future" (1982: xi). Ignoring their focus on encounters between strangers, this definition serves as a useful basis for examining intra-organisational encounters which have implications for the future career or status of one of the participants.

In what follows, this broader concept of gatekeeping is used as a starting point to explore "what is going on" in three interestingly contrasting types of encounters which all focus, albeit in different ways, on organisational and intra-organisational boundaries and norms. The first type of encounter is perhaps the closest to the traditional gatekeeping encounter, in that it involves an interview focussed around the criteria for access to a higher position in the organisation. However, it contrasts with traditional gatekeeping encounters in that the applicant initiates the interview, and then contests the institutional criteria invoked for movement through a promotional gate. The second type of encounter provides a different kind of contrast in that the person in the position of power takes initiatives to open gates, and even prods the subordinate in the direction of movement over hurdles. The third type of encounter extends the traditional focus of

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[3] This example is discussed in greater detail in Holmes and Marra (2002a).

gatekeeping analyses by examining some of the more subtle and implicit ways in which people within an organisation "do gatekeeping" in everyday workplace interaction.

Theoretical framework

The great majority of workplaces are intrinsically hierarchical in structure and the power relations between people who work together are constantly instantiated and dynamically constructed through talk. However, it is not only those who hold positions of overt authority who exercise power through talk (Holmes 2000a, Holmes and Marra 2002b, Marra and Holmes 1999). The analysis below illustrates ways in which gatekeeping power, in particular, is not exclusively concentrated in the hands of those who appear most obviously to have authority over others. Subordinates, for instance, have subversive power (Holmes 2000a, Pateman 1980, Sollitt-Morris 1996), and core members of an organisation or team have the power to grant membership, or not, at a more subtle level than that involved in appointment to a position in an organisation.

Using this approach, power is treated as "a systemic characteristic" (Fletcher 1999: 16), a transformative and non-static feature of interaction (Wodak 1996, 1999), whose manifestations are often difficult to identify. Systemic power typically goes unquestioned because it is firmly based in conventional wisdom; its incontestable status is simply one of the taken-for-granted, self-evident truths or background assumptions of our everyday talk. As Fletcher (1999: 17) says "The locus of power... is...in systems of shared meaning that reinforce mainstream ideas and silence alternatives". By their very nature, gatekeeping encounters provide an ideal site for the covert, systemic exercise of power, and a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach provides a means of identifying the unobtrusive, "naturalised" conversational strategies through which power relations are constructed and reinforced in such interactions (cf Fairclough 1989, 1992).

And while typically it is the more powerful person in an interaction who gets to define the purpose or significance of the interaction and who influences the direction in which it develops, it is also worth paying attention to what is achieved by less powerful participants in responding to the subtle and not-so-subtle exercise of systemic power by others. Tannen (1987: 5) points out that the notion of power "is always metaphoric when applied to interaction and discourse". She highlights the variety of ways in which power may be manifested, and the fact that in any particular interaction different participants may have different kinds of power which they exercise in different ways. In other words, she suggests that it is impossible to identify *the* power in a situation. Rather, power is dynamically constructed and exercised, both implicitly and explicitly, in different aspects of a specific interaction; different participants manifest power in diverse ways as they construct their own identities and roles in response to the behaviour of others (see also Holmes ip).

Davis (1988: 99) similarly argues that power relations "are always and everywhere contextual...Power, along with structures of domination, is implicated in concrete situated social practice". So while power is often manifested in relatively overt ways in gatekeeping encounters, it may also be constructed by more subtle and complex discursive strategies. The three different types of encounter analysed below explore this proposal in some detail. In the first two types of encounter, the power of the gatekeeper is relatively explicit and overt; the analysis highlights, however, the contestive power of subordinates in the first type, and the beneficial use of power in the second. The third

type of encounter illustrates the more complex and subtle ways in which colleagues may shape and monitor the behaviour of would-be team members. First, however, I provide a brief description of the database from which examples have been drawn

Database and methodology

The material analysed in this paper involves interactions between colleagues in white collar professional workplaces, selected from the large database of the Victoria University of Wellington Language in the Workplace (LWP) Project.[4] The project was designed to analyze features of interpersonal communication in a variety of New Zealand workplaces, and data has been collected from government departments, commercial organizations, small businesses, factories, and even hospital wards.[5] The data thus differs in a number of ways from the interview data which has been the focus of most previous research on gatekeeping encounters (e.g. Erickson and Shultz 1982, Gumperz 1982, 1992, Roberts et al. 1992, Schiffrin 1994, Trinch 2001).

The LWP Project methodology was developed to record authentic workplace interaction, using audio tapes, and more recently mini-disks, supplemented by video-recording whenever possible (Stubbe 2001, Holmes and Stubbe 2003). In general, volunteers tape-record a range of their everyday work interactions over a period of two to three weeks. Over the recording period, people increasingly ignore the microphones and the video cameras (which are relatively small and fixed in place). The equipment simply comes to be regarded as a standard part of the furniture, and there are often comments indicating people have forgotten about the recording equipment. As a result the database includes some excellent examples of workplace interaction which are as close to "natural" as one could hope for.

Monitoring and negotiating institutional barriers

The first type of gatekeeping encounter involves examining the task of getting through the gate from the point of view of the subordinate. This is exemplified by an interview which focusses on the issue of how one of the participants can break through a promotion barrier. The gateway in this case provides access to a higher position in the organisation. To this extent the encounter resembles more traditional gatekeeping encounters (Erickson and Shultz 1982, Gumperz 1982, Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992) which function to monitor access to an institution or organisation. However, this particular interview contrasts with more familiar kinds of gatekeeping encounters in that it is the applicant who initiates the interview, and who then proceeds to challenge the institutional criteria invoked for movement upward through the promotional gate.

The selected excerpts are taken from an interaction which has been analysed for different purposes elsewhere (Stubbe, Lane, Hilder, Vine, Vine, Marra, Holmes and Weatherall 2000, 2003).[6] Claire, a policy analyst, has sought an interview with Tom, a senior public service manager who is two ranks higher than Claire in the organisational hierarchy, and thus not her immediate boss. Claire wants to discuss why she was overlooked for an acting manager position which she believes she was promised by her immediate manager. Given what we know about Claire's attitude to this issue from ethnographic information, as well as recordings of her interactions with other colleagues, it is clear that she feels she has been disadvantaged by the decision.

In what follows, I focus on how Tom makes use of his institutional authority and appeals to taken-for-granted assumptions to monitor the gate through which Claire wants to pass, while Claire manages to contest and challenge Tom's arguments without appearing to be overtly disrespectful or explicitly subversive.[7] As mentioned, Claire has taken the initiative in seeking the interview, and at the outset she skilfully frames it not as a complaint but as a mentoring session in which she explicitly seeks advice from Tom, her superior.

Excerpt 2.1
Context: Claire, a policy analyst has sought an interview with Tom, a senior manager in his office. They work for a government department.

```
1  Cla:   yeah um yeah I want to talk to you about um
2         oh it's a personal issue um + well I-
3         the decision to make um Jared acting manager while /Joseph\ is away
4  Tom:   /mm\ mm
5  Cla:   and I wanted to get some [phone rings]
6         well I've been overlooked quite a few times
7         /but\ I wanted to find out specifically how what I could do
8  Tom:   /mm\
9  Cla:   to help myself be considered next time....
```

In this opening excerpt, Claire presents the issue she wants to address. She has *been overlooked quite a few times* (line 6) for the position of acting manager when her immediate boss, Joseph, has gone away, and she seeks advice on how she can improve her chances of being considered for the position in the future (lines 7,9).

Tom proceeds to provide a vigorous defence of his own actions and devotes a good deal of energy to refuting the unstated implication of bias in the selection of Jared as acting manager. He achieves this partly by emphasising that he has simply followed established procedures and precedents, the taken-for-granted rules about the way things operate in this organisation, or "how things are done around here". Excerpt 2.2 illustrates Tom's repetition of this assertion at several points throughout the interview.

Excerpt 2.2

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[6] Our earlier analyses focussed on this interaction to illustrate the effect of adopting different theoretical perspectives on what is noticed, to exemplify the alternative interpretations which can be generated from the "same" data.
[7] The interaction is analysed in more detail in the contribution by Marra and Holmes in Stubbe et al (2000), where the full interaction is provided as an appendix. See also Holmes (ip).

```
10 Tom:   and it was as simple as that
11        so it wasn't a judgement call on were you better or he w- he better
12        i- it was simply I saw precedents [drawls]:
13        and: that was the safest course of action in the short time I had ....
14        it was simply going on what was the safest ground
15        in respect of what the m- policy manager had done in the past...
16        in lieu of a decision I'll take probably the last decision that was made.....
17        I'm more prone to take the least path of resistance
18        or the path that's more known to me
19        which which which really was Joseph had set a precedent before....
20        (well as I say) I didn't er qualify my decision other than look at the precedent
```

Tom repeatedly appeals to precedent, either explicitly (lines 12,19,20), or implicitly *what the m- policy manager had done in the past* (line 15) and *the last decision that was made* (line 16). Appealing to precedent to justify his decision is a very conservative response to Claire's concerns, one that assumes and emphasises the inherent incontestability of the status quo. As the argument is elaborated by Tom, the word *precedent*, and its derivatives and synonyms, are often closely collocated with the words *safe* and *safest* (e.g. lines 13,14). By using such arguments, Tom reinforces the authority of the existing institutionalised power structure and organisational hierarchy. At this point, it appears that the gates are firmly shut, and will clearly remain shut against challenges such as Claire's; opening them, Tom implies, may introduce an element of unwelcome danger.

However, Tom then proceeds to respond to Claire's presentational issue, namely her request for advice about how to improve her chances of promotion in the future. Once again, however, his response is couched in terms of following established procedures if she wants to make progress in the organisation. Tom quite explicitly asserts the importance of Claire using the "proper" channels to make her request for consideration for preferment.

Excerpt 2.3
```
21 Tom:   the issue... ...is [drawls]: probably: one that um +
22        you could address directly with Joseph.....
23 Tom:   you might like to raise that as a development issue with Joseph....
24 Tom:   because he's your immediate controlling officer......
```

By explicitly referring to Joseph's status as her *controlling officer* (line 24), Tom emphasises his point that Claire should follow established procedures. Indeed, at several points during the discussion, Tom refers to the way he himself follows proper procedures in dealing with those of different status in the organisation. Hence Tom consistently asserts the importance of using the "correct" institutional channels to approach organisational gateways. His arguments presume the legitimacy and stability of existing hierarchical positions and relationships, and take for granted that Claire should recognise and respect them.

The analysis so far describes a situation which could be replicated in many gatekeeping encounters. The more powerful participant defines the situation, outlines the rules of play, and describes the conditions which the subordinate or supplicant must comply

with.[8] In this encounter, however, Claire does not sit back meekly and accept Tom's definition of the status quo. She firmly and consistently contests his propositions, and she points out inconsistencies and flaws in his arguments. Her line of attack is just briefly illustrated here in excerpt 2.4 where she challenges Tom's main line of defence, namely that he has proceeded on precedent and therefore appointed someone who had taken the role of acting manager previously.

Excerpt 2.4
25 Cla: suppose that I just + I suppose I wanted you to sort of look
26   more closely at it from the point of view of opportunities for me as well
27 Tom: yeah
28 Cla: because I mean if you go on precedent
29   and if I don't get any any opportunities
30   then I don't get considered next time
31 Tom: mm
32 Cla: and basically otherwise I don't see myself moving much
33   if I don't get any experience myself
34 Tom: mm
35 Cla: so that's that's really what I wanted to sort of talk to you about
36   and if there was anything I could do just to-
37   just to um [tut] develop my own ability to be able to
38   /( )\ (like that)
39 Tom: /yeah I think that's\ I think that's a fair comment

In this excerpt, Claire gets Tom to admit (line 39) that the gate will stay permanently closed, and that she can never make progress, if the principle of precedent is followed, since it puts her in a catch 22 situation (lines 25-35). She presents her cogent argument with a great deal of attention to Tom's face needs. Linguistic hedges and mitigating pragmatic particles are abundantly sprinkled throughout these lines: *just, I suppose, you know, sort of, I mean. I think*. Yet the argument is cogent and clear, and effective, and it is followed up by a repetition of her initial request for advice. This is an effective strategy for re-directing Tom's attention from the business of defending precedent in which he has been extensively engaged for the first section of the interaction, to the matter of "what next?", Claire's avowed main concern.

By returning to the initial request for advice, Claire also strategically re-positions herself as supplicant following an exchange in which she has successfully contested Tom's position. By emphasising her subordinate position, and seeking guidance, she re-directs attention away from her effective subversion of Tom's institutional arguments to an area where he can re-define his role as superior and re-assert his authority and power. And she is very successful. The gate begins to open a little.

Excerpt 2.5
40 Tom: er I [drawls]: um: [tut] um personally would suggest that you know [voc]
41   you might like to raise that as a development issue with Joseph
42 Cla: okay
43 Tom: um + because he's your immediate controlling officer /and\ um
44 Cla: /right\

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[8] See for example Holmes and Stubbe (2003: 49), Holmes (ip).

45 Tom: [tut] you know I think he sh- he should give you an an opportunity +
46   /um\ you know and and and or certainly talk you through it
47 Cla: /(right)\ [inhales] well what sort of things could I talk to him about

Tom responds initially by repeating advice he has given earlier, namely, that since this is *a development issue* (line 41), she should consult her *immediate controlling officer* (line 43), and he provides his views about what Joseph should do, namely allow her to practice or talk her through the role of acting manager (lines 45-46). Claire presses Tom further, asking for still more specific advice *what sort of things could I talk to him about* (line 47). This proves very effective and Tom responds by giving her explicit and very detailed advice about how to broach the topic with Joseph; he finishes as follows:

Excerpt 2.6
48 Tom: I think you should front it broach it like that
49 Cla: okay /then)\
50 Tom: /'cause you\ do see it as a development issue +
51   and that er if never given the opportunity [voc] to test yourself
52   you're never gonna know ....
53   so (now-) I mean + next time it happens
54   and if it does happen again
55   then yeah sure no difficulties
56 Cla: all right then oh good
57 Tom: okay?
58 Cla: okay thanks

Claire has very successfully elicited a potential key to the gate from Tom. He ends by providing a reassurance that if the situation arises again there will be *no difficulties* (line 55). Through her persistence in pursuing this issue, she manages to obtain not only very specific advice from Tom about the steps she should take to improve her chances of being considered seriously for the role of acting manager next time, but also something close to a commitment that she can expect to be given such an opportunity. She has successfully elicited a statement indicating that next time she will be more favourably positioned to make it through the gate. This interaction, then, in which the subordinate is the driver, provides an interesting illustration of the ways in which gatekeepers can be successfully challenged, and their gatekeeping processes subverted, even in established institutional, professional contexts.

Claire effectively manages this gatekeeping interview by strategically positioning herself as mentee, seeking advice from a superior. After a period of re-asserting the institutional rules and precedents which bar Claire's progress, Tom is gradually drawn into the mentoring role, and possible ways through the gate begin to emerge. In the next type of gatekeeping interaction, the superior spontaneously and willingly takes on the mentoring role, and provides advice and guidance to the subordinate about how to advance their career progress Indeed, power, knowledge and influence is explicitly used to assist people to pass through organisational portals.

Mentoring - opening professional gates

The second type of workplace encounter which is analysed as a type of gatekeeping provides a direct contrast to the strategies examined in the previous section, since it focusses on strategies which facilitate career progress, rather than those which enforce institutional barriers. In this more positive type of encounter, people in positions of power take active initiatives to open career gates, and to encourage their colleagues and subordinates to venture outward and upward. Perhaps the most obvious examples of this type of encounter can be found in interactions between a mentor and a mentee (Holmes 2003a), although any exchange between a manager and subordinate offers the potential for such gatekeeping behaviour.

Mentoring can be regarded as a relatively explicit form of intra-institutional gatekeeping. It is generally described as a pairing between a senior, more experienced person with a less experienced person (Clutterbuck 1992), for the purpose of guidance, and advice, and for primarily professional, but sometimes also personal, development (Caldwell and Carter 1992, Dymock 1999). From a CDA perspective, it is important to recognise that the senior person who has been assigned a mentoring role within an organisation will be expected to bear the organisation's concerns in mind as well as those of the mentee (Murray 1991, Kram 1988, Mink, Owen and Mink 1993, Dymock 1999).[9] And even those who informally adopt a mentoring role typically provide advice and guidance which takes account both of the mentee's professional needs and the organisational constraints within which they are operating. Overall, however, in this type of gatekeeping encounter, the mentee's needs are a much more overt focus of concern than in type 1 encounters. A mentor within an organisation is typically strongly positioned, as well as expected, to identify which gates are worth focusing on, and which professional pathways worth pursuing.

Our database provides a number of examples where a senior person provides explicit career guidance to a more junior person in the same organization. The clearest examples are components of a performance review process, a process where at least in theory, the minimum objective involves identifying a level of performance required for continued employment, while at the other end of the spectrum the discussion typically focusses on what needs to be achieved in order to merit promotion or career advancement. The examples in our data fall between these extremes; they involve managers exploring ways of assisting subordinates to make progress by acquiring further skills and qualifications which will contribute to their personal and professional development. Obviously, good career advice benefits the organisation as well as the individual, but, interestingly, a detailed analysis of such interactions, reveals just how extraordinarily facilitative many good manager-mentors can be.

Excerpt 3 illustrates a typical negotiation between a manager and a member of his department regarding steps which the manager considers will benefit the staff member's career development and enable her to progress within the organisation. This organisation is a relatively egalitarian community of practice, with a democratic workplace culture where negotiation rather than authoritarian directives is the usual process for getting things done.[10] In the exchange leading up to excerpt 3.1, Len, the

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[9] See Holmes (2003b) for further discussion.
[10] The term "community of practice" derives from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998), and is now well established in language and gender research (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992, 1995, Holmes 1999, Holmes and Stubbe 2003, McConnell-Ginet 2003). The term refers to "an aggregate

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manager, and Elinor, the subordinate, have thoroughly discussed Elinor's current work, and Len has provided a good deal of very positive feedback to her about what she has been achieving (see Holmes 2003a). They then reach the point where they are looking forward. Elinor asks for some staff back-up because she feels very vulnerable as the only person in her area, and Len responds very positively, agreeing to provide this for her. At this point, Elinor is ready to finish the interview (line 1), but Len raises professional development issues.

Excerpt 3
Context: Performance review meeting between manager and staff member in a government department.

```
1   Eli:   so that's it then eh
2   Len:   well um what else + your university work? ++
3          that's going all right? you did your seminar?
4   Eli:   mm +++ yeah ....
5          and I'm managing to find time at home
6          like an hour when I get home to do my reading ...
7          um my first test will tell me how I'm doing +
8          but I'm ( ) I'm learning
9   Len:   yeah
10  Eli:   yeah + I reckon if I could afford to I'd be able-
11         I- I could (draw) being a full time student actually [sniffs]
12  Len:   all right well [clears throat] one step at a time
13  Eli:   yep + which I don't even know where I'm heading [sneezes]
14         I don't even know what field I want to get into
15  Len:   mm
16  Eli:   mm ++
17  Len:   yeah well I mean if you see how these two papers go
18  Eli:   (through) yeah
19  Len:   how about your word processing
20  Eli:   my word processing
21         oh well I don't get much onto that word processor at all
22         but I- I'm learning new things I sort of study ( ) things
23         yeah so I'm just picking up things as I go
24  Len:   right
25  Eli:   like where the cut and paste thing is .......
26  Len:   all right [clears throat] so you're happy enough just taking it bit by bit
27  Eli:   mm
28  Len:   all right and so maybe at the end of the university year
29         we look at a short course or something for you
```

Len is clearly taking positive initiatives to assist Elinor to make progress, to provide her with guidance, to open doors and shepherd her through gates. The tone of the interaction is constructive and facilitative, and they negotiate their way through the various options Len thinks she should consider. Note that Len is very much in touch with what Elinor is doing *you did your seminar?* (line 3), and he listens patiently while

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of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations - in short, practices - emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464).

she talks about the challenges the work poses (represented here by just 4 lines from a longer section). However, when she says she might like to be a full-time student if she could afford it, Len responds cautiously commenting *one step at a time* (line 12). This could be interpreted solely as concern for her interests, especially since she goes on to admit that she is not sure where she is heading (lines 13-14). However, it seems likely that Len has the interests of the organisation in mind here, and does not want to lose Elinor who is extremely good at her job. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Len goes on to identify aspects of professional development which will very obviously benefit Elinor's work performance, namely word-processing skills (line 19) and he then reinforces his recommendation that she take things slowly, phrasing his recommendation in a way that invites Elinor's agreement rather than *so you're happy enough just taking it bit by bit* (line 26). The introductory *so,* neatly presumes this is an agreed position that they have reached. His final suggestion that she take a short course at the end of the university year is again one which is consistent with the needs of the organisation as well as being potentially useful to Elinor's professional development.

Len is a good manager-mentor. It is clear from the earlier section of this interaction that Elinor is a reluctant participant in the performance review – not because she is not performing well, but because she is modest and does not like the inevitable focus on herself and her achievements which such a review entails – she just wants to get on with the job. Len persists in asserting her strengths and giving her positive feedback (see Holmes 2003a). And consistent with this positive approach, excerpt 3.1 illustrates that he does not allow the interview to conclude before he has considered Elinor's professional needs. He is pro-active and engaged with her welfare, an approach which contrasts with that of some managers who merely go through the motions of performance review. On the other hand, it is clear that he is also aware of his responsibilities as a manager and his attention to the needs of the organisation are also evident, even in this brief snippet of interaction.

This same pattern is evident in many more of the workplace interactions we have recorded. One further example must suffice here, namely, an interaction between a manager, Leila, and a subordinate, Zoe, in another government department, with similar democratic practices, and a similarly egalitarian organisational culture. The interaction is one of the regular weekly meetings between the two women in which they discuss staffing issues and ongoing workplace objectives. Zoe is on a limited term contract, and, unless it is renewed, will move on to a new position when it finishes. In this meeting Zoe twice indicates that she has begun to think about moving on.

The first excerpt from this interaction involves a discussion about useful training courses for Zoe. Like Len, Leila is a good manager-mentor and in this meeting she explicitly raises the question of Zoe's professional development needs and suggests a particular course, but Zoe, apparently with her eye on exiting to a different organisation, negotiates for funding to attend a different course. The excerpt is discussed more fully in Holmes (2003a); here just the nub of the negotiation is discussed.

Excerpt 4.1
Context: Weekly meeting between manager and subordinate in a government department.
1 Lei: ... thinking about your future ....
2   there's a couple of quite exciting looking things that
3   Mary sort of like or Sally was /(talking about there that so)\

4 Zoe: /oh yes yeah I've\ looked at
5 Lei: /yeah but well\ cos I thought you might be interested too
6 Zoe: /yeah mhm\ yeah there was actually um [inhales]
7 Lei: (course like some) if you were still here\
8 Zoe: well I was interested in the serials one but I\
9   but I thought well it's a bit you know sort of
10   I couldn't really justify it really
11   I really would like to go it was about + the future of /serials\
12 Lei: /yeah I saw that\ ....
13   [*discussion about dates and sources of information*]
14 Lei: if you're interested in serials I'm perfectly happy
15 Zoe: okay
16 Lei: for you to go to that /I mean I (and)\
17 Zoe: /right okay (thanks)\
18 Lei: for for the [*name of Leila's department*] to meet the costs for that um
19   I mean I think those are you know
20   it's been great having you here
21   and so if those sort of things are gonna to help you
22   in your personal development I think (they're fine) um +

In this excerpt Zoe (very politely) contests Leila's suggestion for an appropriate training course, by suggesting an alternative (*the serials one*) which will better suit her own goals, even though she knows it is not as relevant to the objectives of the section in which she is working: *I couldn't really justify it really* (line 10). As a good manager-mentor Leila is clearly oriented to Zoe's needs (lines 1-2, 5, 21-22), and after a minor digression about whether they have missed the date for applying and where they can check this (which perhaps gives Leila some off-line thinking time), she offers to accommodate her budget to encompass the course that Zoe wishes to do (lines 14,16,18), even though she had not been aware of it before their discussion. In the process, she links the offer to her appreciation of Zoe's contribution to the department's work, *it's been great having you here* (line 20).

Leila, like Len, clearly takes a positive, constructive, and on-record approach to assisting her subordinates to achieve their professional goals. She here helps to open gates for Zoe and facilitate her career progress, even when it is not directly relevant to Zoe's work in her department. The excerpt also illustrates a very negotiative and dynamic style of interaction. Like Claire, Zoe is pro-active in negotiating for what she wants; but Leila contrasts with Tom in finding ways to assist rather than to block Zoe's preferred pathway. Both women are actively and constructively engaged in resolving the issue of which will be the best course for Zoe.

The second point at which Zoe indicates that she has plans for moving on occurs towards the end of the meeting, when she tells Leila she has applied for another job. It transpires that Leila already knows this, and Zoe then goes to considerable lengths to reassure Leila that she is not planning to leave immediately. Again, from a gatekeeping perspective, Leila is consistently helpful and facilitative.

Excerpt 4.2
23 Zoe: okay um and the other thing was something personal um I'm
24   I've decided to apply for a job at the um [tut] film and literature
25 Lei: I saw that

26 Zoe: /classification\ because it's initially full time
27 Lei: /yeah\
28 Zoe: but then it's going part time [tut] I'm not
29 how can I put it um I'm really using it as a testing thing
30 I would like to just have an idea of what the salary is like
31 Lei: yep
32 Zoe: and it might be just quite good for me to have an interview
33 I'm /sort of just feeling\ at that sort of a thing
34 Lei: /yep (I can understand)\
35 Zoe: so I don't want you to get sort of all worried /and\ concerned
36 Lei: /right\
37 Zoe: um but I I would like to be able to use your name /(if I may)\
38 Lei: /I just gave it now \ [laughs]
39 Zoe: oh wow wonderful
40 Lei: but I mean I'd be really happy to and I tell you what
41 both um [tut] from two points of view um
42 that might not be unhelpful ...
43 [*25 lines of discussion of people Leila knows in department where Zoe has applied*]
44 Lei: so we have a good relationship /+\ with them
45 Zoe: /mm\ well the re- reason the other thing is
46 that it's setting up a library which is something I've never done
47 [*6 lines discussing another reason Zoe thinks the job would be a good one for her*]
48 Zoe: well it seems a bit too good /really to to [laughs]\
49 Lei: /I saw that\
50 I thought it actually looked like quite a good job as well
51 just the only thing that would ever worry me about
52 there is the content of what they're dealing with
53 [*10 lines of discussion of potential problems with the job*]
54 Lei: I'm just trying to think + I'll have a wee think
55 there's probably some decent things to read about that actually
56 Zoe: oh okay that would //be useful\
57 [*20 lines of discussion of manager of the section*]
58 Lei: I think she'd be quite a good employer
59 Zoe: yeah okay oh well /thank you that was fine\
60 Lei: /no that was fine\ that was (a good thing)
61 Zoe: /that was (what) I wanted to ( )\
62 Lei: /and I won't get worried don't worry\
63 Zoe: /[laughs]\

There is abundant evidence here that the two women are relating well to each other and on the same wavelength. Leila let's Zoe know that she is aware that Zoe has applied for another job (line 25), and in fact has already agreed to provide a reference (line 38). Zoe frames the application as non-serious, using phrases which signal vagueness such as *how can I put it um* and *a testing thing* (line 29) to indicate lack of commitment, and hedges such as *might, sort of (thing), quite* and *just* to indicate tentativeness (lines 30, 32,33,35), and concern for any potential threat to Leila's face.

Leila by contrast is consistently confidently affirmative, constructive and supportive. She asserts her support very strongly *I'd be really happy to* (line 40), and proceeds to consider ways in which she can assist Zoe through her contacts, *so we have a good relationship with them* (line 44). Leila's extensive knowledge of the area also means she

is able to raise possible problems Zoe may face (line 52 and 10 following lines, not provided in transcript) and to provide information about the person Zoe would be working for (line 58 and 20 preceding lines, not provided in transcript). She also offers Zoe advice about material to read to address the potentially problematic area she has identified saying she will think about possible references *there's probably some decent things to read about that actually* (line 55).

The two end up in clear accord, with laughter and echoic phrases (cf Coates 1996, Hay 1995, 1996), after what could have been a very problematic discussion. They both assert almost simultaneously that the discussion has been *fine* (lines 59-60) and Leila states that she will not get worried about Zoe leaving (line 62), thus indicating that she accepts Zoe's reassurance that she is simply testing the waters at this point. Leila and Zoe indicate throughout this exchange that they are sensitive to each other's politeness needs and potential threats to each other's face. And Leila acts consistently in a helpful and positive way, going well beyond minimal requirements in her advice to Zoe.

Overall, then, this excerpt again demonstrates Leila's apparent willingness to provide Zoe with help in achieving her professional goals, facilitating her progress through career gates, even if it means she may lose expertise in her own organisation. Leila's greater power and superior status in these interactions is evident in Zoe's heavily mitigated and apologetic explanations of why she is looking for a job elsewhere, but Leila herself downplays it. However, the basis of her authority is implicit in her discourse: her proffered advice, analysis and information reflect her greater and wider experience. It is hard to construct Leila as other than a very facilitative gatekeeper. And this is not at all atypical; power is used consistently in a benign way in the large number of recorded interactions which involve this manager.

Similar patterns of constructive mentoring were also identified in the discourse of mentor-managers in other organisations (see Holmes 2003a), though the balance between explicit and implicit concern for the individual's needs compared to the organisation's interests differed in different interactions. These interactions also raise interesting questions about the relevance of factors such as the influence of organisational culture, or type of leadership, in accounting for such differences, which there is not space to pursue here.

Integrating into a workplace team

The third type of gatekeeping I want to discuss again differs from more traditional or classic discursive gatekeeping in its very subtle manifestations. This type of gatekeeping consists of the complex and indirect strategies which colleagues and workmates use to admit a newcomer to the team, or in some cases to make clear that a newcomer is not yet a fully accepted team member. Integrating into a new workplace is generally a challenging experience (Holmes and Fillary 2000). The process of joining an established community of practice involves learning the unwritten rules of interaction and sussing out the taken-for-granted norms and underlying values and beliefs which make each workplace and workplace team distinctive. Learning "how we do things around here", as workplace culture has been described, often takes a considerable amount of time. Excerpt 1 illustrated this type of gatekeeping. Members of the "home" team use the excuse of a formal "outside" event to highlight Jacob's membership of another organisation, an affiliation which had been socially irrelevant during their

working sessions, but which suddenly came into focus in the context of an event involving other staff members. In other words, his technical "outsider" status nicely serves as a source of humour and teasing from those who "belong" to the organisation to which he had been seconded.

The example highlights the dynamic nature of insider-outsider status, and the fact that it is not fixed but constantly changing and context-dependent. Being a member of the "in-group" depends on how that group is defined in relation to a particular context, setting, task, set of participants and speech event. Boundaries are both fluid and contestable (Holmes and Marra 2002a, Duszak 2002). Clearly, this type of gatekeeping is very difficult to document, but it is equally very interesting and, in my view, very important since it is constantly relevant as we go about our daily activities at work. Here, due to the confines of space, I provide just one further suggestive example, in the confident expectation that it will connect with reader's experiences. Both involve humour, a commonly used strategy for managing the discords and disjunctions which inevitably arise when someone joins a new workplace or workplace team.

In excerpt 5.1, Neil is a consultant who has been brought in to assist the management of Company S to deal with a complex HR issue. He will be working with the senior management team for several months, but at this stage he is still feeling his way.[11]

Excerpt 5.1
Context: Towards the end of a senior management meeting Shaun points out that Neil has not yet been introduced to the staff of Company S, as he has not yet attended one of their monthly staff meetings.

```
1 Sha:    (we haven't) introduced Neil to the staff yet
2 Vic:    (no)
3         that's because (you) haven't been to a staff meeting +   ·
4 Nei:    [clears throat] ++
5         I haven't been invited so [laughs] um ++
6         well should I talk give give an h r update and see
7         whether or not that links (until) whether or not you want to send
8         any messages this afternoon with these guys
9 Sha:    okay but I think it's important you do go to the staff meeting
10        and get introduced
11 Nei:   yeah /( )\
12 Sha:   /do\ we have a formal position of who Neil is
13        what he's doing and what you're doing and things
14 Nei:   er I can't do it today unfortunately I've
15        I've already booked in some time with someone else this afternoon
16        but the next one I can come along to yeah
17 Sha:   we'll think about it
18 Nei:   pardon
19 Sha:   we'll think about it
20 Nei:   /[laughs]\
21 Sha:   /we don't take kindly to\ being rejected
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[11] I am grateful to Stephanie Schnurr for finding this example in our database and for discussing it with me. She also provided relevant references which have enhanced the discussion.

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22 Nei:   oh I'm sorry I've got a yeah got a meeting this afternoon which
23        I can't get out of if I'd have know I would of changed it yeah
24 Sha:   what is our formal position on Neil (5)
25 Nei:   [laughs]
26 Sha:   [laughs]: (that) created a baffling silence (didn't it):
27 Che:   well I (thought) it was another one of your rhetorical questions
28        that you were just gonna s- spout forth with
```

This short excerpt provides another succinct example of the way in which gatekeeping is interactionally achieved in an organisation. Neil is working with the senior management team (SMT) as a consultant, and is not at this stage regarded as a member of the organisation. However, like Jacob in excerpt 1, Neil is clearly a member of a team which is addressing specific HR issues. What is going on here is complex. The presentational or apparent issue is the fact that Neil needs to be introduced to the wider staff of the organisation (line 1), and the easiest and usual way to accomplish this is for him to attend the monthly staff meeting (line 3), which is to occur that day. Shaun initiates the humour with his semi-serious question *do we have a formal position of who Neil is* (line 12), though Neil fails to recognise this is a tease. The fact that Neil is not free to attend (lines 14-16) provides an opportunity for Shaun to further torment him for rejecting their invitation (lines 17,19,21). Neil does not recognise that he is being teased, and he responds seriously to Shaun's comment *we don't take kindly to being rejected* (line 21), with an elaboration of his excuse (lines 22-24). Shaun then raises again, more seriously, the issue of how Neil is to be presented to the rest of the staff, *what is our formal position on Neil* (line 24): ie what will the staff be told about Neil's role in the organisation, a question which clearly no-one has an immediate answer to since it is followed by a long pause, described by Shaun humorously as *a baffling silence* (line 26).

The apparent issue then is Neil's status as a consultant, and how this will be "managed" in relation to the rest of the organisation's staff. This is in itself of course a gatekeeping issue which is dealt with here quite explicitly, and identified as a matter which will require some thought. At another level, however, something more interesting is going on. Neil is being introduced to one of the pervasive characteristics of the very distinctive interactional style of the SMT of Company S, a team which our ethnographic data indicates forms a very close-knit community of practice. Their interactional style is characterised by extensive competitive teasing (see Schnurr fc), a style we have identified in at least two other workplaces (Holmes and Marra 2002c), and one which serves for the relevant groups as a means of "creating team" (Fletcher 1999), or constructing solidarity between members of the community of practice. Getting integrated into the team involves learning to handle this style and learning to respond appropriately and energetically to the critical comments and jocular insults which are consistently being thrown at all team members. In excerpt 5.1, it is clear that Neil does not achieve this. Though he laughs when Shaun says they will have to "think about" whether he will be invited to the next staff meeting (lines 17, 19), he fails to recognise that Shaun is teasing him when Shaun responds to Neil's laugh with a comment that they *don't take kindly to being rejected* (line 21).

Neil's detailed response to Shaun's tease is clear evidence that Neil has not yet recognised the team style and is not yet a team player. He first apologises *oh I'm sorry* (line 22), and then extensively elaborates the reason he has already provided earlier, namely that he has *already booked in some time with someone else* (line 15). His

response is redolent with appeasement; he even claims he would have changed his appointment if he had known that he was expected to attend the staff meeting (line 23). This is not an appropriate response in the context of the team's typical energetic fighting style, and it clearly identifies Neil as an outsider, not only of the organisation, but more importantly of this senior team with whom he is trying to establish a good working relationship. Interestingly, however, our data shows that within a short time, Neil learns how to respond to such comments, and manages to hold his own in such exchanges: ie he successfully assimilates the team style, and is clearly much better integrated into the team. He manages to play his part in their lively interactions which typically involve jocular abuse, contestation of claims made by others, and general teasing and tormenting (see Schnurr fc).

Excerpt 5.1 nicely illustrates, then, how gatekeeping is instantiated at several levels. As a consultant who has been brought into Company S for his specific skills, Neil is clearly an outsider to the organisation as a whole. Yet at another level, he is being invited to join a team to work on a specific project, and it is important for the success of the project that he integrates with members of the project team. The teasing exchange between Neil and Shaun is one illustration of the subtle process of inducting a neophyte into a new community of practice. Neil gets it wrong this time, but he learns from the experience, and within a few weeks he has passed through the gate and is behaving appropriately as a team member. Excerpt 5.2 is very brief illustration of Neil making a humorous quip based on the fact that one of the team members is communicating with the Wellington SMT by tele-conferencing from Auckland.

Excerpt 5.2
Context: Neil is about to make a Powerpoint presentation to the SMT. Joel is in contact only via a telephone line

1 Vic: so we've got Joel in Auckland
2   and Chester, Shaun, Vic and Neil in Wellington +
3   take it away Neil
4 Nei: thanks can you see that alright Joel
5 Joe: yeah quite good thanks just turn it a bit to the left

The joke works nicely and Joel picks it up and responds in kind. Neil is clearly learning the interactional ropes. Similarly Jacob, in excerpt 1, very effectively contests the teasing about his dubious status as a team member by skilfully inserting a humorous contribution of his own *hide in the back row* (line 6). Brown and Keegan claim that it usually "takes up to three weeks to become accepted as a joker" (1999: 57), but of course this will vary in different work contexts and employment situations. Neil is not working at Company S full time at this point, and so one might expect the time taken to "walk the fine line between being sufficiently appreciative of the jocularity offered by others and initiating jocular transactions" himself would be greater (Seckman and Couch 1989: 334), though in fact, our data shows him attempting to contribute by the third meeting with the team. Clearly, then acquiring the distinctive interactional style of the organisation you are joining is one very important means of getting through the gate and successfully achieving workplace integration.[12]

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[12] Holmes and Fillary (2000) discuss a similar example of teasing and the problems it illustrates for a newcomer in fitting into a new organisation.

In this section, I have suggested that gatekeeping can be quite subtle and complex, and that control of the gate may rest in the hand of a group of apparent equals, rather than being concentrated in the hands of more traditional institutional gatekeepers. Humour is a well-attested discourse strategy for signalling in-group vs out-group boundaries (e.g. Boxer 2002, Morreall 1997, Holmes and Marra 2002a, Wenger 1998), and it presents a challenge to neophytes and newcomers. There are also, of course, a wide range of other subtle ways of signalling to a newcomer that they are not yet an accepted member of the community of practice: e.g. reference to past experiences, institutional narratives and workplace anecdotes, in-group jokes, and so on, which draw on shared knowledge and make reference to established team values and taken-for-granted norms and assumptions which are not available to the new worker. Humour is just one instance of how such strategies may be used to signal that the power to open the gateway to organisational membership does not lie solely in the hands of the appointments committee.

Ultimately, gatekeeping is about "doing power" - but there are many different ways of achieving this.[13] While managers are the most obvious wielders of authority and power in an organisation, our data indicates that anyone on the inside of the gate has some power over those on the outside, even if it consists mainly of demonstrating what insiders know about the workplace culture - "the rules of the game" (Robbins and Barnwell 1998), or "the way we do things around here" - that outsiders do not.[14]

Conclusion

Gatekeeping is a matter of monitoring boundaries. The analysis in this paper has extended the discussion of gatekeeping to encompass some rather less orthodox conceptions of relevant boundaries, and to somewhat less usual methods of how they might be monitored. I have used the term to include the process of monitoring progress across boundaries *within* an institution, as well as providing access to institutional membership. The paper has also presented examples illustrating a much more positive view of the gatekeeper's role than is typical. As Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996: 37) point out, gatekeeping "is largely accomplished through discourse processes". The discourse strategies for "doing gatekeeping" which have been discussed range from explicit appeals to established institutional procedures at one end of the spectrum though to much more subtle signals of acceptance (or not) into a community of practice at the other.

The analysis of such gatekeeping encounters indicates that power may be manifested in many different ways in workplace talk. The first section of this paper illustrated a

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[13] Holmes (ip) discusses the discursive ways in which a humorous sequence, involving a group from a government department, and centred around the notion of "the old boys' network", functions to marginalise women's interests. The systemic nature of men's more powerful position in the workplace is emphasised in the exchange which focusses on the strategies men use to maintain economic power, and the dependence of women on powerful men to provide them with opportunities for employment.

[14] Workplace culture comprises the knowledge and experience that enables people to function effectively at work, or, familiarity with "the way we do things around here" (Bower 1966, cited in Clouse and Spurgeon 1995: 3).

relatively traditional gatekeeping encounter where the manifestation of power took the form of an appeal to institutional norms and standard practices. In the second section, the focus was the benevolent manifestation of power by good mentor-managers, concerned not only with the goals of their organisations, but also with the welfare of their staff. The third section explored the notion that power may also be instantiated more subtly through the discourse of peers and colleagues who have the ability to admit or bar a new employee from full team membership.

The discursive strategies used in each case illustrate how power was interactionally achieved in very different ways in each type of encounter. The first type of encounter was illustrated by an example which in some respects closely fits the traditional notion of gatekeeping in its orientation to ensuring that the applicant fits the requirements of the organisation. The gate in question, however, provided access to promotion and a more responsible position, rather than entry to the institution. The analysis illustrated very clearly and starkly the extent to which a person's manager controls access to organisational resources, and to progress through the organisation's internal boundaries and gateways. The analysis also highlighted the contrast between the conservative, monitoring strategies of the manager, who explicitly appealed to "due process" as his rationale for keeping the gate shut, and the radical challenges of the subordinate who skilfully exposed the flaws in his arguments and successfully inserted a toe in the gate for future negotiations.

The second type of gatekeeping encounter demonstrated that gatekeeping may involve not only monitoring who comes through the gate, but also positive mentoring entailing opening gates and encouraging staff to expand their horizons and venture into new areas. The balance between organisational interests and individual benefit is an obvious issue which arises in such interactions, and different managers handle this potential conflict differently, influenced no doubt by contextual as well as interpersonal factors. The discursive strategies illustrated in this section provide a contrast to those traditionally associated with gatekeeping, where the expectation is that the gatekeepers will be ensuring that only those who "fit" certain requirements will be allowed through the gates.

The subtlety with which gatekeeping can be interactionally achieved was the subject of the third type of gatekeeping. The discursive norms of a particular community of practice may constitute a barrier to a newcomer unaware of their importance in signalling and constructing group membership. Humour was used as just one example to illustrate the range and complexity of strategies which can indirectly, but nonetheless very effectively, signal one's degree of integration into a new workplace. Colleagues clearly play a part in the gatekeeping process, adroitly shaping and monitoring the behaviour of would-be team members in ways that are rarely the focus of explicit analysis, and suggesting that we are all constantly "doing gatekeeping" in our everyday workplace interaction.

The analysis obviously raises many interesting questions, not least the issue of whether we can account for the particular choice of strategy or strategies used in different interactions. Though power underpins the gatekeeper's right to monitor the gate, the choice of strategies for instantiating that power, or constructing one's role as a manager, mentor, or collegial gatekeeper, is influenced by a range of other contextual factors such as the style of leadership (e.g. more transactional vs more transformational) preferred by the manager (Holmes 2003b), or the type of community of practice or organisational

culture in which participants are operating. The next challenge is to unravel these issues.

Discourse analysis of gatekeeping encounters has tended to concentrate on the many and varied sources of miscommunication and misinterpretation between the interviewers and those interviewed in relatively formal gatekeeping encounters, often between strangers. This paper has adopted a rather different focus and has examined how gatekeeping is interactionally achieved in ordinary, everyday workplace talk, and in routine encounters between people in the course of doing their jobs. The interesting range of strategies identified is almost certainly not comprehensive or definitive, but, hopefully, this analysis provides a useful encouragement to look more closely at the diverse ways in which gatekeeping is achieved in workplace talk.

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Transcription conventions

All names are pseudonyms.

[laughs]	Paralinguistic features in square brackets
[drawls]	
+	Pause of up to one second
++	Two second pause
..../......\...	Simultaneous speech
..../......\...	
(hello)	Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
?	Rising or question intonation
publicat-	Incomplete or cut-off utterance
....	Some words omitted
[*comments*]	Editorial comments italicized and in square brackets

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Txt Speak as an in-group marker

Luke McCrohon

Abstract

Technological media have resulted in the creation of a range of new English varieties that may be almost incomprehensible to outsiders. Often originating to combat technological limitations, features such as those used in "Txt Messages" often persist even once such limitations are overcome. Investigation of the usage patterns of "Txt Speak" by L1 and L2 English speakers identified a strong correlation between the number of informal and non-standard English features in text messages and the degree of social distance between sender and recipient. This, along with the inclusion of paralinguistic tokens such as emoticons, supports the argument that Txt Speak serves as an in-group marker. If this is the case, it could go some way to accounting for the linguistic vitality of such varieties.

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Introduction

In recent years the use of text messaging has exploded world-wide, not least in New Zealand. In the United Kingdom, for example, yearly usage of text messaging has increased from 1.1 billion messages in 1999 (MDA 2002) to an estimated 25 billion in 2004 (MDA 2004). This astonishing growth has led to these "dinky, digital messages" (Benson 2001) becoming an almost ubiquitous means of communication, particularly among modern youth.

The rapid nature of the growth of this message form has meant that until recently only a small amount of research attention has been devoted to its study; there is relatively little in the standard academic literature on this topic. The popular press and the Internet, however, are useful sources of information in this area, and scientific articles concerning modern communication forms such as email and cellular telephony also provide valuable data on the topic.

In research primarily documenting the role of mobile phones, but making reference to text messaging, Fox (2002) has suggested that the appeal of text messaging stems from the difficulties of maintaining a close-knit social group amidst the fast pace of modern society. She asserts that by enabling us to keep in touch through short conversations and brief greetings, mobiles make it possible for us to remain connected to our social networks when physical meeting is not possible. Users confirm this is an important reason for making calls. Accepting that social contact is an important basic function of text messages, I hypothesise that the distinctive variety of language used in text messages will also reflect and contribute to this function of "keeping in touch".

The language used in text messaging is generally referred to as *Txt Speak* (Wikipedia 2004a). It instantiates a unique message form whose social context and inevitable limitations have played key roles in shaping the features of this variety. Txt Speak involves instant communication over long distances, combined with the ability to save messages, and the security of complete privacy. Like other varieties constrained by the

limitations of a technological medium, Txt Speak originally evolved to combat such limitations. In the case of Txt Speak, these limitations primarily involved time constraints on writing long messages. The result has been a highly contracted form of English, with most non-essential characters removed or replaced by shorter forms.

Another important factor, however, has been advancing technology. "Predictive Text" means it is now possible to write unmodified messages more quickly than Txt Speak contractions. Industry analysts anticipated that predictive text facilities would cause Txt Speak to die out (Fox 2001). But this has not been the case.

This small study compares the use of Txt Speak by L1 and L2 speakers of English in order to explore the reasons for the surprising linguistic vitality of this variety. It is hypothesised that the functions of Txt Speak in maintaining social networks, and possibly as an in-group marker, account for its survival. One would expect this function to be more accessible to L1 English speakers than to L2 speakers who might be expected to have less exposure to informal English varieties.

Methodology

To gather data for this project I surveyed two groups of university students, sampling their use of Txt Speak through examples of text messages they had sent. The groups were constructed as follows: one group of eight L1 English speakers and one group of eight L2 English speakers. Both groups responded to the same survey which included questions to collect background information about the participants as well as to collect sample messages.

I chose to confine my sample to current university students for two reasons, firstly ease of access, and secondly their relatively high levels of language ability. It seemed important to work with participants who had good English language skills so that all deviations from standard English in their messages could be regarded as the result of choice rather than of ignorance. By selecting only university students, a certain level of proficiency could be assumed (at least IELTS 6.5), as this is a prerequisite to enrollment.

I conducted two pilot studies to develop the questions for the survey. The first included a large number of questions in order to determine which provided the best indicators of language ability and background information. The second pilot survey refined these questions and ensured they were comprehensible to the target audience. The first pilot study led me to choose a set of particular questions for inclusion in the survey; the second resulted in the rephrasing of some of the more ambiguous questions. The resulting questions had three main aims: to determine individuals' sociological background information, details of their phone usage, and details regarding specific messages, including who they were sent to.

Questions on background information and language ability were reasonable standard, with individuals indicating ethnicity via self identification, and language ability via indicators such as the amount of time spent in English speaking countries. I chose not to include questions on social class due to the difficulty of determining class within a student population. Indicators such as income are not reliable for students, and parental income may no longer reflect the status of the individual. However, all participants were university students.

In relation to phone usage, questions sought to determine both proficiency in text messaging, as well as the capabilities of the phone on which messages would be sent, both of which could constrain the language used in the messages. Of interest would have been the cost to the user of sending messages, but due to the many alternative contract and prepaid plans currently available in New Zealand, this would have required prohibitively many questions.

The question designed to determine how well the sender knew the recipients of the messages was particularly important. Assuming Txt Speak is acting as an in-group marker, the degree of friendship or social distance was predicted to be a key determiner of its use. I asked participants to provide only examples of messages previously sent. This was intended to guarantee that only genuine and authentic examples would be included in the sample, and that examples would be unaffected by the knowledge that they were to be included in a survey.

Once messages were collected, I examined them to identify the informal and non-standard features of English they contained, and attempted to find patterns in the distribution of these features. I chose to concentrate primarily on quantifiable differences between messages such as spelling, and in this paper I make only limited reference to other features. An adequate analysis of grammatical and stylistic differences would have required a substantially larger sample size.

It is important to note with regard to sample size that this investigation was carried out as a pilot study for possible future research. Sample size was limited to only 16 individuals, with each contributing a relatively small number of messages. With such a small sample all results must be considered tentative, but also as having the potential for identifying patterns meriting further study.

Results

The results from the 16 individuals were subdivided into two groups according to whether English was their first language or not. On variables other than language the two groups shared roughly the same composition, as shown in table 1. The only significant variation between the two groups was their distinct cultural backgrounds.

From each group I chose a maximum of 6 text messages per participant for further analysis. This provided 76 text messages for examination, a reasonable basis for identifying patterns.

Distribution of features of Txt Speak
In both groups the main informal and non-standard English features identified comprised a variety of forms of contraction. Common among these were the removal of vowels, phonetic spellings, and the replacement of entire words by single characters. Non-standard spelling was also used, even when these did not shorten the word. Short sentences and direct questions were commonly used by both groups. Paralinguistic tokens, known as Emoticons (Wikipedia 2004b), were also occasionally used. Examples of these features are provided in table 2.

The only feature not evident in the usage of both groups was the reduplication of certain words; this feature was only used by some L2 speakers.

Table 1
Characteristics of participants

	L1 English Speakers	*L2 English Speakers*
Average Age	20.1 years	20.5 years
Ethnicity	Mainly European	Mainly Chinese
Gender	7 Males 1 Female	7 Males 1 Female
Students	All	All
Average length of cell phone ownership	3 years	3.81 years
Average no. of texts per week	21.3	20.9
Predictive capability of phone	Yes for all	Yes for all

Table 2
Features of Txt Speak

Feature	*Standard English*	*Txt Speak*
Vowel removal	experiment	exprmnt
Phonetic spelling	night	nite
Replacement	two, too or to	2
Non-standard spelling	maybe	mabye
Short sentences	-	Skipping german
Direct Questions	-	where are you?
Emoticon	-	:-)

The frequencies of use of the most common quantifiable features by the different groups are shown in table 3 and figure 1. All values are expressed as the ratio of actual usage to total possible usage.

Table 3
Ratios of Non-Standard Usage

Feature	L1 Group	L2 Group
Contraction	0.27	0.16
Replacement	0.07	0.07
NS spelling	0.05	0.02

Figure 1

L1 vs L2 Speakers usage of Non-Standard Language Features
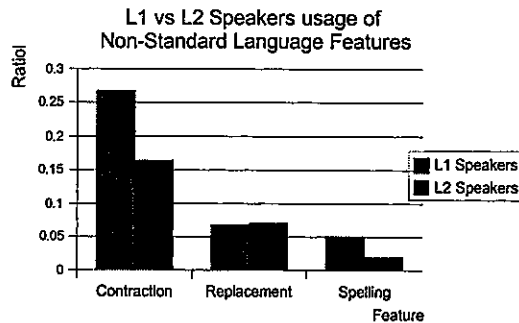
It can be seen that both groups make use of all features, but L1 speakers use contraction and non-standard spellings with greater frequency. Replacement, however, is used with similar frequency by both groups.

Although the cell phones of all those in my sample had predictive text capability, not all participants chose to use it. A similar comparison to that shown in table 3 and figure 1 may be made between users and non-users of the predictive text facility. See table 4 and figure 2.

For all features, those using predictive text show a lower level of use of non-standard forms.

From the comparisons provided in these tables and figures, it can be seen that all three variables show similar distributions, with contraction being the most common feature. In what follows, I therefore focus in more detail on contraction.

Table 4
Ratios of Non-Standard Usage

Feature	Non-Users	Users
Contraction	0.33	0.11
Replacement	0.12	0.02
NS spelling	0.04	0.03

Figure 2

Users vs Non-Users of Predictive Texts usage of Non-Standard Language Features
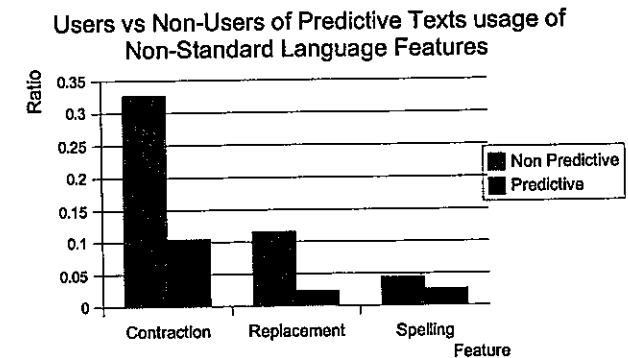
Contraction as an in-group marker

Since contraction was the most frequently occurring feature of Txt Speak, I examined its distribution in more detail, looking especially at the addressees of messages which contained most contractions. Using the contraction ratio as an indicator of the degree of "Txt Speakishness" of a message, and using the sender's reported closeness to the recipient as a indicator of social distance, it was possible to correlate these two factors and compare them between the native and non-native speaker groups. See figures 3 and 4.

These figures demonstrate remarkably clearly that for both L1 and L2 speakers the amount of contraction present in text messages appears to reflect how well the sender knows the recipient. The lower the social distance, the greater the degree to which contraction takes place. This pattern holds for both groups, but with L1 speakers less likely than L2 speakers to report sending messages outside their immediate social group. This may of course be a result of cultural differences in assessing the degree of social distance between participants and their addressees.

Figure 3

L1 Speakers Distribution of
Social Distance vs Contraction Ratio

Figure 4

L2 Speakers Distribution of
Social Distance vs Contraction Ratio
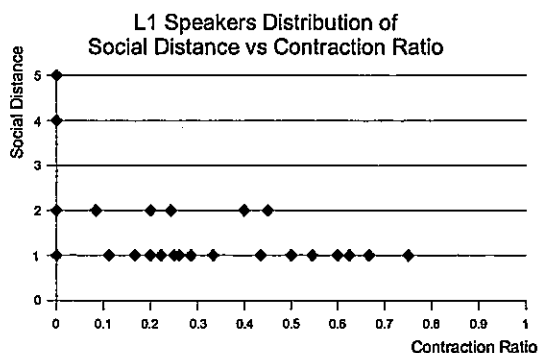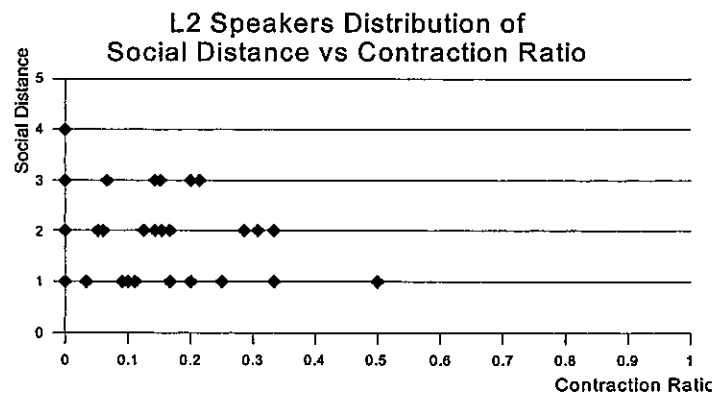
As both groups showed the same qualitative pattern in the relationship between level of contractions and social distance between sender and addressee, I was able to combine both data sets to examine this result in more detail. See figure 5 which reveals the same pattern, but even more clearly.

Figure 5

Combined Distribution of
Social Distance vs Contraction Ratio
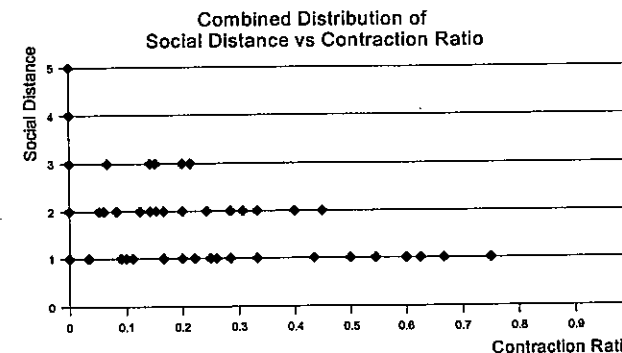
Discussion

All the distinguishing features of Txt Speak identified in the sample of text messages were used by both groups, with the exception of reduplication. The contraction ratio and non-standard spelling ratio were lower for L2 speakers, but, importantly, followed the same pattern as for L1 speakers. On the whole there was little observed variation between the two groups in the features of the Txt Speak variety used.

There was, however, a little evidence that there may be some degree of regional variation between varieties of English Txt Speak worldwide. In the UK, for instance, Benson reports that *your* is abbreviated to *yr* in Txt Speak. In my New Zealand sample, by contrast, *ur* was used for this abbreviation. This difference suggests that Txt Speak is not simply a contraction of English words by individual speakers, but rather something learned from the speech community.

Information about the mood or pragmatic intent of the writer was evident in the messages analysed, and this could be considered particularly relevant in maintaining social ties. Both L1 and L2 speakers used Emoticons in their messages, for example. In addition, the L2 speakers used some reduplication, as mentioned above. This might well be an influence from their first language, which was mainly Cantonese. In several Chinese dialects reduplication of single words has paralinguistic, pragmatic or rhetorical significance, and thus reduplication may also convey such meanings in Txt Speak messages. Interestingly, Halliday (1989:32) suggests that traditional written language has little need for paralinguistic features, as the reader is normally separated from the writer by both time and space. Since text messaging is essentially instant, paralinguistic information is perhaps more important.

The lower usage of contracted and non-standard spelling by L2 speakers may be a product of their lower linguistic confidence in the use of English. It is conceivable that these specific features are regarded by non-native speakers as particularly unacceptable, since they can make understanding difficult. Replacements such as *2* for *two, to* or *too,*

and *4* for *four* or *for*, which were used with similar frequency by both L1 and L2 speakers, on the other hand, do not present a barrier to understanding, as their intent is often very obvious even to those with no Txt Speak experience.

As Fox (2001) commented, the use of predictive text systems does seem to have a normative affect on the language of users, but even those with this capability still employed non-standard English features. More importantly a large percentage, 50% of my sample, chose to disable their predictive systems. This suggests that they preferred to use a system which did not impose standard usages on their texting. More particularly, I suggest that texters prefer to use Txt Speak, a system that allows them the option of using contractions and replacements and other non-standard usages, because these are ways of reducing social distance and signaling in-group identity with addressees. In other words, Txt speak expresses solidarity between texters. This is well supported by the correlation between levels of contraction use and degree of reported social distance between texters and addressees reported above. . Txt Speak is used only with close members of the senders' social network. It has no place in communication with distant associates and strangers.

It would be interesting to explore these patterns further in the texting behaviour of users of differing ages and different social networks. If Txt speak is an in-group marker, one would expect much lower usage between individuals of different ages, for example, and between people from different social networks.

Conclusion

The main feature of Txt speak identified in the 76 messages analysed in this study was the use of contracted English word forms. The analysis also identified a limited number of Emoticons adding paralinguistic information to the messages - information which can often be difficult to express in standard written English. Both these features supported the predicted association of the use of features of Txt Speak with in-group membership.

Predictive Text technologies appear to play some role in standardizing the language features used in text messages. These technologies, however, seem to be often overridden, and are on the whole underutilized, with users often reverting back to Txt Speak forms which provide the potential for differentiation in the messages sent to different addressees.

Contrary to expectations, L1 and L2 speakers appear to use Txt Speak in similar situations and for similar reasons. Even where particular features are used more by L1 than L2 speakers, the overall qualitative pattern remains the same. Finally, this study has provided support for the proposal that the degree to which Txt Speak forms are used in messages relates to the degree of social distance between sender and recipient. Txt Speak appears to act as an in-group marker expressing and perhaps also actively constructing social solidarity between text message users.

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"Whr r u? tb!"
A preliminary study of language use in young people's text messages

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Abstract

Text messaging is assumed to be impacting on language, communication and social behaviour. However, to date there has been relatively little systematic research on it. The present paper provides an empirical study of the language of text messaging and the interactional norms that shape its forms. Two different groups of young people forwarded sent and received text messages to the researchers. The linguistic forms and the communicative functions of the messages were analysed. Some text message sequences were also examined. The results are used to argue for the existence of distinctive linguistic and stylistic variations across the two youth groups. The text message sequences analysed indicated norms shaping responses that have parallels with turn taking norms in talk. Although difficult data to collect, future research on the dialogic aspects of text messaging may bring into sharp relief other norms relevant to everyday interaction.

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Introduction

New communication technologies

Telecommunication companies such as Vodafone have hailed short messaging service (SMS) or text messaging as one of the most successful and popular mobile phone services ever (Vodafone, 2003). The rapid spread of mobile phones and text messaging, combined with a high level of lay interest in mobile communication, makes it difficult to avoid upbeat claims, or what Thurlow and McKay (2003) have called "hype and hysteria", about the significance of text messaging for language, communication and social behaviours. Yet even more scholarly sources contain bold statements about the ways new communication technologies are affecting everyday life. Katz and Aakhus (2002), for example, suggested that mobile communication technologies are impacting on communication patterns to an extent not seen since the introduction of commercial television. According to Herring (2004) text messaging is the most mobile and ubiquitous form of computer-mediated communication in popular use. Given the newness of the technology it is not surprising that published, systematic empirical research on the linguistic and social aspects of mobile communication is comparatively rare.

Prevalence, as Walther (2004) noted, is not itself a compelling rationale for studying a phenomenon. Rather, important the important issues include the ways communication technologies are affecting, and/or accommodating to, established communication norms, and how social goals are accomplished through new mediums. An aim of this paper is to present an empirical study of text messaging as a new communication technology that is both shaped by, and impacting on, established linguistic practices and interactional norms.

Text messaging in New Zealand

In New Zealand text messaging (or SMS) first became possible with the introduction of a text-capable mobile phone in December 1994 (Vodafone, 2003). However it wasn't until a 1999 Vodafone advertising campaign that a rapid rise in text messaging occurred. In December 2001 around one million text messages were being sent every day in New Zealand, with that number increasing to 1.8 million text messages a day by June 2003 (Vodafone, 2003.) According to Vodafone statistics younger customers send more text messages than older ones, with the most prolific 'texters' being 16-20 year olds who are prepay customers. Vodafone also report some sex differences; female pre-pay customers who are 11-20 years old send more text messages than male pre-pay customers in the same age group. Also female contract customers in the 30-plus age group text more than male contract customers of the same age. Text message value-added services are proliferating rapidly, with local Wellington examples including suntan burn times, public transport delay announcements and payment for parking meters.

In New Zealand mass media, text messaging has been associated with various social behaviours. *The New Zealand Listener*, for example, has had at least two articles reporting on various aspects of text messaging including "flooding" (bullying), "dogging" (arranging exhibitionist sex) and general harassment (Bone, 2003; O'Hare, 2004). Furthermore, the "smartmob" (Rheingold, 2002) potential of text messaging was illustrated in New Zealand with a widely reported high school student march on parliament in support of teachers' pay claims, which was coordinated through text messaging (for example, Powley, 2002). Media representations of language use in text messaging suggest that, for young people at least, it is having a negative impact on grammar and spelling – "Txtg is kllg grmmr" (see Claridge, 2004).

Academic research on text messaging

A notable exception to the lack of systematic scholarly research on mobile communication is work conducted by the Information Society Research Centre at the University of Tampere, Finland. Kasesniemi and Rautiainen (2002) reported on one of the Centre's studies that focused on text messaging in Finnish adolescents, who are amongst the most prolific groups of text messagers in the world. Adolescent informants (13-18 years), were asked to transcribe messages from their phones that they had sent or received. Around 8000 messages were collected. Kasesniemi and Rautiainen did not provide a detailed analysis of the linguistic features of the messages. However, they described some general characteristics of the messages including that teens tended not to use upper and lower cases in their text messages; words were shortened, the kinds the inflectional endings characteristic of Finnish were not used and English terms were used for abbreviations. Kasesniemi and Rautiainen suggested the language style found in the text messages could be understood as a new kind of linguistic code.

Thurlow and Brown (2003) presented a more detailed analysis of the linguistic forms and communicative functions of text messages in their study. Text messages (n= 544) were collected by asking a class of university students (mean age 19 years) to retrieve five messages from their phone and to transcribe them as accurately as possible. Thurlow and Brown found messages were less than half the permissible 160 characters in length. Non-standard forms accounted for around 20% of the message content. In

their sample letter-number homophones (e.g. M8 'mate', RU 'are you') were relatively few. Typographic (e.g. exclamation marks) and emoticons were also rare but apostrophe use was quite high. Reasonably common were accent stylizations (e.g. novem for 'northern') and exclamatory spellings (e.g. arrgh!). In contrast to Kasesniemi and Rautiainen (2002), Thurlow and Brown argued that the low frequency and 'standard' types of non-standard forms (e.g. 'kool' and 'nite') in their data countered claims of the impenetrability and exclusivity of a text language or code.

So, the distinctness of the language of text messaging is a debatable issue. Herring (2004) suggested that text messaging could be understood as a kind of mobile e-mail, and Baron (2000) made a case for the distinct linguistic status of e-mail. Baron described e-mail as a system of language conveyance that could usefully be conceptualized as a style of linguistic formulation akin to an auxiliary Creole. In the case of e-mail the two linguistic systems that are in contact with each other through technology are speech and writing. Text messaging is also a blend of speech and writing, but in the case of text messaging the written form is produced from a telephone keypad rather than from a computer keyboard. Composing messages on a keypad is both time consuming and limiting. Another aim of the present study is to present an analysis of text messages that can usefully inform discussion about the linguistic status of text message 'language'.

Aside from the language features of text messages, another area of interest has been to ascertain the communicative functions of text messaging. Thurlow and Brown (2003) estimated two thirds of the messages they collected had social-relational functional orientations, with the remainder having more practical and functional orientations (e.g., arranging a time to meet). They suggested that the principal gratifications of sociability, social coordination and reassurance that text messaging seems to afford may account for its particular attractiveness to teenagers. Thus Thurlow and Brown suggested that mobile phones and text messaging can be understood as 'technologies of sociability' because much of what is being transmitted is at the level of phatic communion. The language style of text messaging which included accent stylizations and exclamatory spellings arguably functioned to attend to interpersonal communication concerns.

Both Kaseniemi and Rautiainen (2002) and Thurlow and Brown (2003) noted, but left unexamined the dialogic aspect of text messaging. In contrast, Laursen (2004) focused specifically on communication sequences of text messages. For one week, Laursen collected all mobile communication from a small group of friends. The dataset included both text messages and mobile conversations. The analysis examined the kinds of norms that participants displayed for organizing communication sequences. Laursen offered evidence of a 'reply norm'. For couples and best friends the average response time was around three minutes with longer gaps for more distant relationships. Chain messages and night time messages were exempt from the reply norm. When the reply norm was breached reminders were sent by the initiator, a pattern that Laursen interpreted as instances of the conversation analytic notion of repair work. Laursen's work points to conversation analysis as a useful tool for understanding the ways sequences of messages, at the beginning of interactions for example, are organized in rule based ways (see Schegloff, 2002; 2002a).

The present study was designed to examine both the form and functions of text messages, and their dialogic aspects; the former is the focus here. Participants forwarded text messages they sent and received to a research phone. Thus we can be

sure that the original language forms were preserved and not changed through the process of transcription. For ethical reasons, only a sample of messages received could be sent to the research phone. The received messages that were forwarded had to be from people who had signed a consent from agreeing to be part of the research and only their messages marked with 'df' (do forward) could be included. Thus, the data set of messages collected in the present study did not capture the full extent to which text messaging gets used as approaching synchronic communication.

Where mobile communication technologies are readily available it is young people who are the most frequent users of text messaging and it is also young people who are most enthusiastic about it as a form of social interaction (Thurlow and McKay, 2003; Oksman and Turtiainen, 2004). It is not surprising then, that the language of text messaging can be linked to other written forms authored and/or read by youth such as note writing (Thurlow and Brown, 2003) and the descriptions on hip-hop albums (personal observation). Sociolinguistic-inspired theories such as communities of practice (see for example Eckert, 2000) and communication accommodation theory (see Weatherall and Gallois, 2003) would predict nuanced patterns of linguistic practices depending on the social groups the young people more commonly communicated with. Accordingly, this study was designed to identify any differences of the linguistic practices of two groups of youth – high school students and post-school youth.

In summary the aims of the present research were: to identify the linguistic forms and functions of text messages, to compare the text messages of two youth groups and to consider the dialogic aspects of text messages. The results will be used to inform a discussion on how text messages are both shaped by and shaping language practices and communication norms.

Method

Participants
A total of 27 participants volunteered to take part in the study of which 21 completed the study as required. Of those who completed the requirements there were nine females and 12 males. Two recruitment strategies were used.

For the school students all Year 9 (13-14 year olds) and Year 10 students (14-15 year olds) at a private boys school and a private girls school in Wellington were invited to participate in an interview and to forward their text messages for two weeks to the researchers. Nine boys were interviewed but only four forwarded all their text messages for the required time period. Reasons for not forwarding their messages included that they couldn't be bothered, it was too much hassle, they were going away and they didn't text enough. One participant withdrew after a bullying incident where his phone was 'flooded' with a personally insulting text message. Seven girls were interviewed and six forwarded all their text messages for the required time period. The girl who withdrew lost her phone. The average age of the school students was 14 years old with a range from 13-15 years. The age of the school sample was like that of the participants in Kaseniemi and Rautiainen's (2002) study of Finish adolescents.

For the post-school youth sample volunteers were recruited in response to a newspaper advertisement asking for participants in a research study on text messaging. Three females and eight males were interviewed and forwarded their text messages for the required two weeks. The average age of the participants recruited from the paper was 19 years old, with a range from 16-36 years old. The post-school sample were working or

in tertiary education. The age of the sample recruited from the newspaper was comparable to the age of the participants in Thurlow and Brown's (2003) study.

Data collection

The process of data collection involved participants forwarding text messages from their own mobile phones to the research mobile phone for two weeks. This included all text messages the participants sent out and all the text messages they received from regular text message partners who indicated with "df" (do forward) that they had given their consent to have their message forwarded to the research phone for inclusion in the study.

Analysis

Presented in this section is a general description of the text messages in the data set. It beings by reporting the average number of text messages sent by participants and the average length of their messages. The general style of messages was examined by considering the use of salutations or greetings and the use of signatures. The language used was investigated by considering the use of standard and non-standard forms. Finally, the communication function of the messages was coded.

General Results

The data set collected for the current research contained a total of 1724 text messages. Thus the data set is over three times the size of that used by Thurlow and Brown (2003) but less than a quarter of the size collected by Kaseniemi and Rautiainen (2002). The participants composed 81% (n=1401) of these messages while the remainder (n= 323 were sent to participants by text partners. Only messages from the participants are included in the following summary figures. On average, five messages were sent per day, over the two weeks of data collection. Messages contained an average of 16 words and 70 characters, well short of the maximum allowable 160 characters in a text message. Of the words contained in text messages 45% were coded as non-standard forms (over double that reported by Thurlow and Brown, 2003) and will be analysed in more detail below.

Table 1 shows the number of messages and the average length of messages by gender of participants and recruitment source. The school students contributed just over half or 53% (n=752) of the messages. About half of these (52%, n = 390) were sent by male students and about half from female students (48%, n= 361). Of the 650 messages written by participants within the paper sample, 82% (n=531) were from males and 18% (n= 119) were from females. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using average number of words as the dependent variable showed no statistically significant effects for gender or source.

Male participants recruited from the paper used, on average, about 14 words per message with female participants from the paper, male students, and female students using about 17 words per message. However, an ANOVA test indicated no significant statistical relationships between average words per message, gender and recruitment sample.

Table 1
Total messages and average words used for gender of participant and recruitment source

Source	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	N	Total Messages	Mean Words	N	Total Messages	Mean Words
School	4	390	17.41	6	361	16.75
Paper	8	531	13.82	3	119	17.09

Greetings and closings

On average, about 23% (n=318) of messages composed by the participants contained a greeting, examples of which included "Hey", "Hi", "Hey *personal name*". Messages with closings were slightly more common (27%, n=379) than messages with greetings and included "tb"and "cya". Table 2 shows the average percentage of messages with a greeting or a closing by gender of participant and recruitment source. Each of the eight percentages in the table is out of a possible 100%.

Table 2 shows there was considerable variability across gender and recruitment source on the use of greetings. From the schools 37% of messages written by female school students contained a greeting compared with 14% of messages written by male students. On average 22% of messages written by males recruited from the paper used greetings compared to 18% of messages written by females from the same sample. However, an ANOVA indicated that the differences between the groups in their use of greetings was not statistically significant.

A statistically significant pattern of results was found for the use of closings. An ANOVA was conducted to explore differences in terminal statement usage between gender and recruitment sample. A significant main effect was found for recruitment source, $F (1,17) = 5.53$, $p< .05$. The means show that a greater percentage of the school sample ($M = 42.5$, $SD = 9.1$) used closings than did the paper sample ($M = 11.6$, $SD = 9.5$).

Non-Standard forms

The words used in each message were coded as standard or non-standard forms. On average, not quite half (45%) of strings were coded as non-standard. Table 3 shows the average number of non-standard forms per message by gender of participant and recruitment source.

Table 2
Percentage of messages containing greetings and closings
by gender of participant and recruitment source

| | Gender | | | | | |
| | Male | | | Female | | |
Source	N	Greet.	Clos.	N	Greet.	Clos.
School	4	13.75	39.50	6	37.00	45.50
Paper	8	22.38	11.25	3	17.67	12.00

An ANOVA was conducted to test for a statistical relationship between average number of non-standard forms used per message by gender of participant and recruitment source. Only a significant main effect for source was found. On average school students used more non-standard forms per message (M=10.20, SD=4.27) than the participants recruited from the paper (M=4.36, SD=3.57), F(1,17)=7.46, p<.05.

Emoticons were reasonably rare non-standard forms. Overall, 8% of messages contained emoticons with 10% of the school sample messages containing emoticons and 6% of messages from the paper sample. Of messages written by female participants 13% contained emoticons compared to 4% of the messages written by male participants. A total of 1519 different non-standard forms were used, with 42% (n=633) used more than once. Table 4 shows the 40 most frequently used non-standard forms and also the frequency with which the standard equivalents were used.

Table 3
Average number of non-standard forms per message
by gender of participant and recruitment source

	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Non-std forms		Non-std forms	
Source	Mean	Std.Dev	Mean	Std Dev
School	10.34	5.08	10.11	4.16
Paper	2.65	2.31	8.93	1.35

A fifth (8/40) of the most frequently used non-standard forms were homophones, (u, 2, r, 4, ur, b, c, 2day), a form stereotypically associated with text messaging. Other abbreviating strategies illustrated in Table 4 include contractions (wat, bt, wen, jst, cn, wt, hw, nt, gt, tht), clippings (jus, goin, hav), dropped apostrophes (im its, il, dnt), non-

conventional spellings (cum, nite) and initialisations (lol, tb). Four accent stylisations (yea, wana, da, gud) and the paralinguistic feature of laughter (haha) also made it into the top 40.

Some non-standard forms are far more frequent than their standard equivalents. For the two types of initialisations (lol, tb), no standard equivalents are used. Apostrophes are very close to disappearing from usage in the text messages in this study. Also, the homophonic equivalents are all considerably more frequent than their standard counterparts in this sample. For contractions some non-standard forms are used more than std forms (bt, jst, wt) some are used less (wat, gt) and some are used about the same (cn, nt, tht). All the clipped forms (jus, goin, hav) and non-conventional spellings (cum, nite) are used more frequently than the corresponding standard forms. The accent stylisations 'yea', 'wana' and 'gud' clearly outnumbered their standard equivalents, with only 'da' being used less frequently than the standard equivalent.

Table 4
Frequencies of 40 most commonly used non standard forms
and standard equivalents

Non Std	Freq	Std	Freq	Non Std	Freq	Std	Freq
u	757	you	120	il	57	I'll	72
2	423	to	96	goin	56	going	20
im	242	I'm	8	gud	56	good	29
r	150	are	32	wen	55	when	4
lol	124	laugh out loud	0	hav	54	have	46
4	117	for	36	jst	53	just	4
tb	116	text back	0	dnt	52	didn't	0
yea	113	yes	2	cum	52	come	47
th	105	the	195	2day	50	today	9
ur	103	your	20	bout	48	about	24
b	102	be	18	cn	47	can	45
da	97	the	195	nite	44	night	14
wat	84	what	152	ur	44	you're	3
haha	82			wt	44	what	24
txt	74	text	7	hw	43	how	36
its	73	it's	4	nd	42	and	113
c	68	see	5	nt	42	not	40
bt	63	but	43	gt	41	got	49
jus	63	just	37	tht	41	that	39
hay	59	hey	181	wana	41	want to	0

Communication function

Any communication may have a number of functions, not all of which may be accessible to a reader with only the partial context of the communication. Nevertheless in order to get some sense of how text messaging was being used, each message was coded for its primary functional orientation. Individual messages were assigned to 11 broad categories. Each message was only assigned to one category. A second rater independently coded a quarter of the messages and a reliability coefficient was

calculated for each category (Cohen, 1960). The kappa coefficients ranged from 0.75 to 1.00 indicating acceptable levels of agreement for all categories.

Eleven functional categories were identified. Brief descriptions and illustrative examples of each are provided here.

Informational
Messages that were requesting and/or providing information that was impersonal and factual, or providing practical advice. Examples included, *"Where'd u get ur over trousers frm?"* and *"Check on www.mob-phone.co.uk or .com I can't remember"*

Phatic Communion
Messages that seemed to function primarily to reinforce and maintain relationships. The messages may have involved asking after well-being and daily activities. It also included humour and conversation that seemed specific to friendship relationships. Examples included, *"Eww you poor thing! Good luck! I sure as heck couldn't get up that early"*, *"How should we cheep up Meash? She needs it. Do u like Jonny?"* and *"hey Bridgey, it was so great 2 c u in Welly! Hope ur happy 2 b home again, and ur not working 2 much".*

Social Activity
The primary function of messages coded in this category was the organization of social activities. Examples included, *"Hey there. I've heard through the grapevine that you're doing something tomorrow night. What's happening?"* and *"Hey Jim, poker and beers @ Maurice's place around 7pm. I'll probably drive down. R u keen?".*

Chain Messages
Rhymes or jokes that are received and then forwarded to another person. For example, *"FOR LOVE: When Venus smiles the whole world smiles. While she's ready 2 grant ur every desire, ask 4 the things that r closest 2 ur heart & mean the most".*

Meta Communication
Any text message that was about communication itself. Examples were, "call me at home 2nite and tell me the details" and *"Text me if you go on msn"*, *"Wat do u mean?"* and *"Did u jst txt me".*

Whereabouts
Messages regarding immediate location. Examples were , *"We r in newtown we shud b about 15 mins"*, *"Come 2wards reading we meet u"* and *"Where u at?".*

Gossip
Texts that were about other people, social relations, or what others said or did. For example, *"anyone get nailed?".*

Text Etiquette
Apologies and explanations for not getting in touch or failing to respond. Examples included, *"sorry no muny on my fone"* and *"Hey sori I didn't txt bac this morn, I just woke up".*

Intimate Exchanges
Sexual, flirtatious or romantic messages. Examples included, *"can I have sex with you pleaz?"*, *"I wasn't lyng when I sed u were hot!"* and *"I luv u more".*

Requests
Messages that asked another for a favour or assistance. For example, *"I 4got my eftpos card when I left. Can you please bring me sum muni?".*

Other
Messages that were unspecific responses to previous communications (e.g. yup) or the purpose of the text was incomprehensible (e.g. gwentz).

Table 5 shows the average percentage of messages coded as having the different communication functions. Phatic communion was clearly the most frequent function of the messages. Organising social activities and describing one's whereabouts were also common functions of text messages in this sample. Thurlow and Brown (2003) suggested that the functional orientation of the messages could be conceptualised as a continuum from those that are highly relational to those that have a more practical orientation. The communicative functions that have a clearly relational orientation are phatic communion, social activity, gossip, and intimate exchanges, which account for nearly three quarters of the messages.

Table 5 also shows the recruitment source of the average percentage of messages by communication function. Both groups used text messages primarily for highly relational purposes. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that when compared with the school students, more of the messages from the older sample recruited from the paper had a more practical orientation. For example, from the paper recruits, a fifth (20%) were asking about whereabouts or for information compared to only 10% for school students.

Table 5
Mean percent of messages by communication function and source

Function	Paper	School	Overall
		Source	
Phatic Communion	40	51	46
Social Activity	12	11	12
Whereabouts	13	7	10
Gossip	11	4	8
Meta Communication	4	7	6
Informational	7	3	5
Intimate Exchanges	3	4	4
Text Etiquette	3	3	3
Requests	2	1	2
Chain Messages	0	1	1
Other	13	9	11

Reply norms

The messages coded as having a text etiquette orientation (e.g. *"Hey sori I didn't txt bac this morn, I just woke up"*), point to the existence of reply norms. Further examination of such norms requires a set of instances where they are operating. The present study had been designed to collect sequences of messages sent and received by the participants. However, the ethical requirement that text partners show their consent for a message's inclusion by marking it with 'df' (do forward) meant that the dataset did not capture the full extent of text message 'conversations'. Nevertheless, the data did include examples that at least support Laursen's (2004) work on reply norms for text messages. Laursen suggested that amongst friends there is an expectation that messages will be responded to in under three minutes.

The following example, Extract 1, shows the kind of turn-taking pattern that Laursen identified as a norm. The time the message was sent is indicated in the left hand column:

Extract 1

16:10	Oh kool h hav a piano concert 2nite and a violin concert on sunday r u going to th thorndon fair?
16:12	DF Na i dnt go 2 fairs mum dsnt lyk it n iv gt no1 2 go wif!
16:14	Oh i cnt go cz h hav violin bt mums workin there lol so i mite go at th vry end
16:16	DF Kol luky u!:-)
16:19	Haha i wish
16:20	DF Iv gt 2 go 2 a dnce rehrsl nw! Il txt u l8a!

In the above extract each turn is delivered less than three minutes after the last. The last message finishes with an account for having to stop the conversation – having to go to a dance rehearsal and a promise to send a text message later.

In contrast to the previous example, Extract 2 is an example where an expected reply is not forthcoming:

Extract 2

07:55	Cn i go wit u frm seatoun 2 town?
07:58	Txt bk
08:01	Cn i or nt?

In the first line in extract 2 the participant asks a question. Three minutes later it is clear that a reply has not been received because a prompt is sent. Then after a further three minutes a second prompt is sent. The prompts show not only show that a reply was expected but the time frame that it was expected within - that is in less than three minutes.

The final example also provides evidence of a reply norm shaping the pattern of text messages. Extract 3 also illustrates the kind of hyper coordination that text messaging affords. The first message in this sequence poses a question, which does not get a response and after six minutes a curse prompt is sent to text back. The question is then repeated for a second time after a further six minutes.

Extract 3

13:18	Y r u goin 2 matrix tb
13:24	Oi ttfb
13:30	R u goin 2 th matrix tb
13:31	Oi wat r u doin nd wit hu else tb
13:32	Wat r u doin nd hu wit tb
13:35	So ur waitn 4 us we r in newtown
13:38	We r in newtown we shud b bout 15mins
13:51	Whr u at tb
13:57	Cum 2wards readn we meet u
14:03	In rebel nw
14:07	Meet us im readn
14:13	Whr th fuk r u

It seems likely that a response is provided although it was not forwarded to the research phone. Although the 'replies' are not forwarded to the research phone the three messages sent at 13:32, 13:35 and 13:38 respectively indicate a joint plan to meet up after about 15 minutes. After 13 minutes (at 13:51) a 'whereabouts' message is sent, and the following four final messages function to coordinate the meeting up of the friends, which presumably did occur.

Discussion

Consistent with Thurlow and Brown (2003), the text messages in the current data set were well short of the maximum permissible length of 160 characters. Thus it is likely that speed, which of course entails brevity, is the overriding maxim shaping the number of characters and words used in each message. Furthermore, in the present study length of message was neither influenced by gender nor age of the participants. Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that for text message length, at least, the medium rather than the messenger is the primary influence.

Aside from message length another aspect of the language style that was investigated was the use of openings and closings. Around a quarter of messages in the present data set had one and/or the other. However, the use of personal names in the greeting or sign off was rare. Thus like e-mail (see Baron, 2000) the more formal salutations and signatures most characteristic of letter writing, were sparse in text messages. In text messaging, identifying yourself in the message is redundant when you are communicating with someone you 'know'. Electronic familiarity occurs when your number is stored in another person's phone directory, so a phone will automatically identify a caller. The rarity of personal names in greetings and sign offs indicates that text messaging is primarily a form of communication amongst those who are well known to each other.

Although salutations and signatures typical of more formal written forms are largely redundant for text messages, it seems as though conventions of openings and closings are present and that they may be characteristic of a particular speech community. In the data set analysed here the school students were more likely than the older participants to include a sign-off in their messages. Thus, it seems likely that openings and closings may evolve to identify speech community members – a possibility that could be pursued in future research on the relationships between social identities, linguistic practices and

communication technologies.

Openings and closings are not only aspects of individual messages but are also relevant for sequences of text messages. Schegloff (2002) argued that openings, for example, form part of turn taking sequences that are "routinized" aspects of ordinary interaction. In Schegloff's work, telephone calls to the police were examined to identify the kinds of norms that functioned to organize opening sequences of calls. Applying Schegloff's approach to text messaging it may be that an examination of text message sequences can bring into sharper focus practices that shape everyday talk. The present study had limited success in collecting text message 'conversations'. However, the few examples that were recorded supported Laursen's (2004) claims about reply norms. More fruitful than the sampling method used here, may be to try to record as Laursen did the mobile communications of a small friendship group; this however, required the cooperation of a telecommunications company.

Another stylistic feature of text messages that was examined in the analysis was the use of non-standard linguistic forms. Nearly half of the words used in the present data set were considered non-standard, over double that reported in Thurlow and Brown's (2003) study of university students. At least two differences between the present study and Thurlow and Brown's work may explain the disparity in use of non-standard forms. In Thurlow and Brown's study participants transcribed the messages from their phones, whereas in the present study messages were forwarded directly to the researcher. In the process of transcription participants may have 'translated' words into more standard forms. Also, the participants in Thurlow and Brown's study were akin in age to the participants in the older participants in this study recruited from the paper. However, the younger school students who contributed to the data set analysed here used significantly more non-standard forms that the older participants. Thus the use of non-standard forms may be part of a language style of text messages that varies across speech communities; in the present case school students used more non-standard forms than older youth.

The greater use of non-standard forms, combined with the patterns of openings and closings found in the present study, provide some support for the idea that text message 'language' is a unique code that, following Baron (2000), may be understood as a kind of creolization between speech and writing. Other evidence of a distinctive linguistic profile for text messaging is that the lexicon does seem to be expanding to handle new functions – consider 'tb' (text back), one of the most commonly used 'words' in the present dataset that is unique to the medium. Furthermore, there does seem to be some normalisation of the code of text messages with letter/word homophones (e.g. u, r, b), number/word (e.g. 2, 4, 2day) homophones and dropped apostrophes being used almost exclusively over their standard counterparts.

Text messages are composed in a very restricted context. There is a limited number of permissible characters and each message must be composed on a telephone keypad. Despite the restrictions users still manage some paralinguistic restitution. Some of that restitution dovetails with the requirement of speed (e.g. 'da' involves only two key presses compared with 'the' that would involve five) but others (e.g. 'haha' and 'lol') seem to override it. Thurlow and Brown (2003) suggested that the largely relational orientation of the majority of text messages engenders the relatively high levels of paralinguistic restitution. The results of the present study support that suggestion since three quarters of the messages in the data set were coded as having communicative functions that seemed to be primarily related to intimacy and social intercourse.

The vast majority of messages in the present data set were coded as having a relational orientation. However, there was some evidence that different groups used text messages for slightly different purposes. In this study, there was a tendency for the older post-school youths more than the younger school youths to use text messages for more practical purposes such as establishing the whereabouts of someone or providing information. Perhaps part of the popularity of mobile phones in general, and text messaging in particular, is its flexibility as a communicative medium, which can accommodate a variety of interactional needs.

To conclude, a strength of the present study was that it collected text messages directly from participants phones, assuring the language used was accurately recorded. The high proportion of non-standard forms, the existence of at least one distinctive linguistic form ('tb' text back) and the emergence of a degree of standardization found, supports the idea that text messaging is a unique code in its own right. Some evidence of linguistic variation between the two groups of participants was found. The school students used more non-standard forms and finished text messages with a sign-off more often than the 'older' youths. So, even in the restricted medium of text messaging it seems that potentially identifying linguistic practices emerge. This study had limited success at capturing the dialogic aspect of text messaging, although the potential benefits of studying that was illustrated through some of the sequences that were recorded. It seems likely that future work on the norms that shape text messaging may provide further insights into normative patterns that impact on all everyday interaction.

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