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1. Introduction

Quantitative approaches in the study of language variation have been strongly influenced by the sociolinguistic methodologies established by Labov's (1966 [1982]) study of the speech community of New York's Lower East Side. The sociolinguistic variables that have been pursued and studied in subsequent work have often used the non-linguistic variables that Labov investigated as their primary focus. This has led to some valuable findings both within and across cultures, and perhaps more importantly provided the field of linguistics with a model for reaching out and co-opting the methods and existing insights from other fields as a means of enlightening and furthering linguistic praxis. Indeed, much of the essential early work in sociolinguistics research was conducted by extending the frameworks and interests of other fields such as anthropology and sociology.

There has been a recent reemphasis in sociolinguistics, led by researchers working on the interaction of language and gender, to renew this tradition of reaching out to other fields in order to benefit from what they can tell us about the interpersonal functions of languages and communication. Sociolinguistic studies have for some time standardly adopted the methodologies of participant observation or network sampling that are drawn from anthropology and sociology. Recently this has been accompanied by a resurgence in interest in the methodologies and theory that underlie much of the work that has been pursued in social psychology over the last two decades.

In this paper[1], I will try to bring some of these elements together with some previous findings on how language is used as a social marker. In particular, I will use examples that illustrate speakers' use of linguistic markers as markers of group identity, where the in-group/out-group boundary is drawn on the basis of the speaker's sex. I will attempt to show that previous variationist findings have already shown us the complexity of the notion of sex or gender as a group identity, and that the complexity of a speaker identification like gender or sex lies in its own status as a variable. I will argue that identities vary in their salience from person to person, and even within the same person from one communicative situation to another. I will conclude by presenting a proposal for a model of speaker identity that reflects some of the more important characteristics of speakers' identities that I will have presented, namely:

(1) Speakers possess many different identities - some personal; some group (or social).

(2) Identities vary in their salience in different communicative events, but all of a speaker's different identities are always present and available to them in a communicative event.

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[1]I would like to extend my thanks to a number of individuals for their helpful comments during the preparation of this paper. I am particularly indebted to Nancy Niedzielski and Howard Giles who have been willing, incisive and constructive critics. To Nancy, I am further indebted for her encouragement to apply our model to gender as a sociolinguistic variable. The paper has also benefited from discussions with Alice Freed; comments and criticisms from Naomi Nagy and Bill Reynolds; also my colleagues in the graduate course on Language and Gender, Department of Education, University of Pennsylvania (Spr. 1993), especially Rebecca Freeman; and the audience at the Language-Gender Interface Conference, Columbus, Ohio, 15-18 July 1993.

(3) Identities vary in salience depending on numerous non-linguistic variables: topic; interlocutor; affective goals of the speaker.
(4) Hence, a speaker's identification with different identities has the potential to change during the life cycle.

2. Speakers possess many different identities

Within the framework of social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner 1979; 1986), researchers have for some time been commenting on the need to deal with gender (or sex) in a more sophisticated way. Hogg and Abrams (1988) describe the main challenge for social psychology as being to describe and understand the relationship between the individual and the group. Social identity theory attempts to meet this challenge by focusing on the groups in the individual (Hogg and Abrams 1988: 3). Social identity theory treats an individual's various group identifications as central to a development of self and as the basis for many kinds of behavior, not least linguistic. Individuals may have a number of identities, some of which are characterized as social (i.e. identities linking an individual to social groups and providing a group basis for interaction with others); some of which are characterized as personal (i.e. identities based on more one-to-one relationships). Nancy Niedzielski has suggested to me that an encounter may always take place between people acting as members of different groups, and although I consider this observation very insightful, in this paper I will take the classic distinctions of social identity theory as my starting point, and assume that communicative events are basically either intergroup encounters or interpersonal encounters. The nature of an encounter, and the types of group or personal identity that shape communication within it, will depend on which social or personal identity is most salient to the interactants at that time.

Obviously, researchers coming from this perspective will feel uneasy about treating all female respondents as a single group for analysis simply because of their shared biological characteristics. Thus, researchers in the social psychology of language (e.g. Giles et al. 1980, Condor 1986, Hogg 1985, Hogg and Abrams 1988) have, for some time, been drawing attention to the need for a theoretical framework that will invoke (i) the salience of gender as an identity in a communicative event, and (ii) the presence and influence of any other identity/ies that may be more salient. This theoretical and empirical agenda has recently been highlighted in work on language and gender studies. Kramarae (1990), Henley and Kramarae (1991) and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) have encouraged sociolinguistic methodology to use anthropological techniques which may result in a more appropriate highlighting of the multiplicity of identities that a speaker possesses, and to work these identities into the analysis of language variation.

3. Identification with an identity is variable

There are some clear examples of linguistic variation in the literature that indicate speakers do not consistently identify with the same social grouping. We can consider, for example, the way women in Tunis exploit the symbolic value of three linguistic variables as markers of the salience of the social identities they relate to, or identify with, the most.

One variable is the use of the diphthongs /aw/ and /aj/ rather than the monophthongs /u:/ and /i:/. The diphthong variants occur only in the speech of Tunis women, and more specifically only in the speech of older Tunis women. It occurs categorically in the speech of old women, and variably in the speech of middle-aged women (Trabelsi 1991). Younger women have ceased using the diphthongs and now categorically use the monophthongs that characterize the speech of Tunis men. Trabelsi describes the variation in the speech of the

middle-aged women as representing a "phonological identity crisis" (1991: 89), where the variation in use of the diphthongs and monophthongs reflects the tug of war going on in middle aged Tunis women between a desire to mark, or identify, themselves as being locals (the diphthongs traditionally carrying a strong significance as a marker of being a Tunis woman), and a desire to associate themselves with a more educated, modern identity (which they can achieve by using the monophthongs associated with younger women's and men's speech). Trabelsi reports that middle-aged women's identification with either one of these groupings (traditional Tunis values vs. modernity) is often influenced by her interlocutor. If she is talking to an older woman who clearly identifies with traditional Tunis values in her use of diphthongs, a middle-aged informant is more likely to emphasize her potential identification with these values and to also use diphthongs in her speech. Whereas if she is talking to a younger woman who habitually uses monophthongs, the same middle-aged informant will emphasize her potential identification with values of modernity by also using monophthongs (cf. principles of communicative accommodation theory, e.g. Thakerar et al. 1982, Giles and Coupland 1991).

Younger women in Tunis do not, however, always align themselves with male norms in their choice of linguistic markers. The situation is rather more complex than an association between youth, modernity and male linguistic markers vs. age, tradition and female speech markers. Jabeur (1987, cited in Milroy 1992) notes that bilingual speakers in Tunis also display socially significant variation in their pronunciation of French (r). The standard French uvular (r) varies with a characteristically Tunis variant that is articulated as an alveolar trill. Men virtually never use the uvular variant, while women demonstrate greater variation between the two forms. Jabeur interprets this as Tunis men's favoring a marker with strong significance as an ingroup marker of a Tunis identity, while women are torn more between a desire to identify locally as a Tunis speaker, and a desire to establish their identification with the (French) values of education and greater social freedom for women. Trabelsi also reports that young Tunis women use French borrowings (she discusses lexical borrowings) as a way of getting around some of the linguistics taboos that exist in Arabic, so it seems that the association Jabeur reports between French and freedom of Arab society's restraints on women is fairly robust.

In short, then, we have seen that for Tunis women, part of their communicative competence lies in managing a number of social identities, each of which may be maximally significant to the speaker in a communicative event, and realizing these in the linguistic variables she uses. She may identify as a woman; as a Tunis local; as an emancipated person; as an educated person. Depending on which identity is most salient for her in a particular communicative event, the kinds of linguistics variants she uses in her speech will vary. And there is the possibility that her identification with any of these separate identities may vary within a single communicative event.

Thus, we can imagine a scenario where a middle-aged woman might be using a uvular (r) and the /i:/ and /u:/ monophthongs. She might thereby exploit and invoke the meta-messages of education and non-traditionalness that these variables carry, but she could temper that impression by observing traditional linguistic taboos, and thereby transmit the meta-message that she does not distance herself completely from local, Tunis, traditional values. These different identifications might be signalled across a series of communicative events, or they might be signalled within one communicative event. In the latter case, for example, the unfolding identification with <u>some</u> traditional norms might have a different significance for different interlocutors. It could increase or decrease the personal distance between the speaker and her interlocutor, depending on how the interlocutor has aligned her/himself. But no matter how they are interpreted, these linguistic markers of identification and shifts in identification <u>will</u> be noticed by her interlocutor.

Sociolinguistic studies of variation will often take the form of a report that such-and-such a variant is favored by, or more typically found in the speech of women (or working class speakers, or speakers of a certain ethnic group). But we should keep in mind what these findings really mean in interpersonal terms. What we are really talking about is that such-and-such a variant is symbolic of and signals a speaker's identification with the social groups "women", "working class", "African-American" etc. It is implicit in much sociolinguistic research that this is the understanding we have arrived at, but one purpose of this paper is to make these sorts of assumptions more explicit. The model I will present at the end of the paper is an attempt to have a clearer model of what processes are actually unfolding when linguistic variation provides evidence that speakers' identifications are shifting, within and across communicative events and even across a whole lifetime of communicative events.

3.1. Further evidence of identity as a variable

There has been a body of evidence from social psychology research dating from the 1970s which supports the need to treat gender identity (and by implication, any other identity) as a construct that varies in social significance for an individual depending on the situation. Perhaps not surprisingly, the social psychology research indicates that the kinds of variables that influence the salience of gender identity in an interaction are precisely the kinds of variables that sociolinguistics research has recognized as important in accounting for linguistic variation. Research by Hogg (1985) and Doise and Weinberger (1973) showed that the sex of the interlocutor, for instance, can affect how much salience the speaker ascribes to their gender identity. Doise and Weinberger (1973) and Deschamps and Doise (1978) found that the situation or task, and the speaker's affective evaluation of the task and their interlocutor(s) also had an effect on the salience of gender for their informants.

Hogg (1985) found that women's identification with a gender-based identity varied depending on the composition of the group they were in. In conversations that took place in same-sex dyads, subjective reaction tests indicated that their gender identity was more salient to them than it was when they were interacting in groups, regardless of whether the groups were mixed- or same-sex (Hogg did not test salience of gender identity in mixed-sex dyads).

In Doise and Weinberger's (1973) study, men disassociated themselves from traits of femininity most when they were in an all-male group, but were readier to associate themselves with feminine traits when they were interacting in one-on-one single-sex situations. Their self-association with masculine traits remained high across situations, but was especially high in competitive, as opposed to co-operative tasks. A comparison between Cannavale et al.'s (1970) results and Doise and Weinberger's suggests a possible hierarchy of situational gender salience for men. Cannavale et al. found that in situations they called "de-individuated", any gender identification (i.e. masculine <u>or</u> feminine) seemed to become less salient for men. Thus, Doise and Weinberger's findings suggest that all-male group situations are [+masculine], [-feminine] for men; one-on-one interactions are [+masculine], [±feminine]; and Cannavale et al.'s findings suggest that de-individuated situations are [?masculine], [? feminine] for men. Thus, there is clear experimental evidence from self-reports (Doise and Weinberger; Cannavale et al.) and subjective reaction tests (Hogg) indicating that gender identity varies in salience for adults.

We might ask ourselves at what age gender becomes salient, and when people acquire (or learn) the skill of allowing their gender identity to vary across situations. Deschamps and Doise (1978) found that gender identity has a different significance for female and male primary/elementary school children. In their study, gender identity was a

more positively valued and a more salient marker of group distinctiveness for boys than it was for girls. The boys in this study made greater distinctions between the two genders than girls did, especially when they anticipated some kind of competition between themselves and the girls (cf. Doise and Weinberger's findings about the significance of men's competitive or co-operative orientation on the salience of their masculine identity, mentioned above).

These findings provide some food for thought. It seems that, from an early age, gender is a more salient group identity for males than it is for females, and it also seems that gender is salient to women in a more restricted range of interactional settings than it is for men. We might ask ourselves, therefore, whether, by pursuing a research agenda that assumes gender differentiation is a highly significant form of social categorization, our research agenda and our methods of inquiry are not reifying a masculine view of the salience of gender identity.

Clearly, the task of determining which identity or identities are most salient to interactants is a sensitive business, and findings from the social psychology research caution us to pay close attention to changes in a speaker's perception of the situation they are in, and their perceptions of their interlocutor. I would like to think, however, that it should be possible to marry the sensitivity and subjective validity of some of the social psychology findings, with sociolinguistic information on linguistic variation. In this way, I envisage a model of communication and speaker identity that represents a speaker's affective flexibility, both in terms of changes to their cognitive schema, as well as in changes to their linguistic performance. The model I envisage should be able to represent the changes we can observe in an individual across relatively short periods of time (within a single communicative event, and also across related communicative events), but should also be able to extend so as to reflect the changes we can observe across a speaker's lifetime. In the next section, I will consider linguistic and social psychological evidence that the salience of gender as an identity fluctuates during a person's lifetime.

4. Identity as a variable across the life span

Research by Doise and Weinberger (1973) and Deschamps and Doise (1978) outlined in the last section showed that gender is a salient identity for younger children, even though its salience is potentially mediated by other factors. This certainly seems to be true for at least young boys (about whom these studies provide the most evidence).

A repeated finding in sociolinguistics research has been that linguistic changes are often led by women in the community. As I have already argued, when we describe a change as being led by women in the speech community, there is implicit in this statement the assumption that in that speech community, use of a particular, innovative variant is a marker of speakers' identification as women. Thus, the robust findings (summarized in Labov 1990) that women are more likely to lead phonological changes than men are, carries with it the implication that in the majority of communities reviewed in the sociolinguistic literature, sex is, across many speech communities, marked as a salient group identity in adult speech.

However, while sex seems to be a salient identity for younger members of the speech community (primary/elementary school age speakers), and while it seems to be a salient identity among adults, there is evidence that during adolescence gender becomes a less salient marker of group identity.

Eckert (1988, 1991) has shown that among Detroit adolescents, the degree to which speakers are users of innovative vowel variants affected by the Northern Cities Shift, and the degree to which they use conservative vowel variants is not primarily affected by their

gender identity. Adolescent girls do not, for instance, uniformly lead adolescent boys in use of innovative vowels. Rather, group identities defined within the local adolescent culture are more salient for the use of innovative variants in incipient (as opposed to older) changes and, conversely, for the maintenance of conservative forms. The relevant groups are called "jocks" and "burnouts" by the adolescents that Eckert studied, and as Figure 1 shows, it is identification as a burnout that correlates with high use of innovative forms of the vowels that are newly participating, incipient changes in the Northern Cities Shift, i.e. backed /e/ and /uh/, and not identification with one gender group or the other.

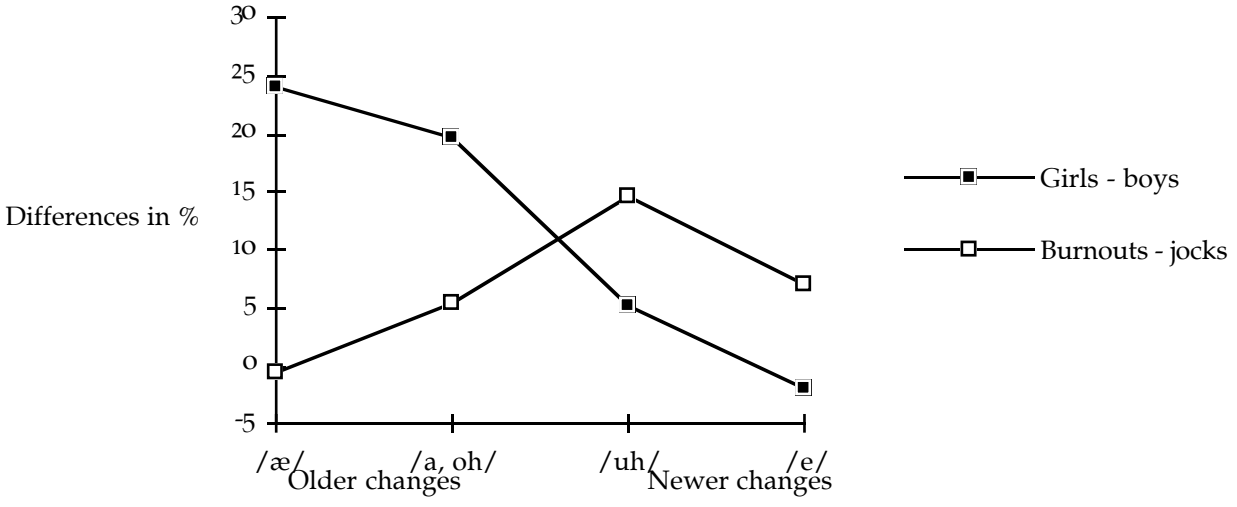

Figure 1: Differences in percentage use of innovative forms in the Northern Cities Shift. Contrasts between girls and boys, and between burnouts and jocks (adapted from Eckert 1989:261-2).

In a study of the speech community in Farmer City, Illinois, Habick (1991) also found adolescents' own social groupings ("burnouts" and "rednecks" in this community) seemed to be more salient to the progression of various vowel shifts than gender was. In Farmer City, fronting of /u/ has progressed throughout most of the community and only four out of the twenty adolescents (three boys and one girl) studied showed less fronted variants of /u/ in their speech. These were all speakers who were part of the redneck group. The most unusual /u/ variant was an innovative form [ü^{y}], and this form was used in the widest range of phonological environments by two burnout leaders. Thus, the adolescents' own social groupings seem to be better correlates of the fronting of /u/ than gender or sex are. However, when we look across the three age groups sampled in the Farmer City study, we can see that there is some apparent time evidence that gender is the more relevant identity affecting /u/ fronting in speakers who are beyond the reach, so to speak, of the social identities and allegiances of adolescence. Data on /u/ fronting in the speech of the parents and grandparents of these adolescents reveals that fronted variants are found in the speech of five out of the six women surveyed, but in the speech of only two out of seven men. This suggests to me that gender as an identity varies in salience in the Farmer City speech community. Among adolescents, it has less salience, but this is not to say that it is

not more salient for speakers at different stages in their lives, even within the same speech community.

A similar argument for the fluctuating sociolinguistic salience of gender as a identity can be made by comparing Eckert's very specific data on the raising and backing of vowels in the Northern Cities Shift among adolescents with more general, community-wide data on the progression of the Northern Cities Shift. The kinds of social identities that are most salient to adolescents are not the same as the social identities that are most salient in the wider speech community. Part of the point of adolescents' social identities is that they are not the same as their parents' salient social identities. The difference between their most salient identities and their parents' is one of the things that defines them as adolescents. So it is not surprising to find that, despite the irrelevance of gender to adolescents' linguistic variation, among adults the raising of vowels in the Nothern Cities Shift patterns like other sociolinguistic variables and women lead men (Labov, Yaeger and Steiner 1972; Labov 1990; Labov in press).

In other words, Eckert shows that among adolescents the variables are markers of a speaker's association with an identity that is relevant in adolescent culture. Labov shows that after adolescence, the same variables are markers of gender identity. What Eckert's and Labov's data tell us is that during adolescence, adolescents reject the socially significant group identities of their parents and the wider speech community in favor of group identities that they have defined for themselves. Adolescents lead the community in the Northern Cities Shift, but they lead it on their own terms - the most salient social identities interacting with linguistic variables are the social identities that are most salient to adolescents. However, as a linguistic change gains a foothold in the wider community, the social groupings that are most salient in the wider speech community assert themselves and become more salient correlates of the linguistic variables. A speaker's gender identity becomes a reliable predictor of the linguistic variant they use.

Greenwood (1993) also provides evidence that the most salient social grouping for the adolescents she studied and their friends is a social identity that unites the speakers in collaborative conversation, stressing shared jokes and the social goal of having a good time together. Speakers who are willing and able to participate in conversational routines that establish themselves as sharing the same goals, are accepted as part of one social group. Greenwood's data provides evidence from the more global levels of conversational management that is not incompatible with Eckert's micro-level analysis of phonological forms. In both cases, we find evidence that an important social function of adolescents' language routines and linguistic behavior is that these routines and variables can be put to use as markers of group identities that distinguish adolescents from the social identities that are most salient to the wider speech community.

5. Implications of identity as a variable to the sociolinguistic tradition

In sociolinguistics, it is generally the case that we work with definitions of the speech community that are predicated on a notion of shared norms for speaking, or shared norms for evaluating different realizations of linguistic variables. The situation in which speakers have many personal and group identities that I have started to outline may require us to sharpen the way in which we conceive of shared norms in a speech community.

Members of a speech community may agree that the same kinds of personal or group/social identities normally constitute the basis for interactions in their community (i.e. they may agree that certain kinds of network ties are the typical or appropriate basis for much interaction - the role of networks and network ties will be elaborated on later). But

individuals may differ in how relevant or salient they consider one of their several social identities to be.

For example, Barbara Horvath's (1985) reanalysis of some of Labov's early work provides some evidence that within the community there may be individuals whose linguistic behavior indicates that they treat one of their group identities as being more salient, while most of their peers in what is still basically the same speech community, treat another group identity as being generally more salient. Horvath's insightful use of a principle components analysis of the speech community (an alternative to usual sociolinguistic methods of carving up the speech community into social groupings) - in which the data is allowed to lead the groupings, rather than vice versa - shows that Nathan B. in Labov's (1966 [1982]) New York study appears to be a speaker for whom sex is a more salient social identification than social class, and this is reflected in what appears to be rather idiosyncratic linguistic behavior. Horvath points out that if we approach Nathan B.'s performance on its own terms - in effect, if we allow Nathan B. to show through his linguistic behavior what social identification is most salient for him - then his high use of the non-standard (dh) variant stops being anomalous. Other speakers' performance reflects their most salient (in this case, class-based) identity; so does Nathan B.'s.

Community members may also differ in what linguistic markers are used to signal identification with different social groupings. Milroy and Milroy (1985) document the sociolinguistic distribution of variants of /ɛ/ and /a/ in Belfast English. Raising of /ɛ/ and backing of /a/ are both changes occurring in tandem in the speech community, but the changes have very different social significance. Women's use of the innovative, backed forms of /a/ shows a strong correlation with the degree to which they are integrated into the community, i.e. Milroy and Milroy claim that /a/ backing functions as a marker of network strength for women, but it is not an important marker of community identity for men. The indicator that appears to function as a signal of men's high levels of integration into the community are the raised variants of /ɛ/. Thus, the Milroys argue, both women and men in Belfast seem to agree that one's identification with and integration into the community is an important social variable that should be marked in speech, but they disagree as to which variants will be used as markers. I will go a little further, and suggest that what the Milroys' data shows is that the <u>multiple</u> group identifications of an individual speaker are expressed in the selection of one vowel variant.

For instance, by using a backed variant of /a/ ([ɑ:] or [ɔ:]), a young Clonard woman may be interpreted by listeners as signalling her strong integration into the community. However, in interpreting the linguistic variant in this way, the listener must already have recognized and processed the salience of her identity as a young Clonard woman. It would be impossible for the listener to correctly interpret the use of [ɑ:], for instance, as a marker of network strength, without working through the computation in terms of the speaker's gender identity too. I therefore see the complexity of some of the Belfast data as graphic support for the complexity and multiplicity of identities that are factored into and used to compute social meaning.

In a similar vein, Milroy (1992) reports unpublished work on the glottalization of stops in Tyneside English that has been done by M. Cowhig, L. Rigg and M. Turner. Their findings suggest that glottalization of stops in Tyneside English has primary significance as a marker of male identity among men. Women show much greater variation in the amount they glottalize stops than men do, and the variation exhibited by women is linked much more closely to changes in style than the variation exhibited by men is. Thus, it seems that glottalization of stops in Tyneside English is a linguistic marker for both men and women, but with different symbolic meaning for the two groups. For men, it is a marker of gender; for women, it is a marker of register. This example serves as an impor-

tant reminder to us that a correlation between speaker sex and use of a linguistic variable does not necessarily indicate that the variable functions primarily as an intergroup marker of gender.

6. Defining our terms: cautions from social psychology research

As we saw in the discussion of Trabelsi's and Jabeur's reports of sociolinguistic variation in Tunis speech, speakers may sometimes use linguistic variables to signal their identification with a group identity based on sex, but we also saw that this identification is not a behavioral constant. We must, therefore, be cautious about overgeneralizing the significance of a group identity like gender where we do not have the data that specifically supports such a generalization, e.g. similar patterns of linguistic variation in other variables; explicit meta-linguistic comments by speakers.

There is also a body of work in the social psychology research that indicates we should also be careful to define precisely what it is we are talking about when we characterize a social identity as being gender based. Members of a speech community may, for instance, agree upon the same labels for some of the group identities that are considered salient in their community, but they may have different perceptions about what the labels mean. Hunter and Davis (1992) and Condor (1986) provide examples of just this.

Hunter and Davis conducted interviews with 32 African-American men on what it means to "be a man" and this led them to conclude that for African-American men the concept of masculinity or manliness is a product of the interaction between at least two, and sometimes three distinct identities. The interviews generated 108 distinct traits that the respondents felt were important to being a man. Hunter and Davis grouped these into a number of thematic areas, and on the basis of the thematic areas identified, they concluded that three masculine identities are available to African-American men as a basis for constructing their gender identity. One of these is the dominant notion of manhood that cuts across American society (stressing successfulness and leadership, for example), another is the notion of manhood located within the co-operative, group survival norms of the African-American community, and the third potential influence is a "hypermasculine" (1992: 467) identity associated with sexism and violence. Thus, the traits typically associated with masculinity (especially in subjective reaction tests in social psychology), e.g. physical strength, competitiveness and aggressiveness, were not necessarily considered central to a manly identity by African-American men (respondents acceded that they were important characteristics of manhood when pressed on the topic, but did not emphasize them themselves).

Condor undertook a similarly subjective inquiry into the nature of sex role identification among women. She conducted interviews with 77 "traditional" women, i.e. women who described themselves as supporting "the existing roles of men and women" (1986: 102) and 39 non-traditional women, i.e. women who stated a desire for change in sex role differentiation. Her interviews revealed that not all women share the same meanings for certain terms. This makes it far from simple to compare the beliefs about gender and womanliness of these two groups of women, and it makes it quite difficult to establish a common discourse between the two groups of women in order to discuss sex role beliefs. The traditional and the non-traditional women agreed to a certain extent: identification as a woman for both groups of women entails some intergroup comparison between women and men. Generally, both groups of women also agree in evaluating "men and 'male' characteristics" negatively (1986: 106). They also both favored basic levels of equal rights/equal opportunities for women.

However, the two groups of women differed markedly in the way in which they conducted the intergroup comparison, and the differences in the way they conducted the

comparison were indicative of more fundamental differences in their respective conceptualizations of what it is to be a woman. Traditional women, for instance, saw their feminine, or womanly, identity as complementary to men's masculine identity. Non-traditional women, on the other hand, saw the comparison in more competitive terms. They compared the social prestige and economic security of women and men, and partly by virtue of coming up with a disparity were able to define what it is to be a woman (1986: 103).

In the next section of this paper, I will present a model of speaker identity which, I will suggest, is able to reflect the empirical and theoretical data I have presented so far. A speaker's gender identity will take its place as one among many possible social and personal identities, varying in salience depending on several factors, including the speaker's ties with their interlocutor, and the feedback that the speaker gets about the affective nature of the communicative event.

7. A Model of Speaker Identity

In work on the sociolinguistic factors affecting the likelihood of creolization in pidgins, I proposed a model of communicative events which pivoted on a multifaceted conceptualization of speaker identity. In that paper (Meyerhoff and Niedzielski 1994), the communicative model is presented in detail and we suggest that speaker identity is a useful way of accounting for the blocking or acceleration of some kinds of language change. We presented a model of speaker identity, within the larger model of communication, which is our attempt to handle the conceptual problem of how theory should represent an individual that is trying to manage multiple identities (some group, some personal), without presenting them as overly eclectic, or even schizophrenic. We wanted to capture the fact that even though a person may be a single person, part of their uniqueness lies in their blend of many social and personal identities. All of these identities should be represented in every communicative event, yet a model should reflect the obvious fact that not every one of an individual's identities is equally important in every single interaction they have. Our model of speaker identity attempts to provide the flexibility needed to indicate the way a speaker's identities change in salience from one interaction to another (and sometimes within the same interaction), as well as the way a speaker's overall identity can change over time. We believe it provides a more explanatory framework in which we can relate the findings of some of the sociolinguistic and experimental studies that we have come across - findings that have provided ample evidence that speakers' linguistic and social behavior is motivated by numerous social identities, but which seemed to us to be providing ever more detail at the expense of a theory which might further our understanding of the underlying processes and which might unify their results.

Briefly, speaker identity is pivotal to our model of communication in the following way. Not only does it intentionally shape the linguistic forms of the communicative event and provide the social and cultural knowledge necessary for making basic sociolinguistic and pragmatic choices (e.g. politeness markers, language in a bilingual setting, conventional implicatures), but the on-going social and personal outcomes of the communicative event feed back into the interlocutor's identities, constantly determining the way a speaker will shape their next utterance. Thus, speaker identity is both a receiving and a sending post.

7.1. Form and structure of an individual identity

How does an individual identity manage this work? There are four facts that need to be captured:

(1) In general a speaker interacts with others in terms of one, most salient group or personal identity at a time.
(2) That most salient identity is shaped by its relationship to other group or personal identities that the speaker possesses.
(3) That identity is also a product of what the speaker's interlocutor perceives to be the speaker's most salient identification.
(4) Aspects of an individual's overall identity change over time and across interactions.

In contrast with some existing descriptions, our theory does not conceive of speaker identity as an orthogonal relationship between group and personal identifications, nor as a series of distinct selves that are shuffled, like a pack of cards, until one is at the top. Rather, we see it as a network of interconnected identifications, operating together as if they were parts of a movable sphere.

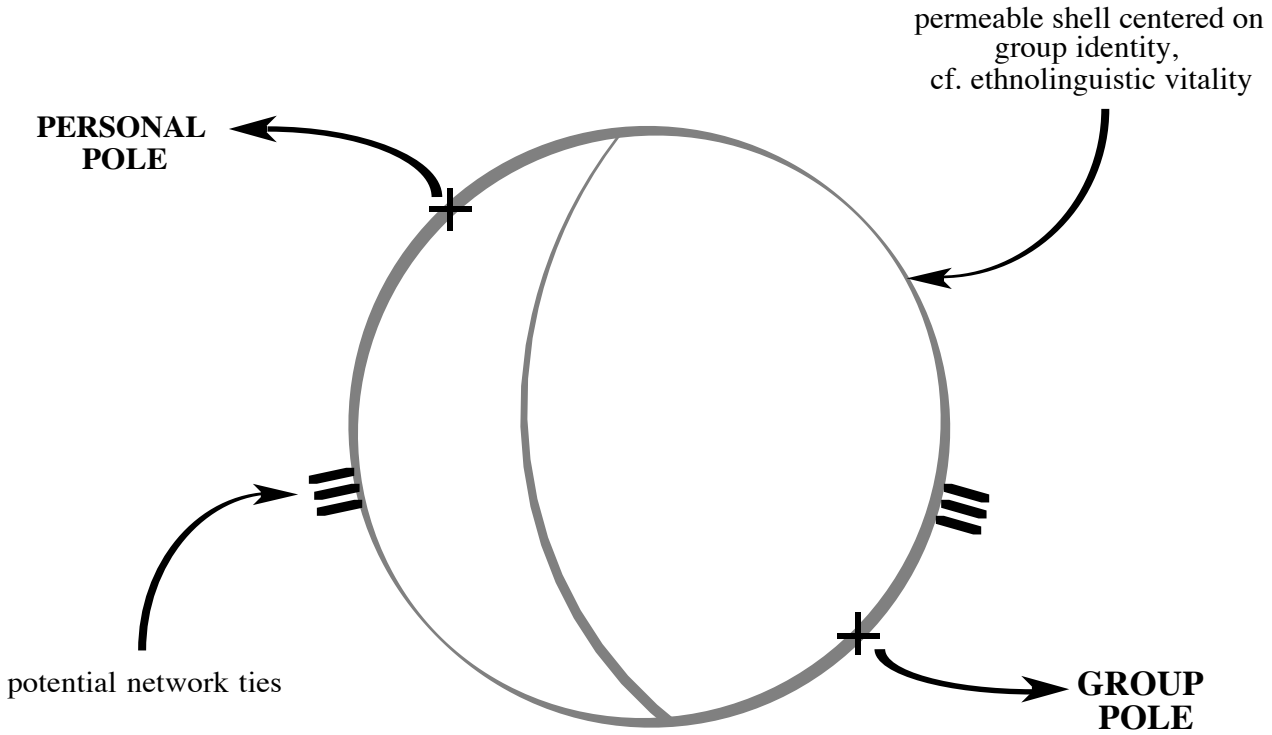

Figure 2: Model of speaker identity showing complementarity of personal and social identities, also two possible network ties (one via a more personal identity; one via a more social, or group, identity).

As Figure 2 shows, we propose that an individual's identifications can be described in terms of their relationship to two poles, group and personal, and can be positioned relative to each other on this continuous field. The model is spherical in order to capture the fact that it is impossible for any one identification to be wholly independent of the others. Identifications may be complementary to others or they may be in competition with others, but, crucially, our model entails that no single identification, personal or group - even when it is the most salient identification for a communicative event - exists in isolation.

Our model also introduces two other sociolinguistic and psychological factors: social networks and ethnolinguistic vitality. Network theory allows us to explain the level at which communication takes place and how the on-going feedback in the form of social and personal outcomes in a communicative event is received. Milroy and Milroy (1992) have recently argued that social networks are crucial to an informed understanding of the social categorization known as "class". Class, they argue, is seldom defined in sociolinguistics in terms of the experiences of the research subjects and the notion is generally defined and applied by researchers. As such, it becomes an external social measure of linguistic variation and change, and hence of limited explanatory value. The Milroys argue in this article that if research paid greater attention to the quality and quantity of network ties between interactants, we might not only improve our understanding of a complex sociometric notion such as class, but we might also attain a better understanding of the salience of a person's group or personal identifications in an interaction. These seem to be very similar arguments to the ones being forwarded about the treatment of gender as a sociolinguistic variable that I reviewed at the start. Furthermore, Meyerhoff and Niedzielski (1994) agree about the importance of network theory to the investigation of language variation. Network ties seem to us very likely to be instrumental in post hoc explanations of change, as well as in predicting the likely mechanisms of future changes. Our model reflects our belief that a communicative event is initiated through the medium of a network tie, and that feedback is received - the interaction furthered, maintained or severed - through the medium of such ties. Figure 2 shows a potential network tie with a group identification, and one with a more personal identification. Individuals possess numerous such ties, each associated with different identifications. The essence of this observation is not new. Aside from the influence of the Milroys work in sociolinguistics, we note that in social psychology similar observations have been made for some time. Deschamps and Doise describe the social environment of an individual as being potentially composed of "a network of categories which... will tend to cut across each other" (1978:144). What we have tried to do, however, is relate observations like Deschamps and Doise's to a more fully developed network theory and work them into a testable model.

Ethnolinguistic vitality is a measure of the perceived institutional, linguistic and social support that a language variety associated with one group possesses, and allows comparison between other groups' language varieties (Giles et al. 1977). It is, therefore, associated with the group identity pole in our model, and since perceptions of ethnolinguistic vitality seem to be a reliable predictor of linguistic security (Harwood et al. in press) and the likelihood of language shift in multilingual/multidialectal situations (Giles et al. 1990), we assume that it functions as a psychological shield, through which feedback from the ongoing outcomes of the communicative event is filtered. This shield, or buffer, is most effective with the group identification(s) that the speaker perceives to have highest vitality.

For many women in our society, a gender identity is unlikely to have sufficient ethnolinguistic vitality (i.e. sufficient linguistic, social and institutional support) to provide much of a shield at all, and we would expect them to rely on other group identifications with higher ethnolinguistic vitality (e.g. being white, since the language variety associated with a white group identity has considerable ethnolinguistic vitality in our society) as

buffers against social attack or threat. This, of course, begs the question of what women of color do in the absence of an ethnic identity with strong ethnolinguistic vitality. We would suggest that one corollary of our model is the prediction that women of color are more vulnerable to affronts, insults and hurts than white women are in Anglo society. Where a white woman can deflect an assault on her female identity by reducing its salience and making her ethnic identity (with its greater ethnolinguistic vitality buffer) the newly salient identity for an interaction, a woman of color will not have this option. If she is fortunate enough to be in a position of having another identity with high vitality (e.g. her work status, her age, expert knowledge in a field) she may be able to redefine the interaction through the medium of an identity which will provide her with greater protection. But in the absence of any such identity for women of color, or when "being white" is not enough to protect one from personal or group attack, we would suggest that women's usual experience is one of anger, frustration or humiliation.

The implications of this for our model are simple. In order for different identifications to be able to become more or less salient and for them to be able to be brought in by the individual as needed protection against communicative assault, the model of speaker identity must be able to move. Different identifications (with their associated ethnolinguistic vitality) can shift into position as the main point from which communication proceeds and at which feedback is received. Thus, the spherical model is required not only to motivate the inter-relationship of all identities with each other, but also in order to motivate the ability speakers have to shift the focus of an interaction from one identity to another, either because it is more salient, or because it provides the best psychological protection.

To summarize, the model of speaker identity proposed in Meyerhoff and Niedzielski (1994) brings together what we think are the theoretical tools most likely to help us understand (i) the complex nature of any one of a speaker's numerous identifications and (ii) the complex nature of their overall identity. It draws from traditions in sociology (network theory); intercultural communication theory (ethnolinguistic vitality); and social psychology (social identity theory). In the following sections, my goal will be to interpret some of the data on the changing salience of speakers' identities that I have already reviewed in terms of this model.

7.2. Application of the model: examples from social psychology

Let us first revisit Condor's findings of how traditional and non-traditional women understand quite differently an identity that they nominally share, i.e. the identity of being a woman. Condor's findings indicated that traditional and non-traditional women construct an identity of womanliness in different psychological terms. Traditional women saw their gender identification as being complementary to men's identity. This suggests that their identity is a composite of several social and/or personal identities, e.g. mother to so-and-so; emotional caregiver rather than material provider; supporter rather than leader.

Condor's study also showed that for traditional and non-traditional women the links between gender identity and other identities differ. Non-traditional women showed links between being a woman and identities with high status/high prestige and identities with economic independence[2]. Presumably the high prestige identities they linked to their identity of womanliness might include being white, being well-educated, or being affluent in British and American society (i.e. identifications with groups that have high ethnolinguistic

[2] Traditional women may lack some identifications that non-traditional women possess, e.g. identity as an earner, identity as an autonomous individual, identity as a leader of men etc., but further research will be required to test this hypothesis.

vitality). If this is true, our model generates another testable hypothesis. If a woman also possesses some of these higher prestige identities, the comparison between the high prestige identities and their gender identity might accentuate a perception that their gender identity is unsatisfactory (cf. Williams and Giles 1978: 436). Gallois and Callan (1991) also found that the interaction between ethnic identities and identifications of social status with gender resulted in different behaviors and expectations among women and men. This seems to indicate that social power and social status must continue to be central to our discussions of gender identities, even as gender is seen to be a more complex identity than it has sometimes been treated as being.

Returning to Hunter and Davis' findings, we will recall that their results showed that what on one level of analysis seems to be one social identity, i.e. "being a man", may actually be a composite of up to three different identities for African-American men. I believe that this should somehow be represented as an organic situation; I find it implausible to simply think of speakers as shuffling among several identities[3] and making mutually exclusive choices between their various social and personal identities, perhaps occasionally coming up with an amalgam. Since, I would suggest, identities are generally established in terms of contrasts or comparisons with others, a plausible model of speaker identity should reflect this. Our model would allow for an African-American man to potentially possess all three of these identities, and it would thus allow for the identities to shape each other.

Furthermore, our model allows for the possibility of tension between all these identifications, and enables us to express how this tension may be resolved in favor of different salient characteristics, depending on the nature of an interaction. For example, Hunter and Davis mention that they were able to make canonically "masculine" traits salient by asking about them. Within our model, this could be expressed in the following way: the traits widely and stereotypically associated with masculinity are available as one of several social identities for these men. When required, they can spin a more canonical notion of masculinity into a position of greatest salience and talk with an experimenter about it, even though, when interacting at home, another more specific African-American notion of masculine identity is spun to a position of salience for interactions with their family. We would predict that different characteristics of manliness would be treated as most salient, i.e. spun so as to provide the medium through which most communication takes place through the strong network ties of the family, by a man in his home (where he might be interacting primarily on the basis of his African-American male identity), as opposed to the characteristics that might be most salient when the same man is at work, in a law office or the phone company, where dominant American norms of manliness might prevail and be the medium for interaction and feedback.

In addition, our model provides for the possibility of a life-style change, e.g. from primary identification with the violent hypermasculine identity to an identification with the co-operative African-American masculine identification. Our model would predict that this would be as a result of either a cessation of interactions via a hypermasculine network tie, or a change in the subjective salience of the hypermasculine vs. African-American identity. In the latter case, this might be motivated by a change in salience of other identities, e.g. as a father vs. a child; as head of household vs. independent self. These suppositions are not necessarily supported by the data I have reviewed above, but our model does provide a framework within which some clearly testable hypotheses can be developed.

So far I have looked at gender as an identity in people's perceptions of self. We might ask whether other people's perceptions of gender as a component of speaker identity can also be married with our model. Giles et al. (1980) show that other people's percep-

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[3] Rebecca Freeman first made clear to me how important it is for any theory that describes individuals in terms of multiple identities to address this issue.

tions of the salience of gender are just as complicated as individuals' notions of gender have been shown to be in the studies I have outlined above. In a series of studies, Giles et al. show that it is a fairly straightforward task to find out what kinds of attributes or traits people agree on as being "masculine" or "feminine", and that it is also fairly straightforward to conduct experiments that reveal which of those traits are associated with a particular speaker's voice. But this does not mean that when people match a woman's voice with typically feminine adjectives, they are necessarily responding to a feminine identity. This is because those adjectives associated with perceived femininity are exactly the same adjectives associated with perceptions of middle class status, or a generally liberal political outlook.

Giles et al. (1980) conclude that class may be a more salient characteristic than gender in people's responses and perceptions of voices. This is a provocative finding. It suggests that we must gain a better understanding of not only gender, but what it is we are talking about when we talk about social class in our studies and analysis (see also Milroy and Milroy 1992). Our model would make it quite clear where and how individual identities fit in with a collective identity like class or gender - recall that we have proposed that the way interlocutors communicate with each other is by means of shared network ties which create sociolinguistically meaningful links between individuals' shared social identities.

By way of summary: these findings reinforce the need for two things: (i) a way of determining when and how the salience of one identity rises above any others (Giles et al. 1980: 277), and (ii) a way of indicating the potential overlap and influence of more than one social construct on each other. I would suggest that the model of speaker identity outlined here can clearly satisfy the second need, and it also satisfies the first inasmuch as it provides a mechanism for determining how the saliency of an identity varies.

To the extent that our explanation relies heavily on subjective information, there are certain challenges that remain to be met. The model of speaker identity and communication that I have proposed does not actually prescribe the way(s) in which researchers in linguistics and the social psychology of language should go about operationalizing the changes that occur in the salience of different social and personal identities, and I will concede that this remains a methodological hurdle for the model. Quantitative studies within a sociolinguistic paradigm, for instance, ideally require that a researcher be able to establish linguistic and non-linguistic variables that are all independent of one another - though the extent to which the social variables used in sociolinguistics have ever been independent of one another is debatable. Be this as it may, by providing a schema in which to frame further methodological and theoretical questions, including some hypotheses that should be fairly easily testable, I would like to think that the model could be a step in the direction we want language and gender studies to go.

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