

Language, Stance, and Identity at Selwyn Girls' High

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Abstract

This paper reports on results from ethnographic work conducted at an all girls' high school in New Zealand, focusing particularly on two groupings: the common room (CR) girls, who form a constellation of practices, and the non-common room (NCR) girls, who form what I refer to as a constellation of stance. Trends in the data provide evidence that an individual's realisation of /k/ in quotative and discourse particle *like* can be predicted by the stances taken by these two groupings, suggesting that stance is indeed a locus of stylistic linguistic variation.

Keywords: identity construction, constellation of practices, constellation of stance

1 Introduction

In this paper, I will first outline the trajectory of sociophonetic work that focuses on social theory, stepping through what Eckert (2005) refers to as the First, Second, and Third Waves of variation studies. I will then present observations from ethnographic work that I conducted at an all girls' high school which I refer to as Selwyn Girls' High (SGH). Finally, I will discuss how speaker-based variation in the realisation of /k/ in quotative and discourse particle *like* reflects an individual's stance as someone who views their self, and constructs their social persona, as either "normal" or "different".

2 Background

2.1 First Wave

Following Labov's work in New York, the majority of sociolinguistic studies have focused on phonetic variation which patterns systematically with a group's social category (e.g. age, gender, social class). In the years since Labov's early work, a multitude of studies have arisen displaying trends in other languages and dialects (e.g. Trudgill 1972). Some examples with New Zealand English (NZE) include studies investigating gender-stratified realisations of the vowel /I/ (Maclagan et al. 1999), the relationship between /r/ intrusion and gender and social class (Hay & Maclagan forthcoming), and how intonation patterns according to gender and ethnicity (Britain 1992).

2.2 Second Wave

Rather than analyse their data based on predetermined social characteristics, researchers in the Second Wave use an ethnographic approach to observe the relationship between linguistic variation and social categories that are created by, and relevant to, the speakers themselves. Using an ethnographic approach allows researchers to gain an understanding of the speakers' values, which helps to shed light on the meaning behind the variation. This is demonstrated by Labov's (1963) work on Martha's Vineyard, where speakers adopted local forms associated with covert prestige rather than overt prestige. Crucial to uncovering the meaning behind this choice in variants was an understanding of the emotions and opinions of the people on the island.

Employing an ethnographic approach at a high school in the US, Eckert (1989, 2000) found that phonetic realisations in an individual's speech patterned with whether that individual was categorised as being either a 'Jock' or a 'Burnout'.

2.3 Third Wave

Studies in the Third Wave focus on style and view it as the central component to the construction of an individual's social identity. These studies examine how linguistic variables contribute to an individual's collection of styles and social personae. In other words, these studies focus on social meaning, where social meaning is not characterised by being a part of a social group but by an individual's stance and their expression of who they are. Whereas studies in the First and Second Waves view sociolinguistic variables as indexed to a social group, studies in the Third Wave treat stylistic practice as fundamental. Variables and social categories are indexed indirectly through their direct relationship with style.

Eckert (2005) has described how the Jocks and Burnouts were in fact indexing stances through their use of both linguistic variables (e.g. the diphthong /ai/) and non-linguistic factors (e.g. cruising). As Eckert (2005:11) explains

The Jocks believe that the Burnouts are irresponsible and antisocial while the Burnouts believe that the Jocks are disloyal and status-oriented.

Their stances were diametrically opposed, where stance is defined as 'a socially recognised disposition' (Ochs 1990: 2), and the phonetic variants they adopted reflected this.

Among younger girls, Eckert (1996) has identified linguistic variants that co-vary with non-linguistic cues, such as nail polish, lip gloss, hair style, and new ways of walking. All of these cues serve a symbolic means. Adopting a socially-meaningful variant (e.g. backed /æ/ before a nasal) combined with taking part in certain activities

(e.g. wearing nail polish) served to construct an individual style that was to define their social persona. Other studies in the Third Wave include work by Mendoza-Denton (2008) who employed an ethnographic approach when studying the speech of Chicana and Mexicana gang girls in California, Zhang (2005) who found that realisations of variables produced by speakers in Beijing were correlated with whether they worked for a government-owned company or a foreign company, and Podesva (under review), who examined the relationship between intonation contours and the construction of an individual's persona in different situations.

2.4 Communities of Practice and Groups of Shared Stance

The construction of identity through linguistic variation can be observed in a community of practice, a term coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) which Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) define as 'an aggregate of people who, united by a common enterprise, develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, and values - in short, practices' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999:186). Wenger (1998: 73-85) states that to be a community of practice, a group must be involved in mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and have a shared repertoire of practices. It is through these that a community of practice negotiates the meaning of the practices themselves, drawing on and connecting meaning to what people know and do not know (Wenger 1998:73-85). However, it is not clear that communities of practice are always the best groupings to focus on for work in the Third Wave. Podesva chose to focus on the individual, and Zhang examined groups that share styles and stances but that do not fall into the traditional notion of a community of practice. Consistent with the Third Wave, the current research views stance as the central element that is indexed to socially-meaningful phonetic variation. While the traditional notion of a community of practice was observed across the distinct groups (e.g. The Goths), some of these groups shared stances, forming larger groups of which the girls were not aware. In the following section I will discuss these groups and their different stances in more detail.

3 Ethnography at Selwyn Girls' High

3.1 Methodology

I spent the entirety of the school year at Selwyn Girls' High, gradually becoming familiar with girls in their 13th and final year of school. During their morning and lunch breaks, the girls and I would eat and talk, and I would watch and listen. These breaks provided opportunities to learn about the girls' personal lives and to begin to understand their joys and frustrations. They taught me about their struggles and triumphs at home. I learned about their boyfriends, and who partied and how they partied. They taught me about how clothing and make-up varied across the different groups at the school, and where each group sat during lunch.

Although I occasionally attended classes, most of the school day was spent listening to and talking with the girls, as the timetable was set up so that at least one group of

students was in “Study” at any given time. Study was a period set aside to give students time to do homework, though it was more often used to share gossip. The girls allowed me to record many of the conversations that took place during the Study period. The linguistic variation described in this paper is based on speech recorded during Study. Names used to refer to the girls and the school are pseudonyms.

3.2 Groups at the School

Upon being asked what groups were at Selwyn Girls’ High, the girls pointed to an area of grass in the quad or an enclave of a building and asked whether I knew the group that ate there. They would then name the group or a member of it. The analysis presented in this paper focuses on 12 of the different groups at the school: the PCs, the BBs, the Pasifika group, the Christians, the Goths, the Geeks, the Trendy Alternatives, the Relaxed Group, Rochelle’s Group, the Sporty Girls, the Real Teenagers, and Sonia’s Group. The group labels used here are in some cases based on something a group member said during an interview (The Relaxed Group). In other cases, the label is a term used by other girls to refer to a particular group (The Geeks).

These groups formed clear communities of practice; there was mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire of practices. The girls in each group negotiated who they were as a group, giving meanings to their styles, and individual girls in a group constructed their own unique persona within the context of that group (e.g. the leader, the listener, the drama queen).

Where the girls ate lunch was perhaps the most defining feature of a group. Girls knew where the other groups ate, and when a member of a group was not aware of a change of lunch plans, it led to a mad rush of texts in an attempt to locate her friends. On cold and rainy days, the girls left the outdoors in favour of drier sitting areas. Some groups chose to sit in the common room. It contained a microwave, a stereo, and a number of beanbags. Though it was designated for all Year 13 girls, the common room was a piece of prime real estate that only some girls laid claim to. Table 1 displays the division between the Common Room (CR) groups and the Non-Common Room (NCR) groups. This paper focuses on individual girls and on the CR-NCR distinction. A description of the different groups that form communities of practice can be found elsewhere (Drager forthcoming).

Table 1: Common Room (CR) and Non-Common Room (NCR) Groups

CR	NCR
The PCs	Pasifika Group
Sporty Girls	The Goths
Trendy Alternatives	The Geeks
Rochelle’s Group	Real Teenagers
Relaxed Group	Sonia’s Group
The BBs	The Christians

3.2.1 CR Girls

The differences between CR groups were more subtle than those found between the NCR groups. In general, girls in CR groups took part in school activities and played sport. Being crude or dressing differently than the other CR girls was not considered acceptable. They wanted to be liked, and they wanted to be admired. The girls conformed to each other in what they liked and what they did, thereby setting the norms of the school.

Girls who ate lunch in the common room still sat in their separate groups, though they occasionally interacted to ask about a song on the radio, sell chocolate for a charity, or make suggestions for the formal. Many of the girls in the separate groups had classes or Study period together, and they were sometimes mentioned, positively or negatively, by girls in other CR groups. Together these groups formed a constellation of practices, a term used by Wenger (1998) to refer to groups who were too broad and diverse to be considered communities of practice but who shared interconnected practices nonetheless:

The term *constellation* refers to a grouping of stellar objects that are seen as a configuration even though they may not be particularly close to one another, of the same kind, or of the same size (Wenger 1998:127).

He explains that constellations of practices need not have a name and the individuals in them need not be aware that they form any kind of grouping.

3.2.2 NCR Girls

The groups labelled here as NCR were a mix of diverse groups with very different values and lifestyles. By placing them in a single category (NCR), I do not mean to imply that they were similar. The NCR groups did not share a set of practices that were distinct from those they also shared with CR girls (e.g. attending Health class). They did, however, share the view that they were different from the CR girls. Rather than refer to them as a constellation of practices, I argue that the NCR girls formed a *constellation of stance*. They were separate, diverse groups with wildly different styles from one another, but crucially, they all shared a single stance: they viewed themselves as different from the other girls.

4 A Difference of Stance

The girls' choice of clothing, piercings, and activities supports the CR-NCR distinction. The CR girls most often wore clothes from chain shops found in malls throughout New Zealand. In most groups there was at least one girl with a single facial piercing. Across the different NCR groups, there was a much greater amount of variation in how they dressed. The Real Teenagers mixed their own homemade

creations with designer ones, and some had multiple facial piercings (e.g. both nostrils and the back of the neck). In contrast, the Christians wore conservative clothing and had naked faces (i.e. no make-up or piercings). That girls from the different NCR groups did not dress similarly to one another is not surprising. Each of the groups rejected the norms in different ways, but some of these acts, such as not eating lunch in the CR, were shared across the different groups.

During interviews, CR girls most often commented on how everyone at SGH was friends. For example, when I asked Rachel what groups there were at the school, she responded:

(1) Rachel (Sporty Girls)

Rachel: like I don't feel like it's that divided
well that's how I feel like some people might think it's different
but I kind of feel like I'm friends with everyone like like

KD: that's cool

Rachel: I don't feel like I don't have the right to t- go like
go up to a group and sit down with them
hang out with them one lunchtime or anything like

In Example 1, Rachel downplays any divisions among the Year 13 girls at SGH, suggesting that she could even sit with another group at lunchtime. Though she made this claim, I only ever saw her sit with her own group and with the PCs (who were friends with the Sporty Girls) during lunch.

During a conversation in a Study period with both CR and NCR girls present, Katrina, a CR girl, mentioned the tendency to downplay different groups even though they existed. Bianca, a NCR girl, added that she appreciated the diversity of groups at the school.

(2) Katrina and Barbara (The Relaxed Group) and Bianca (The Geeks/The Goths)

Katrina: but we kind of deny cliques as well

Bianca: yeah

Barbara: yeah
what did you call it? cliques?

Katrina: yeah [laughter]
that's what it is

Bianca: but I like variety 'cause it
I kinda do like variety in a
in like a school 'cause if you have everyone that looks the same
. you know it's kinda boring

In contrast to other CR girls, Katrina acknowledged that there were divides at the school. Interestingly, Katrina was a CR girl who, in interviews conducted since graduation, has admitted that she would have liked to have been in a NCR group. Yet it took a NCR girl, Bianca, to state that she appreciated the diversity of personality types. That a CR girl did not make this statement is no surprise: NCR girls valued being different whereas CR girls valued uniformity.

Though the CR girls did not state it explicitly, their claim on the only space set aside for their year reflects their status at the school. They were “normal”. They were unified. The existence of cliques was denied. In a world where “everyone” got along, they saw no reason that they should not use the room.

In contrast to the CR girls, NCR girls consistently expressed how they felt different from other girls at the school, how they were not like everyone else. While CR girls viewed the social make-up of the school as a cohesive, unified community, NCR girls felt separated from other girls at the school. In the exchange shown in Example 3, Esther (The Christians) expressed how she felt that she had been labelled by the other girls as different.

(3) Esther (The Christians)

Esther: I don't know how but I think I just like from Year 9 I just .
got the label that I wasn't . the same
I don't know like like it's weird 'cause

KD: the the same as what?

Esther: I li- as everyone else

She attributed the difference between herself and other girls at the school to her status as a Christian, and in the statement above, she appeared to put the power of labelling in the hands of other girls. However, later in the interaction, it became evident that the division was at least partially a result of her own devices.

(4) Esther and Theresa (The Christians)

Esther: I I think the difference is probably kah- [breathes in] we're both
Christian

Theresa: yeah

Esther: yeah
like it's kind of weird

Theresa: it is quite weird

Esther: yeah

KD: what do you mean?

Esther: like 'cause . we have different standards from everyone else
'cause yeah the . in history and they're all talking about
you know oh I slept with so and so on the weekend and and
and I mean I still wanna be their friend
but it it's just kind of weird 'cause you know .
I don't . sleep with so and so on the weekend and yeah

Rather than an external bias against Christians causing her distance from the other girls, her rejection of the others' behaviour served to ensure the existence of a divide. She would have liked to have been their friend, but it was hard to find common ground on which to connect. Wishing they could connect with the other girls is not to be confused with wishing they were more like the other girls; both Theresa and Esther had a strong sense of identity and were proud of who they were.

A very different group from the Christians, the Goths, also took pride in their differences and viewed these differences as defining characteristics of their personalities. As shown in Example 5, being "normal" was not necessarily considered a positive attribute by all girls. Whereas CR groups like The Relaxed Group and the BBs described themselves as "normal", NCR girls such as Vanessa and Isabelle did not want to have a claim on this label.

(5) Meredith and Vanessa (The Goths) and Isabelle (The Real Teenagers)

Meredith: we're not weird we're normal everyone else is weird

[pause]

Meredith: I'm happy being weird

Isabelle: well that's good

Vanessa: as I said before if you don't like me then piss off

Meredith: I'd hate to be normal it'd be so boring

Isabelle: I know what is normal anyway

Meredith began by claiming that she and the other Goths were not weird. She acknowledged that there was a difference between her and "everyone else", but the difference was due to everyone else being weird, not her. When met by silence from her friends, she not only retracted her statement, but clarified that being weird was, in fact, a good thing. Isabelle, a Real Teenager, affirmed Meredith's claim of weirdness.

The Goths and the Real Teenagers did not claim to be “normal”. Instead they claimed to be “weird”, setting themselves apart from the “normal” CR girls.

The Pasifika girls also expressed feelings of difference. Marama and Lela agreed that they would prefer to attend a school with a higher percentage of Māori and Pacific Islander students. They were proud of who they were, but they struggled at feeling entirely like a part of the school community. In Example 6, their friend, Masina, stated what she viewed as the characteristic that set her apart from other girls: her skin colour. She explained that this had a negative effect on her opinion of the school.

(6) Masina (Pasifika Group)

Masina: oh yeah I go to this school I'm so proud I go to this school but . personally like to be honest I don't like this school

KD: really why?

Masina: yeah . because like . well for a lot of reasons I mean . like um . being a different . k- color . you know .

Girls in the Pasifika Group felt that their culture and their skin colour made them different in the eyes of the school. Masina and her friends did not want to be like the other girls - they were proud of their culture and skin colour - but they would have liked it if there had been more students who shared these attributes. Like the Christians, the Real Teenagers, and the Goths, they established social personae that they viewed as different from the majority of girls at the school.

5 Phonetic variation at SGH

A great deal of variation can be found in the girls' speech. In the interest of investigating subtle differences in pronunciation across social groups as well as across different meanings of a single word, I examined variation within the word *like*. For the analysis, I used the different grammatical and discursive functions of *like* as outlined by D'Arcy (2007). This paper focuses on variation in /k/ realisation for quotative and discourse particle *like*, shown here in (7a) and (7b), respectively.

(7) a. Discourse Particle: Lily was LIKE checking out my brother. (Kanani (CR))

b. Quotative: and Mum's LIKE “turn that stupid thing off.” (Marama (NCR))

Overall, I found that CR girls were more likely to realise the /k/ in discourse particle *like* than in quotative *like* and that NCR girls were more likely to realise the /k/ in quotative *like* than in the discourse particle. The model upon which these findings are based is complex and can be found elsewhere (Drager forthcoming). This paper will focus on differences across the different individuals and how these differences are related to the stance (i.e. “normal” or “different”) taken by that individual.

5.1 The Individual

In this section, I will discuss the patterns of /k/ realisation exhibited by different individuals. I will argue that a strong NCR trend in production (i.e. they were more likely to drop the /k/ in discourse particle *like* than in quotative *like*) is associated with individuals who were likely to reject norms, and that a strong CR trend in production (i.e. they were more likely to drop the /k/ in quotative *like* than discourse particle *like*) is associated with a wider range of people: those who actively embraced norms as well as others with an alternative motivation. The order of individuals (from speaker with the strongest NCR trend to speaker with the strongest CR trend) is shown in Table 2. The coefficients are based on a binomial mixed effects model fit to the data (Baayen 2008), modelling the likelihood of producing the /k/. Included in the model was an interaction between whether or not the token was quotative and the random effect of the speaker. The following environment was included as a fixed effect. The estimate for each speaker is the difference between random effect coefficients when the token was the discourse particle and when it was the quotative. The coefficients in the table reflect a speaker's relative likelihood of producing the /k/ in discourse particle *like* compared to quotative *like* while controlling for following environment. A larger coefficient means that a speaker was more likely to produce the /k/ in the discourse particle than in the quotative; the more negative the coefficient, the more a speaker was likely to exhibit a strong NCR trend in production.

5.1.1 Girls Exhibiting NCR Trends

The girl who showed the strongest NCR trend (she was most likely to produce the /k/ in quotative *like* and drop the /k/ in discourse particle *like*) was Santra. Santra was the central member of the Goths. She was the only Goth who wore all black; she was the Goth who gave the Goths their name. She questioned everything, loudly and boldly. She had very strong political and social views, and she was the only openly bisexual girl in Year 13. If anyone at the school was the most likely to reject norms and rebel against conformity, it was Santra. It is unsurprising that out of all of the girls whose speech I analysed, Santra's realisations of quotative and discourse particle *like* were least similar to those of the CR girls.

Other NCR girls also exhibited strong NCR trends. These include Vanessa and Marissa (The Goths), Joy (The Geeks), Isabelle (The Real Teenagers), Marama (The Pasifika Group), and Esther (The Christians). These were girls who expressed feeling different from other girls at the school, and they were proud of these differences.

The girl with the most atypical trend for a CR girl was Patricia from the Sporty Group. Though the majority of her tokens of quotative *like* had the /k/ dropped, she was less likely to produce the /k/ in discourse particle *like* than in quotative *like*. Patricia had some Māori ancestry, though she did not identify strongly as Māori. I mention this because her speech patterns in terms of *like* were similar to those of two other non-Pākehā (non-New Zealand European) girls, Marama and Kanani, and because she had some features of Māori English in her speech despite not identifying strongly as Māori. She was also not a central member of her group. Though she liked the Sporty Girls, her closest friends went to schools other than SGH, and most of her free time was spent with these other girls. It is likely that Patricia conformed to

the patterns of her friends outside of SGH, with whom she identified more strongly, rather than to those of the SGH group with whom she was friendly.

Table 2: Likelihood of an individual producing /k/ in discourse particle *like* compared to quotative *like*. The presented estimate for each speaker is the difference between random coefficients when the token is a discourse particle and when it is a quotative.

Speaker	Sub-group	Group	Estimate
Santra	Goths	NCR	-2.0703
Joy	Geeks	NCR	-1.6716
Patricia	Sporty Group	CR	-1.2415
Vanessa	Goths	NCR	-1.1587
Esther	Christians	NCR	-0.9681
Kanani	Sporty Group	CR	-0.7485
Isabelle	Real Teenagers	NCR	-0.4060
Marissa	Goths	NCR	-0.2408
Marama	Pasifika Group	NCR	- 0.2117
Theresa	Christians	NCR	0.2002
Jane	BBs	CR	0.3874
Mariah	Geeks	NCR	0.4208
Justine	Trendy Alternatives	CR	0.4755
Sarah	Real Teenagers	NCR	0.6186
Tracy	PCs	CR	0.6860
Emma	PCs	CR	0.7593
Katrina	Relaxed Group	CR	0.7877
Bianca	Geeks	NCR	0.9391
Betty	Sporty Group	CR	0.9608
Christina	Trendy Alternatives	CR	0.9831
Holly	Sonia's Group	NCR	1.0437
Juliet	PCs	CR	1.0621
Tania	Goths	NCR	1.1319
Barbara	Relaxed Group	CR	1.4309
Rose	Relaxed Group	CR	1.4348
Meredith	Goths	NCR	1.4751
Rochelle	Rochelle's Group	CR	1.8832
Clementine	Trendy Alternatives	CR	2.0994

All of the girls just named were individuals who rejected norms at the school. Even those individuals who were in CR groups did not embrace the norms of the CR girls. That these girls actively rejected norms established by the CR girls suggests that they manipulated this linguistic variable to construct their identity as someone who was different from the CR girls.

Like Patricia, Kanani (Sporty Girls) was more likely to produce realisations of *like* associated with NCR girls. Kanani, who was of Pacific Island decent, used to be in the Pasifika Group but changed to the Sporty Girls at the beginning of the year, and she was no longer friendly with her old group. Though she was readily accepted by girls in her new group, she resisted becoming a part of the group entirely and would instead seek out my company, sometimes even when I was sitting with another CR group. Given her previous membership in a NCR group and her continued dismissal of CR norms, it is not surprising that she did not entirely adopt the production patterns of the CR girls.

5.1.2 Girls Exhibiting CR Trends

Two of the Goths, Meredith and Tania, did not exhibit strong NCR trends and were instead more likely to produce /k/ in discourse particle *like* than in quotative *like*. Tania was previously a member of a CR group (Relaxed Group). Though she was no longer friendly with girls in the Relaxed Group, she interacted occasionally with girls in other CR groups, especially toward the end of the year. She did not reject their expectations as actively as many of her friends in the Goths, and her realisations of *like* more closely resembled those of the CR girls.

That Meredith's realisations of *like* patterned more similarly to the CR girls than the NCR girls is surprising; I expected them to resemble those of her best friend, Vanessa. The motivation behind her adoption of CR trends is rather speculative. It's possible that she adopted variants produced by her close friend, Tania. It is also possible that she diverged away from the speech patterns of Isabelle, with whom she had a falling out earlier in the year.

Another NCR girl who produced CR-like trends in her production of *like* was Holly (Sonia's Group). Holly talked about the PCs as though they were friends, though I never saw them interact. Holly did not sit with the PCs, but from the way she talked about them, it was clear that she looked up to them. She may have adopted similar speech patterns in terms of *like* as a result of identifying with the PCs.

Other girls who displayed strong CR trends were Clementine, Rochelle, Rose, Barbara, and Juliet, all of whom were in CR groups. Clementine was a core member of the Trendy Alternatives and was one of the friendliest girls in her group.

Rose and Barbara (Relaxed Group) were friendly with other CR girls and described themselves as "normal", which suggests that they may have been more willing to conform to the CR norms. It is possible that highly-skilled conformers could exploit their knowledge of a gradient trend in phonetic realisations and adopt patterns that are even stronger. If this occurs within the context of a sound change, individuals could lead changes with the motivation of not standing out or not making a socially-awkward mistake.

Rochelle, the core member of Rochelle's Group, was not particularly friendly with other CR girls, but within her group, she was the optimistic leader. It seems that the people who led /k/ realisation of *like* in the CR direction consisted of a range of people from different groups, including skilled conformers (e.g. Rose and Barbara), skilled social butterflies (e.g. Clementine), the central member of a CR group (e.g. Rochelle), and other individuals (e.g. Meredith) who, surprisingly, had good friends who were among those who most strongly rejected norms (e.g. Santra).

6 Discussion

Speakers actively manipulate linguistic variables and non-linguistic qualities to construct their identities. The variation of /k/ in quotative and discourse particle *like* is no exception. Zwicky (1997) outlines two internal psychosocial mechanisms for the acquisition of identity: identification and avoidance. He argues that an individual can model their behaviour based on characteristics of those who they believe they are similar to or would like to be similar to (Identification). Conversely, individuals can reject behaviour of people from whom they wish to dissociate themselves or do not believe themselves to be similar to (Avoidance).

At SGH, norms were set by the CR girls. They determined which factors were considered to be “normal” at the school. The CR girls consistently displayed a strong tendency to drop the /k/ in quotative *like* and to produce the /k/ in discourse particle *like*. They conformed to each other in an act of identification. It is also possible that adopting these trends was an act of avoidance of realisations produced by particular NCR girls.

It is unlikely that NCR girls were conforming to each other’s speech. There was no evidence of identification in terms of clothes, values, or lifestyles across the different NCR groups. In the production of *like*, NCR girls displayed the opposite trend as CR girls: they were more likely to produce the /k/ in discourse particle *like* than in quotative *like*. They formed a constellation of stance in their shared rejection of the norms of the CR girls, and their trends in /k/ realisation reflect this. Theoretically, they could have diverged in a number of ways, and it is likely they did in terms of other variables. However, in terms of /k/ realisation, NCR girls diverged in a similar manner to each other.

The PCs were a particularly salient group. They were talked about by other groups and were always named first when identifying groups at the school. The discursive functions of *like* were particularly associated with them in the school’s language ideology. Taken together, this suggests that it is possible that NCR girls were diverging from the PCs or particular individuals in the PCs rather than from the CR girls as a whole. While CR girls in groups other than the PCs may have been accommodating to the PCs, the evidence does not necessarily support this. The PCs whose speech was analysed for this study did not display the strongest trends in the CR direction.

That the trends of /k/ realisation result from identification and avoidance finds support in the NCR girls’ rejection of non-linguistic norms. Choice of clothing was fairly consistent across the different CR groups, while many NCR girls chose to wear clothes that were dissimilar to those worn by CR girls. The NCR groups’ divergence in choice of clothing took a variety of forms, and it is likely that they also deviated from the CR norms in terms of phonetic variables that have not yet been investigated.

The girls did not need to be aware of the CR-NCR split in order to observe the socially-meaningful phonetic variation described here. CR girls formed both a constellation of stance and a constellation of practices. They were “normal”, they

were “unified”, and they wanted to be well-liked. NCR girls on the other hand formed only a constellation of stance. They shared few styles, but they shared the stance that they were “different”; they were not like the CR girls.

7 Conclusion

The observed differences between CR and NCR girls are a result of identification and avoidance. CR girls’ similarities in production of *like* are a result of identifying with one another and conforming to each other’s speech (and possibly avoiding speech patterns of the NCR girls), and NCR girls’ similarities were a result of avoidance and a rejection of the CR girls’ norms. These groupings do not need to be above the level of consciousness in order to be meaningfully correlated with linguistic variation, as they can arise from sharing similar stances. While communities of practice are without a doubt important categories for linguistic analysis, there are other levels of groupings that also warrant investigation, including constellations of practices and constellations of stance.

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