

# Chapter 1 – Situating the Research

## 1.1 Research goals and objectives

This thesis reports the results of an ethnographic study of the language practices of 9-10-year-old children in two socially differentiated primary schools in Teesside, in the north-east of England. The data presented are taken from 50 hours of radio-microphone recordings collected during fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork. The linguistic analysis of this data highlights points of contrast between the two schools as communities of practice. This analysis focuses on three salient pronominal features:

- possessive ‘me’ (i.e. the use of [mi] for the first person possessive singular e.g. *Me pencil’s up me jumper*);
- singular ‘us’ (i.e. the use of ‘us’ for the first person objective singular e.g. *Give us my shoe back*); and
- the use of right dislocated pronoun tags (e.g. ‘me’ in *I’m a magician, me*).

Children in *both* schools used *all* of these variants (though with different frequencies) in concert with other variants (such as ‘my’ for the possessive singular and ‘me’ for the objective singular). The central question of this thesis is therefore: *why does a speaker who has a range of alternatives choose one particular alternative in a particular context of use, and what effects might this choice have?* In order to answer this question I explore the processes of meaning-making and identity construction within the two communities of practice in a bid to understand how linguistic forms and their associated linguistic styles become invested with social and pragmatic meaning.

## **1.2 Style and sociolinguistic variation: the origin and nature of social meaning**

A central theoretical and methodological concern in sociolinguistics is the place of social meaning. Current thinking suggests that the study of social meaning is really the study of style: ‘the meaning of variation lies in its role in the construction of styles’ (Eckert 2005). So what constitutes a linguistic ‘style’ and how has this concept been used within sociolinguistics? Further, how can an analysis of style bring us closer to the ‘origin and nature’ (Brown and Levinson 1987:280) of social meaning?

In this section I identify the main elements in sociolinguistic work that are relevant to my study. Eckert (e.g. 2002; 2005) refers to three waves of studies within sociolinguistic variation, but (as she acknowledges) these waves are not entirely chronological. Some of those working in the 1950s and 1960s prefigure concepts that would not be widely used until the twenty first century.

### **1.2.1 Social structure**

Labov’s (1966) ground-breaking New York City study established that linguistic variation correlates with social factors (such as age, gender and social class). Labov demonstrated, for example, that members of a speech community are differentiated such that higher and lower scores for the use of linguistic variables correlate with higher and lower positions on socioeconomic indices. It was in these correlations that the social meaning of the linguistic variable was generally felt to reside (i.e. language was a reflection of existing social structure). And it was the frequency of occurrence of particular variants which were judged to have social significance:

The use of a single variant – even a highly stigmatized one such as a centralized diphthong in *bird* and *shirt* – does not usually produce a strong social reaction; it may only set up an expectation that such forms might recur, so that the listener does begin to perceive a socially significant pattern.

(Labov 1966:85)

Labov further found that each social group displayed the same general behaviour with regard to stylistic variation. According to Labov, linguistic styles can be arranged on a single continuum according to the amount of attention paid to speech. This, in turn, is related to the speaker's perception of the level of formality of the situation. Interviews incorporated techniques that were designed to elicit speech styles situated at various points along this continuum, from careful to casual speech. Labov found that scores for the use of linguistic variables correlated with positions on the scale of formality. Although the absolute values of the variable scores in each style were different for each social group, the *pattern* of stylistic variation was essentially the same. Intra-speaker stylistic variation was theorised as being linked to inter-group variation such that each group modelled its formal style on the speech behaviour of the group who ranked slightly higher in the social scale. In their most formal style, for example, working-class speakers would move systematically towards the casual speech of the lower middle classes, making it difficult to distinguish, 'a casual salesman from a careful pipefitter' (Labov 1972a:240). The same sociolinguistic variable could thus signal both social and stylistic stratification. This finding led Labov to make a general statement about the social stratification of language in New York City: 'New York City is a speech community, united by a common evaluation of the same variables which serve to differentiate the speakers' (Labov 1972a:106). These patterns of variation were linked to linguistic change: as

Milroy (1987a) points out, Labov's main concern was to obtain insights into processes of linguistic change and to document structured heterogeneity.

Other researchers working within urban dialect areas (e.g. Trudgill 1974) adopted the Labovian model. These studies, known collectively as 'Labovian' or 'Variationist' or 'Quantitative' sociolinguistics, marked a profound shift in the study of language, demonstrating that language is not homogenous and that variation is not 'free' – language use possesses structured variability. This work has had a lasting influence on the study of language, and more particularly for this thesis, on the study of linguistic style.

The variationist approach to style has been criticised for being 'uni-dimensional' in that stylistic contexts are ordered according to a single linear scale of formality which corresponds to a single scale of prestige (vernacular to standard). Style-shifts are explained in terms of the degree of attention a speaker pays to his or her speech – another linear scale. Labov made clear, however, that the styles he constructed were not 'natural units of stylistic variation' (Labov 1972a:97). His aim was to define and control the styles of speech so that the performance of any two individuals or groups could be compared thus making it possible to test his hypothesis of regular variation. A simple linear analysis of style was appropriate for this purpose.

Some early post-Labovian developments moved away from the notion of a single linguistic scale. Newbrook (1986), for example, demonstrated that speakers in West Wirral organised their talk relative to three target varieties: RP/standard English; very 'broad' Cheshire; and very 'broad' Scouse. Milroy (1987b:105-106) commented on the difficulty of identifying a single linear scale (most to least vernacular) in the Belfast communities that she investigated, due to the absence of a

clear set of prestige norms. And in his analysis of a Cardiff DJ – Frank Hennessy (FH) – Coupland (1988) demonstrated multidimensional style-shifting within a single speaker's repertoire. In certain situations, FH marked personal competence by shifting to *more* standardised forms of general social dialect features (i.e. those which are found in non-standard varieties of English through Britain) such as 'aitch-dropping', 'G-dropping' and 'T-dropping', but he was able to simultaneously mark in-group solidarity by shifting to *less* standardised variants of regional dialect features (i.e. those specific to Cardiff) such as Cardiff (a:). In such contexts, FH was clearly not responding to a single linear scale (status-solidarity), and his style-shifts could not be theorised in terms of a single dimension of 'accent standardness/non-standardness' (Coupland 1988:157).

Other criticisms of the Labovian model (e.g. Coupland 1988; Cameron 1990) highlighted the inadequacy of the explanations given (or presupposed) in the quantitative paradigm for the social meaning of variation. The correlations that variationist sociolinguists describe between linguistic and non-linguistic (i.e. demographic and contextual) factors are just that, descriptions, and an account which confuses such descriptions with explanations for the social meaning of the patterns noted falls into what Cameron (1990) describes as the 'correlational fallacy'. Mendoza-Denton (2008:216) similarly criticises what she calls the 'correlational imperative', 'where groups are pre-emptively divided into sociodemographic categories and their linguistic behaviour explained by appeal to these same categories'. Variationist accounts do sometimes go one step further in explaining correlations, for example, by invoking the notion that speakers are expressing their identity (e.g. as a working-class female). While this is a neat, and perhaps tempting,

explanation, Cameron points out that a social theorist might ask of it the following ‘awkward questions’:

do people really ‘have’ such fixed and monolithic social identities which their behaviour consistently expresses? Furthermore, is it correct to see language use as expressing an identity which is separate from and prior to language ... is it not the case that the way I use language is partly *constitutive* of my social identity?

(Cameron 1990:60)

These are precisely the issues I will address in Section 1.3.

Studies which adopted the survey-style, quantitative approach to language variation have been described collectively by Eckert (e.g. 2002; 2005) as the ‘first wave’ of variation studies. Not all of Labov’s early work adopted this approach, however. In his research on Martha’s Vineyard (1963), for example, Labov highlighted the importance of local identity categories. He explored the relationship between the centralisation of the diphthongs in words such as *try* and *how* (i.e. the PRICE and MOUTH lexical sets) and speakers’ orientations to the island. The economic independence of the native ‘Vineyarders’ was under threat from the incursion of mainland tourists. The greatest resistance to ‘the summer people’ came from the Chilmark fishermen; the summer tourist trade represented an opposition to the locally run fishing trade. The increase in centralisation began with the Chilmark fishermen and this group then became a reference point for some young Vineyarders (those who chose to stay and earn their living on Martha’s Vineyard) who used this feature to project their identities as islanders. The social meaning of centralisation was ‘positive orientation towards Martha’s Vineyard’ (Labov 1963:306). Eckert (2008) notes, however, that this early suggestion that variation could be a resource for the local construction of social meaning was lost in the large-scale survey studies that followed. Labov’s Martha’s Vineyard Study presaged studies that were to come

20-30 years later. Eckert (2005) actually identifies this very early study by Labov as part of the ‘second wave’: ‘the landmark study that established that the second wave could happen’.

### **1.2.2 Social relations**

The relevance of social relations in style-shifting was already implicit in Labov’s (1966) New York City Study. In the Lower East Side survey, interview techniques were designed to minimise the impact of the presence of the interviewer on an informant’s speech (to tackle the ‘Observer’s Paradox’ (Labov 1972a:209)), and in these interviews, speech to family members and friends was categorised as ‘casual’ speech in contrast to the ‘careful’ speech used to answer the interviewer’s questions. As already discussed, though, Labov explained style-shifts according to a single scale related to the amount of attention the speaker paid to his or her speech. Bell (1984) calls this explanation for stylistic variation a ‘nonstarter’. In his seminal paper, ‘Language style as audience design’, Bell (1984) proposed that style is essentially a speaker’s response to an audience. Bell’s framework of ‘audience design’ was established as an explanation for his research on broadcast news in Auckland, New Zealand. Bell analysed the same newscasters’ reading style on two stations: YA (national radio with higher status audience) and ZB (community radio with lower status audience). In relation to one variable, intervocalic ‘t’, Bell found that the newscasters systematically shifted from more standard variants (voiceless stop) on station YA to less standard variants (alveolar voiced flap or voiced stop) on ZB. Bell interpreted this shift in terms of the newscasters’ response to the different audiences for these stations. All other variables that might be suggested as possible influences on style-shift, such as speaker, topic and setting, remained constant: the newscasters were the same for each station; they read similar news stories and

sometimes even the same script; and both stations were broadcast from the same suite of studios. The change in audience appeared to be the only explanation. In his bolder hypotheses, Bell even stated that style-shift associated with these other ‘non-personal’ factors (i.e. topic and setting) are derived from audience-designed shift. He suggested that speakers associate topics/settings with certain addressees; when speakers then shift their style because of a change of topic/setting, it is a reflection of the kind of shift that would occur in response to those associated addressee(s). Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) found some supporting evidence for this assertion.

At the centre of audience design is the Style Axiom:

*Variation on the style dimension within the speech of a single speaker derives from and echoes the variation which exists between speakers on the ‘social’ dimension.*

(Bell 1984:151)

We can thus ‘expect that, qualitatively, some linguistic variables will have both social and style variation, some only social variation, but none style variation only’ (Bell 1984:151). This is why some variables are what Labov (1972a) has termed ‘markers’ (variation on both dimensions) while others are ‘indicators’ (social differentiation only). Bell claimed that quantitative evidence for the style axiom could be found in a variety of studies in which the degree of style variation never exceeded the degree of social variation. Bell’s style axiom builds upon Labov’s interpretation of his New York City data (and the variationist studies that followed), but at the same time, Bell also proposed an explanation of how styles become socially meaningful. In arguing that style derives from social variation, Bell is claiming that it is the social meanings attached to linguistic variants through their association with particular social groups that make them available for stylistic



meaning (Coupland 2001a). From this perspective, social and stylistic variation are viewed as separate (but related) phenomena and ‘social variation comes first’ (Bell 1984:151).

Bell states that there is also an ‘initiative’ dimension to audience design. Here, style-shift is not merely a passive response by the speaker to a change in the situation; it actually initiates a change. Such a distinction was originally drawn by Blom and Gumperz (1972), who coined the terms ‘situational’ and ‘metaphorical’ switching. In situational/responsive style-shift, the speaker responds to the social situation by considering norms of appropriateness which have developed in relation to certain audiences. Metaphorical/initiative style-shift trades upon such associations, ‘injecting the flavour of one setting into another’ (Bell 1984:182). So, for example, a speaker could inject a sense of informality or intimacy into a social situation by switching into the local dialect, a style usually reserved for intimates.

According to Bell (1984:186), initiative style-shifts are in essence ‘referee design’. The speaker makes a style-shift as if talking to an absent referee rather than the actual addressee. This is, to some extent, based on elements of Le Page’s ‘acts of identity’ framework (Le Page 1968; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985), though Bell (1984) did not fully explore issues of identity management. The comparison becomes more obvious in Bell’s later work where he writes that speakers use initiative style-shifts ‘to represent their identity or to lay claim to other identities’ (Bell 2001:163). Originally, referee design was simply an ‘add-on’ to the core concept of audience design. In this later work, though, Bell acknowledges that referee design is not the exceptional or ‘marked’ case that it was represented as in his 1984 paper. Rather, audience and referee design are ‘two complementary and coexistent dimensions of style, which operate simultaneously in all speech events’

(Bell 2001:165). Researchers might best access these two dimensions using different tools, however. Bell believes that quantitative methods are likely to be most suited to the analysis of audience design style-shift while referee design style-shift ‘will often deal in the qualitative, the one-off, the single salient token which represents an identity’ (Bell 2001:167).

The regularity of Bell’s approach is tempting, but by focusing only on audience-related concerns I believe that it misses some of the wider issues related to the study of style, such as the *nature* of the relationship between individual stylistic variation and variation at the level of macro-social categories such as social class. I would take issue, for example, with the notion that individual stylistic variation is merely derivative of the variation noted between social groups, preferring instead to leave open the possibility that language is (at least partly) constitutive of the social identities speakers ‘lay claim to’. Further, the standardised research techniques (e.g. interviews with set topics) that Bell (2001) advocates seem to limit the kinds of stylistic resources that can be accessed by the researcher. And, in fact, the resources that *are* investigated are still theorised in terms of a single dimension (i.e. audience). This kind of analysis does not fully account for the creativity speakers invest in their active use of stylistic resources.

The idea behind Bell’s framework was not new. Bell was influenced not only by work in sociolinguistics (e.g. Le Page 1968) but also by advances in social psychology. Howard Giles and his colleagues (e.g. Giles and Powesland 1975) developed a model of social relations, speech accommodation theory (later communication accommodation theory), which theorized style-shifting as a social psychological process. By taking into account speakers’ motivations, accommodation theory has always placed more emphasis on speaker agency than on speaker

response to external stimuli. The essence of the theory is that speakers can encourage interlocutors to view the speaker in a positive light by reducing dissimilarities between speaker and interlocutor. In relation to speech accommodation, this would involve the speaker converging towards the speech style of his/her interlocutor by, for example, reducing the use of marked dialect features (though accommodation is by no means restricted to features of dialect). A speaker could accentuate social distance with the opposite process, linguistic divergence. In addition to linguistic convergence/divergence, Brown and Levinson (1987) discuss various politeness strategies which speakers might adopt in order to negotiate social distance and manage social relations in interaction. Brown and Levinson's model of politeness will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

### **1.2.3 Social networks**

The linguistic styles that were investigated as part of the sociolinguistic interview were not 'natural units of stylistic variation' (Labov 1972a:97). Some studies (e.g. Labov 1972b; Cheshire 1982a; Milroy 1987b (first published 1980)) built upon the early variationist paradigm but aimed to capture a broader picture of the linguistic repertoires of individuals and communities. These studies were concerned with the investigation of language in its social context. They often adopted ethnographic fieldwork techniques in order to carry out more detailed investigations of smaller communities (ethnography as a methodological and analytical tool will be explored in Chapter 2). These studies found that speakers did not necessarily aspire to the speech style of groups immediately above them in the social hierarchy (as was suggested by early quantitative studies). While this might be true at a relatively abstract level, it was demonstrated that, on a more local level, speakers manipulated

all of the linguistic resources that were available to them (which included low prestige and stigmatised varieties) (Milroy 1987b:19).

In Labov's (1966) New York City study, individual speakers acted as representatives of abstract social categories such as social class. In his (1972b) studies of African American Vernacular English in Harlem, however, pre-existing social groups became the unit of study; this is an important feature of 'social network' analysis (Milroy 1987a). Labov collected data from three gang-affiliated adolescent peer groups (Jets, Cobras and Thunderbirds). Labov found a connection between a speaker's language and his place in the peer-group structure. For example, 'lames', who occupied a position on the periphery of the peer-group, used the zero form of the copula (an important stereotype of AAVE) much less often than core members. Cheshire (1982a) corroborated Labov's findings in her study of adolescent peer groups in Reading. Cheshire made informal recordings of adolescent boys and girls as they interacted together in adventure playgrounds. She found that the participants' use of non-standard morphological and syntactic features correlated with the extent to which they adhered to the norms of the vernacular culture. Adherence to vernacular culture was measured via a 'vernacular culture index' which took into account factors such as 'skill at fighting', 'participation in minor criminal activities', and 'swearing'. Cheshire's study included both boys and girls and she noted sex differences in relation to the features that could function as markers of vernacular loyalty. Cheshire also made recordings of some of the participants in the school setting to enable a stylistic comparison to be made. She found the Labovian approach to style (as outlined in Section 1.2.1) to be overly simplistic, particularly when the speech of individuals (rather than aggregated group scores) was considered. One boy, Barney, actually increased his use of non-standard

present tense verb forms in the more formal school situation (group recording made in the presence of a teacher) compared to his speech at the adventure playground. Cheshire's explanation is that Barney (who hated school and had only recently returned after an extended absence) was exploiting his linguistic resources in order to assert independence from the school culture.

A number of other studies have shown that close-knit group structures/networks are common amongst adolescents (e.g. Kerswill 1996; Eckert 2000). Milroy (1987b; 2002) showed that close-knit networks are also characteristic of low-status communities. Milroy used the concept of social network as an analytic tool in her study of three working-class Belfast communities (Ballymacarrett, the Clonard, and the Hammer). An individual's social network can be described as 'the aggregate of relationships with others' (Milroy 2002:549). Social network structure can be evaluated according to two dimensions: density and multiplexity. The density of a network relates to the connections between network contacts. A person's network structure is said to be relatively dense if a large number of their personal contacts also interact with each other. Multiplexity relates to the nature of a person's network ties (e.g. kin, friend, neighbour, co-employee). A person's network is said to be relatively multiplex if their network ties are of more than one kind (e.g. if a person's co-worker is also a neighbour and a personal friend or family member).

Milroy assigned a network strength score to each of the participants in the Belfast study according to five indicators of multiplexity and density (Milroy 1987b:141-142). Statistically significant correlations were found between a speaker's use of phonological variables and their network scores. The closer a speaker's network ties (as measured by the network strength scale), the closer their language approximated to localised vernacular norms (i.e. the strongest vernacular speakers were generally

those whose neighbourhood network ties were the strongest). In order to explain this correlation, Milroy argues that close-knit networks function as norm enforcement mechanisms. She draws upon a number of studies within social anthropology and sociolinguistics, as well as her own data, in order to make this claim.

In the Belfast study, social network structure was used to interpret linguistic behaviour which could not straightforwardly be explained in terms of a speaker's age, sex, regional origin or social class, and it often interacted with these macro-social categories in complex ways. For example, in light of the overall differences observed between the male and female informants, the young Clonard women were found to have unexpectedly high linguistic scores (i.e. high use of vernacular variants) in line with their unexpectedly high network scores. This was explained by features of the social situation in the Clonard. This area was experiencing high male unemployment but the women were not affected to the same extent. The young Clonard women worked together as mill hands or shop assistants. They also socialised together and, as a result, came to contract the kind of solidary relationships usually associated with working-class men (e.g. those in Ballymacarrett, where more traditional working patterns and gender roles were maintained).

In line with the first wave of variationist research, social network studies explain linguistic variation in terms of correlations between language and group structure. Milroy (1987b:214) herself makes the point that it is important to interpret the network measure as one of social structure. The groups that were the focus of these studies, however, were pre-existing local groups (rather than group categories imposed by the analyst) that, particularly in the case of Milroy's Belfast study, were available for analysis only after prolonged ethnographic fieldwork. This kind of

approach (what Eckert refers to as the ‘second wave’ of variation studies) reduced the level of abstraction in the correlations made between individuals’ language use and their membership in social groupings. Nevertheless, the social meaning of linguistic variation was still theorised as existing at the level of social structure.

#### **1.2.4 Social practice**

In what Eckert terms the ‘third wave’ of variation studies, there is a movement away from the notion that language variation is a reflection of social structure towards the idea that variation (linguistic as well as non-linguistic) is a resource for the dynamic construction of social meaning. This kind of thinking was first put forward by Le Page (Le Page 1968; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) at the time that the first wave of Labovian sociolinguistics was the dominant mode. Le Page’s central notion is that speakers constantly perform ‘Acts of Identity’ through which they do their best to give the impression to their hearers that they are the sort of person they want the hearers to see them as. Le Page’s concepts were taken on board more by creolists and those working in multilingualism than they were by sociolinguists coming from the variationist tradition. What has been influential in recent years is the notion that processes of meaning-making take place in ‘communities of practice’.

The concept of the ‘community of practice’ originated in learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991), but it was introduced to sociolinguistics in 1992 by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet who describe it as ‘an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor’ (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992:464). This ‘aggregate of people’ might be a friendship group, a sports team, a reading group, a family, a school class, a project team, a musical band; it is any collective who come together to engage in a shared enterprise, and, united by this common

enterprise, ‘come to develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values – in short, practices’ (Eckert 2000). In the introduction to her ethnographic study of a Detroit high school, Belten High, Eckert (2000:3) clearly sets out the differences between research set within the community of practice framework and that set within the first (and to some extent second) wave of variationist research. While traditional variationist research views speakers as representatives of broad social categories and considers linguistic variation to be a reflection of (or even determined by) membership in these categories, a ‘theory of variation as social practice’ sees speakers as *constituting* social categories and as actively *constructing* the social meaning of variation.

Eckert (2000) examined 6 phonological variables (5 of which were involved in the Northern Cities Chain Shift) and a syntactic variable (negative concord). She found that adolescents at Belten High were using the resources offered by these linguistic variables to construct distinct styles which were associated with different communities of practice: the school-oriented ‘jocks’ and the urban-oriented ‘burnouts’. In examining these categories, Eckert was able to get at the local meaning of social class for adolescents at this school. Jocks engaged with the corporate life of the school by taking part in extra-curricular activities such as sports teams and school government. These forms of participation prepared them for college and for their place in adult middle-class culture. The burnouts, on the other hand, were alienated from the school culture. They maintained strong neighbourhood ties and oriented their practices to the urban area. As a result, their social trajectory was geared towards gaining employment post-high school in the local urban area and participating in adult working-class culture. These two oppositional groups accounted for only half of the student population, however. The ‘in-betweens’, while



not a homogenous group, positioned themselves in relation to the jock-burnout distinction. The jocks and burnouts represent class-based communities of practice, but class distinctions were only part of the picture in Eckert's investigation. Only one of the variables, negative concord, showed significant correlation with the socioeconomic characteristics of the speakers' parents. In relation to the vocalic variables, Eckert looked to peer-based categories and the practices which constituted those categories.

The jocks, the burnouts and the in-betweens created different meanings for the variables that Eckert studied by virtue of the distinct practices that they participated in, and in combining these variables with other semiotic resources, they created a complete group identity. The burnouts, for example, demonstrated their anti-school, urban-oriented stance in their clothing (dark colours, rock concert t-shirts, leather jackets and wrist bands), in the spaces they occupied in the school (e.g. congregating in the smoking area, and refusing to use the cafeteria and other institutionally sanctioned areas such as 'homeroom' and the hallways where lockers were located) and in their use of urban variants of the late stages of the Northern Cities Shift (the backing of (e) and (ʌ), and the raising of the nucleus of (ay)). Eckert (2000) demonstrated that the burnouts led the jocks in the use of the advanced variants of these changes. In the wider student population, Eckert also showed that all students in the study (including in-betweens and jocks) differed in the extent to which they participated in the urban vowel shifts according to the extent to which they participated in urban-oriented practices such as 'cruising'. My summary, of course, does not represent the full complexity of Eckert's analysis.

The identity of the community of practice emerges through its participants' joint negotiation in these processes of meaning-making, and so too, the identity of an

individual emerges through their participation in different communities of practice (Eckert 2000:36). Individual and group identities are thus interrelated. Furthermore, the processes at work at this local level can be seen to reinforce, maintain, renegotiate or even challenge existing social structure:

it is the collection of types of communities of practice at different places in society that ultimately constitutes the assemblage of practice that is viewed as class culture, ethnic culture, gender practice, etc..

(Eckert 2000:39)

This process is not entirely unconstrained, however. People's access to and interest in different communities of practice will be mediated according to their place in society as embodied in categories such as class, age, gender and ethnicity: '[t]he individual, thus, is not a lone ranger wobbling out there in the social matrix, but is tied into the social matrix through structured forms of engagement' (Eckert 2005:17). The community of practice is therefore a useful construct within sociolinguistics because it provides a dynamic, bi-directional link between macro-level categories (such as social class) and micro-level practices.

To investigate processes of identity construction and meaning-making within a community of practice, the researcher must adopt a 'bottom-up' approach that begins by exploring the social practices in the community. A participant-driven, ethnographic approach is therefore most suited to this type of study. In addition to Eckert's (2000) investigation of jocks and burnouts in Detroit, a number of other school-based ethnographies have demonstrated the success of this approach and the significance of the community of practice as a factor in sociolinguistic variation: Bucholtz's (1999) study of nerd girls in California; Moore's (2003) study of

adolescent girls in Bolton, Greater Manchester; and Mendoza-Denton's (2008) study of Chicana/Mexicana girl gangs in California.

### 1.2.5 Social action

Eckert's (2000) high-school ethnography was a ground-breaking study which moved the investigation of linguistic variation into new theoretical and methodological ground. Eckert stopped short of analysing language in its discursive context, however. The importance of discursive context *is* highlighted in Eckert's later work (e.g. Eckert 2008) where she argues that variables are associated with a range of potential meanings (an 'indexical field'), and that specific meanings are activated in the situated use of a variable. The heart of Eckert's (2000) analysis of the Belten High data, though, was still quantitative: Eckert demonstrated the social meaning of variation through statistical correlations between the use of linguistic variables and participation in group practices. In comparison, Rampton (1995; 2006) used *qualitative* ethnographic analysis of language practices in order to understand ethnic- and class-based identities as 'lived realities' (Hymes 1996) in the lives of his adolescent informants.

Approaches to style which focus on aggregated data may miss important aspects of individual stylistic achievement. Coupland's early work (e.g. Coupland 1985; 1988) examined style from an alternative perspective. His analysis of a Cardiff local-radio presenter, Frank Hennessy (FH), for example, demonstrated that a speaker can call on dialect resources to navigate their way through complex social space. On occasions where it was particularly important to mark in-group solidarity with the local Cardiff community, Coupland showed that FH's use of the phonological variables under study was 'maximally non-standard' (according to index-scales established for each variable). One phonological variable in particular, stereotypical

Cardiff (a:), became the ‘focus for the symbolic expression of solidarity’ (Coupland 1988:141). This feature was given prominence in the show’s title *Hark, Hark the Lark!*, and in FH’s catch-phrases (‘it’s remarkable’, ‘well there we are’, ‘that’s half tidy’). In addition to mediating group affiliations and issues of solidarity, FH also drew on dialect resources to project different facets of his own identity. In fact, these two aspects of identity work (personal and group) are intimately connected, as Coupland emphasises in later work (e.g. Coupland 2001a). FH produced maximally non-standard variants when using self-deprecatory humour to project humility and unpretentiousness – important characteristics of his presenter’s persona – but in situations which required a display of media expertise (e.g. when publicising the show or making announcements), he produced more prestigious forms to project a competent persona.

Coupland builds upon this early research on ‘dialect in use’ in his later work (e.g. Coupland 2001a; 2006; 2007), which considers dialect style as person variation or persona management. From this perspective, stylistic variation reflects a dynamic presentation of the self. Speakers select from a repertoire of stylistic resources and ‘deploy’ these resources in ‘strategic sociolinguistic action’ (Coupland 2006). In opposition to one of the basic tenets of quantitative sociolinguistics, Coupland (2007:41) argues that ‘[a] single use of a single sociolinguistic variant *can* be socially meaningful’. He further argues that such variants acquire salience in discourse in relation to the particular social and discursive frames (‘socio-cultural’, ‘genre’, and ‘interpersonal’) that are in play at any given moment (cf. Ochs (1996:418), Podesva (2007, 2008), and Eckert’s (2008) notion of ‘indexical field’). Coupland (2006; 2007) reanalyses his Cardiff travel agency data from this ‘active contextualisation’ perspective. Coupland (1980; 1988) had earlier analysed the

speech of a Cardiff travel agent, Sue, in terms of speech accommodation theory. He had found that Sue consistently converged towards the speech of her clients for the four phonological variables analysed, such that her speech was almost as good an indicator of the clients' socioeconomic status as the clients' own speech (see also Bell's (1984) reanalysis). In his later reanalysis, Coupland (2006, 2007) reiterates the importance of social class within the 'socio-cultural frame' that is activated during Sue's client transactions. In Sue's conversations with her co-workers, however, Coupland (2006, 2007) states that social class is not relevant because it is a shared identity within this group of women. In the extract that Coupland (2006, 2007) analyses, the conversation between these women focuses on eating and dieting. Coupland suggests that it is Sue's personal powerlessness in relation to her dieting that becomes relevant in this context, and her linguistic choices are considered from this (participant driven) perspective. The same linguistic resources (e.g. h-dropping, flapped 't', consonant cluster reduction) are thus shown to have different meanings in the interpersonal frame (e.g. 'low personal competence and control') compared to the socio-cultural frame (e.g. 'working class').

Critics would argue that the weakness of this approach lies in its inability to generalise to wider sections of the population. Coupland (2007:28) suggests, however, that there '*is* the possibility of generalising from single-case analyses, but it involves generalising to what is stylistically possible, rather than to "what people typically do"'. I would emphasise that the former is no less of a valid theoretical concern than the latter. Podesva (2007; 2008) analyses the speech of a single individual across several speaking situations. He points out that '[f]iner-grained analyses delving deep into an individual's linguistic performances, though they lack generalizability, may offer more insight into *why* speakers make the linguistic

choices they do' [my emphasis] (Podesva 2007:482). And more than this, an analysis of style as strategic social action makes claims about the 'non-arbitrary' nature of linguistic styling (Brown and Levinson 1987:282). This is an important point which resonates throughout the analysis in the forthcoming chapters: the individual linguistic choices a speaker makes are purposeful and meaningful. Eckert makes a similar point in relation to Labov's (2002, as cited in Eckert 2008:453) comment that '[t]he great chain shifts sweeping across North America are more like ocean currents than local games':

To seek explanations for chain shifts in the day-to-day construction of meaning would certainly be futile and ridiculous. But to ignore what people do with the elements of these chain shifts to construct social meaning is to turn a blind eye to an aspect of human competence that is at least as mind-blowing as the ability to maintain distance between one's vowels.

(Eckert 2008:454)

Further, a style as persona management approach offers theoretical benefits. In particular, it provides a link between the 'social' and 'situational' dimensions of sociolinguistic variation:

Dialect style as persona management captures how individuals, within and across speaking situations, manipulate the conventionalized social meanings of dialect varieties – the individual through the social. But it is the same process of dialectal self-projection that explains the effect of dialect stratification when the speech of social groups is aggregated in sociolinguistic surveys. Individuals within what we conventionally recognize to be meaningful social categories enact dialect personas with sufficient uniformity for survey researchers to detect numerical patterns of stratification ... It is in relation to group norms that stylistic variation becomes meaningful; it is through individual stylistic choices that group norms are produced and reproduced.

(Coupland 2001a:198)

This quotation encapsulates the back and forth movement between individual and group, practice and structure, micro- and macro-levels of analysis which sociolinguists continually grapple with. The construct of the community of practice adds a meso-layer which can help to mediate between these extremes. Podesva (2007), for example, shows that a medical student, Heath, takes on a specific persona (that of a ‘flamboyant diva’) in his interactions in one particular community of practice (a close-knit group of friends). Heath displays this diva persona on a phonetic level through the use of falsetto. Podesva goes on to show, via processes of indexicality, how Heath’s use of falsetto in his diva performances within this community of practice might be linked to gay identity.

### **1.3 A theoretical framework for identity**

In line with Bucholtz and Hall (2005), this thesis will engage with multiple levels/dimensions of identity: (1) interactionally constructed stances; (2) local ethnographically specific positions within a community of practice; (3) macro-level identity categories such as social class. Crucially, the framework which links all three levels together rests upon Ochs’ (1992) theory of indexicality. Ochs argues that there is no direct link between linguistic forms and macro-social categories such as class or gender. Rather, language indexes stances, speech acts and activities in interaction which, in turn, help to constitute social identities. So identity is not separate from or prior to language. Ochs illustrates this process with reference to the identity category of gender but states that it ‘can be taken as exemplary of how language conveys social identities more generally’ (Ochs 1992:343). For example, tag questions in English have been associated with a feminine linguistic style. But the link between tag questions and the social category of gender is not direct; it occurs only through a series of ideological conventions which associate a stance of

hesitancy with female identity. So we can say that tag questions directly index a stance of hesitancy and only indirectly index a female identity: '[i]t is in this sense that the relation between language and gender is mediated and constituted through a web of socially organized pragmatic meanings' (Ochs 1992:341-342). There is no one-to-one correspondence between linguistic form and social or pragmatic meaning, however:

It is important to distinguish the range of situational dimensions [particular stances, acts, statuses etc.] that a form (set of forms) *potentially* indexes from the range of situational dimensions that a form (set of forms) *actually* indexes in a particular instance of use.

(Ochs 1996:418)

This act of differentiation occurs during the processes of 'active contextualisation' referred to in Section 1.2.5 above. A number of current theorists of style have drawn on the concept of indexicality to show how interactional stances constitute more enduring styles, personas and identity categories (Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Eckert 2005, 2008; Johnstone 2007; Podesva 2007; Eberhardt and Kiesling 2008; Bucholtz forthcoming).

Bucholtz and Hall acknowledge the crucial role that social action plays in the construction of identity, but they reject an extreme social constructivist position which locates agency within 'an individual rational subject who consciously authors his identity without structural constraints' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005:606; cf. Coupland 2006). The notion that identity emerges in interaction does not preclude the possibility that it may also draw on existing structures and ideologies:



On the one hand, the interactional positions that social actors briefly occupy and then abandon as they respond to the contingencies of unfolding discourse may accumulate ideological associations with both large-scale and local categories of identity. On the other, these ideological associations, once forged, may shape who does what and how in interaction, though never in a deterministic fashion.

(Bucholtz and Hall 2005:591)

This quotation makes explicit the important point that structure and agency are inextricably linked. For Bucholtz and Hall (2005:606), agency is ‘the accomplishment of social action’, and importantly, there is no requirement that social action be intentional: ‘habitual actions accomplished below the level of conscious awareness act upon the world no less than those carried out deliberately’.

## **1.4 Children and adolescents in sociolinguistic research**

Labov (1964) suggested that it is in adolescence that the kinds of sociolinguistic patterns found in adult speech communities are acquired. It is now well established, however, that children develop sociolinguistic competence at a much earlier age (e.g. Romaine 1984a; Andersen 1990; Youssef 1991; Gupta 1994), in the case of politeness markers, even before the second birthday (Ainsworth-Vaughn 1990). Nevertheless, there have been few studies of sociolinguistic variation in the speech of pre-adolescent children. Reid’s (1978) study of the speech of sixteen eleven-year-old boys from three socially differentiated schools in Edinburgh was an early exception. He recorded the boys in a variety of different contexts: reading aloud; a one-to-one interview; group recording; and playground interaction recorded with radio-microphones. Reid found the same patterns of social and stylistic variation that had already been established in the adult speech community (e.g. by Labov 1966 and Trudgill 1974) with regard to two phonological variables: variation between alveolar and glottal stops for (t); and variation between velar and alveolar nasals for (ng).

Reid noted an anomaly in the playground data for (t), however; there was actually a decrease in the group index (i.e. greater use of more ‘standard’ realisations of (t)) rather than the increase that would have been expected in this most informal and ‘natural’ situation. Reid explains this to be a consequence of a technique that was used to encourage the flow of talk. The child wearing the radio-microphone was encouraged to act as a commentator while the other children fought boxing matches, ran races and so on. This did produce ample speech, but some of the children imitated a ‘TV commentator style’ which involved the appropriation of Scottish, English and American voices. While this development was not in line with the goals of Reid’s research, it did provide early evidence that stylistic variation could be found outside of the organised speech contexts contained within the sociolinguistic interview. The children also expressed awareness of social and stylistic variation in language, making comments like the following: ‘if I talk to them with a sort of clean accent ... they’ll think ... a bit of a bore ... if you talk with the same accent as they do they’ll just think ... you’re one of us in a way ... ’ (Reid 1978:170).

While there is evidence to show that patterns of variation are acquired early in a child’s development, there is little evidence for the kinds of social meaning such variation has for children, particularly pre-adolescent children. One reason for this may be the ‘middle-aged perspective’ that pervades social research (Eckert 1997; see also Eckert 2000). Middle-age is seen as the only life stage that is engaging in ‘mature use’ of language rather than ‘learning’ or ‘losing’ it. Roberts similarly makes the point that while adults are thought to control language varieties, children are ‘seen primarily as “acquirers” of the vernacular of a speech community’ (2002:333). Yet there is no reason to suppose that processes of meaning-making and identity construction among children are any less complex or worthy of study than

those among adults: ‘there is plenty of opportunity for variation to develop social meaning among children that is quite specific to their own social practices, and it is in these practices that we must seek explanations’ (Eckert 1997:162).

Fischer (1958) studied different realisations of the present participle ending (i.e. alveolar or velar nasal) in 24 children aged between 3 and 10. By the time recordings were made, Fischer had observed the children for around 8 months and therefore knew them (and they him) quite well. Fischer found that girls used ‘-ing’ (i.e. [ŋ]) more frequently than the boys, which led him to suggest that ‘-ing’ is regarded as symbolizing female speakers and *-in* as symbolizing males’ (Fischer 1958:49). But he then moved beyond macro-level categories when he examined what he termed ‘differences in personality’ in the boys to explain disparate linguistic behaviour. The ‘model’ boy used ‘-ing’ (i.e. [ŋ]) for the present participle ending more often than the ‘typical’ boy. While the difference between the boys was described in terms of personality traits such as ‘thoughtful and considerate’ on the one hand and ‘dominating, full of mischief’ on the other, it is a small step to view this variation in terms of social practice. The model boy was school-oriented and popular amongst his peers, a prototypical ‘jock’ in Eckert’s (2000) terms. Fischer’s work was in fact ahead of its time in a number of important respects (the full extent of which I cannot do justice to here). He recognised, for example, the importance of style and demonstrated systematic style-shifts several years before Labov’s (1966) New York City study. He also drew a question mark over a simple definition of ‘prestige’:

the grounds of prestige clearly vary according to individuals and societies. A variant which one man uses because he wants to seem dignified another man would reject because he did not want to seem stiff.

(Fischer 1958:56)

Fischer further seemed to be advocating the kinds of studies of style that were discussed in Sections 1.2.3 – 1.2.5:

The study of social factors in linguistic drift is in the field of the sociology of language rather than linguistics proper. However, this study can not reach ultimate fruition without certain linguistic studies by competent linguists. I refer here to studies of individual variations in linguistic forms in small, face-to-face speech communities, and of variations in these forms in the speech of single individuals in a range of social situations. Studies of this sort constitute tasks of respectable magnitude which have, in the main, been neglected.

(Fischer 1958:53)

A number of sociolinguistic studies have emphasised the importance of the peer-group in relation to a child's language use (e.g. Labov 1972b; Reid 1978; Cheshire 1982a; Romaine 1984a; Kerswill and Williams 2000). The strict age-grading in institutions such as the school plays an important role in the development of peer culture (Eckert 1994). The significance of peer-group culture has no doubt influenced the number of studies which have employed the community of practice framework within adolescent groups in the school setting (e.g. Bucholtz 1999; Eckert 2000; Moore 2003). Bergvall (1999) raises the possibility that the community of practice might be more suited to the analysis of variation among teenagers than any other age group. Adolescence is certainly an important life stage in the study of variation but it does not signal a sudden awareness of the social function of variation: 'the adolescent does not emerge, dialect intact, from a vacuum' (Roberts 2002:334). Roberts (2002:345) is emphatic in her assertion that more work is

required to explore the social meaning of child variation. This life-stage is remote from the researcher's own, and hence difficulties may arise in accessing information which might shed light on the social meaning of their linguistic variation (e.g. the children's interests, practices, relationships etc.). Nevertheless, the community of practice framework together with linguistic ethnography are likely to provide useful tools in the pursuit of these social meanings.

### **1.5 Outline of the study**

This chapter has situated my study in relation to past and current research on style and sociolinguistic variation. Chapter 2 provides more specific background information in relation to the study. I begin by situating the two schools in their social and geographical context and then turn to a more nuanced description of these schools as distinct communities of practice. In the second part of the chapter, I outline the fieldwork procedures used in my data collection, and consider the benefits of an ethnographic approach.

Chapter 3 begins by reviewing the place of 'non-standard' or 'colloquial' forms, such as possessive 'me' and singular 'us', within traditional pronoun paradigms. I review the distribution of possessive 'me' and singular 'us' in the data, and then situate both variants in their wider social, geographical and historical contexts. The second part of the chapter focuses on the children's use of possessive 'me', which I suggest is influenced by factors such as stylisation, performance and identity work in addition to linguistic factors (e.g. stress and phonological environment).

Chapter 4 develops the analysis of singular 'us' by exploring its social and pragmatic functions in interaction. This chapter investigates the possibility that singular 'us' has been adopted by the children as a mitigating factor in imperatives,

and situates the use of this strategy in relation to other directives. I use the insights gained from ethnography to interpret the differences between the two communities of practice that are highlighted by this analysis.

Chapter 5 begins by consolidating (and clarifying) existing research on right dislocation, before examining the ways in which this construction was used to organise discourse and create interactional stances and identities. This Chapter highlights the difficulties associated with a variationist analysis of discourse, and further suggests that social class holds a somewhat uncomfortable position within sociolinguistic accounts of the different ‘ways of speaking’ adopted by socially differentiated groups.

Finally, the concluding chapter, Chapter 6, summarises the main findings of this study and highlights the implications of these findings for future sociolinguistic research.

- Ainsworth-Vaughn, Nancy. 1990. The Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Norms: Style-switching in Very Early Directives. *Language Sciences* 12(1): 22-38.
- Andersen, Elaine S. 1990. *Speaking With Style: The Sociolinguistic Skills of Children*. London: Routledge.
- Bell, Allan. 1984. Language style as audience design. *Language and Society* 13: 145-204.
- Bell, Allan. 2001. Back in style. In Penelope Eckert and John R. Rickford (eds). *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 139-169.
- Bergvall, Victoria L. 1999. Toward a comprehensive theory of language and gender. *Language in Society* 28: 273-293.
- Blom, Jan-Petter and John J. Gumperz. 1972. Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code-switching in Norway. In John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes (eds). *Directions in Sociolinguistics: the Ethnography of Communication*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 407-34.
- Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bucholtz, Mary. 1999. "Why be normal?": Language and identity practices in a community of nerd girls. *Language in Society* 28: 203-223.
- Bucholtz, Mary. forthcoming. From Stance to Style: Gender, Interaction, and Indexicality in Mexican Immigrant Youth Slang. In Alexandra Jaffe (ed). *Sociolinguistic perspectives on stance*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bucholtz, Mary and Kira Hall. 2005. Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies* 7(4-5): 585-614.
- Cameron, Deborah. 1990. Demythologizing Sociolinguistics. Reprinted in Nikolas Coupland and Adam Jaworski (eds.). 1997. *Sociolinguistics: A reader and coursebook*. Houndmills, Palgrave: 55-67.
- Cheshire, Jenny. 1982a. *Variation in an English Dialect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coupland, Nikolas. 1980. Style-shifting in a Cardiff work setting. *Language in Society* 9: 1-12.
- Coupland, Nikolas. 1985. 'Hark, hark the lark!': social motivations for phonological style-shifting. *Language and Communication* 5: 153-72.
- Coupland, Nikolas. 1988. *Dialect in Use*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

- Coupland, Nikolas. 2001a. Language, situation, and the relational self. In Penelope Eckert and John R. Rickford (eds). *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 185-210.
- Coupland, Nikolas. 2006. The discursive framing of phonological acts of identity: Welshness through English. In Janina Brutt-Griffler and Catherine Evans Davies (eds). *English and Ethnicity*. New York: Palgrave, 19-48.
- Coupland, Nikolas. 2007. *Style: Language Variation and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eberhardt, Maeve and Scott F. Kiesling. 2008. Stance and the "baptismal essentializations" of indexicality. Paper presented at Sociolinguistics Symposium 17, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
- Eckert, Penelope. 1994. *Entering the heterosexual marketplace: Identities of subordination as a developmental imperative*. Palo Alto: Institute for Research on Learning. [from <[www.stanford.edu/~eckert/gender](http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/gender)>] [accessed January 2006].
- Eckert, Penelope. 1997. Age as a Sociolinguistic Variable. In Florian Coulmas (ed). *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 151-167.
- Eckert, Penelope. 2000. *Linguistic variation as social practice: The linguistic construction of identity at Belten High*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Eckert, Penelope. 2002. Constructing meaning in sociolinguistic variation. Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, USA
- Eckert, Penelope. 2005. Variation, convention, and social meaning. Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America., Oakland, CA, 7th January 2005.
- Eckert, Penelope. 2008. Variation and the indexical field *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12(4): 453-476.
- Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 1992. Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-Based Practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 461-90.
- Fischer, John. 1958. Social influences on the choice of a linguistic variant. *Word* 14(1): 47-56.
- Giles, Howard and Peter Powesland. 1975. Accommodation Theory. Nikolas Coupland and Adam Jaworski. 1997. *Sociolinguistics A Reader and Coursebook*. Basingstoke, Hamps, Macmillan Press: 232-239.
- Gupta, Anthea Fraser. 1994. *The Step-Tongue: Children's English in Singapore*. Clevedon/Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.



- Hymes, Dell. 1996. *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Johnstone, Barbara. 2007. Linking Identity and Dialect through Stancetaking. In Robert Englebretson. (ed). *Stancetaking in Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 49-68.
- Kerswill, Paul. 1996. Children, adolescents and language change. *Language Variation and Change* 8(2): 177-202.
- Kerswill, Paul and Ann Williams. 2000. Creating a New Town koine: Children and language change in Milton Keynes. *Language in Society* 20(1): 65-115.
- Labov, William. 1963. The Social Motivation of a Sound Change. *Word* 19: 273-309.
- Labov, William. 1964. Stages in the acquisition of standard English. In Roger W. Shuy (ed). *Social Dialects and Language Learning*. Champaign, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 77-104.
- Labov, William. 1966. *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Labov, William. 1972a. *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov, William. 1972b. *Language in the Inner City*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lave, Jean and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Le Page, R. B. 1968. Problems of description in multilingual communities. *Transactions of the Philological Society*. 189-212.
- Le Page, R. B. and Andrée Tabouret-Keller. 1985. *Acts of Identity: Creole-based approaches to language and ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 2008. *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice among Latina Youth Gangs*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Milroy, Lesley. 1987a. *Observing and Analysing Natural Language*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Milroy, Lesley. 1987b. (2nd edn). *Language and Social Networks*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Milroy, Lesley. 2002. Social Networks. In *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, 549-572.
- Moore, Emma. 2003. Learning Style and Identity: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of a Bolton High School. PhD Thesis, University of Manchester.
- Newbrook, Mark. 1986. *Sociolinguistic reflexes of dialect interference in West Wirral*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

- Ochs, Elinor. 1992. Indexing gender. In Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin (eds). *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 335-358.
- Ochs, Elinor. 1996. Linguistic Resources for Socializing Humanity. In John Gumperz and Stephen Levinson (eds). *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 407-437.
- Podesva, Rob. 2008. Three Sources of Stylistic Meaning. *Texas Linguistic Forum* 51.
- Podesva, Robert J. 2007. Phonation type as a stylistic variable: The use of falsetto in constructing a persona. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 11(4): 478-504.
- Rampton, Ben. 1995. *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents*. New York: Longman.
- Rampton, Ben. 2006. Language Crossing. In Janet Maybin and Joan Swann (eds). *The art of English: everyday creativity*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 131-140.
- Reid, Euan. 1978. Social and stylistic variation in the speech of children: some evidence from Edinburgh. In Peter Trudgill (ed). *Sociolinguistic Patterns in British English*. London: Edward Arnold, 158-171.
- Rickford, John R. and Faye McNair-Knox. 1994. Addressee- and Topic-influences Style Shift: A Quantitative Sociolinguistic Study. In Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan (eds). *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Register*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roberts, Julie. 2002. Child Language Variation. In J.K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill and Natalie Schilling-Estes (eds). *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, 333-348.
- Romaine, Suzanne. 1984a. *The Language of Children and Adolescents*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Trudgill, Peter. 1974. *The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Youssef, Valerie. 1991. Acquisition of Varilingual Competence. *English World Wide* 12(1): 87-102.