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Focusing and Diffusion in 'Cape Flats English'

A sociophonetic study of three vowels

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A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfilment* of the requirements for the award
of the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics

Faculty of the Humanities

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January 2012

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

This research contributes to the wider fields of sociophonetics and the social dialectology of English in South Africa. The study looks at three vowel sets; GOOSE, BATH and KIT taken from Wells (1982). The study was designed to identify and attempt to explain potential differences in pronunciation amongst speakers in an English-speaking community living in Cape Town and classified as 'Coloured' during apartheid. The community in question has used English as their first language for several generations and has enjoyed some of the economic advantages attached to this while at the same time being the victims (historically) of discrimination and marginalization. The study looks at the speech of twenty speakers. Using the methods of variationist sociolinguistics, it aims to investigate what correlations can be drawn between these speakers. It examines whether the speech of the informants can be correlated along lines of social class, education, personal background and occupation. In addition, the study looks (albeit briefly) at issues of language usage and social identity with regard to these twenty speakers. The methods employed are therefore mixed, with traditional Labovian sociolinguistic methods forming the main means of data collection and analysis; but also being combined with methods of linguistic anthropology and language ideological debates. The findings suggest that despite some accommodation to the historically prestigious 'White' varieties of English, these twenty speakers are remaining remarkably loyal to their own variety. Traditional community norms of language usage appear to be holding firm amongst these speakers. There is also a strong pragmatic sense of the importance of, what is perceived as, 'proper' English. The latter is what marks these speakers in many ways and separates them from those who use more non-standard and stigmatized language varieties. Despite some reported stylistic shifting under certain conditions, these stigmatized forms are avoided. The most interesting feature of the research perhaps, is how speakers manage to sound 'proper' and 'correct' while at the same time retaining a strong 'Coloured authenticity' in their speech. Focusing, or the conformity to community norms is therefore clearly evident.

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Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the generous funding I received from the National Research Foundation through Professor Rajend Mesthrie's SARCHI chair in Language, Migration and Social Change. I am also deeply grateful to the Mellon foundation which awarded me the Andrew W Mellon postgraduate scholarship in 2009 and 2010.

Professor Mesthrie acted as the supervisor for this research and I express my sincere gratitude for his guidance, his patience, good humour and practical advice. Above all I thank him for his meticulous attention to detail when reading my work.

Several people have contributed to the development of this thesis. Ana Deumert and Tommaso Milani took time out of their busy schedules to read sections of the thesis and offer very detailed and helpful advice. I am grateful to them both. I benefitted greatly from the Linguistics postgraduate reading group and I thank all those who participated for always being so supportive of my work. I wish to thank Derek Gowlett, Yolandi Klein, Oscar Masinyana, Tracey Toefy and Bruce Wileman for their support and encouragement over many months. My most pervasive debt is to Alida Chevalier who was kind enough to assist me with all manner of things, but in particular with the more technical aspects of the project.

I am deeply grateful to the informants who gave of their time to participate in the study. Many thanks also to my colleagues at the Institute for the Humanities in Africa for their kindness and support during the final stages of the project. I owe a special debt of gratitude to William Daniels and the staff of the Research Commons of the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library at the University of Cape Town

My partner Lance Heath has been my rock for more than six years. His faith in me and in this project has sustained me throughout. I need hardly say that nothing would be possible without his love or the love and support I receive from my parents, my sister and my extended family. Finally this thesis is dedicated to my maternal grandfather Clifford Kies and my uncle Professor Bryan Kies; both of whom passed away in the course of 2011 while this work was being completed.

List of abbreviations

CFE – Cape Flats English

SAE – South African English

WSAE – 'White' South African English

MC – Middle class

LMC – Lower middle class

L1 – First language / mother tongue

Norm – Normalization

UCT – University of Cape Town

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Chapter 1

Background, aims and theoretical considerations

1.1 Introduction

The current study represents a contribution to a much larger field concerning the socio-phonetics of English in South Africa. The project aims, broadly speaking, to investigate what correlations can be drawn between language and social factors such as class, occupation and social networks based on interviews conducted with twenty English-speaking informants all of whom grew up and currently live in Cape Town and all of whom were classified as 'Coloured' during apartheid. In this chapter I introduce and outline the specific aims of this project. I discuss the question of English in South Africa with specific reference to English amongst 'Coloured' people in Cape Town. I provide an overview of the limited work done on so-called Cape-Flats English (CFE) and, particularly, Cape-Flats phonology. Finally I survey the field of variationist Sociolinguistics and place the current study within it. I also elaborate on the theoretical approaches which have framed the study.

1.2 English in Cape Town

The variety of English spoken by the community classified as 'Coloured' (during Apartheid) has received little attention from linguists thus far. In a study dealing with English in South Africa, Lanham and Macdonald (1979) make the following rather perplexing comment:

the main ethnic groups which enter into the composition of the [South African English] community are still easily drawn distinctions: Jews; Afrikaners; gentiles of British origin. (Lanham & Macdonald 1979: 26)

Written more than thirty years ago, the authors seem to completely ignore several groups. For example, people like my parents, grandparents and extended family who represented an established First Language (L1) English community that was only partly "of British origin" if at all. This community forms the focus of the current study. 'Coloured' English speakers are interesting in that they spoke a language that carried a great deal of power and prestige (along with Afrikaans), yet they were marginalized in economic, political and social terms. As Malan (1996: 125) tells us:

Historically, ['Coloured' people] have shared the Dutch/Afrikaans and English languages of South Africa's dominant white classes, yet they have not had the same

access to power and privilege nor the same strong link between group identity and one particular language – facts that have crucially influenced the form of the language varieties spoken in Cape Flats communities.

Lass (2002: 111), gives a description of South African English (SAE) dividing it into what he calls a lectal hierarchy albeit one which can be described only “in a loose qualitative way”. Lass is referring here to the L1 English of ‘White’ South Africans which he, following Lanham and Macdonald (1979), divides into Conservative SAE, Respectable SAE and Extreme SAE. These terms have gained currency in the literature but are used with caveats (Lass 2002). Less loaded terminology would be to speak of ‘cultivated’, ‘general’ and ‘broad’ SAE. The precise linguistic features of these varieties need not detain us. However, Lass does go on to make an important comment:

This trichotomy is cross-cut by the results of South Africa’s unfortunate social history; in particular, the mother-tongue varieties of various ‘non-white’ communities (Indian and coloured) have their own internal varietal stratification, though speakers may ‘cross over’ in complex ways into the white hierarchy. (Lass 2002: 111)

This crossing over, or the potential to do so, and how it is achieved are important points of reference for the current study. Lass’s formulation can be augmented, not only by thinking about ‘Coloured’ and ‘Indian’ varieties of English, but also by considering the second language varieties of English associated with ‘White’ Afrikaans speakers, ‘Coloured’ Afrikaans speakers and speakers of South Africa’s indigenous or African languages. The situation I have been discussing presents us with a number of interesting questions. For example, what are the linguistic features of ‘Coloured’ English and to what extent are speakers remaining loyal to this particular variety?

An elaborate linguistic description of the English of ‘Coloured’ speakers falls outside the scope of the study. Such descriptions, though not very extensive, can be found in Mesthrie (2010), Dennis (2008), Finn (2004), McCormick (2002), Mesthrie (1999), Malan (1996) and Wood (1987). The question of ‘dialect loyalty’, or linguistic focusing and alignment, is more pertinent to the present study. Before moving on to outlining the specific aims of the study in greater detail, let us briefly review the limited work done on Cape Flats English phonology in recent years.

1.3 Cape Flats English and Cape Flats phonology¹

Finn (2004) presents a short, though very useful, chapter entitled Cape Flats English: phonology. Let us begin by considering the following extract:

As a type of South African English, CFE most closely resembles the lect of (typically) white SAE most closely associated with the lowest socio-economic class (that is, the English of white working-class native speakers). (Finn 2004: 967)

Finn characterizes Cape Flats English as a variety that is closest to what Lass calls Extreme SAE. While this assertion is plausible, it would need to be supported by further empirical evidence. Finn's work is introductory and therefore not very detailed or overly nuanced. Boundaries of class, education and occupation are collapsed and there is no discussion of variation in pronunciation among 'Coloured' speakers of English apart from specifying salient phonetic variants.

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Wood (1987) offers perhaps the most comprehensive discussion to date on the English of people who were classified 'Coloured' by the apartheid state. He proposes a continuum similar to the one put forward by Lass (2002) for 'White' South African English (Wood 1987: 75-76). 'Coloured' speakers of English, according to Wood, use the language in different ways depending on where they live and their socio-economic status. Explaining the origins of the variety of English spoken by 'Coloured' people is a difficult proposition. Finn (2004: 965-966) provides the following brief account:

Cape Flats English has its roots in these old, mixed residential areas² where language contact was the order of the day, and where everyone needed to acquire

¹ The term "Cape Flats" is an unfortunate one as it denotes neither a geographical area nor a type of language usage but rather an awkward mixture of the two. I have kept it as it appears in much of the recent literature already mentioned. There is also very little, if any, research on the English of 'Coloured' people who live outside the Cape Peninsula.

² Areas such as District Six; see McCormick (2002) for a detailed account of the importance of District Six to linguists.

some command of English [...] The dialect spread to the Cape Flats as residents of the older suburbs moved to that area voluntarily or through the massive forced removals of the 1960s and 70s.

Grappling with what the terms 'Coloured' and 'Coloured' identity mean or may mean is an important component of my own study. Studies such as Finn (2004), Mesthrie (1999) and Malan (1996) are all quite tentative in their approach to the subject of 'Coloured' identity. In elaborating on the terms 'Coloured' and Cape Flats, Mesthrie (1999: 59) alludes to the awkward position in which researchers find themselves.

The Cape Flats refers to the vast sandy areas of Cape Town set aside in former times for occupation by 'non-white' people, often people forcibly removed from lush areas by Apartheid laws in the nineteen fifties. This dialect of English is spoken largely, but not only, by people classified 'coloured'. I have resisted the ethnonym 'coloured English', since we are trying, with some difficulty, to move away from the facile and stereotypical labels of Apartheid rule.

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The phonetics of 'Coloured' English has been documented not only by Finn (2004) and Wood (1987), but also by Mesthrie (2010) and Dennis (2008). The work of Wood, Finn, Dennis and Mesthrie will serve as a point of reference to help substantiate the claims I make about the speech of the speakers I interviewed. I turn now to examine the aims of the thesis in greater detail.

1.4 Aims of the study

This thesis represents a sociophonetic examination of tokens of the GOOSE, BATH and KIT vowels, using the labeling of Wells' (1982) lexical sets, taken from recordings of interviews done with twenty informants. The three vowels were selected on the basis of their salience in the SAE literature³. They were also chosen because they feature fairly prominently in the writing on 'Coloured' English mentioned earlier. My aim is to use the speech collected in the twenty sociolinguistic interviews to examine whether these three vowels can shed any light

³ GOOSE fronting, BATH backing and the KIT split are still of current research interest in South Africa.

on issues of linguistic variation, social meaning and identity. The different manifestations of these three vowels can, reasonably speaking, be seen as evidence of the existence of different groups or social categories among speakers of English in South Africa. This is true both historically and regarding the current situation.

This project aims, mainly, to investigate whether English pronunciation among 'Coloured' speakers is stratified along lines of social class and social networks. Let us consider the following statement by Chambers (2002: 350):

In every community that has been studied so far, sociolinguists have found that phonological variables tend to be distributed throughout the population, regardless of class, but graded so that the higher classes use particular variants infrequently and under more constrained circumstances, usually in casual settings with intimate participants.

In Cape Town, however, it is not as straightforward as arguing, as Chambers does, that phonological variables are graded along class lines. Instead, these variables are stratified both within one ethnic group (vertically if you like) and across ethnic groups (horizontally). It may well happen that a particular variable associated with a higher social class in one ethnic group is actually spurned by the higher social class of another ethnic group. This, as we shall see, is evident from my own research, when the respondent named Mark comments about "not wanting to sound "White"". Chapter four will tell us whether these sentiments are borne out by the phonetics.

The notions of prestige and stigma become extremely interesting in Cape Town English dialectology. It is not always easy to pin down what is prestigious and what stigmatized. Since the political changes of the early 1990s, there has, according to some scholars, been a linguistic re-alignment of sorts. In a recent article Mesthrie (2010:5-6) argues that the time has come for a renewal of interest variationist research within the South African context in the light of the recent political and social changes. Sociophonetics and the study of accents, particularly in English, is an important part of this renewal. I agree with Mesthrie, though I am also interested in the limitations of variationism (as a discipline) when investigating issues of

linguistic behaviour and social change. Mesthrie believes that the political changes in South Africa in the 1990s, and the subsequent social and economic changes, have had linguistic consequences.

One example of this is the fronting of the GOOSE vowel among 'Black' speakers⁴. As Mesthrie concludes:

middle-class, L1 English-speaking South African students of all backgrounds are fronting the GOOSE vowel. Fronted realizations were once firmly associated with 'whiteness'... [however] this vowel has been adopted to varying extents by middle-class speakers from other groups. In doing so they have turned it into a marker of youth and middle-class status, thereby deracialising the vowel to a large extent. (Mesthrie 2010: 28)⁵

The research done by Mesthrie, postulates that the GOOSE vowel is a variable that is now a "marker of youth and middle-class status". It is important to point out that the current study is not concerned with speakers who attended private or former 'Whites'-only schools; the beneficiaries, if you like, of desegregated schooling and increased upward social mobility. Instead I focus on speakers who were classified 'Coloured' under apartheid and who attended schools designated by the state for 'Coloured' pupils.

The question for my thesis may be described in the following way: What type of speaker in the 'Coloured' community is more likely to accommodate to the so-called 'White' variety of English? We are able, I think, to formulate three hypotheses. Firstly, that it is the highly educated, professional speakers who are shifting to the 'White' prestige 'norm' of English in South Africa. A second hypothesis postulates that it is in fact the 'Lower middle classes' who are more likely perform this shift⁶.

4 I use the term 'Black' in the political and not ethnic sense to mean those people who were deprived of political rights by the apartheid regime; people classified as 'African', 'Coloured' and 'Indian'.

5 Apart from Mesthrie (2010), see also Chevalier (2011), Wileman (2011) and Dennis (2008) as examples of current research into sociophonetics and social change.

6 The terms class or social class are notoriously difficult and slippery ones to define. I follow the criteria set down by Chambers (2003) and Guy (1988). The lower middle classes are those people who have little or no tertiary education and are employed in an intermediate capacity, usually in

There is, of course, a third possibility namely that these two positions on their own cannot answer the question of whether 'Coloured' speakers are trying to sound 'White'. Instead, it is necessary to evaluate each speaker as an individual and explain their linguistic behaviour in terms of their background and life experience. This is not to say that trends cannot be identified and generalizations made, a point we shall return to in the next section on variationism. I adopt this third possible hypothesis as the guiding assumption of this thesis. Apart from issues of class and social networks, the thesis also aims to look at the relationship between language and identity. The latter has become an important object of study in recent years as one pair of observers put it:

It is no overstatement to assert that the age of identity is upon us, not only in sociocultural linguistics but also in the human and Social Sciences more generally. (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 608).

In addition to the methods and techniques of sociophonetics, I spend chapter four analyzing the language ideological debates which are evident in the metalinguistic reflections of the informants. The current study therefore aims to contribute, in some small way, to both sociolinguistics and identity studies by investigating the relationship between language and so-called 'Coloured' identity. It will be interesting to discover whether such links can even be made or whether the ethnic dimension has been overemphasized in some past research.

One possibility is that so-called 'Coloured' people somehow reinforced a top down or state-sanctioned⁷ identity through linguistic means. How any of these linguistic strategies are achieved in practice has not yet been studied as far as I know. The phenomenon of 'passing for White' is a common refrain among "Coloured" people in Cape Town⁸. While none of the speakers I interviewed were guilty of the latter, it is an important factor that could shape the way they speak and needs to be borne in mind.

large organizations such as shops, banks, businesses etc.

⁷ I am referring here to the apartheid state. The question of language and identity, both under apartheid and currently, will be dealt with more fully in chapter 3.

⁸ During apartheid, 'passing' was achieved through an elaborate process of having oneself reclassified in terms of the population registration act. It often meant cutting oneself off from family members who were darker-skinned and who did not go through this process.

My contention is that the focus and diffusion mentioned in the title refer to possible fluctuations in language usage depending on a range of factors such as context, interlocutor and the life experience of the speaker. Speakers possess what Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 597) describe as a “repertoire of linguistic forms associated with personas and identities”. This means that they are able to shift between different styles and registers of language depending on what may be necessary for a particular context. These observations are not new though. They build on work done by Gumperz (1982) and Labov (1972).

South African studies of the language of people classified as ‘Coloured’, as Dennis (2008: 19) reminds us, are still new. It is hoped that the current study will be a contribution to the fields of sociophonetics and social identity with reference to the ‘Coloured’ community. I now turn to providing an overview of the discipline of variationist sociolinguistics but before doing so, the objectives of my research are summarized in the following five research questions:

- Is the English pronunciation of the twenty speakers stratified along lines of social class, income or occupation?
- If it is, does this stratification correlate with divisions along lines of social networks?
- To what extent does the speech of the twenty speakers conform to ‘community norms’ regarding accent? Or how focused or diffuse is the informants’ speech?
- Is the notion of ‘Coloured’ identity a legitimate one? And if so, how does it come about? Is it imposed from above or is it negotiated by members of the ‘community’ themselves? What is its relationship to language?
- What kinds of language ideological debates are present in the metalinguistic reflections of the twenty informants?

1.5 Literature survey

The current study is situated in the tradition of variationism or urban dialectology or, as Chambers (2003) would have it, Sociolinguistics⁹. The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of this field and its historical development as well as introducing and elaborating the theoretical approaches which frame the study. In addition to providing a broad introduction to variationism, I discuss the concept of sociolinguistic style as well as Eckert’s (2010) notion of the “third wave” in variationism before moving on to considering the

9 What exactly constitutes “Sociolinguistics” is a complicated question which need not detain us here. See chapter 1 of Chambers (2003) for a definition of the discipline which limits it to variationism.

theoretical concepts that have shaped my own work. I begin by tracing the development of variationist sociolinguistics as a scholarly discipline. Variationism was pioneered by Labov in the 1960s¹⁰. Chambers (2003: 11) makes the following observation:

Though linguistic variation may [have been] obvious, no linguists analyzed it systematically until the inception of sociolinguistics in the 1960s.

Of central importance to the approach, is the concept of the linguistic variable. The latter is a feature of language which can be manifested in different ways within a particular community (Mesthrie 2009b: 78). Linguistic variables are not, however, significant in and of themselves. They acquire significance, in the Labovian approach, by being linked to something broader and more socially meaningful. As Chambers (2002: 349) tells us, "the essential function of linguistic variables is to mark group membership". In other words, the fact that the GOOSE vowel in South African English (SAE) can be manifested either as a back vowel, a centralized vowel or a fronted vowel is not, in itself, the focus of attention for sociolinguistics. Instead, it is the fact that these different variants of GOOSE are indicators which mark the speaker as a member of a particular social or ethnic grouping which is of interest. Cape Town is an important site for variationist study for several reasons.

The city, like South Africa as a whole, was stratified both along lines of social class and lines of ethnicity or 'race'. In Cape Town, as elsewhere in South Africa, phonological variables thus act as 'ethnic' or 'racial' markers as well as markers of social class. In addition, mother tongue (L1) speakers of English in South Africa are not homogeneous. They are divided along lines of social class and ethnicity. As Mesthrie (2010) notes, 'White' and 'Coloured' speakers of English formed social and linguistic totalities with very little crossover from one group to the other during the apartheid era. Recent research by Mesthrie (2010) and Dennis (2008) deal with the potential effects deracialisation is having on variables such as the GOOSE vowel.

¹⁰ See Labov (1972) and Labov (1966). See also Mesthrie (2009b) and Chambers (2003) for detailed introductions. See Figueroa (1994) and Cameron (1990) for more critical accounts.

But what does it mean to conduct a study of variationist sociolinguistics? It is not an easy question to answer. Eckert (1996: 47) sums up the significance of the pioneering sociolinguistic work in the 1960s:

[Labov's] earliest linguistic work, the famous and inspired Martha's Vineyard study (1963) showed for the first time that phonological variation can serve as a highly nuanced symbolic resource.

Eckert succinctly highlights one of the core principles of variationist sociolinguistics; namely that language usage has the ability to index extra-linguistic elements. The latter may take many different forms; from social class, ethnicity and community membership, to attitudes, values and other aspects of identity. The aims and interests of variationist sociolinguists are, of course, quite diverse. Eckert merely focuses on one of the ramifications of Labov's early research. I chose the above quotation because Eckert's point resonates with my own project. She goes on to make the following claim:

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In this study of the raising (centralization) of the nucleus in (ay) and (aw) on Martha's Vineyard, Labov established the value of ethnographic work in seeking social explanations for variation, and the potential for variables to convey locally based social meaning. (ibid.)

This is essentially the approach I adopt. The current project may best be described as a study in variationist sociolinguistics which is infused with an interest in the ethnography¹¹ of Cape Town. My study is by no means identical to the one undertaken by Labov on Martha's Vineyard. What is similar though, is the need for the researcher to pay close attention both to the personal histories of all the informants, and also to the role of the researcher himself. Johnstone (1996: 8) makes the following interesting observation:

11 See Blommaert & Jie (2010) for a useful definition of ethnography as not purely a methodology, but also as a way of thinking about language and particularly about language and society.

Variation in language use is ultimately explicable only at the level of the individual speaker. No matter how refined our models of the various social factors that correlate with patterns of language use – social class, gender, age, ethnic identity, social network, urban versus rural background – we can not predict what a given person will say in a given situation, *or how it will be said*. (emphasis added).

Johnstone seems to be ignoring the dialogical nature of linguistic interaction and hence of linguistic variation, but her ideas are useful to a point. I intend to make claims about the accents of the twenty speakers I interviewed. These claims, however, cannot be supported without detailed reference to the background and life experience of the participants. The information I gleaned from the interviews I conducted will not be sufficient. It has to be supplemented by my own knowledge of the community and of the individuals involved¹². My role as researcher (ethnographer) and as a type of insider thus becomes extremely important¹³.

The current project is less a study in quantitative sociolinguistics than one concerned with demonstrating potential links between the individual voice and language usage on the one hand; and issues of identity and social positioning on the other. I wish to shift focus slightly and view sociolinguistic variation as a series of potential ways of being linguistically. To do this, I engage the body of work on sociolinguistic style¹⁴ as well as Eckert's notion of the 'third wave' in variationist sociolinguistics. I deal with the former first.

1.6 Sociolinguistic style

Coupland (2007: 3) defines stylistic analysis in the following way:

Stylistic analysis is the analysis of how style resources are put to work creatively. Analyzing linguistic style [...] needs to include an aesthetic dimension. It is to do with designs in talk and the fashioning and understanding of social meanings.

¹² See the section in chapter two which deals with speakers and where they come from.

¹³ I will deal more fully with these issues in the next chapter which covers my research methodology.

¹⁴ See especially Coupland (2007) as well as Eckert & Rickford (eds.) (2001).

Coupland is talking here of style in the context of sociolinguistic variation and the analysis of accents and other features of 'talk'. As he notes, the concept of style has proved useful for numerous scholars from Joos in the 1950s to Labov (1966) and beyond. By his own admission, Coupland is "[taking] the considerable achievements of variationist sociolinguistics for granted", while at the same time offering some constructive criticism (Coupland 2007: 4-5). This approach is an astute, but also cautious, one and it is one which I attempt to emulate in my own work. As Coupland tells us:

The survey designs of variationist research, which have been so remarkably successful in revealing broad patterns of linguistic diversity and change, have not encouraged us to understand what people meaningfully achieve through linguistic variation. (Coupland 2007: 5)

One of the aims of this study is to investigate what speakers are "meaningfully achieving" through speech while they are speaking to me as a researcher. This is a difficult question of course. In order to understand it better, it might be helpful to frame the question in different terms. Bell (2001: 139) identifies what he calls a "core question" in the sociolinguistic study of style. "*Why did this speaker say it this way on this occasion.*" While this statement may not be as vague as asking (as Coupland does) what can be 'meaningfully achieved', it amounts to the same thing.

Bell's formulation is certainly more plain-spoken and specific than Coupland's, and therefore more helpful in unpacking some of the issues at stake in a study of accents and identity. Both scholars will, I think, lead us ultimately toward a deeper understanding of the links between identity and ways of speaking. Bell has developed what he calls an "audience design framework" when dealing with the question of sociolinguistic style (Bell 2001: 141). He summarizes the gist of the framework in the following way:

the basic tenet of audience design [is] that style is oriented to people rather than to mechanisms or functions. Style focuses on the person. It is essentially a social thing. It marks inter-personal and inter-group relations. It is interactive – and active. (Bell 2001: 141-142)

Bell's ideas are echoed in Johnstone (1996) and her belief that the distinctive features of language usage can be analyzed properly only at the level of the individual. This emphasis on distinctiveness is a common one in the volume edited by Eckert and Rickford¹⁵. It is, I think, a very useful concept. One of the themes of my own research is to identify and explain what I take to be the distinctiveness of my speakers both from each other and as members of a group. Bell (2001: 142) goes on to say that "style derives its meaning from the association of linguistic features with particular social groups."

Herein lies the rub. Being 'distinctive' and being part of a group are not one and the same. It is true that group and individual behaviour are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However the notion that linguistic features are associated with "particular social groups" does not seem to be easily compatible with the notion of style as distinctiveness. Perhaps a way out of this possible conundrum lies in what Labov (1972), calls the 'outlier'. These are people who, for one reason or another, do not conform to the behaviour of the 'group'. Outliers, in the linguistic sense, are those individuals who can be identified as members of a particular group, but who do not display the linguistic features traditionally associated with that group. Another way out would be to invoke Rampton's (1995) concept of "Crossing". The latter refers to linguistic style shifting by speakers who are wishing to emulate the language of an in-group or an out-group for that matter.

We would still need to address the basis on which people are assigned to particular groups. There is also the question of explaining why certain linguistic features are associated with that particular group. These problems notwithstanding, the concepts of "outlier" and "crossing" do allow us to avoid an essentialist position concerning language and identity and instead, enable us to adopt a more nuanced approach. It obliges us to examine and explain the linguistic behaviour of individual speakers, and to view speakers as unique entities and not as mere reductions to members of a particular group.

1.7 Eckert's *Three Waves of Variation Study*

This study is influenced by what Eckert (2009) has called the "three waves" of variationist sociolinguistics. The first wave refers to the type of work pioneered by Labov in the 1960s;

¹⁵ Irvine (2001: 37-42), for example, discusses the issue of distinctiveness at some length.

what Eckert (2009: 3) calls “the survey era”. I quote at some length to summarize Eckert’s characterization of the first wave:

- “These studies established a regular and replicable pattern of socioeconomic stratification of variables, in which the use of ‘non-standard’ variants correlates inversely with speakers’ socioeconomic status.” (Eckert 2009: 3)
- “The assumption from the start has been that language varieties carry the social status of their speakers, making the class stratification of language a continuum of linguistic prestige.” (Eckert 2009: 3)
- “The first wave studies also showed that speech throughout the socioeconomic hierarchy varies stylistically, so that the individual’s speech range occupies a subset of the total range within the sociolinguistic continuum. Each speaker’s formal and read speech is closer to the standard, while their casual speech is farther from the standard.” (Eckert 2009: 3)

The first wave represents a quantitative approach which seeks evidence for broad generalizations about language usage and its relationship to social factors such as class, gender and ethnicity. The second wave may be described as the ethnographic approach to variationism. The waves are not strictly chronological and are best viewed in conceptual terms. Labov’s (1963) study of language on the island of Martha’s Vineyard is ethnographic as are a number of other landmark studies such as Milroy (1980). The emphasis in the second wave is on longer term observations of communities and their language usage as well as a shift in focus from social categories (such as class and gender) to social networks. Once again I use a lengthy quotation to illustrate Eckert’s characterization of the second wave:

In an ethnographic study of Belfast, Lesley Milroy (Milroy 1980) explored the positive forces in vernacular usage. Her focus was on social networks – configurations rather than categories – seeking what it is that makes working class speech local. A robust literature has shown that working class people’s social networks are more locally based than those of the middle class – that working class people tend to get jobs through family and friendship networks, to live close to their friends and relatives, and to pursue leisure activities with them. The result is greater density and multiplexity of social networks overall. (Eckert 2009: 10)

This explanation ties in with what Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) call focusing. The more an individual is restricted in their movements and in their social networks, the greater the likelihood of their language usage closely matching the norms of that community. This brings us to the third wave. The latter is concerned with issues of individual voice and issues of human agency. In addition, it shifts the focus of the study of linguistic variation, once again, this time to examine questions of individual style, practice and identity. The second and third waves will be the most useful approaches for my own study although all three waves are important and they are not mutually exclusive I believe. Let us examine Eckert's articulation of the third wave a little closer.

This move from the study of structure to the study of practice, giving agency its place in the analysis, has defined the recent history of the social sciences and recent intellectual history more generally [...]. It does not negate the importance of structure, but emphasizes the role of structure in constraining practice and, in turn, the role of practice in producing and reproducing structure. In the study of variation, a focus on practice brings meaning into the foreground, as we try to get at what speakers are doing on the ground. (Eckert 2009: 14)

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I invoke Eckert's third wave, in particular, because it helps us bring "meaning into the foreground" by focusing on practice. The articulation of identity through speech is one way in which meaning is made explicit. An examination of how both the structural (sociophonetic) features of the informants' speech and the language ideologies embedded in their metalinguistic reflections can reflect their 'identities', places the current study in Eckert's third wave of variationism more so than the first two waves though as already stated, all three waves have a bearing on my research. A literature review can never be exhaustive. I have attempted to focus only on those aspects of the 'field' which I find most relevant and useful. I have also attempted to place the present study within a particular tradition of variationist scholarship. I shall now elaborate on the theoretical framework that I shall be using when analyzing the pieces of speech I collected.

1.8 Other theoretical influences

This project has three main concerns. Firstly, I examine correlations between language usage and factors such as class, income and occupation. Secondly I attempt to find overlaps between these correlations and those occurring along lines of social networks and

community ties. Thirdly, I look at the relationship between identity and language usage. What claims can be made about this relationship? More importantly, how can we substantiate any claims we make? In attempting to address each of these concerns, I identify and utilize certain existing theories from sociolinguistics and the broader humanities which I use as tools to examine the collected linguistic data. I single out three groups of theoretical concepts: (i) Bourdieu's concept of habitus as explained in Eckert (2010), Hanks (2005) and Duranti (1997); (ii) the theory of acts of identity developed by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985); and (iii) Eckert's (2008) notion of "Variation and the indexical field" which is closely linked to her notion of a 'third wave'. These three sets of concepts will serve as the theoretical basis on which my claims about language usage, identity and social meaning will rest.

The work of the French sociologist Bourdieu has been heavily influential in identifying connections between language and power as well as in explaining language as a social practice¹⁶. The concept of a "social practice", above all, is extremely important to Bourdieu's theoretical formulations. All other implications flow from the premise that language is not merely an autonomous system of structure and rules. It is also "actively defined by sociopolitical processes, including bureaucratic institutions such as schools" (Duranti 1997: 45). Bourdieu introduces the notion of habitus as a "unit of analysis"; a way of explaining linguistic behaviour and, more importantly, linguistic diversity and variation (Duranti 1997: 44). Habitus is a theoretical tool meant to shed light on the process whereby individual actors internalize the conventions or "ways of being" of the community in which they find themselves. Duranti goes on to describe habitus in the following way:

a system of dispositions with historical dimensions through which novices acquire competence by entering activities through which they develop a series of expectations about the world and about ways of being in it. (ibid.)

Habitus refers to ways of being in the world which are not, necessarily, conscious. The benefit of the concept habitus is that it allows us to predict behaviour based on our knowledge of the social and cultural context from which the individual is drawn. Conversely,

16 See Mesthrie & Deumert (2009: 333-336) for an introduction to Bourdieu's ideas. See Bourdieu (1991) for a more detailed account.

it also allows us to single out non-conformity; the behaviour which does not quite fit. Explaining this diffuseness often proves to be the real challenge. Habitus is, however, a very useful starting point when dealing with an analysis of linguistic behaviour. As Hanks (2005: 69) tells us:

[Habitus] explains regularity by reference to the social embedding of the actor, the fact that actors are socially formed with relatively stable orientations and ways of acting. The stability of the habitus is not expressed in rules, which Bourdieu rejects, but in habits, dispositions to act in certain ways, and schemes of perception that order individual perspectives along socially defined lines.

Within the context of the current study, habitus would be a way of answering the question of how an 'accent' is reproduced in a particular community or setting. According to Hanks, the core function of habitus is to explain "the regularities immanent in practice" (ibid.).

As a way of combining first wave and second wave variationist sociolinguistics with an approach concerned also with viewing linguistic variation as a manifestation of different "ways of being", I engage the work of Eckert (2008) as well as the work of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985), particularly the latter's concept of "acts of identity" which I deal with briefly. I agree with Le Page and Tabouret-Keller when they stress the value of the many variationist studies done since the 1960s. Their book does not offer a critique of variationism, but instead it:

views variation in linguistic behaviour as the norm, approaches language as essentially idiosyncratic, and seeks to throw some light upon the ways in which such concepts as 'a language' and 'a group or community' come into being through the acts of identity which people make within themselves and with each other. (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985: 2)

The work of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller helps us avoid the trap of essentialism which is described in Cameron (1990). As Coupland (2007: 108) tells us, "the phrase 'acts of identity'

itself evokes an anti-essentialist stance – identity construction being seen as a consequence, perhaps a target, of social action”. If we substitute the term “identity construction” with the term linguistic variation, we begin to see how these ideas can be applied to a sociolinguistic study of language variation. The idea of variation being rooted in social action is one which Eckert also takes up. Drawing on Le Page and Tabouret-Keller’s notion of acts of identity, she is concerned with examining the relationship between everyday linguistic practice (the vernacular in variationist terms) and what she calls macrosociological categories such as ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality etc. As she tells us:

It is in the links between the individual and the macrosociological category that we must seek the social practices in which people fashion their ways of speaking, moving their styles this way or that as they move their personae through situations from moment to moment, from day to day, and through the life course (Eckert 2008: 463).

Eckert then follows Silverstein in deploying the notions of indexical order and an indexical field. She argues that these notions help shed light on the process whereby social meaning is produced, and reproduced, through language. These theoretical concepts, Eckert believes, give us a “foothold on the relation between the macrosociological facts and linguistic practice” (ibid.). She summarizes Silverstein’s invocation of Labov’s “distinction between indicators, markers and stereotypes” during his discussion of the indexical value of variation. Eckert says the following:

In Labov’s terms, *indicators* are dialectal variables that distinguish social or geographic categories but have attracted no notice and do not figure in variation across the formality continuum. *Markers* and *stereotypes* are variables that have attracted sufficient attention to emerge within those categories in stylistic variation. The difference between markers and stereotypes lies in the level of consciousness: stereotypes are subject to metapragmatic discussion, while markers are not. (Eckert 2008: 463)

An indicator, she goes on to tell us, indexes membership. It designates people as New Yorkers, South African etc. The indicator becomes a marker once speakers internalize it and it starts to “index specific elements of character”. Eckert notes that while the “fact of distinction of social groups entails evaluation,” a marker is what speakers use to shift between registers and styles. (Eckert 2008: 473). The GOOSE, BATH and KIT vowels in ‘Cape Flats English’ have the potential to be both markers and stereotypes depending on the speaker.

Eckert and Le Page and Tabouret-Keller are interested in exploring identity construction through language usage at the level of the individual speaker. In addition to exploring possible connections between language and identity, I wish to draw attention to the danger of viewing social categories (gender, social class, ethnicity) as given or pre-existing, and of viewing language as a mere reflection of these categories. Language does not simply reflect, but rather serves also as the means through which these categories can be forged. It is therefore complicit, in some sense at least, in the reproduction of categories. Variationists have noted these concerns. Mesthrie (2009a: 6) tells us the following:

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[Many linguists argue that] accent, for example, may reveal the social group to which a person belongs, but is also part of the definition of that social group. Ways of talking are not just a reflection of social organization, but also form a practice that is one of social organization’s central parts.

The value of the work done by Eckert and by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller is, I believe, twofold. Firstly, it allows us to overcome potential problems raised by the work done on the ‘linguistic individual’ by people like Johnstone (1996). It allows us to predict with some certainty how any given speaker will behave in a particular setting and to explain our predictions in terms of habitual dispositions. While discussing what they call “linguistically heterogeneous situations”, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985: 8) make the following point:

It is clear that we can formulate certain ‘linguistic’ rules which constrain an individual in his selection of a value for [a] vowel; [...] but it is clear that the selection is

constrained also by a host of other considerations, including the stereotypes which the individual has about other people.

It is important to point out that this depends on the variant and its relation to other variants in the language variety being studied. A speaker might well use one particular variant all of the time without invoking any stereotypes or without knowledge of which variants are favoured by other groups. Predictability in language usage, although limited, is attainable and can be explained. Attention, however, has to be paid to the exact context of what is being said and this in turn will help explain *how* it is being said. Secondly, the theory of 'acts of identity' is useful in shifting the view of language, linguistic variation and linguistic style from a simple by-product of a speaker's identity or place in the world, to something that is actively creating the latter.¹⁷ An important facet of this kind of thinking is viewing language and identity as intrinsically interwoven and not as separate entities. They feed off each other and are, in some sense, inseparable and as the authors say; "linguistic items are not just attributes of groups or communities, they are themselves the means by which individuals both identify themselves and identify with others" (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985: 5). This point presupposes another crucial one which the authors also highlight.

It is essential to stress that groups or communities and the linguistic attributes of such groups have no existential locus other than in the minds of individuals, and that groups or communities inhere only in the way individuals behave towards each other.

The importance of this idea cannot be overstated. Groups such as 'Coloured' and the linguistic features which may be associated with them have no intrinsic connection to each other. This is an idea that is long established in Linguistics and the broader Humanities, going back to Saussure. This is not to say that such linguistic features cannot be described. What it does mean is that any description needs to take cognizance of the fact that such features are not pre-determined, but instead have been formed and shaped by a range of complex historical factors.

¹⁷ I deal more fully with this reformulation of the language and identity debate in chapter three.

1.9 Conclusion

The title of this thesis, focus and diffusion, is inspired by the work of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller. Focusing and diffusion refer to the capacity which speakers have to either align themselves with, or distance themselves from certain groups. Linguistic behaviour is fashioned by the speaker so as to either “resemble” a target group, or “be unlike” the target group (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985: 181). There are echoes here of Bell's work¹⁸ on audience design which I discussed earlier. As the authors say, “*all* utterances are affected by the audience, the topic and the setting” (ibid.). In the chapters which follow, I present and interpret the data collected from the twenty speakers interviewed. The question throughout will be the extent to which the twenty speakers are reproducing a ‘Coloured’ accent or whether the latter is being spurned or at least avoided. If so, who are the speakers departing from the ‘community norms’ of speech and what are their possible reasons for doing so? Chapter 3 addresses issues of language, identity and ‘Colouredness’ in greater detail. That will be followed by a chapter in which I attempt to operationalize the theoretical concepts in the analysis of the collected data. Before doing so, I turn to examine the process through which data was collected and analyzed.

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¹⁸ Indeed, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller explicitly mention parallels between their work and the ideas of several other scholars. In particular, they mention Giles's ‘Accommodation Theory’.

Chapter 2

Methodology

This chapter details the process of choosing, collecting and analyzing the data that was used in this study. I will be concerned with explaining four aspects of this process. 1) the group of twenty speakers chosen to be part of the study, 2) the method of obtaining actual recordings from the participants, 3) the socio-phonetic analysis of the recordings, and finally 4) the extent to which my theoretical framework can be integrated into the analysis of the three vowels.

2.1 The sample

The twenty participants in the study were chosen because they fit into a uniquely South African socio-historical grouping. This category of people is most often referred to as 'Coloured' though, as we shall see, this term is quite contentious. In linguistic studies such as Finn (2006), McCormick (2003), Mesthrie (1999), Malan (1996) and Wood (1987), the term 'Coloured' is presented as problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it is arbitrary in the sense that it has no intrinsic meaning and instead is a product of South Africa's history of miscegenation as well as its racialised and segregated political, economic and social development. Secondly the term is used to describe a section of the population that is not homogeneous in class, ethnic or linguistic terms. The people designated 'Coloured' under apartheid were a motley group who often shared a very tenuous historical connection. The absurdity of this situation is highlighted by Wood (1987: 3) who cites the 1950 population registration act as defining 'Coloureds' as "Cape Coloureds, Malay, Griqua, Other Coloureds, Chinese, Indians, and Other Asiatics". Thirdly, the term 'Coloured' has been heavily stigmatized and is often rejected by the very people to whom it is supposed to refer.

Not wanting to become bogged down with labels and identity politics, Linguistic studies on people classified as 'Coloured' have tended to offer a disclaimer of sorts¹⁹ before diving into

¹⁹ See, for example, the quote from Mesthrie (1999: 59) which I use in chapter 1.

the particular aspect of language the study happens to be focusing on. My own research is somewhat different in that it places the notion of identity at the centre of the study.

While the next chapter deals more fully with questions of language and identity, I want to briefly consider the question of 'Colouredness' and its relationship to language. I do this not only because it is central to the project as a whole, but also as a precursor to introducing the twenty speakers in the study; who they are and why they were chosen. My concern in this study is with the extent to which individual subjects project an affinity with 'Colouredness' in linguistic terms, whether consciously or not. If identity is merely ideology and false consciousness, as some would argue²⁰, then it would not be possible for individual speakers to cultivate a particular way of speaking. It would not be possible or necessary for speakers to position themselves linguistically or to subvert or reject a specific identity through their use of language.

And yet the speakers I interviewed do exactly that. They walk a fine line between speaking "properly", "normally", "correctly"; between not sounding "too Coloured" on the one hand and not sounding fake or like something they are not on the other. What this means and how it is achieved in linguistic terms will be demonstrated in the next two chapters. The twenty speakers were chosen because they all conform to a specific set of characteristics and thus form a useful group to examine these issues. I follow Milroy and Gordon (2003: 30) in using the so-called quota sampling method which they describe in the following way:

The principle underlying this approach is that the researcher identifies in advance the types of speakers to be studied and then seeks out a quota of speakers who fit the specified categories. In contrast to the mechanical procedures involved in random sampling, quota samples rely on the investigator's judgment in determining the structure of the sample and even in selecting the subjects that fill the quotas.

This is the approach I adopt. Dennis (2008: 20) reports that she chose her twenty respondents based on whether they "self-identified as Coloured". My own approach was to rely on my knowledge of the speakers and their backgrounds as well as of the wider 'Coloured' community which would have shaped them. It is, however, necessary to address

²⁰ I deal with this point and Adhikari's explanation of it in the section on 'Coloured' identity in chapter 3.

certain commonalities and differences between the speakers in the current study with a view to justifying why they constitute a group worth studying. Of the twenty people that were interviewed, fourteen were interviewed by myself.

The remaining 6 were recordings of interviews done at the same time by my supervisor Professor Rajend Mesthrie. All twenty interviews were between 45 and sixty minutes long. All were transcribed either in part or in total. Before dealing more fully with the sociolinguistic interview process, it is necessary to provide greater background to each of the twenty speakers chosen to be part of the study. The group consists of eight males and twelve females. All but two of the respondents were over the age of thirty. The remaining two were University students in their early twenties who were interviewed by Professor Mesthrie. I state from the outset that I do not consider age to be a significant social variable for this study. The reasons for this will become clearer in chapter four which deals with the analysis of the data.

All speakers had grown up and, with the exception of three people, still lived in neighbourhoods designated under apartheid for 'Coloured' people. All, with the exception of the two younger participants, had attended schools that had been designated for 'Coloured' pupils. The two younger speakers had attended 'Coloured' primary schools and had attended high school after the year 2000 and at schools which had, by that time, come to be dominated by 'Coloured' pupils. Of the twenty speakers, eighteen were monolingual English speakers with a school-induced and very passive knowledge of Afrikaans. The remaining two speakers were strong bilingual Afrikaans and English speakers.

It is important to stress that I view social networks as an overriding factor in helping to explain speech patterns or linguistic behaviour. What this means, essentially, is that who a speaker interacts with in their everyday life takes precedence over other factors such as place of residence or past experiences such as schooling. This is of course not to say that the latter can be discarded when trying to explain linguistic behaviour such as accents. The following table provides a concise introduction to each of the twenty speakers.

Speaker, Sex, Age	Biographical Information
Beryl, Female, 38	Beryl grew up in Athlone where she still lives. She attended schools in the Athlone area and did not study at the tertiary level. She works as a teaching assistant at a pre-primary school.
Carla, Female, 30	Carla grew up in Heathfield where she still lives. She was educated at local schools and attended a college of higher education after high school. She took courses in business administration. She has worked for the University of Cape Town (UCT) in an administrative capacity for at least six years. She is the sister of James.
Carmen, Female, 35	Carmen grew up in Lansdowne. She attended Garlandale High School in Athlone and studied accounting at the Cape Technikon. She works in Human Resources at the head office of a major retailer. Her job involves dealing with employees of the company in different areas. She has lived in Thornton and now lives in Mowbray. She is married to Ned.
Darren, Male, 32	Darren grew up in Heathfield where he still lives. He attended the same schools as Carla, James, Gary and Karen. He studies banking at Cape Technikon and has worked in commercial banking. He is currently employed at a firm of accountants.
Ellen, Female, 57	Ellen was born in Claremont where her parents rented a house. At the age of thirteen the family was obliged to move to Retreat as a result of the Group Areas Act. She has lived in Heathfield since the late seventies. She attended Roman Catholic schools in Wynberg leaving before completing matric. She has recently resigned from her job as a school secretary. She worked at a primary school in Heathfield for nearly thirty years. She is the mother of Karen.
Gary, Male, 30	Gary grew up in Heathfield where he still lives. He attended school with Darren, Carla, James and Karen. After school he studied engineering at the Cape Technikon and now works as an engineer for British Petroleum.
James, Male, 34	James is the older brother of Carla. After High school he studied at

	<p>the University of Cape Town. He then spent time overseas before returning to Cape Town to become a high school teacher. He is currently a postgraduate student at UCT. He lives in Mowbray.</p>
Joan, Female, 58	<p>Joan was born in Newlands and lived there till the age of ten when her family was forced to move to Grassy Park where she still lives. She finished school after what was then standard eight (grade ten) obtaining what was termed a Junior Certificate. She has worked for UCT as an administrator for about thirty years. She is currently based in the admissions office where she deals with queries from parents and prospective students.</p>
Karen, Female, 34	<p>Karen is Ellen's daughter. She was at school with James, Darren, Carla and Gary. She left at the age of sixteen to attend a private vocational college where she completed her schooling. She lives with her mother in Heathfield. For several years she has worked as a customer service clerk for the SPCA in Cape Town. Her job involves interviewing people who wish to adopt stray cats and dogs and assessing the applicant's suitability to care for an animal.</p>
Kevin, Male, 23	<p>Kevin grew up and still lives in Crawford. He attended a local school and then went on to a former Whites only high school. He has just finished his studies at UCT and is looking for work.</p>
Lara, Female, 23	<p>Lara grew up and still lives in Athlone. She attended a local school and then went on to a former Whites only high school. She has also just finished her studies at UCT and is looking for work.</p>
Maggie, Female, 56	<p>Maggie was born in Goodwood and lived there till she was about twelve. The family was then forced to move to Belville South because of the Group Areas Act. She obtained a junior certificate at the age of sixteen and then entered a teacher training college. She has held several jobs over the years including working as a primary school teacher. Working in banking, financial services and market research.</p>
Mark, Male, 52	<p>Mark grew up in Lansdowne. He attended Athlone High School.</p>

	<p>He studied medicine at UCT and then specialized in Paediatrics. He spent time in the UK furthering his studies and now works as a specialist physician in Cape Town. He lives in Claremont.</p>
Ned, Male, 40	<p>Ned was born in Manenberg but moved to Mitchell's Plain at the age of seven. He attended local schools before studying at the Hewat Teacher Training College. He works at a primary school in Hanover Park. He is married to Carmen and they lived in Thornton before moving to Mowbray.</p>
Neville, Male, 49	<p>Neville grew up on the Cape Flats. He studied at UCT and worked as a high school teacher and as a lecturer at a Teacher Training College. He then worked for the National Education Department. He now runs his own company. He has lived in several parts of Cape Town. He now lives in Mowbray.</p>
Rose, Female, 35	<p>Rose grew up in Belhar on the Cape Flats. Her father was a doctor and her mother a school teacher. She attended Harold Cressy High School and UCT where she studied education. She is a teacher and has lived and worked in Pinelands for more than a decade.</p>
Sharon, Female, 38	<p>Sharon grew up in Athlone and now lives in Plumstead. She does not hold any tertiary qualification. After leaving high school she started working for Woolworths in a customer service capacity. She still holds this job. She is the daughter of Shireen.</p>
Shireen, Female, 61	<p>Shireen was born in the Bo Kaap area but has lived most of her life in Athlone. She is now retired but spent about forty years as a sales assistant at Woolworths.</p>
Simon, Male, 52	<p>Simon was born and raised in Athlone. He lived in Wynberg for a time before moving back to Athlone. He attended Harold Cressy High School and UCT. He then worked as a high school teacher and as a lecturer at Hewat College where he and Neville were</p>

	colleagues. He spent time in London doing postgraduate work and is now employed as a lecturer at a university in the Western Cape.
Liz, Female, 60	Liz grew up in Wynberg and now lives in Hanover Park. She finished school at the Junior certificate level and was employed as a factory worker. She stopped working at some point and became a housewife.

Table 1: Background information to the twenty speakers in the study.

The informants who hold bachelor's degrees received them either from UCT or through a complex system that converted the qualifications of former teacher training colleges and former technikons which are now called universities of technology. The main differences between the speakers, apart from age and sex, are their education levels and type of employment. Definitions of class are notoriously difficult and while I have been guided by Chambers (2003) and Guy (1995), I also attempt to move away from models of class that have been developed in Britain and North America and which may not be applicable to South Africa. Instead, I concentrate on the "linguistic individual" as outlined in the previous chapter. The following table divides the twenty speakers into three groups based on socio-economic class.

Group	Members
1). Middle Class (MC): Speakers who are highly educated and/or who are employed in very high status professions	Mark, Simon, James, Rose, Neville, Lara, Kevin, Ned, Carmen
2). Lower Middle Class (LMC): Those who are moderately well educated and who hold jobs where they interact with a wide range of people such as sales, customer service and also some school teachers depending on the level their qualifications. ²¹	Ellen, Joan, Maggie, Karen, Carla, Sharon, Darren, Gary, Liz, Sharon, Shireen

Table 2: The twenty speakers divided into two groups along lines of social class.

²¹ I am thinking here of teachers trained at government teacher training colleges such as the now defunct Hewat College in Athlone.

2.2 The sociolinguistic interview

All speakers were interviewed in the style developed by Labov (1972). This involves making the informants as comfortable as possible by keeping the interview process very informal. Informants were not given any questionnaires nor did I follow a strict formula of questioning. Instead, I used the interview as a discussion to elicit as much talk as possible. Questions were generic and intended to encourage free talk. They focused mainly on personal information and family history such as where and when the person grew up, which schools they attended, what they did after school, what factors influenced their life chances and opportunities and what they are doing now. Most people were interviewed either in their own homes or in my home. Two were interviewed at the University of Cape Town. Three people were interviewed at their places of work. Interviews tended to last for forty-five to sixty minutes.

The sociolinguistic interview needs to be seen as a research tool with both benefits and limitations. It is a speech event, albeit a fairly contrived one, and in this respect it is really no different to other speech acts in that attention must be paid to the context and circumstances which affect it. Scholarly writing on the sociolinguistic interview has tended to fall into two broad camps in recent years according to De Fina and Perrino (2011). The latter explain that the two camps view the sociolinguistic interview either as an unproblematic scientific method that can give us access to naturalistic data, or as an artificial and unreliable process. The second viewpoint tends to be dismissive of interviews altogether as De Fina and Perrino (2011: 5) tell us:

The basic argument against interviews as a method of data collection is that they produce “unnatural” data since the interviewer influences their production (through questions, interruptions, silences, etc.) and offers ad hoc interpretations through the use of etic (i.e. non participant generated) and not emic categories of analysis.

This would hardly be news to any serious variationist scholar of the last half century. As Labov (1972: 209) says:

The aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain this data by systematic observation.

The result is what Labov calls the observer's paradox. Labov develops strategies in the interview to overcome this paradox. These are expanded upon by Labov (1972) himself and then summarized again by De Fina and Perrino (2011: 4), Dennis (2008: 30) as well as Milroy and Gordon (2003: 65). The intention, in a nutshell, is to get the respondent to forget they are being interviewed, to be as relaxed as possible and to speak in the manner they would to their husbands, wives, close friends and family members. This is certainly possible I think and is borne out by my own work.

The speaker known in this study as Liz spends a lengthy period of time talking about the effects alcohol abuse has had on her family life and the lives of her children. She becomes incredibly animated and at the end of that section of the interview process actually says: "You know I completely forgot that I was being interviewed". However as De Fina and Perrino point out, both the assumptions which underlie the observer's paradox and the strategies developed to overcome it are open to criticism. As they tell us:

One presumption in Labov's work was that with minimal intervention of the researcher the interview could become as similar as possible to a "natural conversation". In that sense, the interview was seen more as a context to be erased than as an interactional event whose specificity should be understood and perhaps even exploited." (De Fina & Perrino 2011: 4)

The authors continue by explaining that the above criticism stemmed largely from scholars working in fields such as conversation analysis who were opposed to what they called the "interview-data-as-resource" approach. The opposite of this would be the "interview-data-as-topic" approach. As De Fina and Perrino (2011: 5) explain, the former approach argues that interviews reflect the speaker's reality outside the interview, while the latter approach claims that data from interviews reflects "a reality jointly constructed by the interviewee and interviewer". I do not regard these two positions as mutually exclusive.

We have seen in my earlier example with Beryl that interviews can in fact elicit 'natural' speech (whatever we take that to mean). What is needed, I believe, is for due attention to be paid to the interview as a speech event and to the role of both participants, but especially the researcher, in shaping that event.

The fact that several of the respondents were people I had met at some point before is also an important one. Even in the case of those I was meeting for the first time and in the case of the speakers not interviewed by myself, I have a great deal of insight into the speakers' lives. The fact that I am part of this 'community' is a crucial factor in the process of analyzing the 'community's' speech. I am, however, not suggesting that any analysis be done solely on the basis of intuition or prior knowledge. Rather I would argue that intimate knowledge of the community is an asset in the process of interpretation. It assists in the evaluation of the respondents' speech and is helpful in identifying and explaining subtleties of language usage and the social factors which may be influencing that usage. It would certainly aide in determining whether the manner of speaking in the, rather brief, sociolinguistic interview was typical of that person or not.

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2.3 Sociophonetics

I turn now to the methods of phonetic analysis employed in the study. Di Paolo and Yaeger-Dror (2010) is a comprehensive introduction to the field of sociophonetics. It starts off by tracing the history of this field. At the most basic level, the authors define sociophonetics as a combination of "analytic phonetics" with "Labovian sociolinguistic research methodology" (Di Paolo & Yaeger-Dror 2010: 1). They go on to say:

that only a combination of sociolinguistic, anthropological, and phonetic research tools will permit an integrated understanding of how phonetic variation is produced, performed, and perceived in its social context.

Sociophonetic analysis then can be a useful tool not just in describing phonetic variation, but also in shedding light on what exactly that variation might be indexing. It allows us, I believe,

to make judgments and draw conclusions about speakers' identities, attitudes and self-perceptions. However it can do this only when analyzed in conjunction with other factors. These would include the precise context of the recording, the metalinguistic reflections of the speakers themselves as well as level of education, occupation and social networks. The current study is concerned with three vowel sounds taken from Wells's (1982) lexical sets; namely the GOOSE, BATH and BIT vowels.

Analyzing vowels, according to Di Paolo et al (2010: 86), presents challenges not associated with grammatical features of language. "Listener perceptions are not accurate enough to permit a conscientious analyst to rely on his or her ear alone to accurately represent vowel quality or trajectory" (ibid.). We are therefore reliant on some kind of instrumental phonetic analysis. In my case, the computer software programme known as PRAAT. The latter is a software programme developed in the Netherlands for the purpose of measuring "formant frequency values" (See Boersma and Weenink 2011). It can be downloaded free from the following internet address: <http://www.praat.org/>

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The concept of the formant is crucial here. Formants are physical phenomena and not easily defined in abstract terms. Dennis (2008: 32) follows Ladefoged (2006) in describing a formant as "a concentration of acoustic energy which occurs at a particular frequency in a speech wave." The word "concentration" is, I believe, important here. When a vowel is produced in the vocal tract, it is not one single burst of energy in spite of how our ear perceives it. Instead, the vowel is a sound wave that consists of different points where the acoustic energy is concentrated (Ladefoged 2006: 181-182). These concentrated points are what we call formants. Formants are useful for our purposes because they can be measured and then plotted on an axis. The first two formants (F1 and F2) are particularly important. F1 measures vowel 'height' and F2 tells us whether the vowel is back, centralized or fronted. "F1 and F2 have long been understood to supply crucial cues to vowel identity and context" (Di Paolo et al 2010: 93). I intend to focus on the first two formants only. Additional issues which the latter scholars highlight when analyzing vowels include the following:

- Which phonological environments does one include in a data set?
- What is the number of tokens of each lexical set (word class) required to perform a proper analysis?

- What is the best way of measuring formants?
(Di Paolo et al 2010: 87)

The PRAAT software programme allows us to measure the values of F1 and F2. Once we have obtained the values for F1 and F2 of a particular vowel, these can then be plotted on an axis. The vertical Y axis records the F1 values and the horizontal X axis the F2 values. Each interview was saved in wav format and then downloaded onto PRAAT. All relevant tokens for the three vowels were identified using PRAAT, the vowel isolated and the formants logged and then stored on computer. I say relevant tokens as this refers back to the question of which phonological environments to consider. I follow Mesthrie (2010) and Finn (2004) in deciding which phonological environments to use and which ones to ignore.

For GOOSE, there will be three sets of tokens for my data set. Coronals (in example words such as “too” and “do”) and non-coronals (“pool” and “move”) make up the first two sets. The third set is the word “school” which, while also a non-coronal, is being treated separately as it occurs so many times in each interview. For BIT, there will be two sets. The first set consists of words where the BIT vowel is preceded by a velar sound (example “kit” and “give”) or a glottal sound (“hit”). The second set will be all other realizations of the BIT vowel. For BATH, Finn (2004) does not recommend any separation of environments. For all three variables, tokens following /r/ and /l/ will be omitted as these two consonants interfere with the acoustic analysis (Mesthrie 2010: 10).

2.4 Normalization

Watt et al (2010: 111) defines normalization as a process aimed at “factoring out [...] differences in vowel production resulting from anatomical differences between speakers”. These scholars go on to describe normalization as a “standard practice in sociophonetics”, adding that:

The major motivation for normalizing data is that through normalised data one can directly and *quantitatively* compare speakers' and speaker groups' vowel productions with one another (ibid. emphasis in original).

I follow Dennis (2008) and Mesthrie (2010) by using the Watt and Fabricius method of normalization described in Watt et al (2010: 114). This consists of using a complex mathematical algorithm "to eliminate variation caused by physiological differences among speakers" (Watt et al 2010: 112). Fortunately, this process has been simplified through the use of the so-called NORM website <http://ncslaap.lib.edu/tools/norm>. The latter allows one to normalize quite easily by plugging the collected data (formant values) into a special web-based programme which will apply the algorithms itself and effectively normalize the data. Dennis (2008: 39) describes the process of normalization in the following way:

The centroid, *S*, is then calculated as follows: the centroid's F1 value is the sum of the mean F1 values of [i], [ä] and [u¹], divided by three. The F2 value of the centroid is the sum of the mean F2 values of [i], [ä] and [u¹], divided by three. All values of F1 for any vowel are then divided by the F1 of *S*, and all values of F2 for each speaker are divided by the F2 of *S* for that speaker.

Formant values are now converted from Hertz to a ratio and expressed as such when plotted on a graph; example $F1/S(F1)$ and $F2/S(F2)$. This whole process enables us to obtain normalised data for each vowel of each speaker which can then be compared to all the other speakers in the current sample. The work on the phonetics of the English of 'Coloured' speakers done by Wood (1987), Lass (2002) and Finn (2004) will provide reference points for my comparisons of speakers in this sample group and in my estimation of what can be taken to be 'typical' linguistic behavior of 'Coloured' English speakers.

2.5 Integrating theory

Integrating the theoretical approaches mentioned in my first chapter will perhaps provide the greatest challenge to this entire exercise. The key will lie in the personal details of each speaker I interviewed. Speakers who are identical in every way except in level of education or in type of employment will, I suspect, speak slightly differently. This difference can only be explained, I believe, through careful consideration of speakers' backgrounds as well as to the identities the speaker may be projecting through speech. It is to the sensitive issue of 'Coloured' identity and its impact on language to which I now turn.

Chapter 3

Language, identity and the 'Coloured' question.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the question of language and identity with particular reference to the community classified as 'Coloured' in South Africa. My writing is framed by the approach to language and identity developed by scholars such as Edwards (2007), Schilling-Estes (2004), Joseph (2004), Eckert (2000) and Gumperz (1982). These scholars have all contributed to an approach which argues that language actually shapes identity in some way. Identity is not to be viewed solely as something which resides in individual psychology, but rather as something which is produced by semiotic activity such as language. In this chapter I outline the theoretical connections between language and identity with a particular focus on work from variationist sociolinguistics. I then move on to the notion of agency and its relevance for discussions on language and identity. This is followed by a description of recent debates on notions of 'Colouredness'. In chapter 4, I attempt to give some insight into the metalinguistic reflections of the respondents using ideas and tools from the field of Language Ideology.

3.2 Identity in sociolinguistics

There is a rich selection of work on language and identity within the discipline of sociolinguistics. Scholars such as Bucholtz and Hall (2005), Schilling-Estes (2004), Eckert (2000), Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) and Gumperz (1982) all deal extensively with this question. Edwards (2007) and Joseph (2004) are full-length studies of language and identity. The latter gives a useful overview of the interface between sociolinguistics and other disciplines regarding issues of identity. I am particularly interested in his treatment of "Social Identity Theory" (Joseph 2004: 76-78). This theory links an individual's sense of self with "his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups)". Joseph goes on to spell out what he regards as the significance of this theory by claiming the following:

- that social identity pertains to an individual rather than to a social group;
- that it is a matter of *self-concept*, rather than of social categories into which one is assigned by others;
- that the fact of *membership* is the essential aspect, rather than anything having to do with the nature of the group itself;
- that an individual's own knowledge of the membership, and the particular value they attach to it – completely subjective factors – are what count;
- that emotional significance is not some trivial side effect of the identity belonging but an integral part of it. (Joseph 2004: 76)

Joseph singles out Gumperz in the United States and Le Page and Tabouret-Keller in Britain whose work has attempted to pursue an identity-based analysis of language usage. There are several points which need reiteration here. Scholars such as Gumperz are concerned, according to Joseph, with how possible “multiple identities are signaled simultaneously” (Joseph 2004: 79). This is done, Joseph explains:

By analyzing each utterance a speaker makes as an 'act of identity' that can be interpreted multidimensionally as manifesting very complex sets of belongings. (ibid.)

The idea of signaling multiple identities resonates with Fought (2006) and Schilling-Estes (2004). It is important in that it helps clarify the situation amongst 'Coloured' speakers of English living in Cape Town. What we may perceive as 'ethnicity' is only one of the identities which may be signaled through language. Others could include age, gender, sexual orientation, economic class and status as well as family history and location. Fought's book is on ethnic identity and language but she spends a considerable amount of time elaborating on the interplay between the construction of ethnic identity through language and the construction of other types of identity (Fought 2006: 23-25).

Similarly Schilling-Estes makes the claim that “identity, including ethnic identity, is dynamic and multifaceted and very much a product of unfolding talk” (Schilling-Estes 2004: 190). Schilling-Estes's work resonates with Bucholtz and Hall (2005) as well as with Johnstone

(1996). While Johnstone places a much greater emphasis on the linguistic individual, she shares with the other scholars a concern for the interactional nature of identity construction. Schilling-Estes writes from within the quantitative paradigm of sociolinguistics but is also drawn to the importance and usefulness of studying linguistic interaction as a way of shedding light on “variable features” and how these features are used “in displaying, shaping, and re-shaping personal, interpersonal, and group identity” (Schilling-Estes 2004: 190). She goes on to advocate a dual methodology whereby the “broad approach of the quantitative sociolinguist and the in-depth approach of the discourse analyst / interactional sociolinguist” are combined when investigating “localized linguistic practice” (ibid.). It is this approach which I wish to emulate.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 586) make the following argument:

identity does not emerge at a single analytical – whether vowel quality, turn shape, code choice, or ideological structure – but operates at multiple levels simultaneously.

Bucholtz and Hall see identity not simply as constructed, but also as multidimensional; operating in different kinds of ways. They agree with Schilling-Estes (2004) in that they argue that “self-conceptions enter the social world [...] via some form of discourse” (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 587). Language does not merely reflect a pre-existing identity housed in the mind, it is partly responsible for creating that identity. The authors go on to point out that they privilege “the interactional level”, as they believe that it is mainly through discourse or interaction that identity emerges and can be identified. The concept of “emergence” becomes central. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 588) tell us:

Identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon.

My own study deals with the sociophonetic analysis of vowels. Bucholtz and Hall draw on research done within the field of variationism with a particular focus on linguistic style (see Eckert and Rickford 2001). Style can be understood as attention paid to speech by the speaker in response to context and/or interlocutor and the changes in language usage which result from this attention (see Coupland 2007 as well as Labov 2001 and Labov 1966). Sociolinguists of style concentrate on "linguistic structures below the discursive level, such as grammar, phonology and lexis" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 597). A socio-phonetic examination of the English spoken by people classified as 'Coloured' would, for Bucholtz and Hall, fall into the ambit of sociolinguistic style; at least as far as a consideration of the issue of identity is concerned.

3.3 Agency

The issue of language and identity draws considerably on the work of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) on acts of identity. I am concerned with the possibility for speakers, whether consciously or not, to use language to either forge or subvert a uniquely 'Coloured' identity. This brings us to the question of agency in language and language usage. Once again I follow Bucholtz and Hall who argue that agency is a useful concept in analyzing identity in and through language usage. They argue that language usage is an act of agency and that "identity is one kind of social action that agency can accomplish" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 606).

A definition of agency is not an easy proposition. Agency lies somewhere between individual choice and control on the one hand, and systematic language structure on the other. Duranti (2004) proposes a hands-on definition of agency. He says:

Agency is here understood as the property of those entities (i) that have some degree of control over their own behaviour, (ii) whose actions in the world affect other entities' (and sometimes their own), and (iii) whose actions are the object of evaluation. (Duranti 2004: 453)

Duranti continues by arguing that consciousness and intentionality are not the same as agency. Yet he stresses that intentionality (or conscious planning) cannot be dismissed entirely when considering agency. The reason for this is that there “are situations in which human actors might feel (or be judged) unable to act otherwise” (Duranti 2004: 454). This is a key point with regard to the present study. To what extent do people have a choice in the way they speak?

Ahearn (2001: 112) suggests what she calls a bare bones definition of agency by saying that “it refers to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act”. While this definition is too vague and insufficient to be of any real use, it is a helpful starting point. Ahearn stresses the need for linguists and anthropologists to adopt a rigorous approach to the concept of agency and she urges them to be as detailed and explicit as possible when defining the concept. Bourdieu (1991), for example, has written extensively on how certain 'dialects' or 'varieties' are elevated above others. The process is arbitrary in that any variety could, theoretically, have been chosen. Yet it appears to speakers as though the 'official' or 'standard' form of the language has always held this status. Speakers of the prestige form feel naturally superior, while speakers of other forms often feel that they need to use the 'standard' form more often if they wish to widen their employment opportunities and improve their social standing.

The status, or prestige, attached to a particular variety has been fixed as a result of various historical factors. The possibility for people to transcend or subvert such processes stems, I believe, from their agency. This potential for 'linguistic subversion' need not be confined to situations of unequal power relations. The linguistic focusing and diffusion described by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller as 'acts of identity' could also be seen as a manifestation of agency. Focused linguistic norms within a community, social network or peer group represents a type of linguistic closure. Linguistic diffusion, or departures from the norm, would represent a rupture of this closure.

The definition of agency outlined above is not the only approach one could adopt. It carries with it the inherent danger of seeing agency purely as disruption or decentering. This would imply that people who are not being disruptive and who are conforming to linguistic 'norms' are not exercising any agency. Indeed, Ahearn herself cautions against this possible eventuality.

Scholars using the term must define it clearly, both for themselves and for their readers. For anthropologists in particular, *it is important to avoid treating agency as a synonym for free will or resistance.* (Ahearn 2001: 130, emphasis added)

Ahearn goes on to suggest a direction for future research by proposing that different kinds of agency be identified and examined. Ahearn's ideas represent an astute and nuanced approach to agency; one which I endorse even though I am not able (for reasons of space) to fully explore these different types of agency and their implications. Agency is not “a synonym for free will or resistance” and it cannot be equated with choice. I view it, instead, as the capacity of speakers to exercise some degree of control over their actions.

The concept of agency will help shed light on the linguistic behaviour of the speakers I interviewed, in particular, the speech of the so-called outliers. Before moving on to consider extracts from the interviews in greater detail, let us take a closer look at recent writing on the issue of 'Colouredness' and 'Coloured' identity.

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3.4 'Colouredness'

Matters concerning so-called 'Coloured' people are always fraught as a result of the contentious and contested nature of 'Colouredness' and debates about the language of this 'community' will be no different. I am willing to enter this debate because I believe that links between language and identity are interesting and that these issues will be particularly revealing in a study of so-called 'Coloured' English. It is through language more than anything else, as we shall see, that a notion of a 'Coloured' identity could be said to have crystallized. I am inclined to agree with Wood (1987) who highlights the paradoxical nature of 'Coloured' identity.

In response to the domination and labeling by 'Whites', a covert identification with fellow community members exists. Thus a [overt] rejection of 'coloured' identity is nevertheless accompanied by a loyalty to personal networks. (Wood 1987: 67)

This is the paradox; on the one hand there is a powerful anti-racist ethos which runs through sections of the 'Coloured' community in Cape Town. This type of thinking was closely linked to the struggle against apartheid and had been nurtured by several radical organizations which were small but highly influential (Adhikari 2005: 98-115). The ethos had a strong tendency to disavow any notion of a separate 'Coloured' identity. On the other hand social networks were very strong and tended to shape social identity in a powerful way. This becomes even more salient when one considers that for much of the twentieth century, people classified as 'Coloured', like all people in apartheid South Africa, were compelled by state regulation to lead very separate and insulated lives. They lived in designated areas and attended designated schools with little mixing with other 'groups'.

Writers such as Adhikari (2005) and Erasmus (2001) have drawn attention to the so-called intermediary status of 'Coloured' people in South Africa, with Adhikari (2005: 12) pointing out the following:

The structurally ambiguous position of the Coloured community within the South African racial hierarchy [...] played an important part in reinforcing and reproducing the identity.

The respondents I interviewed are people who mostly grew up in an environment where non-racialism was desired in principle, but not really attainable in practice for a range of reasons. The question then becomes: Do people use their speech to index their position in the world, and if so how?

Adhikari (2009) identifies four approaches or paradigms through which 'Coloured' identity has been conceptualized in recent decades. Firstly, an essentialist approach which Adhikari argues was explicitly racial or racialised as it viewed 'Colouredness' as clearly defined category to which people either did or did not belong. 'Coloureds' thus made up a separate ethnic grouping and membership was determined based on a range of factors including physical appearance and skin colour as well as family background and history. It is not possible here to detail the various sources of essentialism, however, as Adhikari notes, they all assigned "racial origins and characteristics to the concept of colouredness" (Adhikari

2009: 10). In addition, according to Adhikari, essentialism formed the dominant paradigm for writing on 'Coloured' identity until the 1980s. As pressure on the apartheid state, both locally and internationally, increased in the 1980s, so essentialism gave way to a second approach namely instrumentalism. Adhikari (2009: 12) explains this approach as follows:

[it] stemmed from a refusal to give credence to apartheid thinking, or in the case of the expedient, the fear of being accused of doing so.

Although this approach seemed blind to the reality of racial divisions within black South Africa and of coloured exclusivism, it did score significant political successes in that it helped create a united front against apartheid and played a role in undermining white domination.

Instrumentalism viewed 'Coloured' identity as something not worthy of any attention or legitimacy. Instead, the concept of 'Coloured' identity was dismissed as an invention of the apartheid state with the intention of dividing the oppressed population of South Africa. The third and fourth approaches to 'Coloured' identity are the ones most relevant to my own work. Adhikari (2009: 13) terms the third approach "social constructionism" and explains it in the following way:

The basic assumption of this genre is that coloured identity cannot be taken as given but is a product of human agency dependent on a complex interplay of historical, social, cultural, political and other contingencies. It is neither ordained by God nor a product of nature as essentialists imply, nor is it a device conjured up by the machinations of white supremacism as instrumentalists argue.

What needs to happen, according to the social constructionist approach, is that we need to consider the relationship between the institutions of state such as education system and legal framework on the one hand and the capacity of individuals to forge their own identity on

the other. This relationship is not a case of one imposing itself on the other. It is a complex process of individuals responding to the pressures of institutionalized and entrenched discrimination and responding in creative and multifaceted ways. Social constructionists seek to explain “how and why coloured identity came into existence and to unravel the intricate ways in which it has found expression” (Adhikari 2009: 14). Adhikari (2009: 15) goes on to tell us

Social constructionist histories have therefore been at pains to demonstrate the complexity of coloured identity and, most importantly, to stress the agency of coloured people in the making of their identity.

The social constructionist approach not only supports the ontological existence of 'Coloured' identity as something which cannot be dismissed or wished away, it also places a renewed emphasis on individual consciousness and behavior in explaining the origin of that identity.

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The fourth approach of “conceptualising coloured identity as a product of creolisation” can be seen as an offshoot of social constructionism (Adhikari 2009: 16). Its basic premise is that 'Coloured' identity is a product of “cultural creativity shaped by South Africa's history” and not a product of “racial mixture” (ibid). The latter two approaches have a bearing on the current study in that they help us to think about what could be shaping the way the respondents in the study speak. Both personal and group identities are closely connected to language, a recurring theme in the works on the sociolinguistics of identity cited at the beginning of this chapter. While noting that much sociolinguistic scholarship has focused on groups and not on individual speakers, Johnstone (1996: 13) also points out the following:

Newer approaches to linguistic variation and pragmatic interpretation locate language and dialect in the individual's creative choices for how to talk and understand. These approaches stress the dynamic, changing nature of social groupings, the importance of personal identity and its linguistic expression, and the indeterminacy of meaning.

The dynamic, contested and shifting nature of social groupings and social identity are shaped by and reflected in language usage. The accents of my respondents, at least the sample I have in the form of the sociolinguistic interviews I collected, are shaped by a number of factors. These include historical considerations such as the development of English in South Africa and in particular the influence of language contact with Afrikaans and other languages. It also includes the nature of the interaction and the presence of a researcher. Equally salient, however, would be the respondents' ability and desire to sound a particular way. While it is not always possible to access or evaluate the motivations of a speaker, I am convinced that the complex relationship between language and identity plays an important role in determining what people sound like in any context.

Milroy and Gordon (2006: 130) refer to "dialect levelling" which they describe as "the eradication of socially or locally marked variants in conditions of social or geographical mobility and resultant dialect contact". If the English spoken by 'Coloured' speakers is to be seen as a socially marked variant, then it could be a candidate for the type of 'dialect' levelling Milroy and Gordon discuss. There is evidence in South Africa, however, of the opposite of this process occurring. Mesthrie (2010) and Dennis (2008) report a significant affinity by speakers for the English of 'Coloured' people despite some movement toward features of English associated with the formerly dominant 'White' population. It will be interesting to discover the extent to which this 'dialect' loyalty is evident amongst the speakers I interview.

3.5 Conclusion

Work done on the language of South Africans classified as 'Coloured' is inextricably linked to notions of identity as is evident from a range of studies such as Dennis (2008), McCormick (2002), Stone (2002), Malan (1996) and Wood (1987).

Recurrent themes include the following:

- the historical marginalization of 'Coloured' people in political, economic and social terms;

- the community's lack of homogeneity (both currently and in the past) in terms of socio-economic class, level of education, income and status;
- the existence of a strong sense of community which binds people together and which is based on social networks which have been forged over time and revolve around neighbourhoods, shared schooling as well as extended family and friendship circles;
- the preoccupation with public perceptions and with notions of 'respectability' and 'decency' as discussed in Adhikari (2009), Adhikari (2005), Stone (2002) and Erasmus (2001).

Added to these considerations would be my own position as a 'member' of this 'community' who comes from the same social milieu as many of the speakers I interviewed. All of the factors listed above affect the identity and the language usage of the twenty individuals I spoke to.

It is important to bear in mind that the notion of identity I am working with is one which sees identity not as static but as something that is constantly being created. And that the latter process is accomplished mainly through the dialogics of talk and linguistic interaction. It is not possible, in my opinion, to rely solely on any kind of acoustic analysis of phonetic variables as the insight gained from such analysis, while important and useful, will always be limited. Instead, attention will also have to be paid to other sources of information. These include topics of conversation during the sociolinguistic interview and in particular, responses gleaned from metalinguistic questions such as those dealt with earlier in this chapter.

This is the approach adopted by Dennis (2008) who interviewed twenty young (aged 18-24) 'Coloured' English speakers for her research. Metalinguistic questions proved invaluable in determining what speakers thought about their own accents and the accents of others. Repeatedly, Dennis found evidence of a strong allegiance to a 'Coloured' identity with several respondents stating explicitly that it was "cool to be coloured" (Dennis 2008: 73). This overt identification with 'Coloured' identity is not present in the speakers I interview. Instead, there is a more subtle allegiance. My respondents are more cautious and pragmatic in their views. While there is clear disdain for so-called coconuts and repudiation of any attempts by peers or colleagues to sound 'White', there are also deep misgivings about so-

called *gamtaal* or any non-standard, 'broken' or stigmatized language. Those who admit to using these forms are quick to point out that it is a stylistic choice on their part and usually meant to be a source of humour or a way to mock those for whom such stigmatized language represents a kind of vernacular. For many though, these forms of language are considered vulgar and not respectable and should be avoided at all times. In the chapters which follow I turn to the analysis of the speech of the twenty speakers involved in the study. I attempt to operationalize the theoretical and conceptual tools that I have discussed thus far.

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Chapter 4

Findings Part 1: sociophonetics

4.1 Introduction

The first part of this chapter presents the findings of the sociophonetic analysis of the GOOSE, BATH and KIT vowels with reference to the research questions raised in chapter 1. Each vowel is done separately. I begin each section with an overview of the literature of the vowel taken from Mesthrie (2010), Bekker (2009), Dennis (2008), Da Silva (2007), Finn (2004) and Wood (1987). This is followed by a description of the realisations of each vowel among the twenty speakers I interviewed. Finally, I attempt to operationalize the theoretical concepts dealt with chapters two and four. I begin by representing graphically the vowel system of two speakers; one lower middle class speaker (Darren) and one middle class speaker (Simon). These speakers were chosen because they display, what I regard, as a typical accent of a Cape Town 'Coloured' speaker of English.

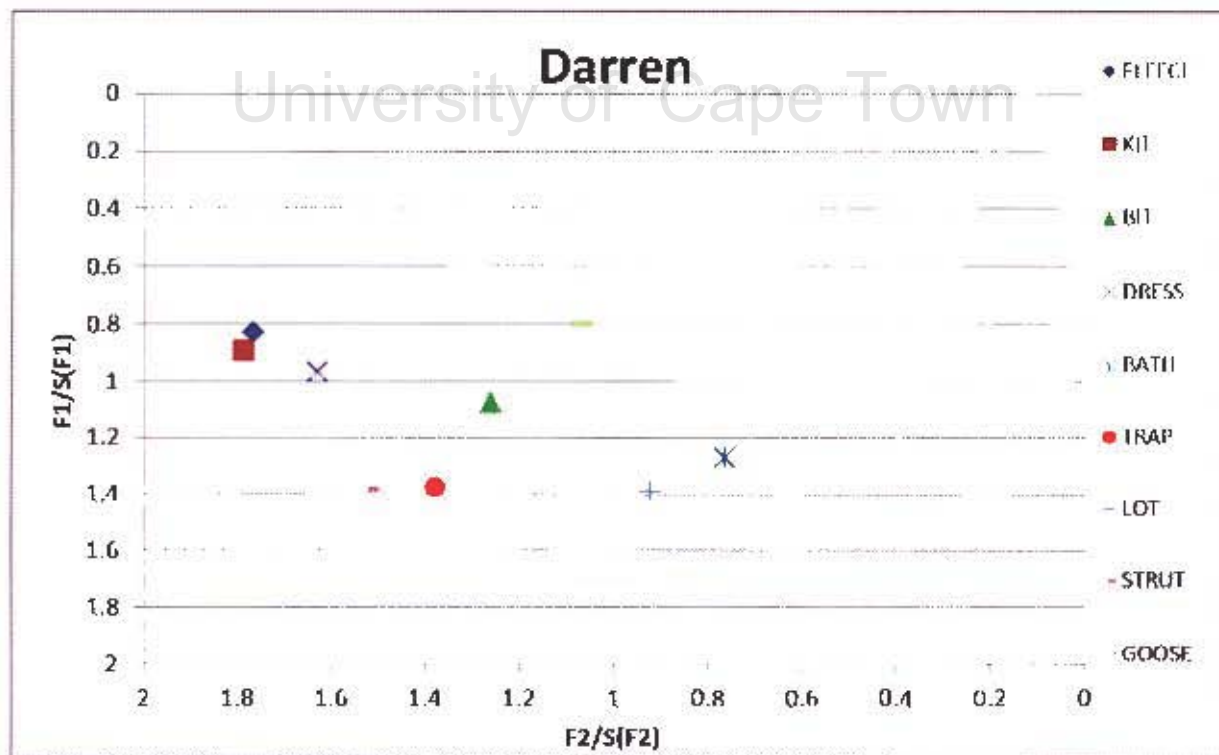


Figure 1: Normalised Word List Tokens for Darren (a typical lower middle class 'Coloured' speaker).

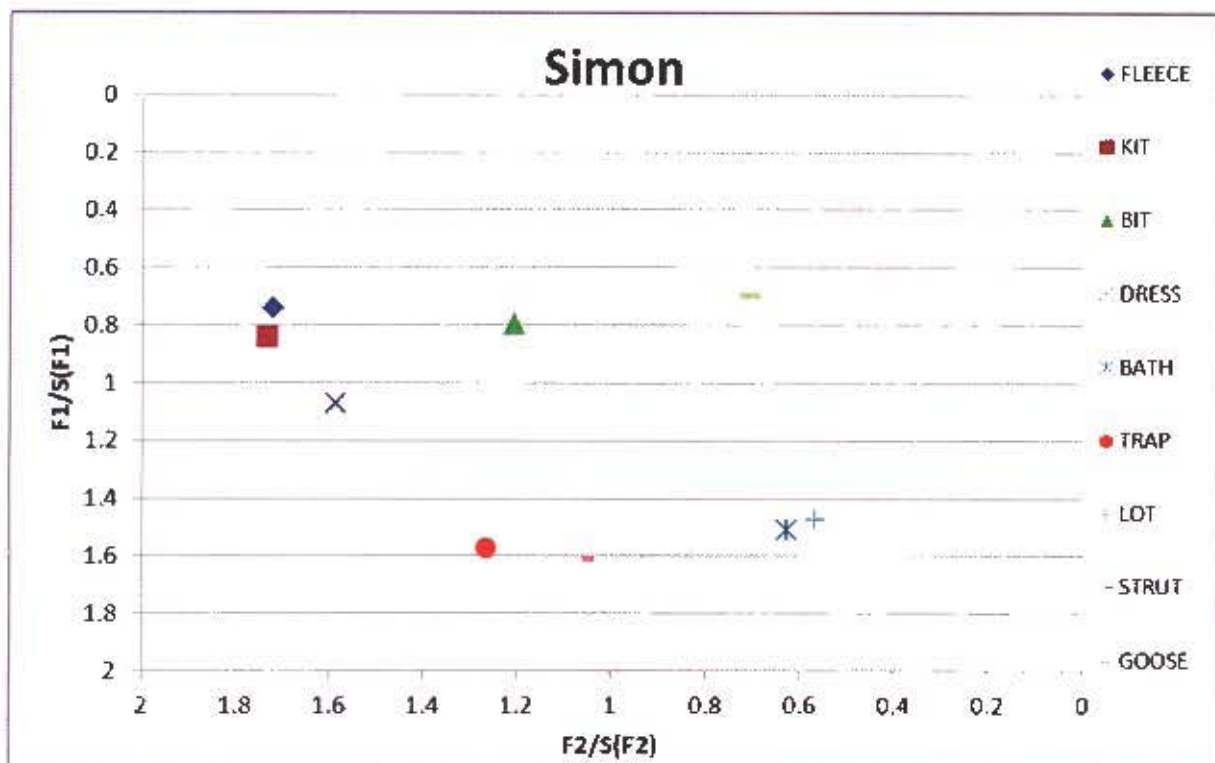


Figure 2: Normalised Word List Tokens for Simon (a typical middle class 'Coloured' speaker)

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The graphs of these two speakers will form the basis for comparisons when examining the results for the interview style tokens for the three vowel variables for the twenty speakers.

4.2 Results: preamble

Before moving on to discuss the three vowels selected for this study, I wish to provide some further points of reference regarding different 'varieties' of English in South Africa. I use two recent studies to do so. Chevalier (2011) which looked at 'Indian' English speakers in Durban; and Wileman (2011) which looked at realisations of three vowels amongst young 'White' English speakers in Cape Town and Durban. The following three tables represent values for F1/S(F1) and F2/S(F2) for GOOSE, BATH and KIT respectively for word list tokens of "typical speakers" chosen by Chevalier and Wileman.

	GOOSE F1/S (F1)	GOOSE F2/S (F2)
'Typical' Male Cape Town Speaker (Wileman 2011: 38)	0.9	1.6
'Typical' Female Cape Town Speaker (Wileman 2011: 40)	0.7	1.3
'Typical' 'Indian' male speaker (Chevalier 2011: 36)	0.8	1.1
'Typical' 'Indian' female speaker (ibid.)	0.8	0.8

Table 3: Normalised word list tokens of GOOSE taken from Chevalier (2011) and Wileman (2011).

	BATH F1/S (F1)	BATH F2/S (F2)
'Typical' Male Cape Town Speaker (Wileman 2011: 38)	1.4	0.8
'Typical' Female Cape Town Speaker (Wileman 2011: 40)	1.1	0.8
'Typical' 'Indian' male speaker (Chevalier 2011: 36)	1.5	0.8
'Typical' 'Indian' female speaker (ibid.)	1.3	1.2

Table 4: Normalised word list tokens of BATH taken from Chevalier (2011) and Wileman (2011).

	KIT F1/S (F1)	KIT F2/S (F2)
'Typical' Male Cape Town Speaker (Wileman 2011: 38)	1.2	1.3
'Typical' Female Cape Town Speaker (Wileman 2011: 40)	0.9	1.3
'Typical' 'Indian' male speaker (Chevalier 2011: 36)	1.0	1.4
'Typical' 'Indian' female speaker (ibid.)	1.0	0.9

Table 5: Normalised word list tokens of KIT taken from Chevalier (2011) and Wileman (2011).

Once again the purpose here is to provide a basis for comparison when looking at the results from the current research for the GOOSE, BATH and KIT vowels.

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4.3 The GOOSE vowel: an overview

Da Silva (2007: 93) follows Lass (2002) by pointing out that GOOSE is a “socially significant variable in South African English” and that it may be seen as an “ethnic marker”. It must be noted that South African English (SAE), as mentioned before, is associated primarily with the country’s ‘White’ community. The fact that GOOSE can be an “ethnic marker” does not imply that it can be used as a way to separate ‘ethnic’ groupings in the country as ethnicity is not something which is fixed. Finn (2004: 972), in his chapter on Cape Flats English (CFE), notes the following:

CFE (as well as South African Indian English; see Mesthrie 1995: 253) is to be distinguished from [SAE] by typically having old-fashioned [in SAE terms] realisations for GOOSE, in the area of [u:] – that is, with a marked degree of backing and rounding (as also for FOOT).

The manifestations of GOOSE in SAE has been documented, albeit briefly, not only by Da Silva (2007: 93), but also by Bowerman (2004) and Lass (2002). These scholars report that 'White' speakers display a GOOSE vowel which is "usually high central [...] or fronter, significantly more forward than its RP equivalent". (Bowerman 2004: 937) Chevalier (2011), Mesthrie (2010) and Dennis (2008) represent more in-depth studies of GOOSE in South Africa. Mesthrie (2010: 19) notes that the overall GOOSE values for the 'Coloured' speakers he interviewed were "consistently backer than those of the reference group". The reference group Mesthrie mentions refers to 'White' South African English speakers. While expressing reservations he argues that it is reasonable to use 'White' speakers as a point of reference for a "socio-phonetic analysis of present-day, middle-class [young people's] English". (Mesthrie 2010: 12) With regard to the young 'Coloured' speakers who participated in his study, Mesthrie makes the following observation:

The Coloured speakers in the sample are thus still influenced by community norms of their early childhood, which present an opposing force to middle-class accommodation: viz. to speak in ways acceptable within their former home communities. (Mesthrie 2010: 20)

Dennis (2008) is a study of twenty young 'Coloured' students most of whom attended very well-resourced formerly 'Whites' only schools. She follows Wood (1987) in proposing a continuum between 'White' South African English (WSAE) and CFE for the purpose of the analysis of the sample she collected. (Dennis 2008: 50) The continuum would run from Respectable SAE through Extreme SAE and then, presumably, on to Conservative, Respectable and Extreme forms of CFE. Dennis (2008: 58) draws the following conclusion from her research:

The informants in the sample are placed at various points along the WSAE-CFE continuum. Some are closer to the WSAE end, evident in their use of a fronted GOOSE variant, which is widely reported in WSAE. None of the speakers in the sample fall at the extremes of the continuum, however, using either WSAE or CFE consistently.

Dennis's and Wood's use of a continuum enables researchers to avoid the assumption that both WSAE and CFE, and their various forms (Conservative, Respectable etc.) can all be defined in absolute terms which is not really the case. Instead it is possible to identify linguistic features which cluster around certain groups; features which enjoy a high frequency of usage within one group and a low frequency within another. Wood's approach is equally nuanced. While his study is about 'Coloured' speakers, he refutes the notion that 'Coloured' and 'White' speakers of English constitute completely separate speech communities. (Wood 1987: 75)

Wood goes on to make the following useful comment regarding the differences within the 'Coloured' community:

I will try to show that 'coloureds' in Cape Town use language in somewhat different ways from those in the surrounding rural areas. I have described 'coloureds' in Cape Town as often being members of 'micro communities' and a 'macro community' to account for two different levels of norm sharing, both linguistic and non-linguistic. (ibid.)

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Wood's formulation of macro and micro communities resonates strongly with Eckert's (2008) conception of the macrosociological and how it shapes the individual and his/her linguistic practice. Wood is touching on the issues I raised in chapters one and three. Linguistic focusing occurs mostly at the level of the micro community (close family, friends and neighbours), while diffusion is more visible at the level of the macro-community (interaction with sales people, government officials, and possibly in the work environment if the latter is not in the home community).

In the environmental division of GOOSE I am guided by Mesthrie (2010). There are three sets with the first two being where the GOOSE vowel was preceded by a coronal sound (as in *do*, *to*, *soon*, *choose*, *shoes*) and a non-coronal sound (as in *cool*, *pool*, *move*) respectively. The token *school* forms a set on its own as a result of the high frequency of its usage and the fact that it is preceded by [k] and followed by a lateral [l] which causes backing. Table 6 below shows the numerical distribution of the three sets among the twenty speakers:

Name	Coronal	Non-Coronal (Excluding School)	School Tokens	Total
Beryl	10	4	9	23
Carla	17	14	37	68
Carmen	13	8	17	38
Darren	16	1	10	27
Ellen	23	4	21	48
Gary	11	2	2	15
James	9	6	19	34
Joan	1	9	11	21
Karen	9	3	6	18
Kevin	13	7	23	43
Lara	8	2	14	24
Liz	11	1	14	26
Maggie	16	8	31	55
Mark	4	1	20	25
Ned	19	10	23	52
Neville	15	2	43	64
Rose	21	14	45	80
Sharon	12	5	9	26
Shireen	8	1	4	13
Simon	10	16	30	56

Table 6: Number of GOOSE tokens (normalised) for each speaker separated by phonetic environment.

4.4 Results: GOOSE

In the description of the behaviour of GOOSE among my twenty speakers, I make use of the fronting scale developed by Mesthrie (2010: 12). According to the scale, fronting is measured by values for F2/S (F2) reflected along the X axis. Examining this axis, 1.2 is the cut-off point for a moderately fronted GOOSE vowel and 1.4 is the cut-off point for a fully fronted one. A centralised GOOSE vowel would fall between 0.8 and 1.2 which is a wide range. 0.8 to 0.6 would be backish and anything lower than 0.6 would be a fully back GOOSE vowel. I have adapted the scale which is shown in figure 3 below.

Front	Frontish	Central	Backish	Back		
1.6	1.4	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.4

Figure 3: Fronting Scale for GOOSE vowel

The graph below (figure 4) shows normalised mean values of the *school* token for all twenty informants.

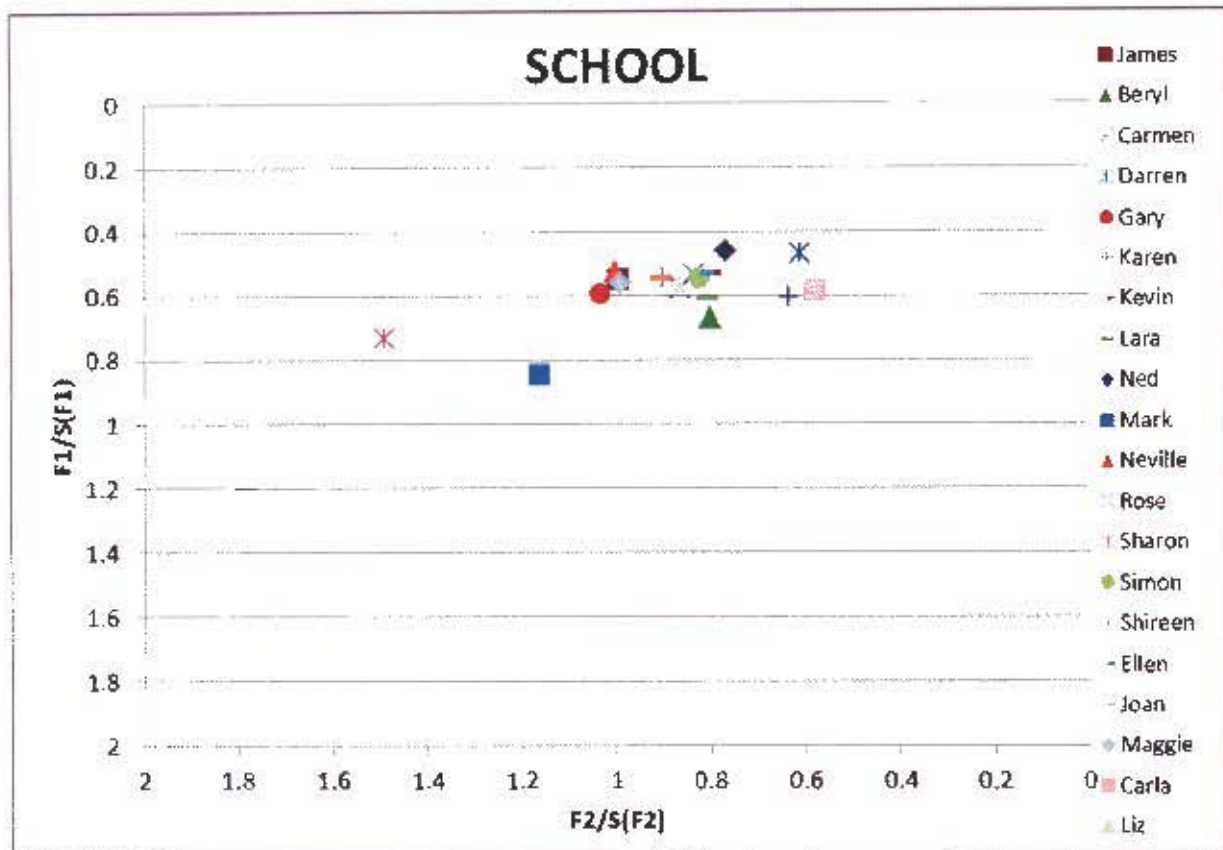


Figure 4: Normalised mean values for *school* for all twenty speakers.

According to the fronting scale (figure 3), most speakers interviewed are realising *school* as either a central or backish vowel. Three speakers are approaching a fully back realisation of *school*, while there is only one person (Sharon) who displays a fully fronted GOOSE with Mark approaching fully fronted. These latter two speakers are outliers in comparison to the rest of the sample. These results appear to echo the findings of Mesthrie (2010: 16) who reports that none of the speakers he focussed on used frontish or fronted GOOSE after non-coronal sounds (this includes *school* tokens). Mesthrie's findings in turn echo Dennis (2008) who reports the following:

None of my informants use fully front [y] for GOOSE, as is fashionable amongst young, white female speakers (Lass 2002: 116). They all use variants between back [u] and centralised [i]. (Dennis 2008: 53)

These findings are interesting given that the 'Coloured' speakers interviewed by both Mesthrie and Dennis were all young and middle-class and not of the same generation as most of the speakers in my study. The phonetic environments must of course be considered when examining the behaviour of *school* tokens. Mesthrie (2010: 14) tells us that the environment which is least likely to result in fully fronted values would be where "a non-coronal consonant precedes and /l/ follows the GOOSE vowel". This, however, appears to be contradicted by Finn (2004: 972) who says that "realisations [of GOOSE] are not apparently affected by following /l/". Let us look at a representation of the graph in figure 5, this time with speakers divided along lines of social class.

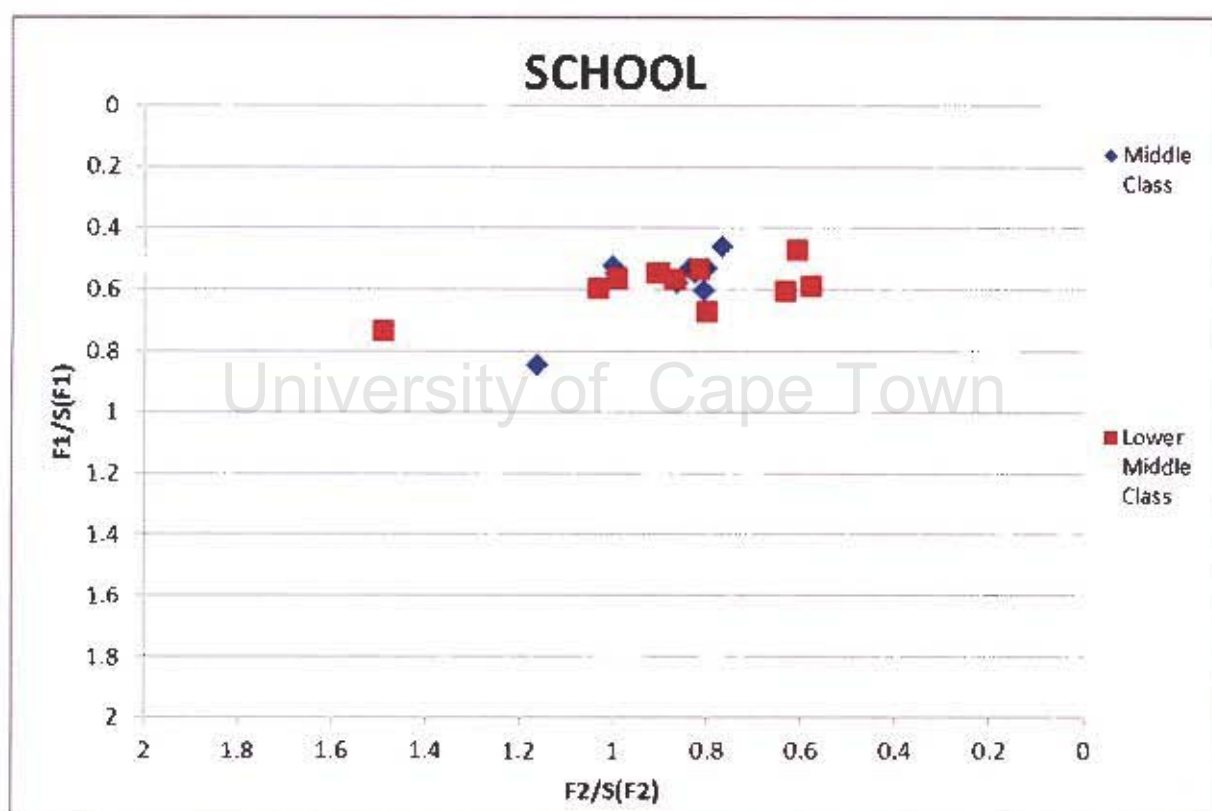


Figure 5: Normalised mean values for *School* (MC versus LMC).

It is interesting to note that the two outliers (Mark and Sharon) come from different class groupings. Both of them deal with the public and with a wide variety of people in their daily work life. There is strong clustering of both middle class and lower middle class speakers in the centralised to backish region with the three fully back speakers all being lower middle class.

Figure 6 below represents a graph of the findings for GOOSE vowels preceded by a non-coronal sound (excluding *school*). The graph shows mean normalised values:

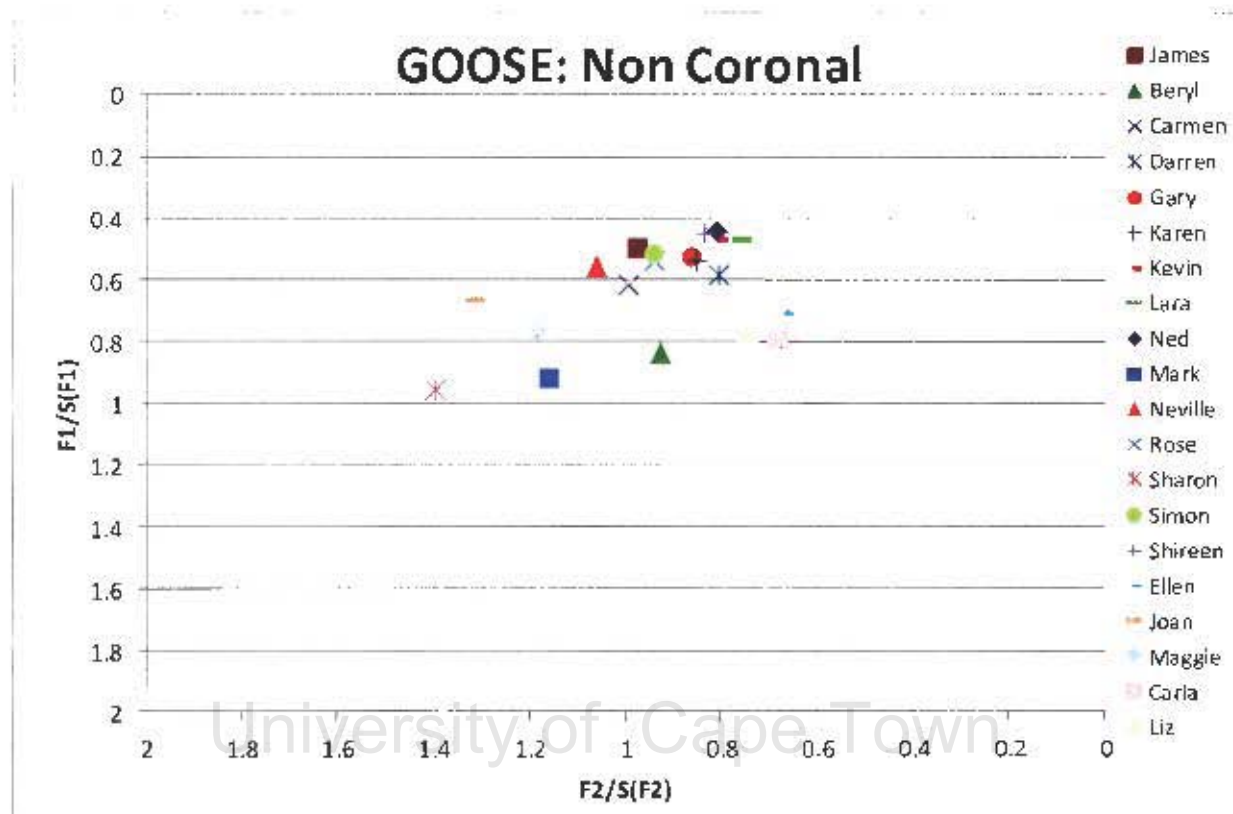


Figure 6: Normalised mean values for GOOSE *non-coronal* (excluding *school*) for all twenty speakers.

The picture here is fairly similar to the one reported above for *school*. Sharon leads but is now joined by three others (Mark, Maggie and Joan) in displaying frontish to fully fronted realisations. The rest are evenly split between displaying a central to frontish value on the one hand, and a backish realisation on the other. The evidence presented above is therefore countering Finn's claim that the /l/ in *school* is not pulling the vowel back. The tokens reflected in figure 6 (eg. *move, moving, movies*) do appear to be more fronted than the *school* tokens reflected in figure 5. What is most interesting here is the difference between these speakers and the ones reported on in Mesthrie (2010). In the latter study, not one of the twelve young 'Coloured' speakers displayed a value higher than 1.2 for F2/S(F2) in the non-coronal environment. In fact more than half were under 0.8 which is approaching a back

vowe. The younger speakers in Mesthrie's study are therefore displaying quite strong 'dialect loyalty'

They are more focussed overall than the speakers involved in the current study. Figure 7 below shows Non-coronal GOOSE along lines of class.

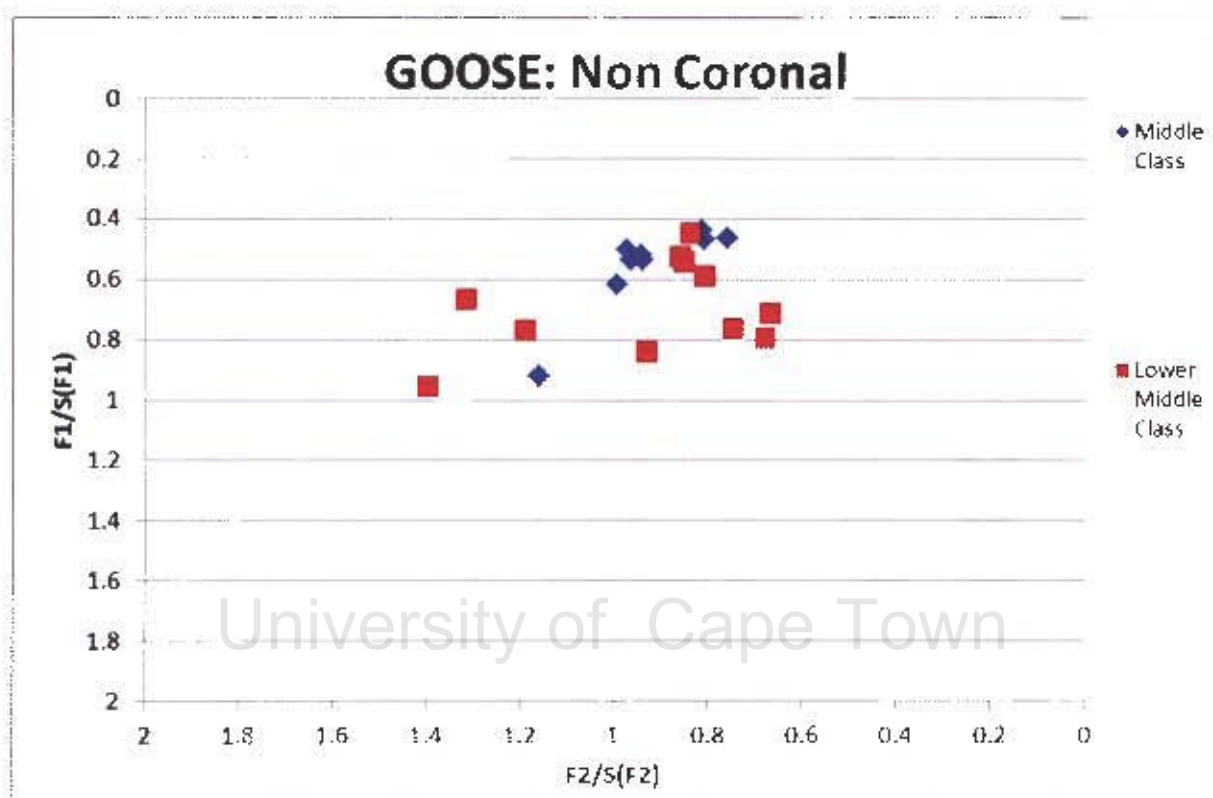


Figure 7: Normalised mean values for GOOSE non-coronal (MC versus LMC).

In figure 7 we see that the middle class speakers are more focused while the lower middle class speakers are more diffuse. It is the speakers who work in customer service type jobs (Maggie, Joan and Sharon) who are fronting noticeably as well as Mark who works as specialist physician.

Figure 8 below is a representation of GOOSE in the coronal environment showing normalised mean values for GOOSE after a coronal sound (*to, do, too, soon, shoes, choose* etc) for all twenty speakers.

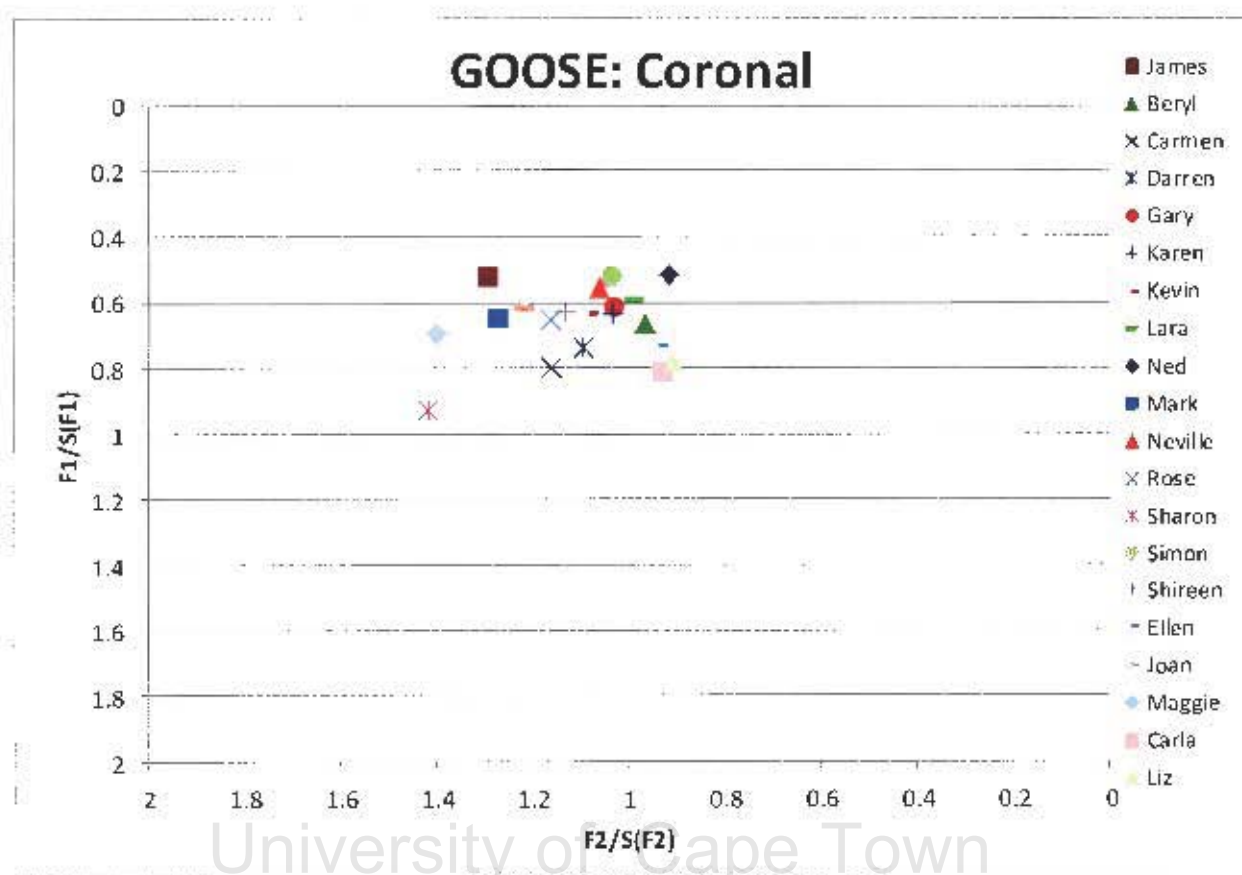


Figure 8: Normalised mean values for GOOSE coronal for all twenty speakers.

We see that Sharon and Maggie are once again around the fully fronted mark of 1.4. They are joined this time by James and Mark who are very frontish. The remaining speakers are either frontish or central with no backish realisations. Once again there is a difference between these findings and those reported by Mesthrie (2010). The latter reports no frontish realisations for GOOSE after a coronal sound and only one fully fronted realisation which Mesthrie describes as an outlier. Let us now look at the same graph this time comparing middle class to lower middle class speakers.

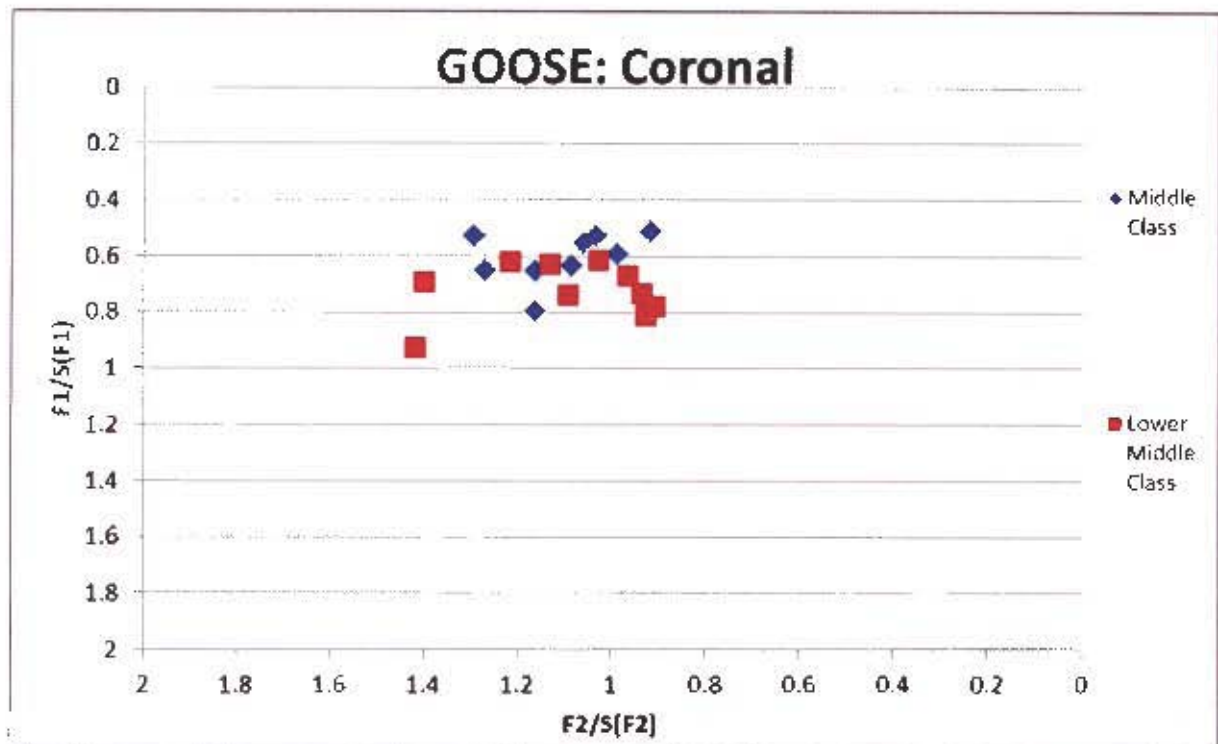


Figure 9: Normalised mean values for GOOSE coronal (MC versus LMC).

If we take 1.2 as the cut-off point for fronting, then we see that three lower middle class speakers who work in highly visible jobs (Joan, Maggie and Sharon) are fronting together with James and Mark who are highly educated university graduates. Once again we see that the lower middle class speakers are more diffuse than their middle class counterparts.

Finn's brief commentary on GOOSE in what he calls Cape Flats English does generally support my own findings as well as those of both Mesthrie and Dennis. Let us consider the following quote:

Lass [...] claims that there is a strong tendency to avoid fronter values even in very standard registers. However, my data revealed that some (mainly L1) speakers do approximate to the more centralised SAE norm. (Finn 2004: 972)

Centralised GOOSE appears to be well represented in my own data. There is also quite convincing evidence from figures 4 to 9 that fully fronted values of GOOSE are being avoided. This does not apply to frontish or moderately fronted values of GOOSE, 1.0-1.4 for F2/S (F2), which are also well represented in the group of speakers I interviewed. How could we interpret this degree of fronting and how can we link it to earlier discussions on identity and 'Colouredness'? The answer needs to be sought by taking three different factors into account: 1) personal information, 2) context and location of the interview and 3) habitus.

- The personal refers to the background of each of the twenty speakers; their level of education, current occupation, age, life experience and social networks.
- By context I am referring to the sociolinguistic interview as a speech event. This remains largely consistent despite changes in the physical location of the interviews and some fluctuations in the duration of interviews. The interview format, interlocutors and the level of formality remained roughly the same across all twenty interviews.
- Habitus draws on the historical dimension and refers to the factors which may be shaping how these speakers sound and how they want to sound and why.

My analysis is informed by a hermeneutic approach in that it adopts an interpretive stance to action. While it is rooted in theory, this approach seeks to shed light on human agency and social action. The reasons for actions may ultimately not be accessible to an observer however, we are able to draw some conclusions on what Eckert (2000: 41) calls "variation, style and the making of social meaning". Let us consider the following lengthy quote as a way into the questions of interpretation, social practice and social meaning:

The many studies of variation that followed the Martha's Vineyard study have recognized social categories as stand-ins for social practice, and have appealed to practice to explain large-scale correlations. One could say that the study of variation is implicitly a study of social practice, but is built on a theory of structure. Since structure and not practice has been the primary object of study, data on variation do not include robust accounts of practice. (Eckert 2000: 44)

While the above quote represents an over-generalization, it is helpful in articulating the type of focus I wish to adopt. A "robust account of practice" is what I shall attempt by appealing to the personal, the contextual and the habitus as factors which shape linguistic behaviour. It is only by going beyond structure that we can hope to gain insight into the social meaning of style and sociolinguistic variation.

This approach is documented in Eckert (2008), Eckert and Rickford (2001) and Eckert (2000). Coupland (2001:209) spells out these methods more clearly, saying that "data appear to demand a far broader, more flexible, interpretive, and ethnographic apparatus to capture the stylistic processes at work". More specifically, Coupland draws on the earlier work of Bakhtin when he introduces and discusses the term "dialogic" to describe the process of sociolinguistic style and variation. This term is relevant for my own work. It refers to the notion that all talk is contextually situated and that when my informants produced talk within the confines of the sociolinguistic interview, it was always *in relation* to either myself or Professor Mesthrie who conducted a few of the interviews. It is likely that the interviews produced an asymmetrical power relationship between myself and the informants. The presence of a university-based researcher often results in a situation where speakers feel the need to sound more 'proper', 'correct' or 'refined' than normally would be the case. This would help explain frontish values of GOOSE as these values are strongly associated with more affluent first language English speakers who, in this country, happen to be 'White'. (See Bowerman 2004 and Lass 2002.) It is of course possible that fronting of GOOSE for Joan, Maggie and Sharon is not merely restricted to formal settings such as interviews.

The explanation of accommodation to the interviewer might be sufficient in accounting for the more fronted values of Joan, Maggie and Sharon all of whom are not educated beyond the high school level but work with the public in customer service type jobs. It is, however, less convincing when explaining the behaviour of Mark, James, Rose, Carmen and Neville who are all very well educated and also display fairly frontish values for GOOSE. Here the personal would be more significant and we would have to consider the professional status of these five speakers as well as their current jobs and educational qualifications. Similarly, the more backish values of people such as Beryl, Ellen, Liz and Ned can be explained with

reference to not only their relative lack of education, but also by their strong ties to the communities where they live and work. Again it is important to stress that I am looking only at the tokens of GOOSE collected from the interviews I conducted.

The most remarkable speakers, in my view, are Carla, Lara and Simon. These three all produce consistently backish values of GOOSE despite being highly educated and not very involved in 'the community' (in the case of Lara and Simon) or being employed in very visible and prestigious settings (in the case of Carla and Simon). Here it would be necessary to appeal to the social networks of these speakers in addition to considering habitus and personal background. Carla, Lara and Simon all have strong ties to their 'home communities'. Simon has lived in Athlone practically his whole life despite being an academic and very well-educated. He also maintains links to community organizations such as civic associations.

4.5 Results: BATH

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According to Finn (2004: 970) BATH in CFE is typically raised and rounded. There is also evidence from Wood (1987: 123) that there is a DANCE subset which is typically realised as a TRAP vowel among so-called Extreme CFE speakers. There is, however, no evidence that this is replicated among the twenty speakers I interviewed. Finn also indicates that, unlike GOOSE, there is no significant variation of the BATH vowel in CFE based on phonetic environments. Figure 10 below shows normalised mean values of all BATH tokens for all twenty speakers. The set includes words such as *bath*, *can't*, *dark*, *far*, *farm*, *father*, *park*, *path*, *start* etc.

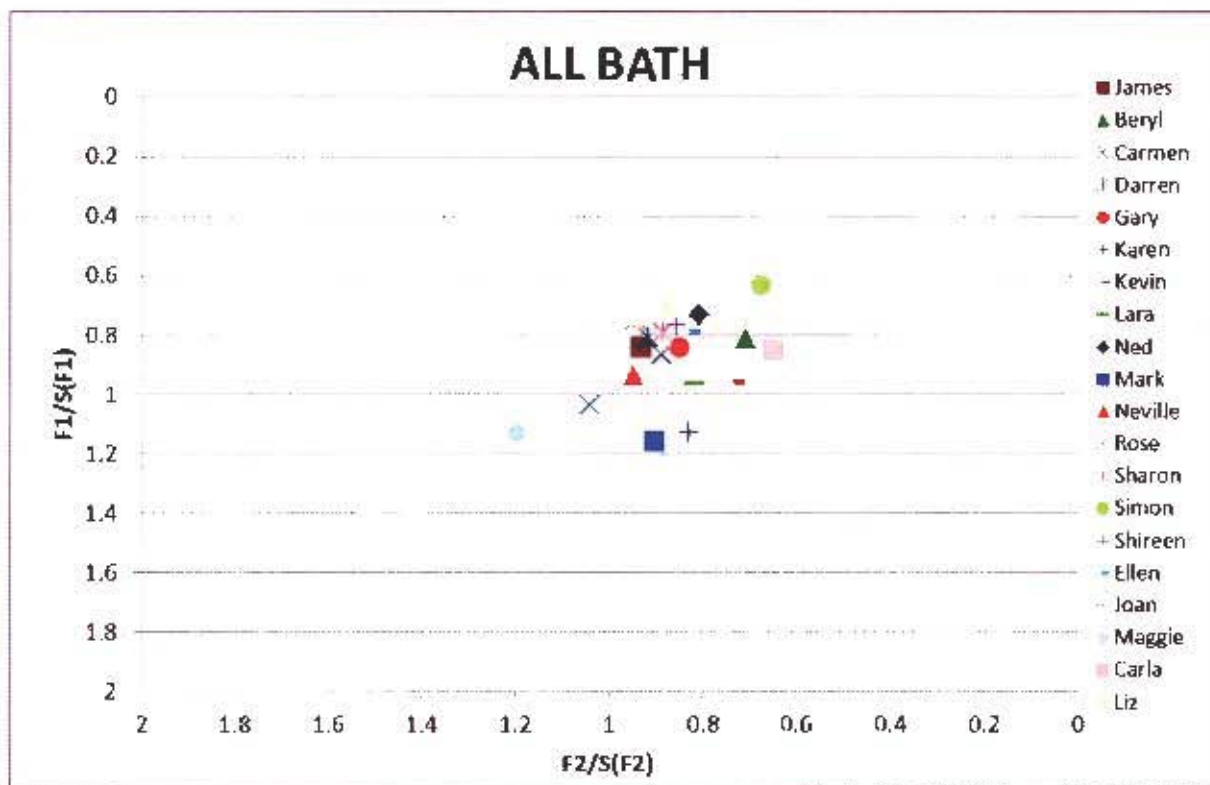


Figure 10: Normalised mean values for BATH for all twenty speakers.

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The Y-Axis ($F1/S(F1)$) measures vowel height. The lower the value for $F1/S$ the *higher* the BATH vowel. Bowerman (2004: 937) tells us that in 'White' South African English, generally speaking, the BATH vowel is typically "low and fully back" with "cultivated" speakers realising a "more central version".

Figure 10 therefore represents strong evidence that most of the twenty speakers in this study do approximate, at least as far as BATH is concerned, the variety known as Cape Flats English. There are only four speakers with mean values for BATH higher than the 1.0 mark for $F1/S(F1)$, with most speakers clustering between the 0.6 and 1.0 mark. The group of twenty speakers forms a fairly homogeneous group with Karen, Maggie, Mark and Rose being possible exceptions here.

If we follow Dennis's (2008: 50) continuum between 'White' and 'Coloured' varieties of English, then "one end of the continuum is represented by the back [and low], Respectable SAE [a:] and the other by the raised and rounded Cape Town CFE variant". There is scant literature available telling us exactly which values (in Hertz) should be seen as "raised", "low"

etc. I therefore have to rely on my own intuition to some extent but also on the findings of other scholars. Table 4 (page 47) showed that speakers interviewed in Chevalier (2011) and Wileman (2011) are realising BATH between 1.5 and 1.1 for F1/S (F1). As already stated, most of my twenty speakers are realising BATH below 1.0 for the F1 plane. This would put them in the raised (or moderately raised) BATH category. Let us now look at the division between middle class and lower middle class speakers.

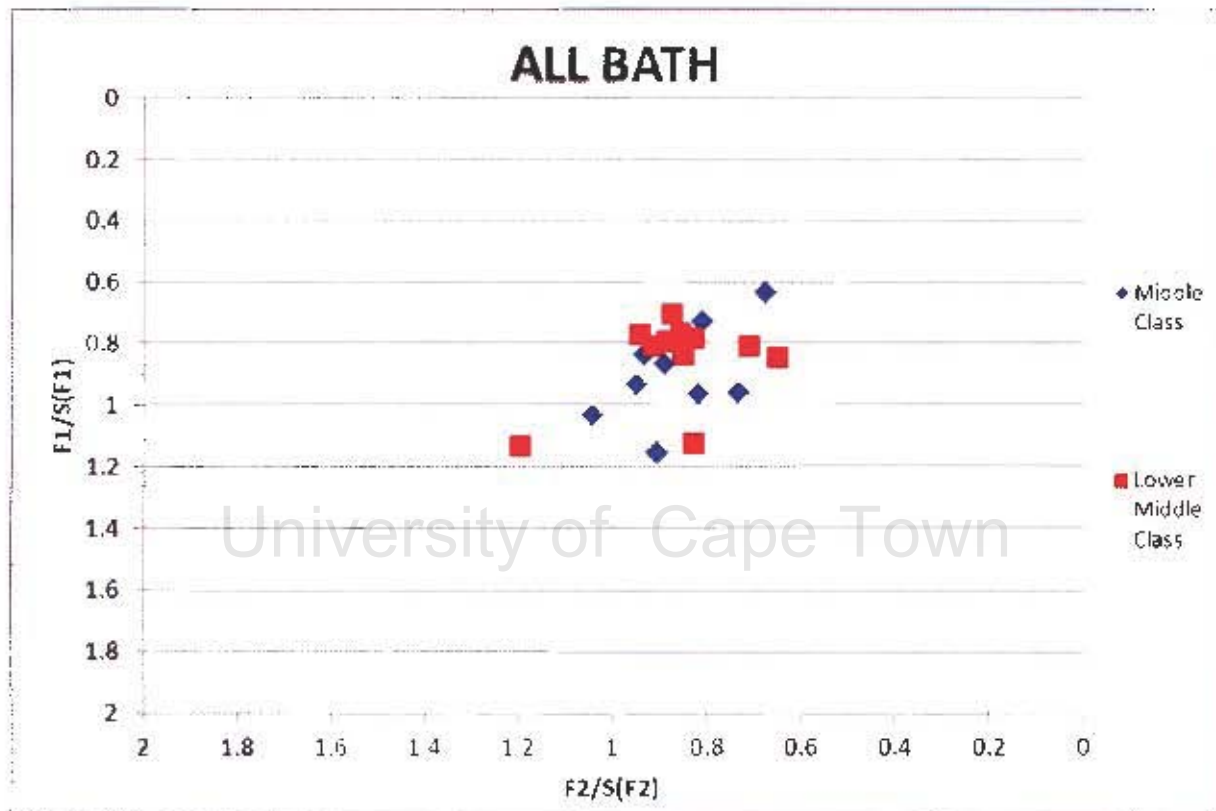


Figure 11: Normalised mean values for BATH (MC verses LMC).

Once again, Simon is an enigma in that he produces the highest BATH of the twenty despite his high level of education and his job in academia. James, who is also very well educated, is likewise realising quite a raised BATH. Contrasted to this are people like Karen and Maggie who are not very well educated and yet are producing what appears to be a much lower BATH vowel. They appear to be joined by Mark, Rose, Neville, Lara and Kevin who are all relatively well educated. The fact that Karen and Maggie both work in customer service environments accounts for their lower BATH values as the latter is associated with WSAE which these two speakers are accommodating to as a prestige norm.

4.6 Results: KIT

Finn (2004: 969) says the following about KIT in CFE:

CFE, like SAE, evidences the (ongoing) 'KIT-split' [...] whereby KIT is realised as (a) [ɪ] ~ [i] initially, after /h/, in velar environments, and often before /ʃ/ (the *IT* subset), while (b) and as centralised [ɪ] elsewhere (the *SIT* subset).

Finn also repeats Wood's observation that in CFE "low schwa is used for /ɪ/ in certain contexts [the *SIT* subset], as is the case with other SAE varieties". (Wood 1987: 122) Wood also mentions the raising of front vowels such as [ɪ] in CFE with /ɪ/ becoming [i] as in words like *fish* [fiʃ] and *dish* [diʃ], while words such as *him*, *hit* and *kit* still take [ɪ] (*ibid.*) This latter point is what most distinguishes CFE from SAE generally. Bowerman (2004: 936) notes that KIT in 'White' South African English is split mainly "between the realisations [ɪ] and [i]"; with the more working class variety ranging from [i] and [ɪ] to [ə]. There is no explicit mentioning by Bowerman of KIT before /ʃ/.

Da Silva (2007: 87-90) deals quite extensively with the KIT vowel. She argues that "Capetonians use the short high vowel [ɪ] as opposed to other L1 speakers in Natal and the Transvaal, who use a more 'typical' central vowel [ə]." She goes on to suggest that the occurrence of [ɪ] in non-velar and non-glottal environments is a form of hypercorrection that spread from bilingual to monolingual English speakers. (Da Silva 2007: 89) The most comprehensive examination of KIT in the South African context is Bekker (2009). Bekker notes that there is overlap in SAE between KIT (velar and glottal) and DRESS, and that realisations of KIT in SAE in non-velar and non-glottal environments are relatively high and centralised (Bekker 2009: 269). Bekker does not detect any major difference between KIT before /ʃ/ and KIT following a glottal sound or in the context of velars. If Da Silva and Bekker's observations are accurate, then they would extend also to 'Coloured' speakers of English, particularly those who are more affluent or well-educated.

Taking into account the work of Finn Bowerman, Da Silva and Bekker, I have separated the KIT vowel into two sets. The velar environment and following glottal /h/ is one set and all other environments fall into the second set. Figure 12 below is a representation of realisations of the KIT vowel in the non-velar and non-glottal environment for the twenty speakers in the sample. The set (which I name the BIT set) includes words such as *bit*, *bitter*, *differ*, *different*, *difficult*, *fit*, *fitter*, *sit*, *tim* and *tip*.

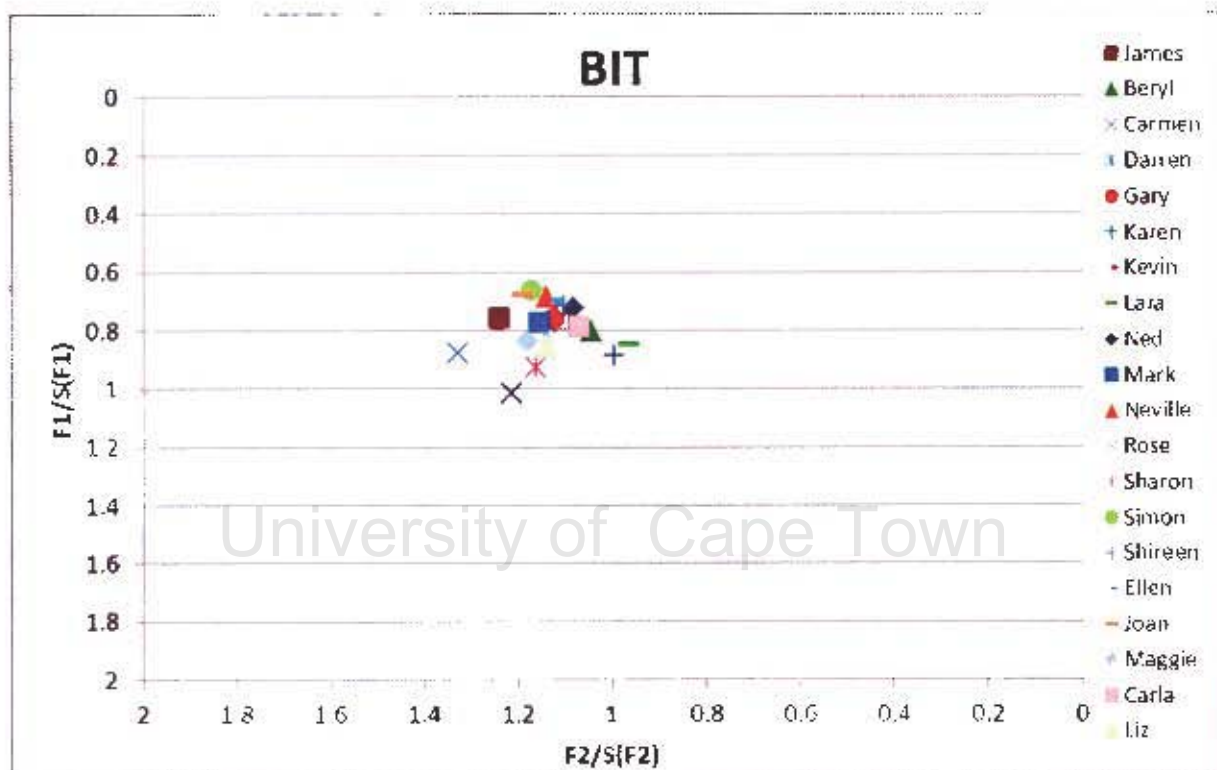


Figure 12: Normalised mean values for KIT (non-velar and non-glottal) for all twenty speakers.

There is remarkable clustering among all twenty speakers. The speakers are all realising a mid and centralised KIT vowel in the non-velar and non-glottal environments with values for F2/S falling at 1.1 -1.2 and values for F1/S (which measures vowel height) falling between 1.0 and 0.7. If we look at Wileman's (2011: 38 & 40) graphs for word list style for two 'typical Cape Town speakers' from his sample, we see *SIT* being realised as follows:

	<i>SIT</i> F1/S(F1)	<i>SIT</i> F2/S(F2)
Male Speaker	1.1	0.9
Female Speaker	1.0	0.9

Table 7: Normalised values of word list tokens of *SIT* taken from Wileman (2011)

I choose *SIT* because it is non-velar and non-glottal. The twenty mean values of non-velar and non-glottal KIT reflected in Figure 12 are all more fronted than the two 'White' speakers taken from Wileman; clustering around the 1.1 to 1.2 mark for F2/S(F2). Realisations of KIT in this environment are also lower than those reported by Bekker and Da Silva. This confirms Wood's claim that 'Coloured' English speakers use a low schwa for /ɪ/ following non-velar and non-glottal sounds. Let us now examine the realisations of KIT (non-velar and non-velar) along class lines.

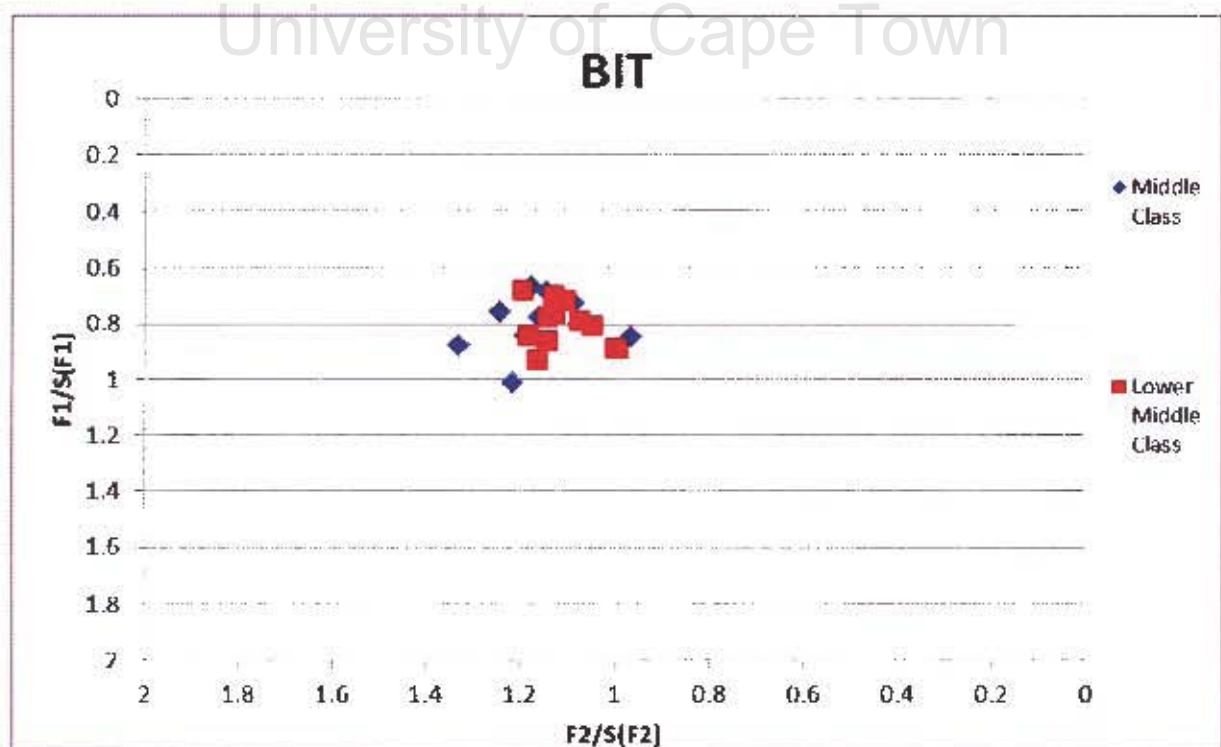


Figure 13: Normalised mean values for KIT non-velar and non-glottal (MC verses LMC).

There is remarkable focusing in the entire sample. This is further evidence, along with the BATH vowel, that the twenty speakers are replicating the CFE variety.

I turn now to examine realisations of KIT in the velar and glottal environments. This set includes words such as *kit, kick, pick, thick, hit, him, gift, give* etc. Figure 14 below is a visual representation of fourteen speakers. The remaining six speakers unfortunately did not produce these sounds during the interview.

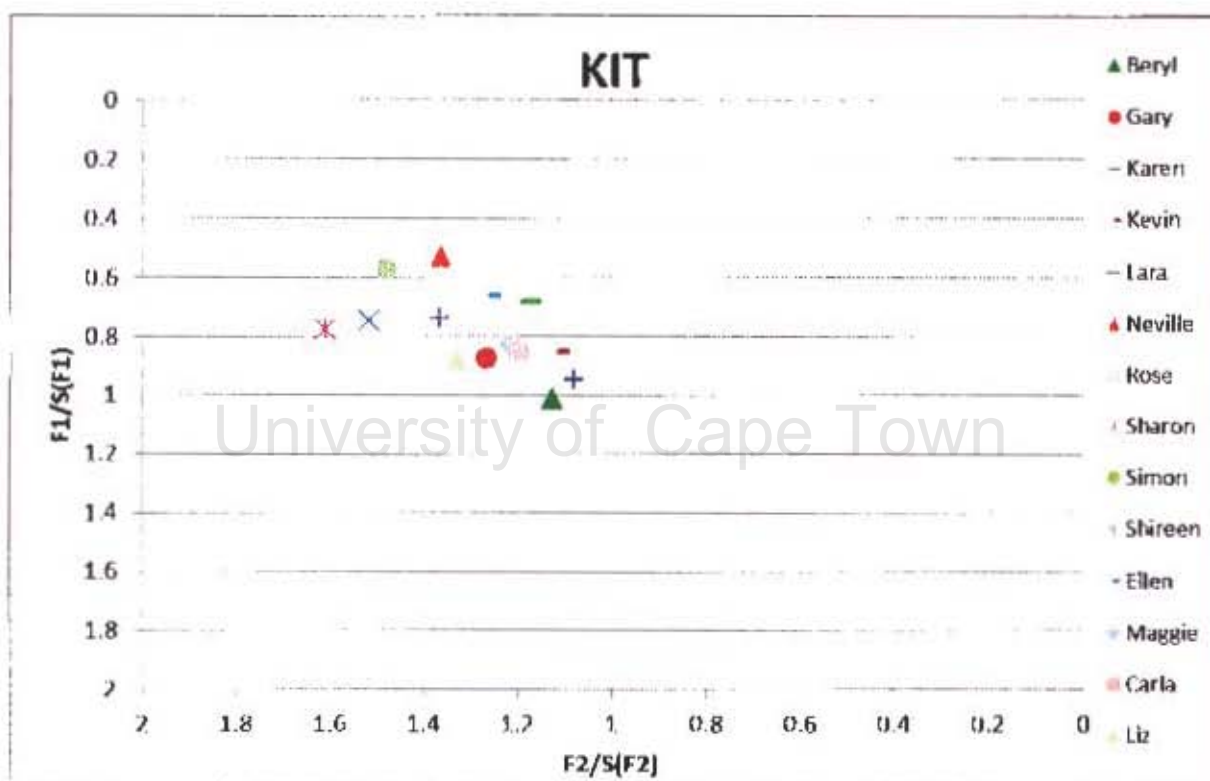


Figure 14: Normalised mean values for KIT (velar and glottal environments) for fourteen speakers.

These values are clearly more spread out than the ones in Figure 12. In terms of height, speakers are clustering around the 0.7 to 0.9 mark for F1/S(F1). As expected this is higher than KIT in the non-velar and non-glottal environments reflected in Figure 12. Bekker (2009: 267) tells us that KIT in velar and glottal environments are realised as centralised and

frontish approaching *fe/* in SAE. Figure 15 below shows KIT in velar and glottal environments along class lines.

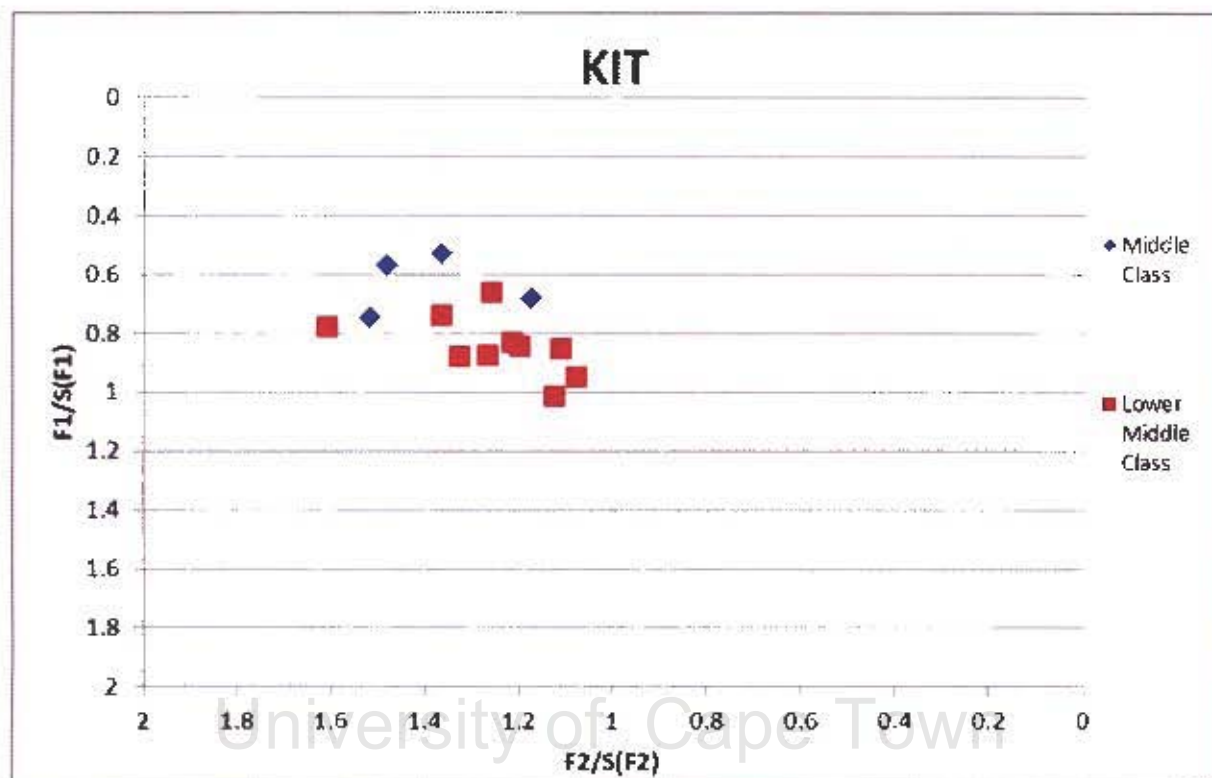


Figure 15: Normalised mean values for KIT velar and glottal (MC verses LMC).

The diffusion in KIT is divided along lines of class with lower middle class speakers clustering in the more centralized area. The middle class speakers represented here are more raised and fronted²².

²² The graphs do not allow us to differentiate tense versus lax realisations of the KIT vowel in velar environments; ie. [i] versus [ɪ]. We would need to do a purely aural analysis to determine whether tensing occurs in the sample.

Part 2: language ideological debates

4.7 Introduction

The rest of this chapter continues the analysis of the collected interviews by examining the meta-linguistic reflections of some of the speakers. I begin by introducing the conceptual tools I shall be using. Milani (2010) has written about the language ideologies embedded in discourses around non-standard and marginalized linguistic varieties in Sweden. He says the following about his approach:

a language ideological approach argues that 'What we think about language will be related to how we perceive ourselves and eventually how others perceive us' [...] This belief system is *inter alia* the precipitate of discourses that create indexical links between: (1) perceived or presumed features, genres, styles or varieties of language; and (2) broader images of their purported speakers in terms of nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, aesthetics, morality and so forth. (Milani 2010: 120)

The "indexical links between" the variety of English known as CFE and the people who use the variety is what concerns this study. These links reveal themselves in the overt discussions on language usage and identity I had with the speakers. They revolve mainly around issues of perception; perceptions of self, perceptions of types of language and perceptions of people who use those various types of language. Milani goes on to elaborate on the methods of textual analysis he deployed.

A language ideological approach [...] provides us with a fine-grained discourse analytical apparatus that allows us to tease out how social boundaries and inequalities are enacted through an *ideological matrix* where representations of language intersect with images of age, gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, etc. (Milani 2010: 121)

Milani uses the methods of close textual analysis to reveal the various ideological strands at play in the discourses around these Swedish linguistic varieties. It is my intention to do the same with regard to CFE and the twenty speakers I interviewed.

4.8 Self-awareness and attitudes amongst the speakers

In a pioneering study of the English of 'Coloured' people in the Cape Peninsula, Wood (1987) details the paradoxical nature of 'Coloured' identity and its effects on language. Wood concedes that, despite all the complexities of 'Colouredness', "a large number [of people] are prepared to refer to themselves as 'coloured', albeit reluctantly" (Wood 1987: 47). He goes on to elaborate on the notion of "respectability" amongst 'Coloured' people.

Educational attainment and socioeconomic status are stressed and looked to to provide a positive self- image. Scrupulous cleanliness, tidiness and the cultivation of a prosperous exterior are highly valued. Pride is taken in being more 'cultured' than many 'whites' and those who achieve success in this endeavour not only tend to treat with scorn lower class 'coloureds', but also certain segments of the 'white' population (Wood 1987: 48).

This idea of respectability is crucial, I believe, in explaining the linguistic behaviour of my respondents. Faced with the prospect of a university based researcher interviewing them, in most cases either at work or in their own homes, speakers I think fell back on this core aspect of their identity. There is a similarity here with the work done by Mesthrie (2002) on South African Indian English and summarized again by Fought (2006).

Indian South African speakers must balance conflicting pressures: use of the more basilectal forms may be seen as unsophisticated, but use of the more acrolectal forms, according to Mesthrie, may be viewed as "putting on airs" or "being cold". (Fought 2006: 28)

When asked questions about language or speech, time after time my speakers expressed the importance of speaking “correctly” or using what they termed “proper” English. Several respondents explained that this respect for “proper” language was instilled in them from a young age by parents, family members and teachers. Gary, for example, relates a story of how his mother impacted on his language usage and his ideas about language. His mother passed away in the late 1990s when Gary was in his late teens. He explained how, throughout his childhood, she would not only stress the importance of always speaking “correctly”, but would constantly model what she regarded as acceptable English through her meticulous attention to grammar and pronunciation and through her use of what Gary called “jawbreakers”. Gary elaborates:

She used words that nobody else used; words I had to look up in the dictionary. Like tepid. This water is tepid. To this day I know what tepid means. (Gary)

Similarly Mark explains how as a child there was no television and instead they listened to the radio, which gave them a model of how to sound articulate. These memories are useful in gaining greater awareness of how these speakers see, not just themselves, but also their language and its development over time. Ellen describes private elocution lessons paid for by her parents where she was made to repeat things like “*how now brown cow*”. Joan talks openly about what she calls her “telephonic voice” and this is actually quite different to her ‘normal’ voice.

Speakers who were questioned about so-called language mixing and other non-standard forms of English associated mainly with poor and marginalized communities reinforced the stigmatized view of these language varieties. Several speakers admitted to being able to replicate these stigmatized forms under certain circumstances and usually as a joke or stylistic exercise. Both Carla and Gary refer specifically to their ability to switch between different registers and styles depending on their interlocutors. This aspect of their language repertoire is often connected to the playful dimension of language usage. Let us examine some extracts more closely.

A typical example is, we've got a temp now and she's White. And I don't speak, *Coloured* as such in front, to her; I try and speak properly. Because she, because that's the way she's speaking to me. (Carla)

Carla has no problem affirming that there is indeed a 'Coloured' variety of English. She claims *not* to "speak Coloured" in the presence of her 'White' colleague. She reveals that, instead, she attempts to "speak properly". The dichotomy created is that speaking "Coloured" is somehow the opposite of speaking "properly". Carla also states explicitly that her reason for speaking "properly" is the fact that her colleague speaks this way: "that's the way she's speaking to me." Carla therefore feels compelled to speak in a particular way to her 'White' colleague. When pressed to explain what she means by "properly", Carla says the following:

Well, I won't use words like [...] like slang. I won't say *kwaai* for example, you know. But I might say that to someone else, who has a 'Coloured' background who's speaking like that to me. (Carla)

This type of accommodation is a recurring feature of Carla's speech as is evidenced from her meta-linguistic reflections. She continues to talk about language in the workplace saying the following:

In my office we, it's a group of 'Coloured' women and a male, 'Coloured' male and we don't speak; they don't speak Afrikaans, *Gam*, in the office. We talk like we talking now. But there are a group of like ['Coloured'] men who will come and speak Afrikaans. Now because I don't speak Afrikaans I tend to use, to throw in like a *Gam*²³ word kind of thing. But I don't *usually* do that. (Carla)

²³ The term 'gam' is a derogatory name used to describe a 'Coloured' person who is not very refined or educated. It refers also to the language spoken by this group.

Carla is quick to emphasize that she doesn't "usually" use the stigmatized and non-standard form known as 'gamtaal'. She does have exposure to this variety and it is part of her linguistic repertoire albeit in a very limited way. She is able to "throw in", as she puts it, some *gam* vocabulary. Carla does not directly explain her reasons for doing this but it is reasonable to assume that she is wishing to align herself, in some small way, with the male 'Coloured' workers who use *gamtaal* routinely and who are passing through the office. Carla's use of the word "throw" is interesting and resonates with the playful and creative nature of language usage and of language variation.

There are similarities between Carla and Gary. The latter also claims to use more stigmatized and non-standard language varieties under certain conditions. Among his friends and close associates, Gary claims that they would "jest"; meaning they would use the 'gamtaal' variety as a joke or to poke fun at something or someone. Gary explicitly talks about types of style shifting when he relates the following story:

If I ask for directions in Manenberg, I'm not going to go *excuse me sir, could you tell me where...*No, it'll be *naand meneer, hoe gannit meneer...*you know.

When questioned about accents and identity issues, speakers tended to be harsh on those perceived to be fake or trying to be something they are not. Sharon, for example, speaks scathingly of a family member she calls a "coconut".

He has just completely lost touch with reality. Ya, no, I think I thrive on having them [coconuts] in my company. I will irritate the living daylights out of them and be gam 'Coloured' just to prove a point. Don't forget your roots. (Sharon)

The emphatic nature of Sharon's speech is quite striking. She talks about "[irritating] the *living daylights*"; an expression that is very expressive and idiomatic. Its use is symptomatic of Sharon's contempt for her relative and his behavior. She uses strong terms like "thrive" and she claims that the relative in question "has lost touch with reality". It is difficult to imagine a more unflattering characterization. The relative is never named, but rather he and

his coconut ilk are kept at a distance through the use of pronouns like “he” and “them”. She uses the word *gam* explicitly, claiming that she will “be *gam* [...] just to prove a point”. The point being, she emphasizes, that you “don’t forget your roots”.

Once again we see the tensions that these issues bring to light. It is important for Sharon to use the standard form of English and to speak in a ‘respectable’ way while at the same time maintaining some kind of authenticity and not trying to be something she is not. Passing for ‘White’ or attempting to do so was thus deeply offensive to many ‘Coloured’ speakers. What is most interesting here, however, is the fact that Sharon is the speaker who, according to the phonetic analysis, most approximates the ‘White’ variety of SAE. Her actions are thus at odds with the strong sentiments expressed above. Similarly, Mark also produces meta-linguistic reflections which appear to affirm his ‘Coloured’ identity while producing vowels which do not; if we examine the evidence from the phonetic analysis. When questioned about the possible existence of a ‘Coloured’ variety of English, Mark says the following:

I think one of the key determinants could be, you know, just being able to align yourself with a particular group. When I think back, when I was growing up, if you didn’t speak in a particular way, you could be branded as being, as trying to play ‘White’. You know, and so, some people actually found it important to conform.
(Mark)

These sentiments are also quite strong despite the hedging which occurs with the use (twice) of the modal auxiliary verb “could” as opposed to the more assertive *would*. Mark explicitly mentions the idea alignment with a social group. He links this alignment clearly to language usage by saying that “if you didn’t speak in a particular way”, then you could find yourself ostracized. This would mean being “branded” as he says. This word has strong connotations associated with traitors. Mark ends this statement with hedging saying that only “some” people wanting to avoid stigmatization. We are left in no doubt as to the power of these processes and the desire of Mark to, as he puts it, “conform”. Like Sharon, we see something of the opposite in the production of the vowels analyzed in this study with Mark, perhaps because of his professional status as a physician, producing vowels which approximate WSAE.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter I summarize and discuss the findings of the current study. I also clarify the links between my findings and the hypotheses and theoretical claims made in the opening chapter. In addition, I revisit the question of the link between identity and language usage in light of the results described in the previous chapter. I also sum up the correlations between language usage and social class, occupation and social networks. I end by identifying areas for future research.

5.1 Preamble to discussion of findings.

This project examined the speech of twenty speakers of English who were classified as 'Coloured' during apartheid and who grew up and still live in Cape Town. The research aimed to analyze the speech of the participants in terms of the following research questions:

- The degree of focusing and diffusion present in the speech; or the degree of conformity to 'community norms' regarding accent.
- The degree of stratification of the participants' accents along lines of social class.
- The degree to which this stratification is, in turn, mirrored in divisions along lines of social networks.
- The degree to which a 'Coloured' identity is present in the speech, particularly the metalinguistic reflections, of the participants.
- The types of language ideological debates present in these metalinguistic reflections.

The analysis was also framed by three main theoretical concepts:

- i. **Habitus.** This refers to the regularities of practice in speech which allow us to explain why a particular way of speaking is being reproduced by a speaker.
- ii. **Acts of identity.** This refers to the process whereby speakers align or distance

themselves from particular groups through their language usage. Alignment with the 'home community' would be an example of focusing, while diffusion occurs when speakers display linguistic features not normally associated with the 'home community'.

- iii. Variation in the indexical field (part of Eckert's third wave). This refers to the extent to which the GOOSE, BATH and KIT vowels can index not just membership of a particular group, but also certain attitudes and dispositions.

5.2 Summary and discussion of sociophonetic findings:

The sociophonetic analysis of GOOSE, BATH and KIT revealed interesting patterns among the twenty speakers interviewed for this research. The three vowels however do not all give us the same picture. GOOSE is the most salient in terms of shifts in style and the prevalence of variation. The significance of BATH and KIT lies more in the fact that they represent evidence of the tight linguistic norms that still prevail among 'Coloured' speakers of English in Cape Town. GOOSE is the variable that most indicates diffuseness among the twenty speakers while BATH and KIT are solidarity markers. While GOOSE is a status marker, there is still variation within it which can be accounted for in several ways.

The phonetic environment affecting the various tokens of GOOSE is an important factor. Coronal GOOSE is the most fronted, while non-coronal *school* is the most backish realization, as we would expect. Added to the phonetic environment factor would be contextual factors that can affect speech. These include location, interlocutor, topic and register (or level of formality). Non-coronal words such as *move* often tended to be stressed or emphasized in the informants' speech during the interviews, similarly with coronals such as *do* and *to*. Emphasis implies some level of agency and therefore the fronting of these GOOSE tokens is linked to the agency of the speakers. It is implausible that emphasis applies to particular vowels but rather it applies to individual words such as affective *do*. What I am suggesting instead, is that fronting of GOOSE occurs in more emblematic or expressive styles.

As already mentioned, Mesthrie (2010: 20) describes the linguistic behaviour of the young 'Coloured' speakers he focused on as being influenced quite strongly by the "community norms of their early childhood". What is most interesting here is that the twenty speakers I interviewed, who are older, appear to be more diffuse in their accents than those interviewed by Mesthrie. Yet the presence of "community norms" (focusing) is still evident. Even with regard to GOOSE, the most sociolinguistically significant of the three vowels, there is strong evidence of clustering among the twenty speakers. This clustering is even more salient with regard to BATH and KIT in the non-velar and non-glottal environments (*sit, bit* etc.).

In the realization of GOOSE the graphs revealed that it is the lower middle class speakers who are more likely to break with 'community norms' by fronting their GOOSE vowel which is an approximation of WSAE. As Lass (2002: 116) tells us, fronted GOOSE is perceived by 'Black' South Africans to be "peculiarly white". However, the speaker known as Mark is a clear exception here. He is a highly educated specialist physician and is also displaying a high degree of fronting. This means that his social networks and his upper middle class status combined are shaping his speech. It is not really levels of income and education which are the key factors in predicting the realizations of GOOSE. Occupation and social networks are more important. Ned, Simon and Neville are all very well educated and yet they are not behaving very differently to the lower middle class speakers such as Ellen, Liz, Gary and Darren.

As mentioned before, realizations of BATH and KIT (in the non-velar and non-glottal environments) are indicative of a strong sense of unity among the twenty speakers. There is clearly a high degree of 'dialect' loyalty among the speakers. This is also evident from the reflections on language and speech which emerge during the interviews. The production and reproduction of the 'Coloured' accent among the twenty speakers is a sign that the habitus of life on the 'Cape Flats' and of 'Colouredness' is a powerful factor impacting people's speech.

Habitus, as we saw in chapter 1, referred to ways of being in the world. It is a tool which allows us to predict behavior in terms of 'community norms' and also isolate those who, for whatever reason, are breaking with those norms. The twenty speakers have all been exposed to the same habitus and yet Mark, Sharon, Maggie, Karen and Joan form a group which, according to the phonetic analysis, is behaving a little differently to the others.

Through their acts of identity, they have asserted the linguistic voice and forged a position in relation to their interlocutor in the context of the sociolinguistic interview. How widespread these speech patterns are in terms of their everyday lives would have to be the subject of a larger and more in-depth study.

5.3 Language usage and 'Coloured' identity

The relationship between language and 'Coloured' identity was another focus of the current study. Connecting issues of identity to accent is, admittedly, a difficult prospect. The term accent has connotations of something that is not conscious. It was clear from the interviews that the speakers involved in this study do not readily reflect on their speech or consider their accents unusual or worthy of any special attention. What, if anything, can a sociophonetic analysis of three vowels reveal about identity? Another way of framing this question would be to draw on Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) who ask how "individuals [...] can be considered members of linguistic communities [...] but fall short of modelling this" (Patrick 2002: 590).

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The answer lies, I believe, in Eckert's notion of studying variation within an indexical field as well as her idea of a third wave in variationism. As we saw in chapter 1 Eckert's argument was that the study of language variation can proceed from different points of departure; one being a consideration of sound changes within a given society or group. Another approach takes what she calls "meaning" as a point of departure. This is not to say that the study of sound change is devoid of meaning. It simply implies an alternative way of approaching the study of language variation. This alternative places social meaning and linguistic style at the centre of its enterprise.

I have already hinted at how this analyzing of the nuances of linguistic variability can operate in practice by invoking Lass's point that 'Coloured' and 'Indian' speakers of English view fronted GOOSE as a socially and 'ethnically' marked variable. There exists therefore what Eckert calls an indexical field. The speakers I interviewed position themselves along this field in relation to the interviewer (or any other interlocutor). They have a range of variables to choose from. Their use of either fronted or backish GOOSE is an (unconscious) act of

identity that indexes their social positionality. “Different ways of saying things are intended to signal different ways of being” according to Eckert (2008: 456).

The fact that fronted GOOSE is invoked by some speakers and avoided by others is significant given that the background of the speakers and the social milieu shaping them are very similar in many respects. This is of course very similar to classic Labovian variationism. The difference in Eckert’s approach, I believe, is that she takes the enormous strides of early variationism for granted. She builds on the work done by Labov and is, in a sense, able to move slightly beyond it and ask questions about meaning, agency and consciousness which have not been traditionally associated with classic variationism.

As mentioned before, the three most remarkable speakers are Carla, Lara and Simon. They are displaying focused linguistic norms and are doing so despite their social networks and class status. While positing precise reasons for their realizations of GOOSE would fall into the realm of speculation, the habitus affecting their speech is what helps us most to explain their speech. As we saw at the end of chapter 1, habitus is the general social milieu in which these speakers find themselves. It is helpful in explaining how and why a particular way of speaking is being reproduced. It also ties in with what Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985: 182) call “constraints on acts of identity”. By this they mean the forces (both linguistic and non-linguistic) which shape how we speak.

The sociophonetics of GOOSE, BATH and KIT reveal patterns of linguistic focusing which is evidence that the speakers in the sample are strongly disposed to act in a particular way with regard to their accents. They are reproducing a ‘Coloured’ accent in many ways. What would be useful in future is a more detailed study of the style shifting of speakers such as Carla, Lara and Simon; indeed of all twenty speakers. This would entail observing the speakers for much longer periods and in a wide range of settings (work, home, social gatherings etc.). This is a difficult prospect and may not be possible, but it would enable a researcher to determine what effect (if any) a change in location and context would have on the speech of the informants.

The identity of the twenty speakers is most evident in their metalinguistic reflections and in their reflections on South Africa’s past. Regarding their thoughts about language, what is

most striking are the contradictions between what people say and what they do. The phonetic analysis did reveal some accommodation to the 'White' variety of SAE. This despite speakers such as Sharon and Mark stating quite explicitly that they are not 'coconuts' and that it is important for them to conform to community norms. There is an ambivalent relationship to 'Colouredness' or 'Coloured' identity being expressed by the speakers. Several speakers spoke passionately about their family histories and their experiences under apartheid. They spoke about the pain caused not only by discriminatory laws, but also by the actions of some members of their families who bought into the apartheid racial hierarchy and, in some cases, even attempted to 'pass for White'. There is thus a strong sense of what Coupland (2003) calls "authenticity" running through the narratives and reflections of the twenty speakers. And yet, as with the speakers interviewed by Mesthrie (2010), there is also ambivalence; a disdain for the more stigmatized forms of language associated with some poorly educated 'Coloured' people, which are viewed as crude and as a sign of low class status. This notwithstanding, several speakers spoke in some detail of their ability to use these stigmatized language forms in certain situations; usually in jest or with the intention of mocking the stereotype of a poorly educated and 'low class' 'Coloured' person.

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The overriding concern or pre-occupation of the speakers, when it came to language, was with notions of correctness. "Speaking properly" or "normally" is a recurring theme in the metalinguistic reflections of all the speakers (despite possible contradictions between what people say they do and what they actually do). There is a strong affinity with the standard form of English and with notions of linguistic prescriptivism. Regarding the idea of a prestige variety of English in South Africa, the evidence is less clear. As stated already, despite strong linguistic focusing, there is evidence of some accommodation to WSAE. There is also evidence that the 'White' variety of SAE is to be avoided lest it lead to accusations of being inauthentic. Reflections on the idea of a separate or overt 'Coloured' identity rendered similarly ambivalent evidence. There is no clear or single picture with regard to overt reflections or considerations of 'Coloured' identity. Despite this, the linguistic analysis revealed a clear sense of 'dialect loyalty' among the twenty speakers.

5.4 Directions for future research:

This thesis has been a sociolinguistic study of the speech of twenty 'Coloured' speakers of English in Cape Town. I attempted to correlate the speech of the informants along lines of social class, occupation and networks. I have made no far-reaching statistical claims regarding the language usage of 'Coloured' speakers of English. If I have generalized, I have done so only in as far as my knowledge of the twenty speakers allows. This is not to say that the twenty speakers chosen are not representative of the Cape Town 'Coloured' community. The informants are typical of 'Coloured' people who grew up in Cape Town speaking English during apartheid.

I have also attempted to address issues concerning the relationship between language and identity with regard to the 'Coloured' community. There has been a tension in the study which centers around the idea of using variationist methods to uncover the relationship between language and identity. I have been able only to scratch the surface of these issues. What is needed now is a larger and more in-depth study of language and identity with particular focus on the various groupings which can still be identified (despite our best efforts) in South Africa.

I am aware that the variationist paradigm is not the only method of examining links between language and identity. I am also open to the possibility that it may not be the best approach. Scholars such as Figueroa (1994) and Cameron (1990) have dealt quite critically (and contentiously) with strands of variationism. These scholars often do not do justice to the diversity, complexity and rich history of variationism, but they do throw into light the inevitable limitations of working within any paradigm. Despite this, I am convinced that the sociophonetic analysis of the twenty interviews has not only revealed interesting patterns and correlations, but has also helped us better understand the lived experience of the speakers involved in the study. What is needed now, is a renewed engagement with issues of language and identity and a renewed dialogue between variationism and other branches of sociolinguistics.

What is needed now is a larger and more in-depth linguistic study of the English spoken by 'Coloured' speakers in Cape Town; a study which will proceed from the premise that there is class bifurcation amongst 'Coloured' speakers. This study would have to determine whether this bifurcation can be demonstrated in linguistic terms.

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Appendix: word list

KIT

BIT

DRESS

TRAP

LOT

STRUT

FOOT

BATH

CLOTH

NURSE

FLEECE

FACE

PALM

THOUGHT

GOAT

GOOSE

PRICE

CHOICE

MOUTH

NEAR

SQUARE

START

NORTH

FORCE

CURE

DANCE

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