

AN ETHNOLEXICOGRAPHY OF
THE SKATEBOARDING SUBCULTURE

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Abstract:

This study takes an ethnolexicographic approach (Silverstein, 2006) to present a glossary of the skateboarding subculture derived from sociolinguistic interviews conducted with 11 skaters. This study also uses this ethnolexicography to compare sociolinguistic interviews with four skaters, two conducted by a skater and two by a non-skater, and investigates the relationship between skater identity and lexical accommodation (Giles & Ogay, 2007) in the sociolinguistic interview.

The sociolinguistic interview has been shown to be a fruitful site for the investigation of participants' aims (Schiffrin, 1994). The effects of the interviewer's in- or out-group status, as well as familiarity with an interviewer have been shown to effect an interviewee's linguistic performance (Cukor-Avila & Bailey, 2001; Rickford & McNair-Knox, 1994). Given what we know about skaters' proclivity for resistance to authority and the centrality of nonconformity and an insider mentality to skaters' authenticity (Beal & Weidman, 2003; Borden, 2019; Dupont, 2014), the sociolinguistic interview, as a form of "institutional interview" (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 162), serves as a particularly intriguing setting in which to examine skaters' linguistic performances of identity.

In addition to presenting the first ethnographically-oriented analysis of the language of the skateboarding community, this dissertation demonstrates the inextricable relationship between linguistic knowledge and cultural knowledge, and the centrality of this knowledge to skater authenticity. Furthermore, I demonstrate that skaters' willingness to use language which is meaningful to an out-group audience is influenced less by the group identity of the interviewer, and more upon the degree to which the interviewee's identity as skater is central. Specifically, whether or not the interviewer was a skater or non-skater, the more established skaters made an overt effort "to describe it [skateboarding terms] to a non-skater." On the other hand, the skaters whose authenticity was less established made no effort to accommodate either to a non-skater interviewer or to a potential future non-skater audience who may listen to the interview.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Opening Remarks

This dissertation will present an ethnographic dictionary of community-specific lexical items used by members of the skateboarding subculture, a group previously untouched in the linguistic literature. This dictionary is based on sociolinguistic interviews with 11 skaters, examples from skateboarding media, and is supplemented by my own experience as a current and longtime member of the skateboarding community. In addition to presenting the first catalogue and description of the lexicon used by skateboarders (or simply “skaters” as they are known within their own community), this project takes an ethnographic, community of practice approach to explore the role this lexicon plays in the performance and maintenance of skater values in a specific discourse context, the sociolinguistic interview. Of particular interest is the way in which the lexicon related to this lifestyle sport (Wheaton, 2004) is employed in skaters’ performance of identity, both within the community and in their expression of identity toward outsiders.

In his foreword to *Stalefish: Skateboard Culture from the Rejects Who Made It*, legendary skater Tony Hawk (2008) describes skateboarding as:

a lifestyle, an art form, a sport, a career, an escape from responsibility, a hobby, a mode of transport, a kids' pastime, a form of rebellion, a booming industry, a form of expression, family entertainment, a genre of video games, a healthy form of exercise, a dangerous activity, an addiction, a culture, an identity, an education, and even a religion to faithful followers (p. 8).

Hawk's description paints a picture of a subculture rife with innovation, variation, and outsider values. Despite the longstanding and increasing presence of skateboarding in American cultural consciousness, *skaters* are, as noted above, almost entirely absent from the linguistic literature, although skateboarding has been explored in sports sociology (e.g. Beal, 1995; Beal & Weidman, 2003; Dupont, 2014; Wheaton, 2004) and urban design (e.g. Borden, 2001, 2019; Howell, 2008; Woolley & Johns, 2001).

The only exception to the paucity of linguistic literature on skateboarding is Michael Adams' (2009) book on slang, which devotes five pages (pp. 21-25) to a brief and general description of the language of "boarding," that is, snowboarding, skateboarding, and surfing. Adams' description, while an important contribution, conflates all three of these significantly disparate subcultures, and his intriguing but brief catalogue of slang from the sports only highlights the need for further exploration. Recent lexicographic work has provided valuable insight into the construction and performance of identity in other sports communities of practice. Most relevant to the present study, Bray's (2015) thesis draws on sociolinguistic interviews with ice hockey players to provide a brief catalogue of some terms used in the community and reports on the role of their lexicon in the performance of hockey player identity. While Bray's work demonstrates the usefulness of the sociolinguistic interview as a source of community-

specific lexical data, his short glossary does not attempt to provide ethnographic description of the terms.

The main purpose of this study is to begin describing the language of skateboarding, starting with a catalogue of words and phrases used within the community. The lexicon developed here draws on three primary sources of data:

- 1) sociolinguistic interviews conducted with eight skaters from several Oklahoma cities, and three skaters from Toledo, OH
- 2) skateboarding media, especially the two most prominent and longest-running skateboarding (or “skate”) magazines (or “mags”) *Thrasher* and *TransWorld Skateboarding (TWS)*, as well as the social media accounts of these skate mags
- 3) my own experience as a current and longtime member of the skateboarding community.

This dictionary is the first in-depth description of skater language and one of the first sociolinguistic investigations of a sports community of practice. Skateboarding’s status as a “lifestyle sport” makes it a particularly interesting example because language related to the performance of the activity is employed in the performance of identity beyond the borders of the activity itself.

There are limitations in the present study: the skaters interviewed are from Oklahoma and Ohio and while the items analyzed here will exemplify the linguistic performance of authentic skaters, they may not fully represent skaters across the country. Although this sample is geographically and in some ways culturally distant from what is often perceived as the locus of skateboarding (the west coast in general, and southern

California in particular), this fact may actually provide for a more intriguing look at the linguistic performance of skater identity since the skaters in this study may have a more overt, metalinguistic characterization of speech than Californian skaters, given Californians' tendency to perceive their own speech as "standard speaking, regionally unmarked, and unaccented" (Campbell-Kibler, 2007, p. 43). Interestingly, residents of northwestern Ohio (including Toledo, where the Ohio skaters in this study are located) also demonstrate a high degree of linguistic security and perceive themselves as using "good, plain English" in the words of one respondent in Benson's (2003, p. 320) study of Ohioans self-perceptions. Unlike the Californians and Ohioans in these studies, Oklahomans, especially younger residents, have been shown to be more accurate in self-reporting their own speech patterns, and have less linguistic security (Bakos, 2013). In the case of both Ohioans and Oklahomans, perceptions of their own speech -- Toledo as standard or Oklahoma as less standard -- are likely to provide a salient contrast with the speech of southern California, which is most often associated with skateboarding culture and/or its progenitor surf culture, including in the perception of Californians themselves (Bucholtz et al., 2007).

1.2.Lexicographical Terminology (Is It All Skater Slang?)

The decision to identify a word or phrase as 'slang,' 'jargon,' 'argot,' or other similar synonyms is a notoriously difficult one, especially given the fact that slang itself "has rarely been defined in a way that is useful to linguists"(Dumas & Lighter, 1978, p. 5). Their early distinction suggests that the difference between slang and jargon is that the latter is a "technical term that is used solely to designate — regardless of its etymology or the social status of those who use the term" (p. 13). While this definition provided an

early entry point for a definition of jargon, Silverstein's (2003) treatise on indexicality suggests that the premise that any term could be used "solely to designate" (Dumas & Lighter, 1978, p. 13) is highly unlikely given the complex identity work involved in any linguistic choice. Since jargon is a very likely label for the specialist language of any sport, perhaps especially a so-called lifestyle one, I will try to seek further clarification of this distinction. They go on to note that slang goes beyond simple designation, and "characterizes a referent," while "jargon and Standard English [whatever this means] only indicate it" (p. 13). Importantly, however, they also note that a term which is considered jargon for one group may be considered slang by a member of another group, especially if the jargon comes from a lower status group (p. 13), but they do not recognize the potential for in-group recognition of their own specialist language to have slang status. Adams (2009) argues similarly that the lines between these terms are often blurry at best, and the status of a term as 'slang' or 'jargon' can vary by context and user (p. 9). The term 'argot' is significantly less common in the literature and has historically been employed in reference to language used in criminal circles (Adams, 2009). In most linguistic literature, especially those of a more anthropological nature, 'argot' has been used synonymously with both 'slang' and 'jargon', even within the same study (Conrad & More, 1976; Farrell, 1972; Gumperz, 1962), and will not be used in this study.

It can be tempting to label all skateboarding language as slang, perhaps because of the relatively exclusive and counter-cultural nature of the skateboarding community, and the fact that skaters often use their language to maintain these boundaries as described in this study. Adams (2009), in his brief explication of boarding language, refers to the language of snowboarding as 'jargon,' but does so primarily because it can't be found in

either standard or slang dictionaries and is therefore “probably jargon: nonstandard language that is nonetheless not slang, even when it sounds slangy” (p. 21). This seems overdependent on previous identification of lexical status in written work that may or may not have appealed to the community of practice under investigation. He goes on, however, to point out that some boarding terms, such as ‘half-pipe’ do appear in standard dictionaries, including the New Oxford American Dictionary without suggesting that this inclusion would disqualify the item for status as jargon and/or slang status. Considering the lack of research on skateboarding language, Adams’ (2009) criterion of the absence of a term from standard or slang dictionaries seems too arbitrary to dismiss it as slang or jargon. Adams finally recognizes the importance of context, but again makes the distinction much too clear-cut:

Criminals speak cant or argot when they're on the game; anyone pursuing a legal vocation or avocation, from doctors to model train enthusiasts, employs a jargon suited to that particular occupation; any other language that characterizes a group and identifies speakers with that group ends up slang by default. (p. 9)

In this work both ‘slang’ and ‘jargon’ will be avoided wherever possible in favor of broader labels such as ‘vocabulary,’ ‘language,’ or ‘term,’ all the while acknowledging that what is presented here is “skater language.”

1.3.Looking Forward

In chapter 2, I provide some background on the linguistic study of community-specific lexical items, particularly in regard to group identity functions. I then turn to a description of the skateboarding community of practice, drawing on my own ethnographic study and previous work in sports sociology and urban design to consider

the values of the community and their potential impact on the language of skaters. I will focus on the centrality of nonconformity and an insider mentality to the performance of authenticity among skaters.

In chapter 3, I describe the methodology for the sociolinguistic interviews — the primary data source for this study. I also describe how these interviews contribute to the lexicographical conventions used in the creation of the skateboarding dictionary, and how previous findings regarding the effects of group membership (Rickford & McNair-Knox, 1994) and familiarity (Cukor-Avila & Bailey, 2001) on linguistic performance in sociolinguistic interviews informed the approach taken to the collection and analysis of the data used in this study.

In chapter 4, I present a dictionary of skateboarding language derived from the sociolinguistic interviews conducted for this study, and from the skate mags *TWS* and *Thrasher* as well as posts from the social media accounts of these two entities. I also perform some ethnographic and structural analysis of skateboarding terms, with special attention paid to the naming of *tricks*, the maneuvers skaters perform in the practice of skateboarding.

In chapter 5, I describe skaters' use of skater lexicon in the performance of identity toward outsiders and insiders. In particular, I compare four interviews with skaters, two conducted by me, and two by a non-skater colleague, and focus on the degree to which skaters accommodated to their interlocutor when talking about *tricks*. Of particular interest in this section is an analysis of the effect of the interviewer's group membership on the elicitation of authentic skateboarding language, namely that some skaters in this study provided more colloquial/authentic (and more opaque) examples of

language when interviewed by a non-skater with whom they were not familiar. This outcome is unexpected given previous findings such as those of Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) and Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001). This finding also highlights the role of skater lexicon in the performance of authenticity and exclusion of non-skaters.

Finally, in chapter 6, I offer some concluding remarks, summarizing important findings from this study of skater lexicon and considering the implications for future sports (and other) sociolinguistic work.

CHAPTER II

LEXICAL STUDIES OF SUBCULTURES AND AN INTRODUCTION TO SKATEBOARDING

2.1. The Study of Community-Specific Lexical Items

An ethnographic approach to the lexical description of subcultures (especially countercultural ones) was pioneered by David Maurer in his investigation of such criminal subcultures as con men (1940), Kentucky moonshiners (1949), and professional pickpockets (1964). Maurer's pioneering work lends itself to this study in several ways. First, Maurer's lexicography aimed not only to collect a simple catalogue of the intriguing argot (used by Maurer in the strictly criminal sense of "specialized language used by organized, professional groups operating outside the law," 1964, p. 4), but to correlate the lexical items of the subcultures with their "behavior patterns." Second, Maurer's work draws on personal interviews with members of the subcultures, into which he embedded himself deeply (although, he is clear to tell us, not as a practicing member). The same is true of the present study, except that I am a longtime practicing member of the skateboarding subculture. In the 1980s and 1990s, work in various subcultures (much of it by Thomas Murray) investigated the language of such varying subcultures as

bodybuilding (Murray, 1984; see also Strong, 2003), singles bars (Murray, 1985), sadomasochism (Murray & Murrell, 1989), and undergraduate college students (Murray, 1991), a community which has also been explored extensively at UCLA by Pam Munro and her students (2009) and at UNC by Connie Eble (1996, 2017). In all cases, like Maurer's work, Murray's data collection involved substantial integration into the subcultures being investigated, and his work also draws on examinations of the publications of these subcultures when available (a technique adopted in the present study as well). In particular, this dissertation will follow Murray's most extensive study, on the language of sadomasochism, (Murray & Murrell, 1989) in attempting to provide a synchronous catalogue of the community's lexicon and some analysis of patterns in the data.

More recently, Silverstein (2006) describes (although he does not present) an ethnographic lexicon of *oinoglossia*, the language of wine culture. While wine culture is perhaps at the other end of counterculture from sadomasochism and skateboarding (and is perhaps not “counter” at all), Silverstein makes the crucial point that effective lexicography in any subculture is necessarily ethnographic:

As a consequence of understanding the richer, multiple, and interacting partial systematicities involved in how it is that words and expressions occur in discourse — in particular texts in their sociocultural contexts of use — lexicography as such becomes, in part, an ethnographic undertaking. It blurs the boundary, if ever one wanted to invoke one, between what was intended by the “dictionary” of a language and by the “encyclopedia” of knowledge of a culture. (493)

Following the models of Maurer and Murray, and heeding Silverstein's exhortation, the lexicon presented in this study takes an ethnographic approach to the description of the language of skateboarding, viewing this language as representative of and constituting cultural knowledge.

2.2. Skateboarding

Before I begin any discussion of "skateboarding", it is crucial to echo Borden's (2019) point that, especially in the last decade or so, the practice of skateboarding has expanded and diversified enormously:

Skateboarding today is a global phenomenon, with around fifty million riders and thousands of skateparks worldwide, and is recognized as an Olympic sport. From the full-on testosterone of *Thrasher* skateboard magazine to the fashionista lifestyling of *Vogue*, from the skater girls and boys of Kabul to the Native American reservations of South Dakota, from the skateparks of Brazil to the streets of Shenzhen, skateboarding is no longer just for street-based subcultural rebels, and is everywhere and for everyone. (p. 1)

While this is undeniably the case, it is also the case that the most prevalent practice of skateboarding, at least in the United States, is by "street-based subcultural rebels," or at least the descendants of this tradition. While the names and classifications of many skateboarding maneuvers (*tricks*) are consistent across skateboarding communities, this study does not attempt to make any broader generalizations about the language and/or values of "skateboarding" as it stands today. Indeed, it would be futile to make any such attempt given the breadth of geographical, cultural, and language diversity among global skateboarding practitioners. Instead, this study focuses on the contextualized language

uses of a particular subset of skaters: American participants in the tradition of street and park skateboarding, where the practice of skateboarding began. Thus, when I refer to “the skateboarding subculture,” I am referring not to participants in skateboarding around the world, but to the subculture practiced and maintained by skaters such as those in the present study. In the following sections, I provide a brief history of the practice of skateboarding and highlight central values of the subculture as established in sports sociological and other literature which has investigated skateboarding.

2.2.1. A Brief History of Skateboarding

The historical information presented in this section draws heavily on Borden's (2019) excellent account of the history of skateboarding and focuses on the ways in which the development of the skateboard itself has influenced and been influenced by the development of the practice and culture surrounding it. While skateboarding is undoubtedly a lifestyle sport (Wheaton, 2004), such that, as Dupont (2014, 2019) describes, one does not necessarily need to be particularly skilled at the activity to be an authentic, core member, the culture as a whole does largely revolve around the physical practice of skateboarding.

The skateboard was first constructed as a homemade "scooter," made from a 2x4, a fruit crate, and a single roller skate. As Mortimer (2008) points out, riskier individuals soon removed the fruit crate “handlebars” and began to “surf” the streets with only a plank and metal roller skate wheels. The first commercial skateboarding enterprises appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the rapid increase in popularity prompted technical innovations to the design by manufacturers. For example, an early development, the use of larger, clay wheels instead of small steel roller skate wheels, enabled skaters to

take to the streets and emulate the increasingly popular surf culture of the 1950s and 1960s (Borden, 2019, p. 7). The first official skate competition was held in 1964, Hermosa Beach, California, and the first official skateboarding media, *SkateBoarder Magazine* debuted that year as well. It should be noted that at this time, due to the shape of the skateboard, the practice was far more akin to dancing than to what skateboarding is today, and competitions during this time involved performing an earthbound routine of spins and footwork on the skateboard, typically choreographed to a song. The popularity of skateboarding increased rapidly, and in summer 1965 there were around 15 million “sidewalk surfers” in the US, with around \$100 million in annual sales of skateboards (Borden, 2019, p. 9). This first wave of skateboarding was, however, markedly different, both practically and culturally from what was to follow, although some vestiges of this early skate style went on to influence a style of skating referred to as *freestyle*. As an example of how different the early days of skateboarding were culturally, *Life* magazine’s 1965 issue on skateboarding featured national girls' champion Patti McGee (doing a handstand on skateboard) on the cover; modern skateboarding focuses almost no attention on competition or champions, and there is, unfortunately, very little room for women (more on this below).

Despite the rapid popularity and widespread practice of skateboarding, around October of 1965, the skateboarding "fad" died abruptly, and *SkateBoarder* shut down after only four issues. While skateboarding had less of the countercultural connotations in this first boom, it's also worth noting that, as chronicled by Mortimer (2008), many early participants (e.g. Jim Fitzpatrick, Russ Howell, and Dave Hackett) who remained committed through skateboarding's slump and became the founders of modern

skateboarding were some variation of "stoner surf-rat skater," (24) an archetype that became foundational and persists today in the skateboarding subculture. Many of these more counterculturally-oriented skaters remained active, and in the mid 1970s, new technological innovations by several entrepreneurial skaters revitalized the activity. Most notably, polyurethane wheels (as opposed to clay) revolutionized the skateboard and allowed for skateboarding on a much wider range of terrain on much longer-lasting wheels. In addition to the original skaters, many of whom were now involved in commercial aspects of skateboarding, new skaters began to take to the streets. Another important innovation in the mid 1970s was when *grip tape* (a sandpaper-like sheet applied to the top of the skateboard) came into common use, allowing better traction and more options for foot placement. New *trucks* (the axles underneath the board) were also introduced which increased maneuverability and allowed skaters to *bomb* bigger, riskier hills, and to "sidewalk surf" in an even wider range of locations.

It's important to note that while, as mentioned in chapter 1, skateboarding is seen by skaters and outsiders alike as being rooted in California, even in the mid 1970s, skateboarding had become a nationwide and even global phenomenon (Borden, 2019, p. 14). Nevertheless, Southern California is indeed the primary locus of skateboarding's commercial and journalistic endeavors, and this impression of skateboarding as fundamentally Californian persists, and is influential in the cultural (and accordingly, linguistic) performance of skater identity (Snyder, 2017). In the late 1980s to early 1990s, due largely to the innovation of lighter wooden, and even fiberglass skateboards, *street-skating* (a style involving more *popping* and *flipping* of the board, and employing primarily architectural obstacles) increased in popularity, and new skateboarding shapes

and companies accommodated this growth. Most skateboards were narrower and lighter, now had a shallow concave, and were relatively identical in shape on either end, which enabled many of the maneuvers used today. The skateboard itself hasn't changed much since these innovations, and while skaters are always pushing the limits of what can be done with and on a skateboard, the elements of the practice (and the vocabulary used to describe them) haven't changed drastically during this period in which technological advancement in the skateboard has slowed or even ceased. In summary, skateboarding as a culture centered around the practice of skateboarding which began as a toy fad in the late 1950s, grew to a dance-like competition in the 1960s, then went underground for a period of time, was maintained and honed as a more street-based subculture by a number of countercultural individuals who helped to shape the identity of the subculture as well as the actual practice of skateboarding as it stands today. With this history of the skateboard and practice in mind, I turn now to an overview of its subcultural identity.

2.2.2. The Skateboarding Subculture

Lest the term "skateboarding subculture" be viewed as too reductive I feel the need to reiterate that while the practice of skateboarding has expanded immensely, this study focuses only on participants in the skateboarding subculture as it has emerged as described above. Unlike most mainstream sports (e.g. baseball, basketball, or football), skateboarding is considered by sports sociologists and by skaters themselves to be a "lifestyle sport," (Wheaton, 2004) meaning that skateboarding is not simply an activity, but a way of living which permeates all elements of one's daily life, whether or not one is participating in the activity. This notion of skateboarding as a lifestyle sport is particularly relevant to the present study: although the language of skateboarding is used

among skaters while skating for identity purposes, it is also used outside the practice to express to others, both skaters and non-skaters, that one is an authentic member of the community.

The skateboarding subculture has been "largely cast as being oppositional to normative society" (Borden, 2019, p. 24), both in terms of sport norms and broader social norms, as noted in skater Steve Rocco's contrastive observation that "the opposite of skateboarding is golf" (as cited in Borden, 2019, p. 24). In recent years, skateboarding's broader presence has shifted toward the mainstream, as evidenced by the significant entrance of such corporations as Nike and Adidas, and by skateboarding's inclusion in the 2020 Olympics (see Schwier & Kilberth, 2019 for an interesting discussion of the implications of skateboarding's Olympic inclusion). Nevertheless, nonconformity to normative society is a value with deep historical roots in skateboarding, and remains central to many practitioners, including those in the present study. Despite Borden's (2019) accurate assessment that attitudes about skateboarding in academic research have begun to shift, a view of skateboarding as countercultural to even a criminal degree is nicely illustrated in the fact that Snyder's (2017) book *Skateboarding LA: Inside Professional Skateboarding*, which covers the most commercialized and mainstream echelon of skateboarding, is included in NYU Press's "Alternative Criminology Series" alongside such works as *Terrorism as Crime: Oklahoma City to Al Qaeda and Beyond*. It is safe to say that skateboarding remains largely countercultural in the eyes of skaters themselves and of outsiders, including sports sociologists and others.

One factor which likely contributes to skaters' bent toward nonconformity is that skateboarding has been, since its inception, predominantly a youth subculture. The most

recent numbers, from the Public Skatepark Development Guide (Public Skatepark Development Guide, n.d.), suggest that 93% of US skaters are under 24 years old. Indeed, of the 11 skaters in this study, only three are above this threshold, and two of these skaters view themselves as being somewhat graduated from the transgressive elements of skateboarding (more on this in chapter 5). Garratt (2000) argues that subcultures dominated by youth tend to be particularly resistant to and divergent from existing cultural norms since "youth" can be defined as the stage at which the dominant "adult" culture begins to relinquish control and young people forge novel identities. Garratt also makes the crucial point that "for adults working with young people, sub-cultures should be understood as young people understand them, and not as 'respectable' adult society would have them portrayed" (143). While it is often the case that skateboarding has been viewed by outsiders as highly transgressive, Borden (2019) is right to point out that "skate representations do not always correlate with wider skate practices. Much skateboarding culture is far from the reactionary bastion which some have perceived" (26). Nevertheless, Garratt (2000) also points out that in many subcultures, especially youth subcultures, outsider impressions are perpetuated in the subculture, so that media representations are often adopted by the participants, particularly in their expressions of identity to outsiders. This has certainly been the case with skateboarding in many ways, so that representations of skateboarders as rebellious and even criminal are adopted by the community as exemplified in the title of the skater-produced *skate videos Ban This* (Powell-Peralta, 1989), or *Guilty* (Shorty's, 2000), as well as the oft-repeated skater mantra that "skateboarding is not a crime." As will be demonstrated when describing the participants, the skaters in this study represent this range of rebelliousness, with some

skaters indicating that countercultural values are central to their identity as a skater and others suggesting that despite continuing to practice the activity, they no longer hold these values.

2.2.3. Demographics of the Skateboarding Community

Regardless of its countercultural tendencies, skateboarding culture as a whole is notable among other sports cultures in that it is generally more inclusive on various sociological fronts such as religion, ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status (Borden, 2019; Dinces, 2011). Skateboarding has been especially noted for its ethnic diversity, with a 2014 study suggesting that around 34 percent of US skaters are non-white, a figure very close to the 37 percent of non-white people in the US population. Dupont (2014) and Brayton (2005) rightly to point out that while community members and skateboarding subculture are generally more inclusive along these dimensions, the cost and consequences of skateboarding, especially the countercultural elements, are not necessarily equal for all participants. Furthermore, although skaters are more inclusive on many fronts, it is still a heavily male-dominated activity, with few female participants, and widespread expressions of misogyny and sexism by participants (Beal, 1996, 1999; Dupont, 2014), including several of the male skaters in this study, and in skateboarding media and products (Borden, 2019). As Borden indicates, these attitudes have improved somewhat in recent years, as has female participation and recognition in skateboarding, but it remains a largely male activity, and attitudes of sexism and inequality persist strongly among participants. Indeed, in the many hours spent at several skateparks since the beginning of data collection for this project in 2015, I did not encounter a single

female skater who considered themselves a committed enough member to be interviewed as a skater.

In addition to widespread (although certainly not universal) sexism and misogyny, skateboarding has often maintained a strong attitude of homophobia, and this attitude has persisted almost unchangingly, with only a few pro or am skaters openly identifying as gay (Welch, 2016). Skateboarding does continue to diversify (Borden, 2019) and participants include an increasing number of women and non-cis het people; Thrasher Magazine, the most transgressive and "authentic" skate mag (more on this below), published an article in February 2020 which lists "The Top 10 Women & Non-Binary Skaters of 2019" (White, 2020). Nevertheless, as of this writing, the majority of "everyday" skaters in the US continue to be ethnically, socioeconomically, and/or religiously diverse males under the age of 24. The sample of skaters in the present study, described in chapter 3, follows this pattern.

2.2.4. Authenticity in the Skateboarding Subculture

Drawing on interviews with skaters as well as some exploration of advertisements in *Thrasher Magazine*, Beal and Weidman (2003) identify several values held by skaters and argue that skaters (and, in turn, the authors of this skate mag) demonstrate their authenticity through performance of these values: participant control, nonconformity to broader society, self-expression, de-emphasizing of competition, an insider mentality, masculinity, and commitment to the sport/lifestyle. They identify the value of participant control as "central to the skateboarding identity," (340) and their respondents often contrasted the control allowed by skateboarding with the structured rules and refereeing of traditional organized sports. These respondents also noted that this lack of authority

and structure allow for greater self-expression through the activity. Beal and Weidman classify these outcomes of participant control as the interrelated values of nonconformity to broader society and self-expression. Their interrelation lies in the fact that while skaters, past and present, value and practice nonconformity, the authenticity of this nonconformity can be measured by the degree to which participants' nonconformity allows and is used for increased creativity and self-expression. Nonconformity for its own sake is therefore not necessarily valued, but as far as nonconformity allows skaters to more fully and freely express themselves, it is an essential value. Dupont (2014) summarizes this from his own findings that the skaters he identifies as being "core" skaters "emphasized that their actions and values were based on creativity rather than conformity, cooperation rather than aggression or competition, freedom and autonomy opposed to being controlled, irrationality opposed to bureaucratic rationality, and 'authenticity' instead of 'fakeness'" (560).

In summarizing their description of authenticity in the skateboarding world, Beal and Weidman (2003) employ Goffman's (1959) depiction of self-presentation as a form of stage acting or performance. Goffman argues that on the front stage, individuals strive to present themselves to others in a certain way so as to reap social benefits, while on the backstage, individuals act as they truly are (authentically). Thus, Beal and Weidman argue that, as a subculture, skateboarders perform their authenticity by "forgoing any benefits that may come with conforming to general norms and values" (p. 351) and performing their nonconformist self-expression on the public front stage. One obvious way in which this nonconformity manifests itself linguistically is through skaters' highly frequent use of swearwords, and while most participants in the study used swearwords to

some degree, some skaters specifically indicated that swearwords are central to the language of skateboarding: “Basically everything with ‘fucking’ in front of it, that's what it is. Like these fuckin' shoes dude, this fuckin' rail man” (Jordan, this study). The frequent use of swearwords is certainly not unique to skaters, of course, but is nevertheless viewed and used by skaters as an expressive tool, one which often aims explicitly at resisting broader norms of language use.

In discussing the authentic performance of countercultural identity, Borden (2019) contrasts the approaches to skateboarding taken by the two largest skate magazines (or “mags”), *Thrasher Magazine* and *TransWorld Skateboarding*, both used as sources of ethnographic and linguistic data in the present study. Since its inception in 1981, *Thrasher* (whose oft-tattooed motto is “Skate & Destroy”), “has often been based on a nihilistic anti-order of bad taste, scatological humour, **swearing** and poor diets – anything that might be antagonistic to others” (Borden, 2019, p. 71, emphasis added). *TransWorld*, established in 1983 as a deliberate counterpoint to *Thrasher* (their significantly less-frequently-tattooed motto is “Skate and Create”) has attempted to focus on and promote a more positive version of skateboarding. As Borden notes, *TransWorld* targets “not only skaters but parents, companies, authorities and others with an interest in skateboarding” (2019, p. 72). In summary, while *TransWorld* focuses on the “sport” elements of skateboarding, the practice of skateboarding, but less so on the “lifestyle” elements, especially the countercultural elements.

Here it is worth noting the differing perceptions of and success among skaters that each of these mags has experienced. *Thrasher* remains a strong staple of the skateboarding community and has extended itself in recent years to “fashionista” culture

(Smith, 2019), much to the chagrin of skaters and *Thrasher* itself, as evidenced by infamous *Thrasher* editor Jake Phelps' 2016 statement to HYPEBEAST magazine: “We don’t send boxes to Justin Bieber or Rihanna or those fucking clowns. The pavement is where the real shit is. Blood and scabs, does it get realer than that?” (Davis, 2016). *TransWorld*, on the other hand, is often viewed by skaters as less authentic, and has had decreasing success in recent years. Print publication moved from monthly issues to quarterly issues in 2018, and publication ceased altogether in March 2019, shortly after *TransWorld's* acquisition by tabloid publisher American Media, Inc. The varying success of these skate mags highlights the value that the skateboarding community places on the countercultural elements of the community as well as the actual practice.

Dupont (2014), drawing on extensive ethnographic research as a participant-observer in two skateboarding communities, explores the cultural values that make a skater authentic, and defines a hierarchy of the skateboarding community. While he is careful to note that “the dominant understanding of ‘authenticity’ and the social structure of skateboarding may shift” and “is not static or ‘real’” (561), his findings regarding the tenets of skater authenticity align closely with those of other researchers (e.g. Beal, 1995, 1999; Beal & Weidman, 2003; Borden, 2019). Furthermore, as he points out, the hierarchy of authenticity in the skateboarding scene “is real in relation to its consequences” (561), namely the effects of this hierarchy on the values and identity performance of real skaters. Dupont notes that while previous studies have described dichotomies in the skateboarding community such as *skater* (authentic) vs *poser* (inauthentic), the hierarchy that exists in the space between these two extremes provides important insights into what it takes for a skater to become authentic and maintain

authentic status. Dupont concludes that a skaters' position in the hierarchy is determined by the degree to which they demonstrate three things: subcultural capital (knowledge about the community), social capital (an ability to influence others in the community), and a commitment to the activity and lifestyle of skateboarding. At the top of the hierarchy are "core" skaters, which include *riders*, the most accomplished performers of the activity, *filmmers*, who help film, edit, and present footage of skaters, and *skate nerds*, who practice and disseminate the dominant ideologies in the skateboarding community. This distinction is important for the present study since nearly all of the skaters described in this study can be considered core skaters, specifically riders, and are thus at the peak of the hierarchy of skater authenticity.

2.2.5. Skateboarding Language

To the best of my knowledge, only Adams (2009) has described the language of skateboarding to any degree in the linguistic literature. However, skateboarding researchers in other fields have sometimes commented on the language surrounding the practice of skateboarding (especially *tricks*) and observed the importance of language in skater identity. The paucity of direct treatment of skater language can be seen in the fact that in Borden's otherwise fairly comprehensive (2019) look at the history and culture of skateboarding, linguistic items themselves are only rarely addressed except for a mention of the "Trickipedia," a video catalogue of skateboarding maneuvers (*tricks*) on the website of exclusive Los Angeles indoor skatepark and media creator The Berrics. Specifically, Borden observes that Trickipedia features hundreds of tricks, each with a unique name. It should be noted that while Trickipedia catalogues the names of *tricks* and *trick* combinations alongside a video of the *trick* being performed, no further information

is given about the trick, linguistic or otherwise, except for the following description which captions each entry:

Trickipedia is not a “trick tips” section, but that doesn’t mean you’re not going to learn. Trickipedia is the general education page for skateboarding tricks started by The Berrics so that future generations understand the difference between frontside and backside, and that there is no such thing as switch nollie half-Cabs. Each week one of Skateboarding’s best will help fill Trickipedia’s pages, making it the most comprehensive trick reference work on the planet. (The Berrics, n.d.)

While Borden argues that there are "a welter of terms constantly being devised," (p. 188) I observe in this study that the linguistic elements available for the naming of tricks have actually remained relatively stable since the design of the skateboard itself stabilized in the early 1990s. Skaters are constantly pushing the performance of course, and *NBDs* (*tricks* which have Never Been Done) can be found daily in the Instagram feeds of an unknown skater at their local *skatepark* as much as in the highly produced skate videos put out by companies. In fact, there are few tricks for which a name cannot be generated easily from existing elements.

Snyder (2017), writing as a self-proclaimed non-skater, also addresses the language of *tricks*, arguing that "there is a precise grammar in the naming of tricks that follows logical rules" (p. 91). It must be noted that Snyder’s description of the language of *tricks* is anecdotal and not rigorously linguistic, and unlike the present study, his use of such terms as “grammar” is not in a linguistic sense. Nevertheless, Snyder does observe the importance of skater language, especially the language of *tricks* in skater socialization. Like some of the skaters in the present study, Snyder compares the

acquisition of this language to the acquisition of a foreign language and relates an embarrassing mistake on his part when talking with a professional skater (his brother) about one of his tricks in a video. Specifically, while trying to learn the language of skateboarding, Snyder transcribed the trick names of each trick in his brother's video part. The stance of one of the tricks was labelled *switch nollie*, a term which, while accurate, is a significant faux pas for skaters in the know, since this is simply *fakie* (see the Trickipedia description above).

This anecdote evokes Silverstein's (2006) suggestion of the erasure of a distinction between a lexicon and an encyclopedia in documenting and investigating cultural knowledge (see also Peeters, 2000). That is, knowledge of the language of the skateboarding subculture is, in fact, knowledge about the skateboarding subculture, and while the work of Beal (1995, 1996, 1999), Borden (2019), Dupont (2014, 2019), Snyder (2017), and others has provided valuable insights into many facets of the skateboarding subculture, this study focuses specifically on the linguistic performance of this knowledge. In doing so, I aim to follow in the tradition of Maurer (1940, 1949; Maurer & Pearl, 2003), Murray (1984, 1985, 1991; Murray & Murrell, 1989) and others in documenting the language of the skateboarding subculture and demonstrating the ways in which this community-specific language is employed in the performance of identity among insiders and toward outsiders.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodology

This study draws on two main sources of data: sociolinguistic interviews with 11 skaters and the skate magazines (“mags”) *Thrasher Magazine* and *TransWorld Skateboarding*, as well as the social media accounts of these two magazines since, as described by Dupont (2019), social media plays a central role in the performance of skater authenticity. In the following sections, I describe these sources of data, including how the interviews were conducted, details about the participants, some background on the skate mags, their role in the skateboarding community, and how they were used in the present study. Then, I describe the procedure for collecting, organizing, and analyzing the lexical items. Finally, I detail the approach I used to investigate skaters’ use of lexicon in their performance of skater identity in the specific discourse situation of the sociolinguistic interview.

3.2. Sociolinguistic Interviews with Skaters

The collection of this data began in the fall of 2015 and was carried out primarily in semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with skaters, typically conducted at skateparks (see Appendix A for the full interview protocol). Prior to each interview, skaters were

told that I was interested in looking at the language of the skateboarding community and that I wanted to know how real skaters talk and what they think about the language of the community. Participants were also informed that the data obtained from this interview might be presented in academic conferences and/or papers with the aim of sharing information about skater language with the scholarly community. Participants in this study were interviewed using a convenience sampling in Oklahoma or in Ohio. Most were known to me (a skater myself) prior to the interviews, although some were not. In addition, for methodological reasons, two skaters were interviewed by a non-skater with whom they had no previous interaction (see below). Many of the skaters in this study are highly skilled practitioners, “riders” in Dupont’s (2014) descriptive hierarchy of the skateboarding scene. While not all skaters in this study are equally skilled, they were all certainly considered core members, at the peak of skateboarding’s informal hierarchy at the time of interview, either “riders” or “skate nerds.” Basic information about the respondents and their interviews is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent information

Interviewer	Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Years skating	Interview location
Skater	Jacob	M	Native American	16	4	Indoor Skatepark Tulsa, OK
	Robert	M	White	19	7	Indoor Skatepark Tulsa, OK
	Darrell	M	African-American	25	8	Indoor Skatepark Tulsa, OK
	Randall	M	African-American	26	14	Indoor Skatepark Tulsa, OK
	Scott	M	White	28	13	Indoor Skatepark Tulsa, OK
	Daniel	M	White	22	9	Skater's residence Toledo, OH
	Kyle	M	White	23	12	Daniel's residence Toledo, OH
	Chuco	M	Hispanic	16	7	Daniel's residence Toledo, OH
	Lizzie	F	Hispanic	21	1	Linguistics Lab Stillwater, OK
Non-skater	Michael	M	White	23	10	Researcher's home Stillwater, OK
	Jordan	M	White	18	3	Stillwater Skatepark Stillwater, OK

This sample consists of only one individual who identifies as female (respondents themselves filled out the demographic information form, which included open-ended sections for gender and ethnicity). This was not by design, but because of the convenience sampling method used in the data collection, I simply didn't encounter any female skaters during visits to the skatepark. In fact, Lizzie, the one female respondent in the study, was not interviewed at a skatepark, but was referred to me by a colleague. The exclusion of female skaters is well-documented, as described in chapter two (Beal, 1996, 1999; Dupont, 2014, 2019) and as noted by Lizzie herself throughout her interview. Second, the ethnicity of the respondents (again, as described by respondents themselves)

also roughly matches the representation of non-white people in the skateboarding community as indicated by Borden (2019), and as I have observed in my own experience as a skater. Finally, the age range (16-28, median of 22) is somewhat representative of the individuals one might find at a skatepark on any given day, although the skaters in this study tend to be older given the difficulty of acquiring parental consent from the younger skaters. This tendency toward older, more established skaters may in fact have had an unexpected, although ultimately beneficial effect on the collection of skater language, as will be described in more detail in Chapter 5 where I explore the influence of the skateboarding community's values on skaters' use of language.

The respondents were all informed during the consent phase of the interview that the data being collected in the interview would be subjected to linguistic analysis by me, and used to develop a dictionary of skateboarding which would ultimately be presented to other linguists, a readership which is comprised almost exclusively of non-skaters. Despite this goal being made apparent, many skaters made no attempt to accommodate (Giles & Ogay, 2007) to a non-skater audience in their discussion and description of skater language, a finding explored in depth in Chapter 5. In short, most skaters talked about skateboarding as they would to another skateboarder, rather than attempting to converge to an outsider audience.

One attendant at an early presentation of this research, commenting on the opacity of some skaters' responses to questions about skater language, suggested that perhaps skaters may be speaking to me as a skater without considering the future, non-skater audience, and that a non-skater interviewer may be able to elicit more detailed descriptions of skater language. Interviewer effect on performance has indeed been

demonstrated in the linguistic literature. Specifically, group membership of the interviewer has been shown to affect the sociolinguistic interview (Rickford & McNair-Knox, 1994), although Cukor-Avila & Bailey (2001) demonstrate that interviewer identity can be mitigated by other facts, such as familiarity between the interviewer and interviewee. In order to test the effects of group membership and familiarity in these interviews, I asked a non-skater to conduct two of the interviews used in this study.

3.3. *Thrasher* and *TransWorld* Skateboarding

While the primary source of lexical data in this study is from the sociolinguistic interviews conducted with skaters, I used these skate mags to supplement the interview data, as described in detail in section 3.4 below. Furthermore, following Murray and Murrell's (1989) use of the print media of the sadomasochism subculture, the use of these mags allowed for the incorporation of a more geographically diffuse database. Although skaters may not travel as widely in their practice as Murray and Murrell indicate practitioners of sadomasochism often do, much of their exposure to the broader skateboarding community, particularly in the last couple of decades, is derived from skate mags and social media, especially the social media accounts of *Thrasher* and *TransWorld*, making these a valuable source of supralocal skater language. *Thrasher* (first published in 1981) and *TransWorld* (first published in 1983) are the two longest-standing skate mags; although *TransWorld* ceased print publication in March 2019, their social media and web presence remains active. These are undoubtedly the two most prominent skate mags and they occupy distinct spaces in the skateboarding subculture with *Thrasher* highlighting the countercultural elements of skateboarding, and *TransWorld* aiming to promote its more positive elements. One linguistic example of this

distinction can be seen in the varying uses of swearing by the editors of the two mags. For example, *Thrasher* editor Jake Phelps, quoted in chapter 2, refers to two prominent wearers of *Thrasher* apparel, Justin Bieber and Rihanna, as “those fucking clowns” (Davis, 2016). In contrast, *TransWorld* editor Jaime Owens, in his editorial introduction to the June 2016 issue, uses the phrase “fuck the rules” in the text but, ironically titles the piece “Screw the Rules.” This may be a limitation from the publisher (the only other possibly offensive title in the corpus collected for this project is “Hell of a Year”), or it may demonstrate Owens’ awareness of the possibility of a broader readership and a subsequent reluctance to use profanity. whatever the reason, *Thrasher* leans heavily into the countercultural elements of skateboarding, including the use of potentially offensive language, while *TransWorld* targets a broader audience, walking the line between performing an authentic skater identity, and appealing to outsiders. These two mags provide valuable insight into the range of ways in which skateboarding performance can be practiced and described linguistically and will be valuable in the analysis of trick names.

3.4.Collection, Organization, and Analysis of Dictionary Items

First, each of the sociolinguistic interviews was broadly transcribed. Collection of the dictionary items involved a careful reading of these transcripts and the selection of words which were deemed by me and/or the respondents themselves to be examples of skater language. In some cases such as *ghetto bird* or *caballerial* (given as an example below), skaters used only variations and/or the abbreviated, colloquial terms (e.g. *the Chetty Thomas* for *ghetto bird*, or *half-cab*, derived from *caballerial*), and I used my own knowledge as a long-time skater, along with data from the skate mags, to expand upon

and provide ethnographic description of these entries. I was familiar with all of terms from these interviews, with only the exception of *steelo*. One important consideration here is what ought to be counted as “skater language,” especially words which are used in the context of skateboarding, but obviously have similar meanings in other contexts (e.g. *handrails*, [skate] *spots*, etc...). Murray and Murrell (1989) encountered this same problem “when identical items [were] discovered in both the subcultural and the nonsubcultural language— terms such as *handcuffs*, for example, or *whip*” (27). They ultimately decided to include such terms “because to represent the language of sadomasochism without them would be inaccurate and misleading” (27). I take the same approach in my selection of “skater language,” including language which is not exclusive to skateboarding, but is nevertheless widely employed in a skateboarding context. Below, using the example of *caballerial* (and the related terms *half-cab* and *full-cab*), I describe in detail the process for identifying instances of skater language, and including these entries in the glossary.

The term *caballerial*, referring to a trick (*fakie 360*) which is an eponym for seminal skater Steve Caballero, was not used in any of the sociolinguistic interviews, and is relatively uncommon among skaters. However, one skater did use the term *half-cab*, a much more common trick (*fakie 180*), which is a clipped form of *caballerial*: “*Half-cab to backside boardslide*, yeah, that’s a hard one” (Robert). Thus, *half-cab* was identified as an item of skater language and included in the glossary. However, in order to provide a richer ethnographic and linguistic description of this term (including etymology), I also needed to include *caballerial*. While *caballerial* was not used by the skaters themselves, I was able to find an instance of this term in *Thrasher*, and an interview with skaters

detailing the etymology of this term. Finally, while it was also absent from the interviews, I opted to include *full-cab*, the much more frequently-used synonym for *caballerial*, and a backformation from *half-cab*. As with *caballerial*, in-context examples of *full-cab* were available in *Thrasher* and *Transworld*. This process for the collection of lexical items takes as its primary source the sociolinguistic interviews, but allows for a more robust and contextualized description of these terms and the linguistic processes at work in skater language.

In the glossary below, items are organized alphabetically. The headword is in bold, followed by the part of speech identification, a definition, an example of the word in context and the source of that example, and, where available, etymological information. Many of the etymologies of skateboarding tricks in particular are fairly transparent (e.g. *360* refers to a 360-degree rotation of the skater and/or the *board*) even to outsiders, but some are less so. For example, as mentioned above, the *caballerial* is named for skater Steve Caballero, who is often cited as the progenitor of the trick. Because many etymologies are lost to the streets or contested even among skaters, this is not a main endeavor of the present study, but where etymologies are available from interviews with the tricks' creator, or are widely known in the skate community, I will include them. An example entry can be seen below:

caballerial n A *fakie 360*, so that the skater *lands* rolling *fakie* again. Also called a *full-cab*. A *half-cab* is a *fakie 180* to land rolling *regular*. Named for foundational skater Steve Caballero (Wingate, 2003, p. 2).

Terms in the glossary were roughly categorized as referring to *tricks*, obstacles involved in the performance of skateboarding (e.g. *ramps*, *stairs*, etc.), the skateboard instrument (e.g. *deck*, *tail*, *nose*, etc.), and other terms which do not fit into these

categories. Following the presentation of the glossary, I use data from the sociolinguistic interviews as well as *Thrasher* and *TransWorld* to address some morphological processes evident in the naming of skateboarding *tricks* and provide ethnographic analysis of these and other skater language used by the skaters in this study.

3.5. Analysis of Sociolinguistic Interviews

Schiffrin (1994), demonstrates the usefulness of the sociolinguistic interview as a site for analyzing the roles that participants take up in a given discourse situation. The sociolinguistic interview, she argues, is a particularly relevant situation for such an investigation for several reasons. First, although sociolinguistic interviews are indeed interviews, in which the interviewer seeks to gain information from the respondent and asks questions in an effort to achieve this goal, the structure of these interviews is typically looser than many others. This results in “a sometimes explicit avoidance of the question-answer format and fixed topic structure typical of many institutional interviews” (Schiffrin 1994: 162). This “fluidity in [speech] act sequence” (162) can encourage respondents to take control of the topic and speak about topics (and in styles) which do not necessarily adhere to the structure of the interview; indeed, this elicitation is often, as in my interviews, something that conductors of a sociolinguistic interview seek to achieve.

A second fact that makes the sociolinguistic interview an interesting discourse situation for analysis of roles and identity is that, as Schiffrin (1994) points out, while the interviewer’s aims are clear to the interviewer, they may not be as clear to the interviewee, and thus, may not be shared. In my interviews, my goals were a) to collect authentic skater language and commentary about the community and its language for

linguistic description and analysis and, b) to eventually present these descriptions to other researchers, a goal which is made clear to interviewees prior to the interview. As we will be shown below, however, several of my interviewees appeared to have different goals, or to perceive my goals as different from their own. One example of this was the fact that some of my informants went to great lengths, without being asked or prompted, to give a description of a cultural or linguistic phenomenon in the skateboarding community “for a non-skater” (for example, in Scott and Michael’s interviews, analyzed in chapter 5). In particular, my analysis focuses on skaters’ responses to questions about the performance of skateboarding such as “What’s the gnarliest\biggest\most awesome skateboarding thing you’ve ever done?”

3.5.1. Audience Design

Bell’s (1984) audience design theory suggests that speakers craft their performances linguistically by “accommodating” to their audience. One crucial question, especially in the context of the sociolinguistic interview, is that of who exactly qualifies as the “audience.” Goffman (1978, 1981), in his seminal work on participant status in verbal interactions, explores the concept of multiple, remote, or even “imagined participants” in the context of interviews conducted on the radio (1981, p. 138). He describes such interactions as a “three-way mode of announcing,” (234), wherein the guest and the interviewer are interacting with one another with full knowledge that other ratified overhearers (the listeners) are “present,” This ratified nature of remote listeners is demonstrated clearly when the radio announcer or their guest “speaks to the audience alone, and, in a sense, speaks as if each individual hearer were the only one” (1981, p. 235). At least in terms of audience dynamics, the sociolinguistic interview can be viewed

as similar to what Goffman labels “radio talk,” and we may consider not only the interviewer to be a member of the audience, but also the “imagined” participants who will eventually listen to the interview. This requires an analysis of an interviewees’ audience design, including consideration of the social relationship between the interviewer and interviewee and between the future audience and the interviewee.

3.5.2. Communication Accommodation Theory

One particularly useful way of investigating the ways in which individuals design their speech for a given audience is Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) (Giles & Ogay, 2007). CAT posits that interlocutors either *converge to* (make their speech more similar) or *diverge from* (make their speech more different) another’s speech style, often on the basis of “interpersonal and intergroup dynamics, motives, and social consequences” (306). Giles & Ogay (2007) demonstrate that individuals consider their personal and group identities not in isolation, but in relation to the personal and group identities of their interlocutors and that they may choose to converge to their interlocutor’s speech style or diverge from it, in part, Giles and Ogay argue, to “signal their attitudes towards each other and their respective social groups” (294). In discussing motives for these accommodation strategies, Giles and Ogay suggest that the strategy of convergence is often employed in an effort to “gain approval from another” and/or “improve the effectiveness of communication” (296). On the other hand, a speaker may choose to diverge in their communicative patterns in order to accentuate the individual or group distance between themselves and their interlocutor. Thus, analysis of these accommodative strategies can provide valuable insight into the attitudes that an

individual may hold in terms of their personal or group identity as it relates to their audience.

3.5.3. Interviewer Effect on Performance in the Sociolinguistic Interview

Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994), in their analysis of sociolinguistic interviews with Foxy Boston, a young African-American woman, demonstrate quantitatively the effect that the immediate interlocutor (e.g. the interviewer) can have on an interviewee's performance. When the interview was conducted by an individual who was also African-American and lived in the same community, Foxy routinely used more vernacular features. However, when Foxy was interviewed by a European-American graduate student, who was a community outsider and a stranger to Foxy, about similar topics and drawing on information from the previous interview, the interviewee was routinely "less vernacular and more standard" (236).

Like Rickford and McNair-Knox, Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001) found an effect of interviewer on accommodation in the sociolinguistic interview, but in their study, the effect of an interviewer's group membership on the interviewee's linguistic performance could be mitigated by other factors, such as interviewer-interviewee familiarity. That is, an interviewee who was familiar with the interviewer was more likely to converge linguistically, regardless of the interviewer's group membership. Taken along with Rickford and McNair-Knox's (1994) findings, these results demonstrate that both shared group membership and knowledge of one's immediate interlocutor can meaningfully impact an individual's linguistic performance in the sociolinguistic interview, and that, as Cukor-Avila and Bailey argue, there is "need to account both for interviewer characteristics and for interview contexts in reaching conclusions based on sociolinguistic

fieldwork” (2001, p. 268). This study kept these findings in mind from the outset and used skaters’ uses of community language to investigate their performances of identity with both community insiders and outsiders.

While previous studies investigating audience design and employing CAT have primarily focused on phonological and syntactic accommodation, I use CAT to focus on the ways in which skaters accommodate lexically to their audience in the description of skateboarding activities. In order to better investigate the way that skaters employ skater language in the performance of identity toward skaters and non-skaters, I compare the interviews conducted by me and by a non-skater with a particular focus on the degree to which skaters converge or diverge lexically to their interlocutor when discussing community-specific activities — in this case *tricks*, the maneuvers that skaters perform.

On the basis of the studies described above (Cukor-Avila & Bailey, 2001; Rickford & McNair-Knox, 1994), we might hypothesize that a skater like Michael, when interviewed by a non-skater with whom he is unfamiliar, in my home (as opposed to the skatepark) would operate within the frame of a sociolinguistic interview, which, despite being more conversational than other “institutional interviews” (Schiffrin, 1994), is nevertheless an interview. If this is the case, Michael should be less likely to use “skater language” when talking to the interviewer who he knows is a non-skater. Similarly, when Jordan is interviewed by a non-skater at the skatepark, he may use more insider language than Michael, by virtue of being at the skatepark where the activity under question is taking place, but he would nevertheless be expected to use, in the context of an interview conducted by and, presumably for, an outsider, less insider language than he would with someone who he knows is a skater. Following Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001), we would

also expect that familiarity with the interviewer, and a community setting, could result in an increased use of community-specific language. Thus, my interview with Scott, who I have known for many years, at a skatepark, is a configuration which we would expect to result in the most skater-to-skater talk, with little accommodation made to an outside audience.

To summarize, this study used sociolinguistic interviews as a source of lexical data, and as a site to investigate skaters' performance of identity through lexical accommodation. The comparison of interviews by an unfamiliar non-skater to the interviews I conducted in comparable settings (with familiar and unfamiliar skaters) allows me to evaluate how skaters talk about the practice and language of skateboarding to an insider as compared to an outsider (i.e. audience design). A consideration of audience design will also allow me to consider what the similarities or differences in interviews conducted by a skater and a non-skater suggest about skaters' linguistic performance of their skater identity.

CHAPTER IV

A GLOSSARY OF SKATER LANGUAGE

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a glossary of skater language derived from interviews with the skaters in this study as well as a few from *TransWorld Skateboarding (TWS)* and *Thrasher Magazine*. The aim of this glossary is not to represent a comprehensive catalogue of the language of skateboarding. The skateboarding website “The Berrics” has created a detailed (and regularly updated) multimodal glossary of skateboarding *tricks* (<https://theberrics.com/trickipedia>). Instead, this glossary draws on data from my interviews with skaters to catalogue common and exemplary vocabulary items from skaters, describe their structure, especially those that name *tricks*, and, in the following chapter, provide ethnographic analyses of how skaters employ this language to perform skater identity, both inside and outside the skater community.

4.2. Skateboarding Glossary

In this glossary, I have avoided writing “please see the entry above” (or “below”); nearly every entry would involve such cross-referencing. Instead, I ask the reader to refer to other entries in the glossary when an unknown item appears as part of a definition. All items that are defined in the glossary appear in italics when used elsewhere. Given names

in the quotations below are the pseudonyms assigned to respondents in this study. As described in section 3.4, a few items in this glossary were not derived from the interviews or mags used in this study, but are included here in order to provide more detailed context or a synonym for items appearing in the interviews or mags (see for example, the first definition for *bolts*). The few items for which the source is only myself are attributed to (Author).

- 180 ollie** n A *trick* in which the skater ollies and the *board* and skater rotate 180 degrees and land *fakie*. Typically called a 180. "There's a pretty big *gap* off King Road that I did back 180 over" (Daniel).
- 360 flip** n The *board* is simultaneously rotated 360 degrees and *flipped* around the center axis. Frequently called a *tre*, *tre flip*, or three *flip*. "When you first go to a *skatepark*, you're like "what are these dudes talkin' about?" 'cause they're like "three *flip*" and you're like "what is a *three flip*?" and then you go 'Oh *tre flip*?'" (Chuco).
- 360 ollie** n The *board* is popped up and the *board* and skater rotate 360 degrees. Typically referred to as a 360, or a 3 when the direction is used (e.g. front 3, meaning *frontside 360 ollie*). "Popping this one off a bump might be the best way to turn your *frontside 360* around, But you better leave the water *gaps* to Lutzka" (TWS, 05/08).
- 5-0 grind** n A *grind* in which only the back *truck* is on the *rail* or *coping* and the *nose* of the *board* is raised up. Typically called a 5-0. "I was trying to do a 5-0, 180 out on a *ledge* which was caked with *wax*" (Kyle).
- 50-50 grind** n A *grind* in which both *trucks* are on the *rail* or *coping*. Typically called a 50-50 or a 50. "Set your back *truck* down and let your front *truck* follow into the 50-50. But don't try and pull the five-0 to 50-50 thing" (TWS, 03/08). Likely named for the fact that the *trucks* are 50% on the obstacle and 50% off.
- air** n An *ollie* off of a *ramp*. On a *vert ramp*, an air can be performed *frontside* or *backside*. "Nicole Hause, *frontside* air at the Exposure Skate contest this past weekend" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/13/15).

- am(ateur)** n The middle tier of *sponsored* skateboarding. A skater who is *am* may or not receive a salary, but will be featured in skate videos produced by the company, will receive free products from the company, and will have all of their expenses paid when travelling for the company. "Alex Olson is 21. Girl [a skate company] anointed him *am* on 6/6/06" (TWS, 07/07).
- backside** adj Referring to the direction which the front of the skater's body is facing, especially a *trick* involving rotation, either of the skater's body, the *board*, or both. Often abbreviated back in speech, and bs in writing. "I got like a whole bunch of stuff. Ki- uh, double *flip*. Double *backside flip*. It's pretty cool." (Darrell). From surfing jargon, where *backside* means your back is facing the wave.
- bail** n Any maneuver to end a *trick* before finishing or landing it. Typically, by kicking the *board* out from under oneself in the air, or by jumping off during a *ramp trick*. " Besides not skateboarding for a living, the worst part of his job relates to low batteries, security, cramps, bails, skaters sleeping in all day and breaking plans with his girlfriend everyday to push record." (TWS, 06/08).
- banger** n An outstandingly good *trick*, particularly in a longer part in a skate video. "Corey Glick rips! Feast your eyes on a few bangers of Corey for Bronson Speed Co.!" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/13/15).
- bank** n A straight (rather than concave) incline. This term can describe anything from the steep concrete incline underneath of bridges to a small wooden *ramp* used in a driveway. "Cause he does like huge *tranny* stuff, *bank* stuff. I don't get how he survives half the stuff he does." (Chuco).
- bigflip** n see *bigspin kickflip* "I would say my best *trick*'s my favorite *trick*, which would *fakie bigflip* or *backside bigflip, regular*." (Daniel).
- biggerspin** n Similar to a *bigspin*, but the skater's performs a *180* with their body, and a *540* with the *board* in the same direction. (Author).
- bigspin** n A *trick* in which the skater's body rotates *180* degrees while the *board* rotates *360* degrees in the same direction. " I can do *fakie bigspin*." (Robert).

- bigspin kickflip** n A *bigspin* combined with a *kickflip*, so that the skater's body rotates 180 degrees while the *board* rotates 360 degrees in the same direction while also *flipping* along the long axis. Almost exclusively abbreviated to *bigflip*. "I would say my best *trick*'s my favorite *trick*, which would *fakie bigflip* or *backside bigflip, regular*." (Daniel).
- to blast** v To extend the legs far forward when performing a *trick*. "Chris Miller blasts a *backside* corner air and hangs up, landing on the back of his head, and suffering a massive concussion." (TWS 10/08).
- blasted** adj When a *trick* is performed with the legs extended far in front of the skater, especially the front foot. This often causes the *board* to rise higher than usual. (Author).
- block** n A *set* of large (typically concrete) blocks stacked on top of one another like stairs. Always used with the number of blocks. "The *coping* on the two *block*? Yeah, that one'll getcha." (Kyle).
- blunt** n Primarily in *vert* or *transition* skating, the *board* rests on the back *trucks* on the *coping, ledge, rail*, etc. with the back *trucks* and wheels over the *coping* or *ledge*, and the *tail of the board* touching the *ramp*. When in motion, referred to as a bluntslide. "My coolest *trick*? Probably that *blunt fingerflip* or *fakie bigspin* on a *half-pipe*, like *fakie bigspin rock*" (Jordan).
- board** n The entire skateboard assembly on which a skater rides and does *tricks*. "They just say they skate, they carry a *board* around" (Chuco).
2. n see *deck*. "I think they're just good quality boards, I've had several of them and that's kinda my go to" (Kyle).
- boardslide** n A *trick* in which the skater slides on a surface, especially a *rail* or *ledge* along the bottom of the *board*, between the two *trucks*. Often abbreviated to *board* when the direction (*frontside* or *backside*) is used. "I can do half-cab to *backside boardslide*. Yeah, that's a hard one" (Robert).
- body varial** n A *trick* in which a skater jumps off the *board* and turns their body 180 degrees regardless of the *board's* trajectory. "Like yeah, the *sex change*, they would like call it like a *body varial*" (Darrell).

- bolts** n See *hardware*. (Author).
2. adv, inter To *land* a *trick* with one's feet above the *bolts* (well-centered on the *board*). Typically associated with *steeze*. Can be used adverbially, (he landed that kickflip bolts) or as an interjection when someone lands *bolts*. "Bolts is just when you land on the bolts. Yeah that's just what "bolts" means" (Kyle).
- bomb** v Transitive verb to ride down a very large incline, typically a very long hill, and typically very fast. "Let's go *bomb* these hills, cuz." (Darrell).
- boneless** n A *trick* which is performed by taking the front foot off of the *board*, planting it on the ground, grabbing the middle of the *board*, pulling the *board* up, and jumping back on the *board*. Often used to begin other *tricks*, especially rotations. "Frontside 180 Boneless (caption)" (TWS, 06/04). "At first, the *trick* was given the literal--and not exactly catchy--"front-footed *frontside* footplant" moniker, which stuck for over a year until Robert [Hamrick] renamed it "The *Boneless One*" after a puppet of his, Harry The *Boneless One*" (TWS, 11/25)
- bowl** n Any obstacle that is comprised of 360 degrees of concave ramps. Typically (but not always) below ground. Empty pools are often used as bowls. "It wasn't like a big *trick*, but it was like a rock to *fakie*, that's like a really simple thing, but it was on like a twelve-foot *bowl*." (Jordan).
- box** n A skate obstacle consisting of an independent raised platform of any height, but typically higher than a standard *street curb*. At skateparks, it often has *coping* on one or more sides. This terms sometimes alternates with *manual pad*, depending on whether one is *grinding* or performing *manuals*. "There's like that *box* right next to it and then it starts going in" (Lizzie).
- brain bucket** n Colloquialism for "helmet". "It's always like "you need to throw on a *brain bucket*, like you're gonna like hurt yourself." And I get it, logically, yeah, everyone should probably keep a helmet but-" (Lizzie).

- buttery** adj Describes something, especially a *trick*, which appears effortless or flawless. Synonymous with *steezy*. "Just the little terminologies that people use like "oh that was *buttery*"" (Kyle). Likely a reference to the smoothness of a performance.
- caballerial** n A *fakie* (backward) *360*, so that the skater lands rolling *fakie* again. Also called a *full-cab* (a backformation from *half-cab*). A half-cab is a *fakie 180* to land rolling *regular* (forward). "half-cab to *backside boardslide*. Yeah, that's a hard one" (Robert). Named for foundational skater Steve Caballero. (Wingate, 2003, p. 2)
- Carlsbad** n An exceptionally long and tall *gap* located at Carlsbad High School in Carlsbad, CA. Widely regarded as one of the most challenging *gaps*, the *gap* was demolished in February 2012. "If they don't know what *MACBA* or Carlsbad is, they're either new to skateboarding, or they don't know much about it." (Michael).
- Chetty Thomas, the** n See *ghetto bird*. "But then I also can do like the *Chetty Thomas*" (Darrell). Named for *pro* skater Chet Thomas, who popularized this *trick*. Coined by skater Jimmy Carlin in the 2011 YouTube video "*Flippity Flop Pit Stop*"
- clean** adj Describes something, especially a *trick*, which is done very accurately, and for *tricks*, often landed *bolts*. "Another word is *clean*, or *steezy*, or smooth." (Michael).
- coping** n A metal or concrete tube or 90 degree L-shaped piece of metal at the top of a *vert ramp*. Also, a piece of metal, typically angled at 90 degrees which is screwed, welded, or otherwise adhered to a corner so that it can be slid or grinded. "Yeah, it [the *ledge*] has *coping* on it" (Kyle).
- crooked grind** n A *grind* in which the front *trucks grind* on the obstacle while the *tail is raised* and slightly off-center (as opposed to a *nose grind* in which the *tail is centered* on the obstacle). Often abbreviated *crook*, *crooks*, or *crooky*. "I always get compliments on it, and it's a *backside crooked grind*. And I get into this *crooked grind*" (Scott). Likely a reference to the fact that the *board* is angled, rather than directly above the obstacle, as in a *nose grind*.
- deck** n The wooden *board* on which skater stands. Also referred to as the *board*. "They gave me some old *trucks* and I just found like this cheap *deck* online, I was like this is fine" (Lizzie).

2. n A flat surface at the top of a *ramp* where skaters can stand or perform additional *tricks*. "Pat Ngohe was always doing wheelies on the *deck* and then rolling back into the bowl. Neil [Blender] or John [Lucero] saw that and said, "He's manually rolling out and manually rolling back in." That became the manual." (RIDE Channel, 12/215).
- ditch** n A drainage *ditch*, typically consisting of very large and/or steep banks. "We don't have any drainage ditches to skate around here, so people skate more *technical*" (Daniel).
- dolphin flip** n A *trick* in which the *board* is popped, then the front foot is used to push the *nose* of the *board* down, causing the *board* to rotate 180 degrees vertically beneath the skater. "I got *fakie* dolphins, *nollie* dolphins" (Darrell). Likely named for the way that the *board* is popped from the *tail up*, then the *nose* is forced down, resembling the leap and dive of a *dolphin*.
- dude** n, inter As a noun, a term which refers exclusively to a male, but is commonly used as a gender neutral interjection. "Apparently I say "*dude*" a lot. You could probably count how many times I say it in this interview if you want to" (Michael).
- drop** n Any obstacle from which a skater does a *trick* going from a higher point to a lower point. Examples include ledges, *stair* sets, or sometimes *gaps*. "There's the realm of the go big or go home, which is really big drops, *stair* sets, *handrails*" (Scott).
- to drop in(to)** v Starting from a standstill at the top of a *ramp* or other incline with the *tail resting* on the flat surface and the wheels touching the incline. The skater then slams the front of the *board* down and rolls into the incline. A fundamental element of skating *transition* or *vert*. "She's actually a psychiatrist who likes to just go there and just skate. She can *drop* in and do like various *vert tricks*" (Kyle).
- ender** n One or more ending *tricks* in a skater's video part. "@rob.wootton's part in #TheKeepersProject is live today at twskate.com. Some *gnarly* enders in this one!" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/13/15).

- Euro gap** n A *gap* between a *ledge* and a *bank*. Also called a London *gap*. "Park Highlights: Sixteen-foot flat *ledge*, Euro *gap*, 7th Street school *bank-to-ledge* replica (Chad Tim Tim's idea), and brick *vert* extension on quarterpipe" (TWS, 06/06). This obstacle was first included in a *skatepark* at the 1997 Vans Generation 97 contest in London, England. Thus the term London *gap*, and the more widespread Euro *gap*.
- fakie** adj Rolling backward while in one's typical stance. "I can do *fakie bigspin*" (Robert). Etymology unknown, but a popular community folk etymology suggests a portmanteau of fake + *nollie*.
- feeble** n A *stall* or *grind* in which the back *truck* rests on the *rail*, *ledge*, etc., while the front *truck* hangs over the *frontside* (behind the skater) in contrast to *smith*, where the front *truck* hangs over the *backside* (in front of the skater). "There's somethin' about just goin' down a *handrail* in a back *feeble* that is just- when you're in it you're in it and it's like the stuff you dream about" (Daniel). Etymology unknown, but a popular community folk etymology suggests this is a "*feeble*" version of a *50-50* since only one *truck* is on the obstacle, rather than both *trucks*. Some online suggest the name comes from the nickname "the feeb" for Josh Nelson, the *trick*'s inventor, but this is unconfirmed by Nelson or others.
- fingerflip** n A *trick* in which the *board* is made to *flip* using the skater's fingers, typically by grasping and *flipping* the *nose* of the *board*, although the *tail* is sometimes used. "My favorite thing is *blunt fingerflip*" (Jordan).
- first try** adv To do something, especially land a *trick*, the first time, typically in one *session*, that it is attempted. "First try, I go up and I land a *kickflip* over the stairs just because there's a GoPro in the sky" (Michael).
- flatbar** n Can refer to either a *rail* which is parallel to the ground (not inclined, like a *handrail*), or to a *rail* which is flat, rather than a rounded tube (*roundrail*). "Bro, I'd be *pro* right now if that was a *flatbar* not round. A *flatbar*, not a *roundrail*" (Jordan).

- flatground** n Skating on flat ground as opposed to skating on ledges, banks, ramps, etc. May include small rails or other obstacles to do *tricks* over. Often abbreviated *flat*. "I don't particularly like *flatground* or do anything *technical*, but it's easy so I stick with it" (Daniel).
- flow** n The lowest tier of *sponsored* skateboarding. A skater who is *flow* receives free products (e.g. skateboards, wheels, shoes, clothing, etc.) from the company and is often promoted in the company's social media, a crucial element of authenticity and upward mobility in the community (Dupont, 2019). "The newest recruit to bump up in the ranks from *flow* to *am* is none other than Eugene, Oregon's Josh Matthews" (TWS, 02/11). Potentially a reference to the steady *flow* of products from a company for which a skater is *flow*.
- forward flip** n See *dolphin flip*. "What do you say my best *trick* would be? *Forward flip*? Yeah, it'd be *dolphin flip*, *forward flip*." (Darrell). Named for the nearly vertical forward rotation of the *board*.
- front rock** n A *frontside* rock and roll. (Author).
- frontside** adj Referring to the direction which the front of the skater's body is facing, especially a *trick* involving rotation, either of the skater's body, the *board*, or both. Often abbreviated front in speech, and fs in writing. "As you get into *switch and nollie* and *fakie*, then you have four different positions and you have to understand which one's *frontside* and which one's *backside*" (Daniel). From surfing, where *frontside* means your front is facing the wave.
- fruitbooter** n A derisive name for rollerbladers. "I didn't want to be a fruitbooter. Shit—what's a scrawny, anti-social kid supposed to do in high school and middle school besides skate?" (Thrasher, 04/09). Likely from "fruit" as a homophobic slur, as a commentary on the masculinity of inline skaters.
- full-cab** n See *caballerial*. "The best *trick* I've ever seen on my *street course* was *full-cab flip*" (TWS, 11/06). Backformation from half-cab, meaning half of a *caballerial* (*fakie 360*).
- gap** n Any space between two surfaces. The *gap* does not necessarily need to be a *drop*, although it often is. "There's a pretty big *gap* off King Road that I did back *180* over. The *gap*'s probably about just above my height, so maybe like six foot, and then it's probably about twice its height so probably about six by twelve" (Daniel).

- gazelle flip** n A *trick* in which the skater's body rotates 360 degrees while the *board* rotates 540 degrees in the same direction while *flipping* along its long axis. "There's one that people call I guess a *gazelle flip*" (Michael). Etymology unknown, potentially a nonce name or inside joke, as in *boneless*.
- ghetto bird** n A *hardflip* followed by a *late backside 180*. See also *Chetty Thomas, the*. (Author). Likely from ghetto bird, meaning police helicopter, in reference to the numerous rotations.
- gnar** n see *gnarly* "They'll say '*sicky gnar*'" (Michael).
- gnarly** adj Impressive or outstanding in a daunting or gruesome way. Sometimes nominalized as gnar. "I'll be speaking Spanglish at home essentially, and so I'll throw in like "*gnarly*" or something like that and my mom thinks it's like, she doesn't think anything of it just because it's how I talk (Lizzie); I like to watch Jaws I mean, he's just gotta be the gnarliest *dude* (Daniel); The Thrasher skaters are the *gnarly*, old school guys, or the guys who just go all out for *tricks*, they throw their bodies down stuff that you don't even wanna think about" (Michael).
- goofy(-footed)** adj To ride with the right foot forward in the *regular* stance. Compare to *regular-footed*, where the skater's left foot is forward in *regular* stance. Typically abbreviated to *goofy*. (Author). Folk etymologies in the community include a reference to a Disney cartoon where Goofy rides a surfboard with his right foot forward. However, he is also depicted riding in *regular* stance. More likely, a (jokingly) pejorative contrast with *regular-footed*.
- grab** n A *trick* or *trick variation* where one grabs part of their *board* with their hand while performing a *trick*. Some grabs, such as *tail grab* or *nose grab* are easily interpretable, while others, like indie grab (the *board* is grabbed *backside* between the feet) are less so. "So it is a one-footed *crooked grind tail grab*" (Scott).
- grind** n A *trick* involving contact and motion between one or both *trucks* and an obstacle, typically a *rail*, *hubba*, or *ledge*. Compare to a *stall*, where there is contact, but no motion. "It's more technical *flat trick* varieties, and different *grinds* and things like that" (Daniel).

- half-cab** n A *fakie 180* to land rolling *regular*. "Half-cab to backside boardslide. Yeah, that's a hard one" (Robert). From *caballeria*, a *fakie 360*.
- half-pipe** n See pipe. "*Blunt fingerflip* or *fakie bigspin* on a *half-pipe*, like *fakie bigspin rock*" (Jordan).
- handrail** n A raised, sloped *rail* in the middle of an obstacle, typically *stair sets* or *bank ramps* (at skateparks). "There was a 12-*stair handrail*, and it was a very infamous *spot*" (Scott).
- hanger** n The horizontal axle of the *truck* which touches the baseplate and holds the bushings and allows the *truck* to pivot. *Grinds* are performed on the *hanger*. (Author).
- hardflip** n A *trick* in which the *board* is *flipped* while rotating *180* degrees *frontside*. "In Sapulpa, there's a six, like a six *stair*, and I *hardflipped* that." (Jacob). The inventor of the *trick*, Dan Gallagher, claims that he would explain it to other skaters as "a *180 Varial Kickflip*...but *frontside*...the hard way' and eventually I just called it the the *Hardflip* because I got sick of explaining it."
- hardware** n The nuts and *bolts* which attach the *trucks* to the *deck*. Sometimes referred to only as *bolts*. (Author).
- heelflip** n A *trick* in which the *board* is popped, then *flipped* around the long axis by flicking the heel off the front edge of the *board*. "I: What's your best *trick*?
R: Tre *flips* and heel *flips*." (Daniel).
- hit** v A transitive verb used with a skate obstacle or *spot* as the object. Meaning to attempt a *trick* there. "Bro, let's go *hit* these rails! (Darrell); Uh, I *hit* a 15 *set*" (Randall).
- hubba** n A wide, solid *handrail* or sloped *ledge*. "I would argue that skating kinda has it's own language you know, you have things like people say like 'Oh, a *hubba*'" (Kyle). Derived from a famous San Francisco skate *spot* called *Hubba Hideout*, which consists primarily of such obstacles. The name of the *spot* itself " was a nod to the Bay Area slang term for crack cocaine: "*hubbas*." (Salo, 2011)

- hyped** adj Excited. "Check out the scenes and creative skateboarding going on in Warsaw and Berlin! This will get you *hyped* to skate" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/12/15).
- impossible** n A *trick* in which the *board* is popped, then rotated 360 degrees vertically while wrapped around the back foot. Sometimes called *ollie impossible* or *impossible flip*. "I think the technical thing for it would be back foot pressure *underflip impossible* or something like that" (Daniel). Etymology unknown, but likely a reference to the difficulty of the *trick* (as with *hardflip*).
- inward heelflip** n A *backside pop-shuvit* combined with a *heelflip*. Typically abbreviated as *inward heel*. "No- I can do the um- inward 360 big heel (Darrell); Inward *heelflip* is one of those ones that either you have it or you don't" (Daniel). A reference to the inward (*backside*) rotation of the *board*, as opposed to the *frontside* rotation of the more common *varial heelflip*.
- kickflip** n A *trick* in which the *board* is popped up and made to *flip* around its long center axis. Often truncated to *flip* when combined with other features (e.g. double *flip* vs. double *kickflip*). "Kickflips are so- they're fun but I just get so frustrated" (Lizzie). Likely a reference to the kicking motion with the front foot that causes the *board* to rotate.
- kingpin** n The bolt that runs through the *hanger* and bushings and holds the *hanger* to the baseplate. The *kingpin* is adjusted to tighten or loosen the *trucks*. (Author).
- kink** n A flat portion in the middle of a *rail*. On *handrails* and *hubbas*, the *kink* typically coincides with a flat. He almost had it but bailed right at the *kink*. 2. adj. An obstacle with a *kink*. Used only with *rail*. That *kink rail* is ridiculous! "I did a *kickflip* Willy *grind* down a huge double *kink*--hell yeah!" (TWS, 08/08).
- to land (a trick)** v To successfully complete a *trick* and roll away. Landing on the *board*, then falling off shortly after is typically not counted as landing, or a make. "I: What's the gnarliest thing you've ever done on a skateboard? K: Uh. Does that mean things I've landed? [laughs]" (Kyle).

- late** adj A *trick* or part of a *trick* is considered *late* if it is performed after a first *trick* is fully complete. For example, a *ghetto bird* is a completed *hardflip* followed by a *180* before *landing*. "To make it a *tre flip late flip*, after it finishes those two spins, you kick it again and it does one last *flip* and you land on it" (Michael).
- ledge** n A platform taller than a typical *street curb* that drops down to a lower surface. "Oh, there's this *ledge* at Riverside that's like as tall as me and I ollied that, that's probably the biggest thing" (Robert).
- loose** adj When the *kingpin* is loosened so that the *trucks* have greater range of motion. This allows for much more maneuverability, but can diminish *pop*, and may result in *wheelbite*. (Author).
- MACBA** n A well-known plaza in Barcelona Spain, which takes its name from the nearby Museo D'art Contemporani De Barcelona (*MACBA*). "I mean, there's names of *spots* that are on the other side of the world. Like if you say *MACBA*, we instantly know you're talking about this skate plaza in the middle of this country" (Michael).
- mall grab** n Carrying the skateboard at your side by the *trucks* with the bottom facing outward. Often seen as a sign that one is a *poser*. "They just say they skate, they carry a *board* around, do the *mall grab* or whatever. Yeah the *mall grab*" (Chuco). Likely from the attitude toward mall skate shops, which are corporate rather than local, and individuals who carry skateboards in the mall (where one typically can't skate) as an expression of identity.
- manual** n To balance only on either the back wheels or front wheels (*nose manual*), with the others off the ground. "It's primarily *parking* garages and again that's like *manuals* and more technical *flat trick* varieties, different *grinds* and things like that" (Daniel). Pat Ngoho was always doing wheelies on the *deck* and then rolling back into the *bowl*. Neil [Blender] or John [Lucero] saw that and said, "He's *manually* rolling out and *manually* rolling back in." That became the *manual*. (Lance Mountain, RIDE Channel, "Lance Mountain Explains the Origins of Some of Skating's Iconic Trick Names", 12/01/14)
- manual pad** n A raised platform onto which a skater can *pop* and perform a *manual* across. Often abbreviated to *manny pad*. "Rather than saying like 'oh, there's a curb over there to do *manuals* on,' I could rather say 'oh, there's a *manny pad* over there'" (Kyle).

- mini ramp** n A *half-pipe*, typically 6 feet tall or less, with 6-8 feet of flat space in the middle. "@nickmcdonough11 finds his inner Daewon Song on this *mini ramp* and spine" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/16/15). Called "mini" for its smaller size as compared to traditional *vert half-pipes* (typically 8-12ft).
- NBD** adj Acronym for "never been done," referring to a *trick* that has never been done at a particular *spot* or *park*, especially those which are locally or more broadly well-known. Contrasts with ABD (already been done). "I: What do they [younger skaters] say? C: *NBD*. I hate that. When they're like "*NBD dude!*" (Chuco).
- no comply** n A *trick* in which the skater takes the front foot off the *board*, steps on the ground, and uses the back foot to *pop* the *board*. "I love to do just various no-comply variations. Even though no one does 'em, I love 'em, I don't care" (Kyle). Named by Neil Blender because the skater performing the *trick* over a curb refuses to comply with the curb's intention of stopping the skater. ("Jeff Grosso's loveletters-Curbs")
- nollie** n An *ollie* performed by popping the *nose* of the *board* rather than the *tail* while in one's *regular* stance. (Beal, 2014). A portmanteau of *nose* and *ollie*.
2. adj A *trick* performed starting from the *nose*, rather than the *tail* of the skateboard. "I got *fakie dolphins*, *nollie dolphins*" (Darrell).
- nose** n The front of the *deck*, which is typically more concave and is slightly thinner than the *tail*. (Author).
- nose manual** n A *manual* performed while balancing only on the front, rather than the rear wheels. (Author).
- off** prep Signals that a *trick* was performed with an obstacle, as opposed to *flatground*. "What are y'all playin' for? Off what?" (Darrell).
- one-footed** adj To perform a *trick*, almost exclusively a *grind*, *slide*, or *stall*, with only one foot on the board. "It is a *one-footed crooked grind tail grab* and at the very end, when I come off the *box*, I do a *360 flip* with my fingers" (Scott).

- out** prep Refers to a *trick* performed while completing and exiting a *grind* or *slide*. "I was trying to do a 5-0, 180 out on a *ledge* which was caked with *wax*" (Kyle).
- ollie** n To *pop* the *board* into the air by slamming the *tail on the ground*, then sliding the front foot up toward the *nose*, while jumping. The *ollie* is the foundation of any popped *trick*. "But probably my best *trick* would just be an *ollie* 'cause that's what I'm best at" (Daniel). Derived from the nickname of the pioneering early skater who popularized the *trick*, Alan Gelfand.
- park** n See *skatepark*. "As far as *parks* go, there's a new *park*, in Woodland I think" (Robert).
- part** The section of a skate video allotted to a skater or several skaters. "I was in the friends and family part, but I was still in the video (Michael); If these clips are any indication, Karsten Kleppan is gonna have a *sick* part in Nike Skateboarding Chronicles 3!" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/12/15).
- pipe** n A *ramp* with a concave incline, as opposed to a straight incline like a *bank*. Pipe does not occur alone, and is always the head noun of quarter-, half-, or full-pipe. "Do a *stall* on like a fairly large quarter-pipe or something like that (Kyle); He can do a lot of stuff like on *half-pipes*, and like *flatground* and rails" (Jordan).
- polejam** n A *trick* in which a skater slides or *grinds* on any pole which is planted in the ground, typically at an angle. "Front *board ollie* over at 2:15, and that *polejam* *ender!* Unngh!" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/13/15). Etymology unknown, although a popular community folk etymology suggests it is a play on "pole" (the obstacle involved in the *trick*), and the 90s rock group Pearl Jam. This explanation is certainly possible since the *trick* was popularized at the height of this group's popularity.
2. n An obstacle on which a *polejam* is performed, typically refers to an obstacle at a *skatepark* designed for this purpose. (Author).
- pop** v The action of pushing one side of the *board* down to start a *trick*. "You're on your *board*, and you *pop* up onto a *box*, or something that you're *grinding* on" (Scott).

- poser** n An individual who attempts to identify as a skater without commitment to the activity and lifestyle. "I: Is he [*skatepark* employee] a *skate rat*?
Darrell: Hell no. He is a *poser* (Darrell); Whenever I would go to the *skatepark*, like I would just be called like a *poser*" (Lizzie). Likely a reference to the fact that someone is posing as a skater without demonstrating commitment to the lifestyle and/or practice of skateboarding.
- pressure cracks** n Cracks in the *deck* coming from the holes where the baseplate is attached. Typically occurs from over-tightening of the *hardware*. (Author).
- pressure flip** n A *trick* which uses the pressure of the back foot, rather than a flick of the front foot, to *flip* the *board*. Typically refers to a *hardflip* which is *flipped* using the back foot. "I think the technical thing for it would be back foot pressure *underflip impossible* or something like that" (Daniel).
- pro** adj The highest tier of paid professional skateboarding. A skater who is *pro* typically receives a salary and receives their own model of skateboard, shoe, etc. depending on the company. Pro skaters are featured prominently in videos and marketing released by the company. "Bro, I'd be *pro* right now if that was a *flatbar* not round. A *flatbar*, not a *roundrail*" (Jordan).
- to pump** v To bend at the knees and push down, typically at the bottom of a *ramp*, in order to provide momentum to accelerate up a *ramp*, or to continue momentum when rolling down a *ramp*. (Author).
- pump track** n A section of a *skatepark* consisting of a series of humps on which a skater can "pump" (bend at the knees and push down) in order to gain speed and momentum. "They have that *pump track*, like the bigger one on the other side" (Lizzie).
- quarter-pipe** n See pipe. "Probably just various *tranny* things, like do a *stall* on a fairly large quarter pipe or something like that." (Kyle).
- radical** adj Impressive or outstanding. See also *sick*. "I'm like "oh that was *radical*" or like something like that" (Jordan).

- rail** n Any metal tube (may be round, square, or rectangular). Rails are used for *grinding*, but *tricks* are also often performed over rails. See also *handrail*, *flatbar*. "It includes every physical property except for like *grinding* on a *rail* or something, but you could do a *tre flip* into a *grind* if you wanted to" (Michael).
- ramp** n Any sloped surface used for skating. Although this typically refers to man-made structures designed for skating (e.g. pipes), it can also refer to existing structures used for other purposes (e.g. wheelchair ramps). "So normally the *ramp* slopes up like that, but *vert* is when it's just straight up and down" (Jordan).
- regular** adj Refers to a *trick* performed in one's natural stance (*regular-footed* or *goofy-footed*), as opposed to *fakie*, *nollie*, or *switch*. Only used contrastively, and a *trick* named without without any indication of stance is assumed to be in *regular* stance. "I think my favorite *trick's* just a *regular tre flip*. (Michael)" (Michael).
- regular-footed** adj To ride one's skateboard with the left foot forward in the *regular* stance. Compare to *goofy-footed*, where the skater's right foot is forward in *regular* stance. Often abbreviated to *regular*. (Author).
- to ride (for)** v To be on the team for a company. Typically involves receiving free products from the company (see *flow*), and possibly some financial compensation (see *amateur* and *pro*). See also *sponsored*. "He rides on the *pro* team for Tyrant Skateboards and for Launch in Michigan." (Daniel).
- rock** n A *transition trick* (specifically, a *stall*) where the front wheels of the *board* are lifted above the *coping*, then *set* down so that the *board* is resting on the *coping*. "Probably that *blunt fingerflip* or *fakie bigspin* on a *half-pipe*, like *fakie bigspin* rock." (Jordan). Likely named for the rocking motion of lifting the front *trucks*, setting them down, then picking them back up.
- rock and roll** n A *transition trick* in which, after a *rock*, the skater's body and the *board* are rotated 180 degrees to roll into the *transition regular*. When performed *frontside*, referred to as *front rock*. (Author). In addition to the playful reference to rock and roll music, likely named for the fact that one rocks on the *coping* (see *rock*), then rotates 180 degrees and rolls back into the *ramp*.

- roundrail** n A *rail* that is rounded (typically a tube) rather than flat (a *flatbar*). "Bro, I'd be *pro* right now if that was a *flatbar* not round. A *flatbar*, not a *roundrail*. (Jordan)" (Jordan).
- session** n A period of time where skaters skate together, typically at a single location. Often abbreviated to *sesh*. "Nine times outta ten, Kirby is the MVP of the *session*. A quick stop by the #TWSPark and he did his thang" (Facebook post, TWS, 11/12/15).
- set** n See *stair set*. "I hit a 15 *set* in Muskogee." (Randall).
- sex change** n See *body varial*. "Like yeah, the *sex change*, they [younger skaters] would like call it like a *body varial*." (Darrell). Because a *body varial* results in a skater riding *switch* (in the opposite of their *regular* stance), this is likely a play on this alternation.
- shuvit** n A *trick* in which the *board* is rotated under the feet while the skater continues forward. Often abbreviated as *shuv*. Can be performed without popping the *board*, but is almost always popped, and can be referred to as either a *shuvit*, or a *pop shuvit*. "But then the next day I was like "dad, come on, these guys are doin' *pop shuvits* for their final *trick*, like. At least let me try."; Well, favorite *trick* is probably *nollie frontside 360 shuv*" (Michael; Jordan). Likely named for the fact that the back foot is used to shove the *board* around in a 180 degree (or more) rotation.
- shred** v To skate, especially aggressively or with great fervor. "I think that it was primarily a culture shift, saying things like "*shred* 'til ya dead" and "*gnarly*" and uh, just some of the generic skateboard things that I think most people just don't pick up on as "oh, this is skateboarding terminology" (Daniel).
- sick** adj Impressive or outstanding, potentially in a daunting way (see *gnarly*), but can also be used for less extreme situations. "I often catch myself like talking like that when I'm just talking to normal people I'll be like "oh, that's *sick*." Like "oh yeah, you just got that new job, oh that's *sick*."; It's a lot of like "oh that was *sick*" and stuff like that" (Kyle; Jordan).

- SKATE** n A game similar to HORSE in basketball, in which a first skater performs a *trick*, and one or more other skaters must perform the same *trick*, or add a letter in the word *SKATE* to their score. When a player misses five *tricks* (spells *SKATE*), the game is over. An abbreviated version (SK8) is sometimes played as well. "And I remember being in a Portland *skatepark* and like the rules for the game of *SKATE* were different and I thought this *dude* was just pullin' a fast one on me but like, that's just how they played; Week two moving to California, I got a concussion and the next day placed second in an Element game of *SKATE*" (Daniel; Michael).
- skate rat** n A skater who is perceived as or claims to be exclusively a skater. "I: Who says that stuff?
Darrell: I don't know, like *skate rats*" (Darrell).
- skate scene** n The skateboarding community, usually in a given area. A *scene* is often defined by the amount of and activity at *skateparks*, *street spots*, *active* members, skate shops, etc. "The skate *scene* around here is a lot more focused around *street*; *The skate scene* in Latin America is strong as hell!" (Daniel; Facebook post, The Berrics, 11/18/15).
- skate shop** n A shop dedicated (at least primarily) to the sale of skateboarding equipment, clothing, media, and other skateboarding-related products. Many skate shops are run and/or staffed by local skaters, are involved with the community at a broader level, and act as a hub for the local skateboarding community. Often abbreviated to *shop*. "There's more money that's involved in the skateboarding in terms of shops." (Daniel).
- skate spot** n Any place where people go to skate, but especially used for *street locations* (as opposed to *skateparks*), and especially places that are already known to the skaters. Often abbreviated to *spot*. "I mean, there's names of *spots* that are on the other side of the world. Like if you say *MACBA*, we instantly know you're talking about this skate plaza in the middle of this country.

It's like we have this interna GPS where everything is labelled by skate *spots*." (Michael).
- skatepark** n An area built exclusively for skateboarding. Typically contains primarily ramps and *transition* obstacles, but can also contain some *skateparks* elements. Often abbreviated to *park*. "I've come across a few here and there, at the *skatepark* or something" (Scott).

- sketchy** adj When referring to a *trick*, one poorly executed, even if the *trick* was landed successfully. When referring to a *spot*, suggests lower suitability for skating, typically as a result of increased risk such as a rusted, unstable *handrail*. "This one was *sketchy* but I'm so *hyped* I learned these! (Facebook post, Zen Beers, 11/18/15). They say sketchiness, which is like, that was just done really sloppy, or you could've done that better, or I've seen that done better." (Scott).
- slam** n A particularly jarring fall. "After a *slam* like this, most dudes would have laid there for awhile. Or maybe not even gotten up at all. Roman is one tough kid" (Facebook post, Thrasher, 11/12/15).
- smith** n A *grind* or *stall* where the back *trucks* are in contact with the *coping* while the front *trucks* hang over the near side of the obstacle. "I really like *smith grinds*. Front *smith*, back *smith*." (Scott). Widely believed to be named for *pro* skater Mike Smith who popularized, even if he did not invent, the *trick* in the 1980s.
- snake** v To attempt a *trick* on an obstacle before it is your turn. Particularly when a *skatepark* or *spot* is busy, there are relatively rigorous rules of etiquette which are followed, a central part of which involves attempting a *trick* on an obstacle in turn. (Author).
- spine** n A *ramp* comprised of two quarter-pipes back-to-back. Spines typically have *coping* at the top. "@nickmcdonough11 finds his inner Daewon Song on this *mini ramp* and spine." (Facebook post, TWS, 11/16/15).
- sponsored** adj To receive free products from a company in exchange for representing them in person and on social media. May also involve financial compensation at the higher amateur and *pro* levels. "I'm *sponsored* for boards" (Jordan).
- spot** n See skate *spot*. "With the *spots*, people just kinda hafta learn to make the best of it" (Kyle).
- stair (set)** n Any *set* of stairs. Often just called a *set*, or by the number of stairs in the *set*. For example, a *stair set* with four stairs may be called a 'four', a 'four *set*,' or a 'four *stair*'. "In Sapulpa, there's a six, like a six *stair*, and I *hardflipped* that (Jacob)" (Jacob).

- stall** n To stop motion momentarily or for an extended period of time with the *trucks* or *board* in contact with an obstacle, especially the *coping* of a *transition ramp*. Compare to a *grind* or slide, where there is contact and motion. "Probably just various *tranny* things, like do a *stall* on a fairly large quarter pipe or something like that." (Kyle).
- steelo** n see *steeze* "They still say that [*steeze*], but they say '*steelo*' now, it's weird" (Randall). Potentially from the Notorious BIG line "You should know my *steelo*" (for style).
- steeze** n A portmanteau of "style with ease". Typically referred to as a quality or trait of a skater or their style. See also, *buttery*. "I don't know, they just start usin' '*steeze*' and '*steelos*' and stuff like that; Whenever we say some *trick* was done with so much *steeze*, we're saying like it was done smoothly, cleanly executed, and it was done with a certain aspect of beauty that we appreciated" (Randall; Michael).
- steezy** adj see *steeze* "It's just like the best feeling ever, like you land it and it's just super *steezy* (Kyle); don't think we would use *steezy* when we talk about say, a gymnastics performance" (Michael).
- stoked** adj Excited. "I'm not gonna use "*dude*" and "I'm *stoked*," in a business meeting or something at work, right?; Truman rips so we were *stoked* to get this part" (Scott; Facebook post, Thrasher, 03/27/14).
- street** n A style of skating performed on *street obstacles* (such as stairs, ledges, *gaps*), especially as opposed to skating *transition*. Many skateparks have *street obstacles* as well as ramps. "The skate *scene* around here is a lot more focused around *street*. But *technical street*, so a lot of ledges and rails and *technical flip trick* type stuff. There's not a lot of terrain that allows for big *stair* sets or anything that would provide for natural *transition* so a lot of just *technical type skateboarding*." (Daniel).
- stretch** adj Elongated, typically applies to *stair* sets. A *stretch set* will typically be called a '*stretch*' followed by the number of stairs, e.g. "a *stretch four*". (Author).

- sweeper** n A *transition trick* in which the skater airs out of the *ramp*, plants their back foot on the *coping* while grabbing the *nose*, then jumps back onto the *board* and drops in. "I: Do you have a go-to *trick*? C: A *sweeper*" (*Chuco*). Likely a reference to the sweeping motion performed as the skater rotates the *board* while holding the *nose*.
- switch** adv Performed in a skater's atypical stance, so that if one skates *regular*, the *trick* is performed *goofy*. "Just a *regular*, or maybe a *switch flip*" (*Jacob*).
- tail** n The back of the *deck*. Typically wider than the *nose*, and is less concave. "I take my back foot off, and I grab the *tail* with my hand. So it is a one-footed *crooked grind tail grab*" (*Scott*).
- technical** n A type of skating which focuses less on large, risky *tricks* and more on complex and creative *trick* variations, typically on smaller obstacles. Often abbreviated as *tech*. "The skate *scene* around here is a lot more focused around *street*. *But technical street*, so a lot of ledges and rails and *technical flip trick* type stuff. There's not a lot of terrain that allows for big *stair* sets or anything that would provide for natural *transition* so a lot of just *technical type skateboarding*." (*Daniel*).
- to throw oneself down, over** v To perform an *ollie* or other *trick* down a large *drop* such as a *ledge*, *stair set*, *gap*, etc. "Since I moved to Toledo, just keeping with the hometown style has been like "what's the biggest thing I can throw myself over?"; What a terrible idea, throw yourself down 25 stairs; Man in California we would always just throw ourselves down anything" (*Daniel*; *Chuco*; *Michael*).
- tranny** n see *transition* "Uh, *tranny*. I skate a lot of *tranny*; @rickness with a dozen *tranny tricks* you don't have" (*Randall*; Facebook post, TWS, 11/19/15).
- transition** n Skating performed on ramps, especially at the *park* as opposed to skating *street*. Often abbreviated *tranny*. "I skate more *transition* especially as I get older because it's more fun you can go fast with a lower risk factor" (*Daniel*).
- tre flip** n see *360 flip* "Tre *flips* and heel *flips*" (*Randall*).

- trick** n The maneuvers that a skater performs. This is the only term used for these maneuvers. "You could see em smack their head open then they'll get up and try another *trick*" (Michael).
- truck** n The assembly that makes up the axle on the bottom of the skateboard which hold the wheels. "You're balancing on the front *truck*" (Scott).
- varial** n A *trick* in which the *board* rotates 180 degrees along with a *flip variation* (either *kickflip* or *heelflip*). "The part that's learned is the part that doesn't change geographically, and that's like what is *frontside*, what is *backside*, what is an *ollie*? What is a *kickflip*? Ya know- what is a *variation*, or what's a *varial*?" (Daniel).
- variation** n Some variation of an aforementioned *trick*. Typically refers to a change in stance (*fakie* vs *nollie* vs *switch*), *rotation* direction (*backside* or *frontside*), number of rotations, or inclusion of a *flip* or *grab*. "I really like *smith grinds*, *front smith*, *back smith*. Any of those *variations*; That's my favorite thing to do so it's either *ollie* or one of the *bigflip variations*" (Scott; Daniel).
- vert** n Sometimes used synonymously with *transition*, but often refers to a type of *transition* skateboarding involving larger ramps (12+ feet). "There was the *street skatepark*, there was Oakland *vert skatepark*, and then here locally there was Woodville *skatepark*; She's actually a psychiatrist who likes to just go there and just skate. She can *drop* in and do like various *vert tricks*; I like skating *vert* too, but I don't know, we got more *street* so I *feel* more comfortable in the *street*" (Daniel; Kyle; Chuco). A shortening of "vertical."
2. n The sheer vertical portion at the top of a tall *ramp*, especially a *bowl* or *pipe*. "Normally the *ramp* slopes up like that, but *vert* is when it's just straight up and down" (Jordan).
- vert wall** n A very steep concave *ramp*, typically a tall quarter-pipe. (Author).
- wax** n Any type of *wax* that is used to make rails, ledges, or *coping* more slick so that you can *grind* or slide them more easily. Many skate companies produce "skate *wax*," but many skaters simply use candles, which are often cheaper. "I was trying to do a 5-0 180 out on a *ledge* which was caked with *wax* At Highland *Skatepark*" (Kyle).

2. v To put wax on a *rail*, *ledge*, or *coping* in order to make it more slick. (Author).

wheelbite n The result of wheels in motion rubbing against the *deck*. Typically caused by riding *loose*. "Wheelbite can be caused by *loose trucks*, a rock, or a crack. But sometimes it's the fangs of a spiteful beast who just wanted to see you take a dive, *dude*" (Thrasher, "Slam Demons", 8/25/2011).

4.3. Morphological Phenomena and Distribution of Lexical Items

Having presented a glossary of skateboarding terms, I will now describe some noteworthy patterns in the language employed by skaters to talk about skateboarding and about other topics as well as some ethnographic commentary on some of the terms. In terms of the morphology of skater language, the items in this glossary exemplify a number of morphological processes, especially in the production of colloquial variants of terms. Examples of some of these morphological phenomena are presented below in

Table 1:

Table 1. Some morphological phenomena in skater language

Process	Example
conversion	<i>Trick</i> names (nouns, e.g. <i>ollie</i>) are often used as verbs, as in "There's this <i>ledge</i> at Riverside that's like as tall as me and I <i>ollied</i> that, that's probably the biggest thing" (Robert).
acronyms	<i>NBD</i> for 'never been done.'
clipping	<i>half-cab</i> and <i>full-cab</i> from <i>caballerial</i> .
backformation	<i>full-cab</i> from <i>half-cab</i> as a more common synonym for the historical <i>caballerial</i> . The prevalence of <i>full-cab</i> vs <i>caballerial</i> is likely due to the relative ease and higher frequency of <i>half-cabs</i> vs <i>full-cabs</i> .
eponyms	<i>the Chetty Thomas</i> or <i>caballerial</i> (for Steve Caballero).
blends	<i>Steeze</i> from 'style with ease.'

The terms collected in the interview can be broadly categorized into terms referring to *tricks* (e.g. *trick* names, rotation direction, etc.), obstacles, the actual skateboard, and some other terms which are not necessarily limited to the practice of skateboarding, but can be used by skaters for broader purposes. The distribution of terms

in each of these categories is shown in Table 1 below. Note that these are specific items (types) rather than actual tokens of each term, and a number of terms, especially for *tricks*, were used by multiple respondents.

Table 2. Distribution of lexical items

	Tricks	Obstacle	Other	Instrument	Total
Items	77	39	29	13	158
%	49	25	18	8	100

It is important recall that these terms are elicited in the course of a semi-structured interview, and that while skaters (and interviewers) were able to and often did take control of the interaction, they were nevertheless working within the frame of the sociolinguistic interview, and were at least in part responding to questions from the interviewer, a number of which asked directly about *tricks* (e.g. “what's the biggest\gnarliest *trick* you can do?”). In light of this, it is unsurprising that almost 50 percent of the terms refer to *tricks*, and another 25 percent refer to obstacles used for skateboarding (for a total of 74 percent) refer to the practice of skateboarding. Furthermore, some of the terms in the “other” category can be used to talk about *tricks*, although not exclusively, and, as will be discussed below in section 4.6, many of the terms in this category are central in indexing skater identity, to skaters and to others. In the following sections, I describe and provide examples of the linguistic structure and contextual usage of skater language in each of these broad categories.

4.4.Tricks

As will be explored further below, most *tricks* can be referenced using long-form, technical terminology, but nearly all *tricks* also have abbreviated shorter forms. An understanding of the full anatomy of *tricks*, as well as the ability to parse the more

colloquial, abbreviated terms for *tricks* are crucial in performing authenticity among skaters. One place where contrastive examples of this can be found readily is in skate mag captions on photographs of skaters in action. As described in Chapter 3, *TransWorld* and *Thrasher* occupy varying spaces in the community, with *TransWorld* often catering to a broader audience rather than exclusively skaters, and *Thrasher* actively engaging with the more countercultural elements of the skateboarding community. This variation is manifested in the way that these magazines caption images of skaters in action, as seen in Figures 1 and 2 below:

Figure 1. Comparison of trick descriptions in *TransWorld* and *Thrasher*



“Riley Hawk, *frontside 180 switch crooked grind*” (*TWS*, 01/14).



“Striped socks, loading docks and *front crooks* on lock(s). Turn the light off when you leave, Jeremy” (*Thrasher*, 11/19).

While these two *tricks* are not identical, the *trick* featured in the image is the same (*crooked grind*), although *TransWorld* uses the full name, while *Thrasher* employs the truncated forms of both *crooked grind* (*crook*) and *frontside* (*front*).

As exemplified in Snyder's (2017) anecdote on the "grammar" of skateboarding *tricks*, knowledge of all of this information is crucial to community membership. Several skaters in this study also point to an organic knowledge of *trick* names as central to "talking like a skater:"

Excerpt 1 (Daniel, this study):

I: So like, what makes the way that we talk different from the way that other people talk?
D: Ya know, what makes us different I think would be the way that we understand the language of *tricks*. And when you first start skateboarding, one of the hardest things is just understanding the difference between *frontside* and *backside* and why- Ya know, one thing is as you get into *switch* and *nollie* and *fakie*, because then you have four different positions and you have to understand which one's *frontside* and which one's *backside*. And that's something that I think alienates people because just like having another

language, they're not gonna be able to connect. And from that place, it gives you that kind of feeling of like having the upper hand in the conversation and allows you to identify on a much deeper and I think even a subconscious level with people because you're like hey, we're family, we speak the same language.

Skaters' employment of *trick* names for such performance of identity will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5. For now, we turn to a description of the structure of *trick* names.

4.4.1. *Flatground and Drop Tricks*

The names of skateboarding *tricks* are highly productive while following a fairly strict constituent order, especially in the long form. The syntax of a *trick* name can be roughly formulated as follows:

Example 1. *nollie backside flip*

	Stance	Direction	Rotations	Trick
Long-form	<i>nollie</i>	<i>backside</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>kickflip</i>
Short-form	<i>nollie</i>	<i>backside</i>		<i>flip</i>

Information is often embedded in one or more of the constituents, particularly in the more vernacular names of *tricks*. For example, in the shortened version above, *backside* refers to the direction of a rotation, rendering "*180*" redundant since this is the default number of rotations performed (a *backside 360 kickflip* is notably difficult). Note also that *kickflip* can be (and typically is) truncated to *flip* and combined with a *variation* (e.g. *backside flip*, *double flip*, etc.). The same is true of *heelflip*, although in this case, *flip* is truncated and *heel* merges with the *variation* (e.g. *inward heel*). Skaters, including several in this study, often refer to *variations* of a *trick*, meaning a change in *stance*, or the inclusion of rotations of one's body, the *board*, or both. For example, in Daniel's answer to the question of his favorite *trick*, he says "it's either *ollie* or one of the *bigflip variations*." This could refer to any *variation* on a *bigflip* (*bigspin kickflip*, thus itself a *kickflip*

variation), such as a *nollie* or *fakie bigflip*, a *frontside bigflip*, or a *biggerflip* (a *bigflip* with an additional rotation of the *board*).

In some cases, the name of a *trick* itself can bear additional information. For example, a *fakie* variant of the *trick* above would be expected to look as follows:

Example 2. *fakie backside flip*

	Stance	Direction	Rotations	Trick
Long-form	<i>fakie</i>	<i>backside</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>kickflip</i>
Short-form	<i>fakie</i>	<i>backside</i>		<i>flip</i>

However, since a *fakie 180* is (exclusively) referred to as a *half-cab*, this *trick* would be referred to instead as a *half-cab flip*, potentially with the rotation direction given, although *backside* is the default (easier and more common) rotation direction for a half-cab and the direction would likely only be given for a *frontside* half-cab *flip*. Tricks can also be combined with things like a *late* (additional) *trick* or a *grab*, which is appended at the end, as seen in “*bigspin late flip*” (Kyle), or *pop shuvit tail grab*.

4.4.2. Grinds, Slides, and Stalls

Grinds, *slides*, and *stalls* demonstrate a similar structure, and include stance, direction, and *trick* name:

Example 3. *switch back blunt*

	Stance	Grind\slide direction	Grind\slide
Long-form	<i>Switch</i>	<i>Backside</i>	<i>Bluntslide</i>
Short-form	<i>Switch</i>	<i>Back</i>	<i>Blunt</i>

It is worth noting that only *switch* and *fakie* are typically specified in naming a *grind*, *slide*, or *stall* since these refer to a direction of motion, while *nollie* is included only when specifying the stance of a *trick* into a *grind*, *slide*, or *stall*. As with *flatground* and *drop tricks*, some information is often embedded or assumed in a *trick*’s name. Most notably, many *grinds*, *slides*, and *stalls* performed on a *ramp* are assumed to be *backside*

unless the skater is known to be skilled, since *grind*, *slide*, and *stall tricks* are generally more difficult to perform *frontside* (Daniel, personal communication). This same assumption does not apply to *grinds* or *slides* performed on *rails*, especially since rails cannot always be approached from either side, resulting in less possibility to perform a *trick frontside* or *backside*.

As with the example of *backside flip* above, where directionality assumes rotation, some *transition tricks* also exemplify this assumption. For example, a *rock n roll* is typically performed with a *backside* rotation, and is abbreviated to *front rock* when performed *frontside*. A *rock* is a *trick* in which the *board* is rocked against the *coping* at the top of a *ramp*, but does not involve any rotation and is typically performed *to fakie*. However, the inclusion of a rotational direction implies rotation and allows for the exclusion of the *roll* in naming the *trick*. As with the *tricks* above, *grinds*, *slides*, and *stalls* can have additional information included such as *grabs*, e.g. *5-0 nose grab*.

4.4.3. Tricks into and out of Grinds, Slides, and Stalls

Skaters often combine *tricks* performed on the *board* with *grinds*, *slides*, and *stalls*, referred to as doing a *trick into/to, or out* of a *grind*, *slide*, or *stall*. When referring to these *tricks*, each *trick* acts as an individual constituent, following the structure of its respective category. Tricks are arranged in the order that they are performed, with or without a conjoining preposition as exemplified below. The first row comes from the Berrics' Trickipedia, while the second comes from Jordan (this study):

Example 4. Tricks into slides\stalls

Stance	Trick	Prep (optional)	Direction	<i>Grind</i> \ <i>Slide</i> \ <i>Stall</i>
<i>nollie</i>	<i>heelflip</i>	to	<i>frontside</i>	<i>tailslide</i>

fakie bigspin

rock

A *trick* out of a slide:

Example 5. Tricks out of a slide

<i>Grind</i> \slide direction	<i>Grind</i> \slide	Stance	Trick	Prep (optional)
<i>frontside</i>	<i>noseblunt slide</i>	<i>nollie</i>	<i>kickflip</i>	out

Combining both:

Example 6. Tricks into and out of a slide

Trick	Prep (optional)	<i>Grind</i> \slide direction	<i>Grind</i> \slide	Prep (optional)	Trick	Prep (optional)
<i>kickflip</i>	to	<i>frontside</i>	<i>noseslide</i>	to	<i>fakie</i>	
<i>half-cab</i>		<i>backside</i>	<i>noseslide</i>		<i>270</i>	out

These two examples are taken from the Berrics' Trickipedia, which generally use the most technical terms and specify as many details as possible. Several examples of combined *tricks* appear in the data for this study as well, such as in Scott's description of a *trick* he invented: "It is a ***one-footed crooked grind tail grab*** and at the very end, when I come off the *box*, I do a *360 flip* with my fingers" (Scott). Scott's is the most complex *trick* name given by the skaters in this study, and can be parsed as below:

Example 7. Additional trick information

Foot	<i>Grind</i> \slide direction	<i>Grind</i> \slide	Grab	Trick	Prep (optional)
one-footed	<i>backside</i>	<i>crooked grind</i>	<i>tail grab</i>	<i>360 fingerflip</i>	out

One thing to note here is the (relatively rare) inclusion of additional detail about foot placement or use in a *trick*, specifically *one-footed*, meaning that only one foot is on the

board during a *grind* or slide. Such information can also be given in describing *flatground* or *drop tricks*, and usually refers to an atypical use of one's front or back foot to move the *board*, as in Daniel's answer to his best *trick*, a "*back foot pressure underflip impossible*," a *trick* where the front foot is typically used to cause the rotation of the *board*.

4.4.4. Variation in *Trick* Names

The *trick* names collected in this study do not exemplify any substantial amount of variation. Nevertheless, there are several observations to be made regarding linguistic variation of *trick* names. First, as we would expect, there is little if any variation in high-frequency items (none was observed in this sample), as Daniel points out when asked how he learned to talk like a skater:

Excerpt 2: The part that's learned (Daniel)

The part that's learned is the part that doesn't change geographically, and that's like what is *frontside*, what is *backside*, what is an *ollie*? What is a *kickflip*? Ya know- what is a *variation*, or what's a *varial*?

The two *tricks* Daniel mentions here (*ollie* and *kickflip*) are considered the foundation of most *flatground* and *drop tricks* since an *ollie* is almost always necessary to cause the *board* to leave the ground, and a *kickflip* is essential to any other *flip variation*.

Conversely, in this study, multiple terms were found to exist only for very difficult, and therefore lower-frequency *tricks*, as Michael mentions explicitly:

Excerpt 3: Gazelle flip (Michael)

So the way they [skaters in different geographical regions] say it doesn't change very much, but the words and the names [sighs]. Those tend to change. 'Cause like certain *tricks* have popularity to 'em, just with, I don't know, ease. So like, if that *trick* is very easy, everybody's gonna know what it is. But the harder ones, that's where the names could alter around a little bit. There's one that people call a- I guess a *gazelle flip*? But then there's other kids that will call it some weird name like a ghost *flip* or somethin'?

Similarly, although he doesn't mention the alternation explicitly, Darrell employs two synonyms for the same *trick* (*dolphin/forward flip*):

Excerpt 4: Darrell's best trick(s)

I: What would you say is like your best *trick*?

D: I don't know.

[To Randall] What do you say my best *trick* would be? ***Forward flip?***

R: [inaudible]

D: No. I want- Yeah, it'd be ***dolphin flip, forward flip.***

One other noteworthy variation in *trick* names was also given by Darrell, specifically the alternation between *sex change* and *body varial*, which he posits is a regional variation:

Excerpt 5: Sex change vs body varial

I don't know, like just names of it, 'cause like, when I came back from Ohio, like a ***sex change***, or like yeah, the ***sex change***, they would like call it like a ***body varial***. Like they would call it that down here [Oklahoma]. And I'm like- "Oh, well it's called a ***sex change***" and all this stuff, they's like "Oh, we know, that's the layman's term for it," and I'm like. "Okay. Like."

Darrell's assertion that this is a geographic variation is an interesting one since I first learned this *trick* (in Oklahoma) as both a *sex change* and a *body varial* around 13 years ago, and *body varial* is used in a 2004 issue of *TransWorld* (the earliest year available in my sample): "Kris Markovich, *fakie ollie body varial*" (*TWS*, 12/04). Although Darrell did not explain any further, one possibility for Darrell's claim that *body varial* is used in Oklahoma is that after some time, he may have observed a move away from the use of the more transphobic term *sex change* and interprets this as a geographic variation.

4.5.Obstacles and Instrument

The second most populous category of terms in the data for this study is also related to the practice of skateboarding, specifically, the obstacles on which skaters perform their *tricks*. As other skaters did with *tricks*, one skater, Kyle, expressed opaque obstacle names as central to a performance of authentic skater identity:

Excerpt 6 (Kyle)

I: What is it about- what makes the way that we talk different?

K: It's funny, I would argue that skating kinda has it's own language that you know, you have things like people say like "Oh, a *hubba*, ya know, a *hubba*, or a *5-stair*, or a—" I don't even know man.

Interestingly, Kyle refers to these as the "proper" terms, highlighting the importance of knowledge about obstacle names to the performance of skater identity: "I began to realize like these proper terms. Rather than saying like 'oh, there's a curb over there to do *manuals* on,' I could rather say 'oh, there's a *manny pad* over there'" (Kyle). Michael also references obstacles as important to an authentic skater's language, although he refers to a knowledge of well-known *skate spots*:

Excerpt 7 (Michael)

Like that's how you can tell if somebody's a skateboarder or not. If they don't know what *MACBA* or *Carlsbad* is, they're either new to skateboarding, or they don't know much about it.

Of note in the instrument section is that while 12 terms are listed, only five of these (*board*, *brain bucket*, *deck*, *tail*, and *truck*) were used by participants in the study, while the rest were provided by the author in order to provide context. Two of these (*board* and *deck*) are synonymous, and both *truck* and *tail* were employed in the description of *tricks*.

4.6. Other Skater Terms

Some notable terms in the "other" category include the almost universally mentioned *gnarly* and *dude*. These terms were particularly common when skaters were asked whether anyone had ever noticed that they talk like a skater or if they'd been made fun of for talking like a skater:

Excerpts 8-11: *dude* and *gnarly*

It's totally part of me, and I didn't realize how much it was until people started pointin' out I say **dude** a lot (Michael).

I kinda used to say *dude* a lot sometimes, or "that was sweet or fresh" or something like that, and they would kinda say "uhhh, you- that's kinda skaterish or something" (Scott).

They're always like, "you're always saying like *dude* and stuff" and I'm like [laughing] "yeah" (Jordan).

Some words that I d- like especially *gnarly*, some people will say that [she talks like a skater], but not very often, so they're like "oh *gnarly*" [mocking voice] ya know what I mean? Like "oh, what're you, like?" (Lizzie).

As Kiesling (2004) points out, although *dude* was initially, and is perhaps still predominantly, a term used by young men to address other young men, it is now relatively available as a general address term across genders, and within a variety of communities. Despite this broader availability, Kiesling argues that *dude* indexes "a stance of cool solidarity, a stance which is especially valuable for young men as they navigate cultural Discourses of young masculinity, which simultaneously demand masculine solidarity, strict heterosexuality, and nonconformity" (281). These values align fairly closely with those of the skateboarding community as outlined in chapter 2, particularly a sense of masculine solidarity and nonconformity. This may be the source of the perception by skaters and others, according to skaters, that *dude* indexes a skater identity. One particularly intriguing moment was at the very beginning of Scott's interview when he was asked his hometown and responded "My hometown is Tulsa, Oklahoma. *Dude*. Radical." The words *dude* and *radical* were delivered with playful intonation, and appear to be a performance of stereotypical skater talk, highlighting Scott's awareness that these terms index skater identity.

Several adjectives in this category can be, and are used to describe *tricks* (e.g. *banger*, *buttery*, *clean*, *radical*, *sick*, *steezy*, *stoked*), but also have broader application,

and can also potentially be used to index a skater identity, as demonstrated in Kyle and Scott's awareness of their use of skater language in outsider company:

Excerpts 12-13: Talking to normal people

I often catch myself like talking like that when I'm just talking to normal people I'll be like "oh, that's *sick*." Like "oh yeah, you just got that new job? Oh that's *sick*" (Kyle).

I'm not gonna use "*dude*" and "I'm *stoked*," in a business meeting or something at work, right? (Scott).

4.7. Summary

Having presented a glossary of skater language used by the skaters in this study, we can see that, at least in this sample, the majority of what these skaters talk about involves the performance of skateboarding, primarily the *tricks* and the obstacles involved in the performance of skateboarding. These *tricks* follow a complex and productive but fairly rigid word order, and skaters suggest that much of the linguistic performance of skater identity involves an organic knowledge of the structure of *trick* names. This organic knowledge includes an awareness of the technical or formal names for and colloquial, abbreviated versions, as well as what information is obligatory (e.g. a non-regular *stance*), vs embedded in a *trick* name, as in the fact that a *half-cab* is necessarily *fakie*. Skaters suggest that they identify and can be identified by others as a skater based upon their knowledge and use of *trick* language. In addition, several skaters identify other terms which index a skater identity such as certain opaque names of skate obstacles (e.g. *hubba*), or specific well-known *skate spots* (e.g. *MACBA* or *Carlsbad*), as well as other terms such as *gnarly* or *dude*.

Thus, the ethnographic approach to lexicography taken here has highlighted that authentic performances of skater language are also performances of cultural practices thereby "blur[ring] the boundary, if ever one wanted to invoke one, between what was

intended by the “dictionary” of a language and by the “encyclopedia” of knowledge of a culture” (Silverstein, 2006, p. 493). As we turn in the next chapter to an examination of skaters’ use of lexicon and cultural knowledge in the performance of a skater identity with insiders and outsiders, we will keep in mind the varying ways in which skaters can talk about their practice.

CHAPTER V

ACCOMMODATION AND SKATER IDENTITY IN THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC INTERVIEW

5.1. Opening Remarks

I now turn to an exploration of how skaters use the vocabulary items described here in the performance of skater identity in a particular discourse setting — the sociolinguistic interview. I focus on the degree to which skaters accommodate to the researchers' goals for the interview and to the interviewers' knowledge of the community's language. Specifically, I analyze the lexicon skaters use in describing their *tricks* and the degree to which they explain or adjust the opacity of in-group slang and jargon for their immediate interlocutor and/or a potential future, non-expert audience. I will employ a broad transcription, but I will indicate exceptionally long pauses where they occur (e.g. “3s”) and use a colon to mark elongated vowel durations (e.g. “So:?”). In the sections below, I closely examine four skaters' discussions of skateboarding tricks in the sociolinguistic interview: two interviewed by me in various settings and three interviewed by a non-skater in comparable settings. I will provide additional biographical information about each of the skaters in order to contextualize their position in the skateboarding community and their relationship to the interviewer. I will then analyze their responses to questions about *tricks*, specifically, questions about their *gnarliest*

biggest, best, and favorite *trick*. After examining these skaters' lexical accommodation in responses to these questions, I will explore what their varying degrees of accommodation suggest about skaters' performance of identity toward insiders and outsiders and the ways in which the values of the skateboarding community may condition skaters' willingness to accommodate to their interlocutor.

5.2. Skater Accommodation in the Sociolinguistic Interview

5.2.1. Scott (28, Skater Interviewer, Indoor Skatepark)

Scott is a 28-year-old resident of Tulsa, Oklahoma and has been skating for around 13 years. At the time of the interview, he was employed as an engineer and on weekends and was the manager of an indoor skatepark in Tulsa where the interview was conducted (during the park's operating hours). I have known Scott personally since I started skating around 12 years ago and have spent substantial time skating with him at various skateparks and at public spaces in what skaters call a *sesh* or *session*, typically a day trip in which skaters travel between *spots*, known or novel locations which are not designated for, but are conducive to skateboarding. Scott is one of the most skilled skaters at the skatepark and in Tulsa and is highly respected in the community. Although he is an established member of the community, having been *sponsored* in the past and appearing in several *skate videos*, he also indicated that he is "not quite in it like I was before."

In response to the question of the *gnarliest* thing he's ever done, Scott answered without hesitation, describing his first *handrail* experience:

Excerpt 9: 12-stair handrail

- 1 I: What's the gnarliest thing you've ever done?
- 2 S: There was a handrail- downtown Tulsa, there was a **12-stair handrail**, and it was a
- 3 very infamous spot. And it was my first handrail, which was kind of weird, like **you**

4 **don't start off at twelve stairs, you start off at a lot less.** And that was like one of
 5 my most memorable and, I guess greatest moments, 'cause I really felt like I had done
 6 something. I like broke a- such a huge barrier of the human mentality and physicality
 7 restraints of what we think we can do.

Of note in Scott's description of his *gnarliest* trick is that the actual trick (which must be a *grind* or *slide*) is never mentioned. This may be due to the fact that the number of stairs itself is enough to make any trick on the handrail *gnarly*. While this is apparent to me as a skater, Scott orients to a less-informed audience when he indicates in lines 2-3 that "you don't start off at twelve stairs, you start off at a lot less." In response to the next question, of what Scott's best trick is, he also orients immediately and unprompted to an outsider audience:

Excerpt 10: The flask

1 I: Alright so what's your- what's your best trick right now? Or like, ever?
 2 S: Um, so I. I invented a trick. Uh, or at least I think I did, never seen anybody else do it.
 3 And I always get compliments on it. And it's a. Backside crooked grind, and I get into
 4 this crooked grind, which is um, **to describe it to a non-skater**, it's like you- you're
 5 on a- your board, and you pop up onto a box or something that you're **grinding** on.
 6 And the **front truck**- you're on the- you're balancing on the **front truck** and um- I
 7 take my back foot off, and I grab the **tail** with my hand. So, it is a one-footed,
 8 crooked grind, tail grab. And at the very end, when I come off the box, I do a 360 flip
 9 with my fingers, and I land it. I land on the board and roll away. And I called it the-
 10 the flask.

Because Scott's interviewer (myself) is a skater and is known to Scott to be a skater, Scott appears to initially be operating within a more conversational frame, a common, and even sought after feature of sociolinguistic interviews (Schiffrin, 1994). He quickly becomes aware that his description of the trick may not be interpretable to a future, unskilled audience and explicitly makes the decision to "describe it to a non-skater" (line 3). Although Scott switches to a description which still employs jargon (e.g. *grinding*, *front truck*, *tail*, lines 5-6), he may think that these terms are more likely to be known to outsiders, or may at least be less opaque, and he provides additional

information to assist an outside audience in understanding. Furthermore, even prior to Scott's detailed explanation, he uses the full technical name for the trick, as in *backside crooked grind* (vs *crook* or *back crook*), *one-footed crooked grind tail grab* (vs *one-foot crook tail grab*), and *360 flip with my fingers* (vs *360 fingerflip*). Scott's choice of language to talk about his trick closely resembles the captions of *TransWorld* as opposed to those of *Thrasher*, as described in Chapter 4. Recall that *TransWorld* targets "not only skaters but parents, companies, authorities and others with an interest in skateboarding" (Borden, 2019, p. 72), and Scott's employment of this technical terminology for trick names suggests a similarly non-expert audience.

5.2.2. Michael (23, Non-Skater Interviewer, Researcher's Home)

At the time of the interview, Michael was an elementary school teacher and lived and worked in Stillwater, Oklahoma where he is one of the most experienced skaters, and certainly one of the most skilled, especially of the older skaters. In this community, there is a fairly large age gap between skilled core skaters (typically post-graduate working adults) and younger core skaters (typically in early high school). Like Scott, Michael has been *flow* for several skate companies and appeared in local skate videos, an indicator of his high skill level and commitment to the community.

While Michael is a highly skilled and committed skater, and views himself as such, he has also mentioned to me in personal communication that his involvement in and practice of skateboarding has diminished as he has continued to develop a career. In fact, younger skaters have apparently noticed Michael's lessened practice and less pronounced skater identity, and Jordan mentioned Michael in his interview, despite the fact that Michael was not present during Jordan's interview, and Jordan had no knowledge that

Michael had been interviewed: “Like Michael, you'd never think is good, then when I saw him out here, I'm like ‘what the heck?’ But he's so good.” Michael was interviewed at my home by my non-skater colleague, who was not acquainted with Michael.

In Michael’s description of his “coolest trick” (recall that the non-skater interviewer used “coolest” in place of *gnarliest*), he follows a similar pattern to Scott, although he makes the transition more explicit by stopping to ask the non-skater interviewer whether or not he should describe it for a less-savvy audience:

Excerpt 11: Tre flip late flip

- 1 I: Uh. What’s the coolest trick you’ve ever done?
2 M: Hmm
3 I: Or- or not ever, maybe just coolest trick you can do
4 M: Tre flip late flip. That'd be the coolest trick, and that's a trick- **Should I explain how**
5 **that's done like, for people?**
6 I: Please do
7 M: Okay! A tre flip- so first off, if it's a flip trick, the board completely separates from
8 your feet and rotates in a given direction. And a tre flip is where it does two types of
9 rotations. It rotates horizontally and 360 degrees and then it rotates uh- I don't know,
10 the board is horizontal but it flips 360 degrees. Why they call it a tre flip I don't know,
11 but it's two different rotations that totally flip over. But then, to make it a tre flip late
12 flip, after it finishes those two spins, you kick it again and it does one last flip and you
13 land on it, so it's- It's very much a last second type of trick, I don't know. I honestly- It
14 had started happening on accident so I thought "okay, I can do that." And it turned out
15 to be a pretty fun trick Yeah. I think that's the coolest trick I can do.

While Scott’s distinction between the interviewer (a skater) and “a non-skater” is a clear example of his recognition of and adherence to the sociolinguistic interview and its purposes, Michael’s choice of “people” (line 5) to differentiate between the interviewer and other future audiences is a notable one. Although Michael did not know the interviewer prior to the interview, Michael was fully aware that the interviewer is not at all a member of the skateboarding community (a fact which the interviewer specified in his informed consent process prior to the interview). However, Michael positions himself

in nearly the same way as Scott and may consider the interviewer to be knowledgeable about the language and practice of the skateboarding community, perhaps by virtue of his conducting an interview about skateboarding.

Both Scott and Michael participate in a “three-way” discourse (Goffman, 1981) and clearly distinguish between the interviewer, who may or may not be knowledgeable about skateboarding, and the potential future audience for their descriptions of tricks, an audience who are likely non-skaters. In doing so, they adhere to the frame of the sociolinguistic interview, participating not only in a conversation with the interviewer, but aiding the interviewer in accomplishing goals which go beyond the immediate discourse, namely the investigation of the language of the skateboarding community. One noteworthy observation is that in both of these interviews, neither the interviewer’s familiarity with the skater, or the interviewer’s status as a (non-)skater, appears to influence the interviewees’ choice to explicitly shift audiences and accommodate in their lexical choices about tricks, perhaps suggesting that these skaters are operating primarily within the frame of the sociolinguistic interview.

5.2.3. Daniel (22, Skater Interviewer, Daniel’s Home)

Daniel is a 22-year-old bicycle mechanic and self-described ministry director in Toledo, Ohio. Daniel and I have known each other since before we started skating and both began skating at around the same time. He was interviewed by me in his home. At the time of the interview, Daniel operated a weekly “skate church” at his home where he has built a *bowl* in his garage. Like Scott and Michael, he is one of the most skilled skaters in his community and is highly respected in the city and region. Also like Scott and Michael, Daniel suggests that he is less active, and that his age and career have

affected his participation in skateboarding, although he is both younger and more actively involved in the community than the other two:

Excerpt 12: Getting older

- 1 I skate more *transition* um especially as I get older because it's more fun you can go fast
- 2 with a lower risk factor. I don't think that my knees uh are really what they used to be,
- 3 which is sad at 22 um and your- my hips, uh when- ya know when you take a few
- 4 beatings it used to be "ah man, roll that one off, we're gonna try again." But I gotta get up
- 5 and go to work in the morning so [laughs] not the same thing.

Unlike Scott and Michael, Daniel makes no overt attempt to explain his tricks for a potential future, non-expert audience, instead tending to describe the tricks in technical terms, although only for an insider audience. Daniel's answer to the question of his gnarliest trick (which he also indicates is his biggest) is as follows:

Excerpt 13: King Road gap

- 1 I: What's the gnarliest trick you've done?
- 2 D: There's a pretty big gap off King Road that I did back 180 over. That was- that was
- 3 pretty big and that's gotta be- that's gotta be the gnarliest just 'cause the size of it was
- 4 uh- was pretty big. If I had to guess, the gap's probably about maybe just above my
- 5 height, so maybe like six foot. And then it's probably about twice its height so
- 6 probably about six by twelve. Yeah, it wasn't a first try thing. I think that- that that
- 7 would be the biggest thing I've done.

While Daniel uses the abbreviated form of *backside* (*back*) here, he also makes a move similar to Scott's description of his gnarliest trick, the "12-stair handrail," and explains the "gnarliness" of the trick for an outsider audience. Daniel's awareness of the audience is particularly evident in this excerpt since the interviewer (me), to whom he describes the *gap*, was present when he performed the back 180 over the King Road gap, a known *spot* in Toledo. Thus, with Daniel's awareness of an outside audience in mind, we turn to his description of his best (and favorite) trick:

Excerpt 14: Bigflip

- 1 I would say my best trick's my favorite trick. Which would be fakie bigflip or **backside**
- 2 **bigflip, regular**. And those are just- I mean they're incredibly fun, or **inward heelflip** is
- 3 one of those ones that either- either you have it or you don't. But probably my best trick
- 4 would just be an ollie 'cause that's what I'm best at. I mean that's been, since I moved to-

5 to Toledo, just keeping with the hometown style has been like “what's the biggest thing I
6 can throw myself over?” And I guess it's been awhile since I've really looked at
7 something and said "ya know what? I could probably throw myself over that.” But I
8 mean, that's my favorite thing to do so it's either it's either ollie or one of the bigflip
9 variations.

As mentioned elsewhere, in conversation, and even in more formal settings like image captions in skate mags, skaters almost exclusively use the shortened forms “back” and “front,” as in Daniel’s mention of *back 180* above. With the exception of this example, Daniel exclusively uses the “full” names of tricks where shortened variants are more typical, as in “inward heelflip” (Excerpt 3, line 2), which is typically referred to as an *inward heel*. Another example of this increased technicality is in Daniel’s indication that the “backside bigflip” in line 3 is performed “regular” (Excerpt 3, lines 1-2), meaning in his normal, most comfortable *stance*, where the dominant foot is on the back or *tail* of the board, as opposed to *switch* or *nollie*. Because a trick performed *regular-footed* is the default, this information is never provided except to contrast them with previously mentioned variants of the same trick in different foot stances. Furthermore, the “default” rotation direction for a *bigflip* is backside (a regular-footed frontside bigflip is difficult and uncommon), and Daniel’s inclusion of this element is highly irregular in the context of an explanation for another skater, suggesting an awareness of the interview’s goal, namely the collection of skateboarding language. In addition to employing the more technical names for tricks, Daniel explicitly mentions the technical name for a trick he invented (another of his favorite tricks):

Excerpt 15 : The technical thing for it

1 Uh, I think **the technical thing for it** would be um, back foot pressure (1s) underflip
2 impossible or something like that? It's not really a popped uh underflip. it's like you use
3 the pressure. And then my older brother gave it the name transitory flip which I thought
4 was a thing and it stuck ever since. Yeah it's definitely- it's a cool and pretty technical
5 trick. People like it 'cause it's kind of a weird trick and those are the ones that I find most

6 fun. I don't particularly like flatground or do anything technical but it's easy, so I stick
7 with it.

Notice that while Daniel provides technical names for tricks, at no point in his description of these tricks, or elsewhere in the interview, does Daniel attempt “to describe it to a non-skater” as Scott puts it, instead using terms which are only clear to skaters. However, Daniel does make some effort to formalize the information and present it in technical terms. His use of such opaque language, albeit with heightened technicality, suggests that his identity as skater takes primacy in this interview, particularly when talking about skateboarding, and he is simply unable or unwilling to take up a frame in which the discussion or description of skateboarding, particularly his own skateboarding ability, must be “dumbed down” or explained to outsiders. Although he presents the researcher, a skater, with a more formal, almost lexicographic version of his description, indicating his awareness of and compliance with the researcher’s goal of gathering empirical evidence about the language of the skateboarding community, he employs only language which is interpretable to skaters.

5.2.4. Jordan (18, Non-Skater Interviewer, Stillwater Skatepark)

Jordan was, at the time of the interview, a first-year university student in Stillwater, Oklahoma. During the interview, Jordan was the oldest skater at the park besides me. Jordan is highly involved in the local skateboarding community and as he mentions in his interview, is currently “*sponsored for boards,*” meaning that he receives free skateboards from a company in exchange for representing the company on social media and elsewhere. He is viewed as a mentor by many of the younger skaters, although they often make fun of him, including during the interview, for being in a fraternity at the university, playfully referring to him as “Bitch Halmeier” (a pseudonym for his family

name). Although not the focus of this study, this moniker demonstrates some of the more misogynistic tendencies of the community. Jordan is a highly skilled and admired skater on *transition*, and although he is not as skilled at *street* skating, he is respected by the other skaters for his innovative and easy style (*steeze*) and for his likable personality and mentorship of the younger skaters. Unlike Scott, Michael, and Daniel, Jordan exemplifies many of the countercultural values of the skateboarding community at the skatepark, and in daily life, and although he does not mention his participation in countercultural or illicit activities in his interview, he does describe skater talk as “basically everything with 'fucking' in front of it, that's what it is. Like, ‘these fuckin' shoes dude, this fuckin' rail man.’” Jordan is the only skater who explicitly indicates that swearwords are a central nonconformist feature of skater language although this is certainly the case, as exemplified in the contrast between the use of swearwords by *Thrasher* and *TransWorld* in section 3.3 of this dissertation.

Jordan was interviewed by my non-skater colleague, and was not acquainted with my colleague prior to the interview but was informed that the interviewer was not a skater. Throughout his interview, Jordan never made any attempt to accommodate lexically to the immediate non-expert audience (the interviewer), or to a future non-expert audience (as Scott and Michael did) or to provide a more “technical” linguistic description of the trick at hand (as Daniel did). Instead, Jordan explained the tricks to his non-skater interviewer primarily using environmental and technological resources at hand, and even that only after the interviewer explicitly indicated that a description was completely opaque to him and requested further explanation, which happened on several occasions. During the interview, Jordan was sitting on the bleachers at the edge of the

skatepark with his skateboard near him throughout the interview, typically beneath his feet. It's also important to note that while all 11 respondents in this study besides Lizzie also had their skateboards on hand, often beneath their feet, only Jordan opted to use it in his explanations.

Jordan indicates that the most awesome trick he can do is also his favorite, and employs both his board and an Instagram video of himself in order to explain the trick to the interviewer:

Excerpt 16: Blunt fingerflip

- 1 I: What's the most awesome skateboarding thing you've done?
2 J: Probably uh. My favorite thing, **blunt fingerflip**.
3 (1s)
4 I: So:?
5 J: It's like. You go up on the ramp like this, but then you grab it with your hand and-
6 here. Is this on like a time thing? Or like. Okay. Cause I got a video of it I can show
7 you.
8 (5s)
9 J: It's awkward silence now. I did it awhile ago, but this is like a repost of it. It's like a-
10 it's a video if it'll load. Yeah, it's on my Instagram. So that's probably my favorite
11 thing I've done, I think it's the coolest.

In this instance, the trick that Jordan identifies does not have a more or less technical form than the one he gives, and therefore does not allow us to consider the degree of lexical accommodation to his interviewer. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that it takes a full second of silence and a prompt from the interviewer ("So:?", line 4) before Jordan begins to explain what the trick is, and while Jordan begins a verbal explanation, he ultimately resorts to showing the interviewer an Instagram video which may assist the interviewer, but does not offer any explanation for a future audience.

Jordan's answers to the question of the "coolest" trick he can do (the non-skater's version of the "best" question) and his favorite trick are further exemplify his divergence from the non-skater interviewer and lack of awareness of a remote audience:

Excerpt 17: You gotta help me

- 1 I: Uh, so what's the coolest trick?
2 J: Coolest? Probably- Probably that uh blunt fingerflip or fakie bigspin on a half-pipe.
3 Like fakie bigspin rock.
4 (2s)
5 I: [laughs] You gotta help me.
6 J: So like, cause what a fakie bigspin is, is um. The board does a 360 and your body
7 does a 180
8 I: Okay. So you're movin' also?
9 J: Yeah. If this'll load.
10 [Jordan shows the interviewer an Instagram video of himself doing "fakie bigspin
11 rock"]
12 J: Yeah. That was- that was pretty cool for me, cause it's like, you don't see a lot of
13 people like-not a lot of people really do that so.
14 I: So what about your favorite- favorite trick? Or you kinda already said that.
15 J: Well favorite trick is probably uh- Nollie frontside 360 shuv
16 (3s)
17 I: [laughing intonation] Nollie:?
18 J: So it's like- a flatground trick, so instead of standing on the board like here, you just
19 stand on the front of it and uh, you throw it and the board does a 360.
1

In answering these questions (and indeed throughout the interview), Jordan initiates none of the moves orienting toward a non-expert audience, including his immediate interlocutor, that we see in the interactions of Scott and Michael. As in his answer to the first question, it takes an uncomfortably long pause and the interviewer's explicit request for help (lines 4-5) to prompt Jordan's explanation of the trick. Furthermore, unlike Daniel, Jordan almost exclusively uses the less formal names of tricks and their variants, such as *fakie bigspin rock* (line 3), the more technical name being *fakie bigspin to rock and roll* and the abbreviated form of *shuvit* in *nollie frontside 360 shuv* (line 12), but the full form of *frontside*, as Daniel did with *backside* in Excerpt 6).

5.3. Discussion

These skaters' descriptions of their own skateboarding demonstrate a range of lexical accommodation and participation to the "institutional interview" frame underlying the sociolinguistic interview (Schiffrin, 1994). Given studies like those of Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) and Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001), we would expect Scott, a skater being interviewed by another skater, with whom he is familiar, and at a skatepark, to be **most** likely to use more in-group skater language, but in fact, we see the opposite. Michael's discussion of tricks seems to follow the predictions of previous studies, as he provides a great deal of explanation to his non-skater interviewer and even offers to explain tricks and accommodates lexically "for people," explicitly acknowledging the presence of a remote audience. Daniel, interviewed in his home by another skater, does not acknowledge this audience directly, but seems to orient toward the purpose of the interview, namely the acquisition of linguistic data used in the skateboarding community, even explicitly stating his choice to provide "the technical thing for it [the trick]" (Excerpt 7). Jordan, like Scott, deviates from the expectations of previous studies, making no effort to support the understanding of his immediate non-skater audience (with whom he is unfamiliar) or a future non-skater audience, either through lexical convergence or attempted explanation. The next question then is what factors motivate these skaters to participate or not in the sociolinguistic interview frame. One possible answer may be found in more closely examining the skaters' positions in the skateboarding community and the degree to which they view skateboarding, a lifestyle sport (Wheaton, 2004), as central to their identity.

The skaters' (un)willingness to accommodate to a non-skater audience appears to be related to their participation in what Beal and Weidman (2003) refer to as an "insider mentality," a key part of skaters' demonstration of their authenticity, and a value which Beal and Weidman stress as central to their identity. Both Scott and Michael are in well-established positions of leadership in their respective local skateboarding communities, having proven their skill and commitment to other skaters for many years. Furthermore, both of these skaters are more progressed and established in full-time careers outside of skateboarding, and Scott explicitly mentions that he is "not quite in it like I was before." As a result, these skaters may have less to lose in terms of authenticity, and it is perhaps less likely that they will be seen by themselves, or by other members of the community, as "selling out" by assisting in the dissemination and simplification of what might be considered insider information, namely skateboarding tricks.

Daniel is also highly skilled (and known as such in his community) but, like Scott and Michael, is a full-time employee outside of skateboarding who no longer has time to be at the skatepark every day, although as mentioned above, he does essentially have a skatepark in his garage where neighborhood skaters often hang out (Kyle and Chuco were both interviewed at this skatepark). However, Daniel also mentions that, while he is "a skateboarder with the skateboarders," he is no longer in a position where he is "so engrossed in skateboarding that that was all I talked about," and contrasts himself to other skaters who remain so engrossed. In addition, he is often vocal with other skaters about his choice not to participate in some of the countercultural practices associated with the skateboarding community, especially drug use, which may threaten his subcultural capital (Dupont, 2014), and lead him to demonstrate his commitment to skateboarding and avoid

“selling out” by sharing linguistic information about skateboarding in a way that highlights his membership in the community and is not aimed at or “dumbed down” for outsiders.

Finally, Jordan’s role in his local skateboarding community provides particularly strong evidence for the interpretation that skaters’ level of accommodation is associated with the centrality of their skater identity. He is in the uncommon position of being in a university fraternity and being a prominent and highly skilled member of the local skateboarding community at the same time, and unlike the others presented here, is present at the skatepark every day possible. As long as I have known Jordan, and in his interview, he acknowledges the tension between these two identities. He indicates that these tensions exist both at the fraternity, which may be seen by skaters (and others) as the epitome of establishment and conformity (Biddix et al., 2014), and at the skatepark, where non-conformity and individualism are central values. In fact, a few weeks after the interview, and despite his commitment to the fraternity, Jordan was asked to leave it and was told that the reason was that the other members “weren’t really into the skateboarding style” (Jordan, personal communication). Although the skateboarding community in no way ostracized or excluded Jordan (many of the local skaters were actually upset that he had been asked to leave the fraternity, apparently for being a skater), there was nevertheless persistent playful questioning of his commitment to the community given his simultaneous commitment to the fraternity, whose values were seen by the skaters to stand in opposition to the values of the skateboarding community. The local skaters’ relationship with Jordan can be seen clearly in their (almost universally adopted) nickname for him, “Bitch Halmeier” (a pseudonym for his family name). Thus,

Jordan's constant need to reaffirm his commitment to the skateboarding community and its values is perhaps the clearest way in which his identity as a skater differs from the other three respondents examined above.

One possibility for Scott and Michael's unprompted accommodation to an outsider audience is that these skaters may simply have more experience communicating with various audiences than a younger skater such as Jordan might. Indeed, at the time of the interview, Michael was employed as teacher, a job which emphasizes the explanation of novel concepts to others. There are two facts which provide counterevidence to this possibility. First, Jordan himself argues that he is aware of his use of skater talk and is able to accommodate to others when he deems it necessary:

Excerpt 18: Do skaters talk the same all the time?

- 1 I: So do: skaters talk, like, the same all the time, or do they talk different around
2 different people?
3 J: Uh, well. Kinda both. Like if I'm like here I'll talk one way, if I'm at class I'll talk-
4 kinda the same way. But if like- If I'm at like a job interview or somethin' like that,
5 like. It depends on like the environment of it. But um. Just kinda know the time and
6 place of it.
1

A second piece of evidence that a skater's choice to accommodate is not necessarily dependent upon age but upon the centrality of a skater identity comes from Darrell, interviewed by me at the same skatepark as Scott. I had not met Darrell prior to the interview. At the time of the interview, Darrell was a 25-year-old gymnastics coach in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Unlike Scott and Michael, however, Darrell indicates that skateboarding is still the central feature of his life: "I wouldn't be considered a skate rat, but I'm like different, like, I skateboard and I love it, and like my whole life is skateboarding now." In addition to the centrality of skateboarding to Darrell's life, he also demonstrates a number of the central values of the skateboarding community such as

participant control (“I’m my favorite skater”) and his use of countercultural language throughout the interview such as swearwords, and his preference for the more transgressive *sex change vs body varial*. Throughout his interview, the lexical accommodation in Darrell’s discussion of tricks patterns very similarly to Jordan’s, and in a way which might more readily be predicted by previous studies on accommodation in the sociolinguistic interview. Here is Darrell’s response to the question of his “best” trick:

Excerpt 19: Darrell’s best trick(s)

- 1 I: What would you say is like your best trick?
2 D: I don't know.
3 [To Randall] What do you say my best trick would be? **Forward flip**?
4 R: [inaudible]
5 D: No. I want- Yeah, it'd be **dolphin flip, forward flip**. But then I also can do like the-
6 **the Chetty Thomas**. I can do the **inward 360 big heel**. Yeah, I can do- I mean, I got
7 a lot of tricks, I got uh. I got **fakie dolphins, nollie dolphins**, um- I just got, I got like
8 a whole bunch of stuff . Ki- uh, **double flip, double backside flip**. It's pretty cool.
9 Those are stupid. Yeah, **dolphin flip**, I would never lose that trick.

Darrell’s list of tricks represents a variety of highly opaque and insider-centric names, all offered in the most colloquial terms, and with no attempted explanation. *Dolphin flip* and *forward flip* (lines 3, 5, and 9) are synonymous, and are used interchangeably, a fact which is clear to me as a skater, but is never commented upon by Darrell. Furthermore, when referring to the *dolphin flip variations*, (line 7), Darrell truncates the *flip* portion, presenting *fakie dolphin* and *nollie dolphin* in their most colloquial forms. One particularly deep piece of insider knowledge is communicated in Darrell’s use of *the Chetty Thomas* (line 6), more commonly referred to as a *ghetto bird*. This name was first used in a 2011 video of pro skater Jimmy Carlin performing a number of difficult

technical tricks (*Crazy Tricks With Jimmy Carlin*, 2011), and Darrell's use of this name for the trick is interpretable only to a skater audience deeply ingrained in the culture.

Given Rickford and McNair-Knox's (1994) results, Darrell's use of opaque insider language makes sense given the fact that he is talking with a community insider about community-related topics. Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001) would lend further support to this prediction given the fact that the interview was conducted at a skatepark where Darrell is surrounded by his peers, one of whom he even engages with while answering the question. However, Scott was interviewed by a skater in exactly the same setting and was familiar with the interviewer (unlike Darrell), but accommodated lexically and oriented explicitly to an outsider audience. The primary difference between these two was Darrell's statement of the centrality of skateboarding in his life. This explanation is further supported by statements from Daniel and others that the only people they know who talk like a skater all the time are those who are fully committed to the lifestyle: "So I know some dudes that like- skate is life and that's it, like. That's like all they do, and that's all they know, so that's all they talk about, and that's really all they are" (Daniel).

5.4.Closing

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that, while on the basis of previous studies (e.g. Cukor-Avila & Bailey, 2001; Rickford & McNair-Knox, 1994) we may have expected skaters to diverge lexically from an interviewer who is not a skater and to converge to a skater interviewer, the situation appears more complex. In particular, this chapter has examined the degrees to which skaters accommodate to an interlocutor when describing skateboarding maneuvers (*tricks*) and reveals that while skaters are evidently

capable of offering descriptions of tricks which are fairly understandable to an outsider (as in the case of Scott and Michael), they may choose to offer descriptions which are technical but understandable primarily or exclusively by skaters (as Daniel did), and colloquial descriptions which are useful only for other skaters and are used primarily in informal settings (as in the cases of Jordan and Darrell). These varied degrees of accommodation were not predicted by any of the interviewer or location features identified in previous studies, but appear to be conditioned by the centrality of skateboarding to one's identity.

In fact, in Jordan's case, it may be the interviewer's non-skater status and Jordan's awareness of the interviewer's goals (the investigation and broader dissemination of information about skateboarding) which lead Jordan to offer such opaque descriptions of skateboarding. He offers descriptions which demonstrate no lexical accommodation to non-skaters and are only useful to the interviewer in the immediate discourse context (such as showing a video on his phone), thus failing to participate in the broader research goals of the interview, but demonstrating his commitment to the community. These findings would appear to suggest that it is prudent for sociolinguistic work in such communities of practice to take into consideration the values of the community under investigation, and this community's attitude toward the divulgence of information to outsiders when interpreting linguistic data. Of course, for the purposes of the present study (an ethnolexicography of the skateboarding community), the differing levels of accommodation by varying skaters are invaluable, both as insight into skaters' linguistic performance of authenticity when an outsider is

listening, and as lexicographic evidence of the range of ways in which skaters talk about the practice of skateboarding.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1. Concluding Remarks

In this final section, I will summarize important findings from this study of skater lexicon and consider the implications for future lexicography of communities of practice, and more general comments on the sociolinguistic interview, especially those held in specific or even restricted in-group settings.

This research offers several insights into the values and language of the skateboarding community and has shown specifically how such insights can be gained by an ethnographic approach to lexicography. This ethnolexicographic approach was coupled with an examination of the situation of the sociolinguistic interview and has revealed the usefulness of this particular discourse setting for investigating the ways in which individuals position themselves in relation to the interviewer and to potential future audiences of the information in the interview. The findings presented here affirm the assertion of previous sports sociology work that the insider mentality is central to skaters' authenticity (e.g. Beal & Weidman, 2003; Borden, 2019; Dupont, 2014), adding that one crucial way in which skaters may demonstrate their authenticity is through the

use of language, especially language which is related to the activity and is only interpretable to those with insider knowledge.

The findings of this ethnolexicographic approach demonstrate that this robust method for documenting and understanding a subculture's lexicon, and, affirm and extend Bray's (2015) that the sociolinguistic interview can be a productive avenue for collecting such data. Coupling a lexicography with an ethnographic investigation of the community in question, as suggested by Silverstein (2006), has not only revealed a range of lexical items, but also allowed for a better understanding of how these varying lexical forms are used in the performance of identity with community insiders and outsiders.

Furthermore, this study supports Schiffrin's (1994) indication that the sociolinguistic interview may be a particularly useful instrument for investigating positioning, given its inherently multiple audiences, particularly in settings where respondents are clearly aware of these multiple audiences. I contend that the relationship between the sociolinguistic interview and the "institutional interview" (Schiffrin, 1994), including the fact that one of its explicit goals includes the collection of data for non-experts, made it a particularly useful instrument for looking at the range of lexical use in skater language as well as skaters' performance of identity through language, given the community's emphasis on nonconformity and on the preservation of insider mentality.

In contrast to the findings of Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) and Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001), the interviewer's status as an insider or outsider, the environment where the interview was conducted, and the interviewee's familiarity with the interviewer appeared not to have a fully determining influence on skaters' choices to provide more or less descriptive accounts of the activity. The skaters interviewed here oriented instead

toward potential future recipients and the purposes of the information, making lexical choices based on their willingness or unwillingness to talk about skating for a perceived audience. In the present study, speakers oriented to and converged/diverged primarily to a potential future recipient of their communication, a finding which expands the usefulness of CAT (Giles & Ogay 2007) for understanding the ways that speakers' group identities may impact their linguistic choices. In this study, the speakers appear to consider less the group identity or familiarity of their immediate interlocutor and to make choices of convergence or divergence with respect to the future audience, a finding which aligns with previous CAT studies in such mediated communication as television. For example, Bell (1984) found that broadcasters made assumptions about listeners' socioeconomic status and accommodated accordingly.

The communicative situation in the present study, however, is unlike that of broadcasters; the skaters are, in fact, interacting synchronously and face-to-face with an individual whose group identity they largely ignore, at least in terms of audience design. Thus, a CAT analysis of certain discourse situations like the sociolinguistic interview must take into consideration not only the immediate audience, but also potential future audiences in evaluating speakers' accommodation. Furthermore, speakers may choose to converge or diverge not only in lower-level phonological or lexical ways, but at higher levels as well, such as in the choice of how to package and present insider information or whether to share it at all.

The sociolinguistic interview can be a rich source of data, including, as in this study, ethnographically determined lexical choice and orientation to interlocutors. Nevertheless, its use should be undertaken cautiously, with consideration given in both

design and analysis not only to the environment where the interview is conducted and the interviewer's relationship (personal and social) to the interviewee, but to the attitude that the community under investigation holds toward the purposes of the investigation, such as the collection of valued insider information (here, lexical items) which will ultimately be shared with outsiders. As Becker (2013, p. 99) argues, "sociolinguists need to be clear about what kind of data they want and what kind of questions they want to answer before adopting a methodology." In the present study, skaters' varying willingness to engage with the goals of the sociolinguistic interview, revealed through ethnographic interpretations, provided a rich and diverse portrait of the lexicon used by skaters to talk about skateboarding. In conclusion, if we attempt to collect "naturalistic data" of any kind (here, lexical items), a familiar, in-group interviewer may not be enough to overcome the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972) and establish the "authenticity" of data (Eckert, 2003); the values of an interviewee's community are central in understanding their linguistic performances when outsiders may be "listening."

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APPENDIX A – The Language of Skateboarding Interview Questions

NOTE: Italicized items in parentheses are those used by the non-skater interviewer.

1. Residence: Where are you from (what's your hometown)? Where do you live now?
How long have you lived there?
2. Education: What's the highest level of school that you've finished?
3. Occupation: What do you do (or are you planning to do) for a living?
4. Conversation starters:
 - What's the funniest or most embarrassing thing that's ever happened to you?
 - What's the most dangerous situation you've ever been in?
 - How long have you been skating?
 - What's the skate scene (*skateboarding community*) like around here?
 - What's the gnarliest (*most awesome*) skateboarding thing you've ever done?
 - What about the biggest?
 - What's the best (*coolest*) trick you can do?
 - Your favorite one to do?
 - Who's your favorite skater?
 - Why?
 - Do you read any skate mags (*skateboarding magazines*)?
 - Which ones?
 - Why those ones?
 - Do you have a favorite skate company?
 - Why?
 - How do you feel about skateboarding being in the Olympics?
5. Folk linguistic questions
 - What do skaters talk like?
 - What makes the way skaters talk different (words, pronunciation, etc.)?
 - Do all skaters talk the same way?
 - If not, which skaters talk different?
 - And how do they talk different?
 - Do you remember when you first started learning to talk like a skater?
 - Do people ever notice that you skate by the way you talk?
 - Has anybody ever made fun of you for the way you say things, especially for talking like a skater?
 - Do older or younger skaters talk different than you?
 - Or different than each other?
 - What about skaters that live in different parts of the US?
 - What about female skaters?
 - Do you think skaters talk the same all the time, or do we talk differently when you're at the park or with your skater friends?
 - Do you think skate mags are written the way skaters talk?
 - Why or why not?

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