

**Changing Sociolinguistic Identities of Young, Middle-Class 'Coloured' People in  
Post-apartheid Cape Town**

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**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 study set out to examine the sociolinguistics of social change amongst a group of young, middle-class coloured people who were educated in a predominantly white school environment. The demise of the apartheid system in the early 1990s led to a situation in which racial mixing in government-run schools was permitted for the first time. I conducted sociolinguistic interviews with 20 self-identified 'coloured' Cape Town residents, who attended schools that were formerly open only to white children. I analysed the data on two levels. Firstly, an analysis of accent, focusing on three salient phonetic markers of South African English, namely the GOOSE, BATH and PRICE lexical sets (Wells 1982). Acoustic analysis of these vowels was done using a computer software programme, *Praat*, to record a total of 4410 tokens for the 20 speakers. The second level of analysis investigated how the informants constructed social identities in those unprecedented educational circumstances. I used three theories of identity to do this: Speech Accommodation Theory (Giles 1973), Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1972) and the Linguistic Market (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1975). Comparing the results of the phonetic and sociological analyses, I found that the two levels of analysis supported the same conclusion: the young coloured people in the sample subscribe to a coloured social identity, but have clear links with the white community. This suggests that they occupy an intermediate space between the two race groups, which is not surprising given the significant contact they had with members of both communities. There is some evidence of a separation between the coloured community and the typical 'coloured' accent, however, suggesting that one does not need to sound 'typically coloured' in order to be part of the coloured community. It is likely that we are witnessing the formation of an upper middle-class within the coloured middle-class community.

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## List of Abbreviations

SAE	South African English
SBE	Southern British English
CFE	Cape Flats English
WSAfE	White South African English
BSAE	Black South African English
CVA	Cape Vernacular Afrikaans
HOR	(Former) House of Representatives
MC	(Former) Model C
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In 1991, the apartheid policy of racial segregation in South African schools was replaced with a new legislation which outlawed the use of race as a criterion for admission to government-funded schools in the country. This research project examines the sociolinguistics of social change with respect to accent and social identity in a group of young coloured people who, because of the change in legislation, found themselves as a minority in school environments which were dominated by white peers and staff.

These unprecedented educational circumstances<sup>1</sup> cultivated an interesting sociolinguistic situation, in which significant contact between different varieties of South African Englishes was occurring. Based on fleeting observations that people who were educated in such an environment occupy a unique, perhaps ‘intermediate’ position within the country’s social order – somewhere between ‘coloured’ and ‘white’ as previously categorised – it was my aim to find empirical phonetic support for this thesis by focusing on salient phonetic markers of both white and coloured South Africans and describing the variation from my sample of speakers in comparison to recorded norms for each ethnic variety.

After demonstrating that the language variety used by this group of speakers is phonetically unique, I investigate the relationship between language and social identity, as the links between the two tend to be very strong (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 316). Once it is clear what the informants’ language use indicates about their social identity, I attempt to draw parallels between the phonetic and identity studies.

The remainder of this chapter contextualises this research project within the historical and political setting, as well as within the discipline, reviewing the related literature poignant to this study.

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<sup>1</sup> There was racial mixing in schools before the application of the apartheid segregationist policies e.g. in District Six (McCormick 2002: 30). There may have been isolated cases of black, coloured or Indian children attending private schools whose admission policy did not exclude children of colour. Post-1991, the number of black, coloured and Indian children in former ‘whites-only’ schools increased drastically due to the change in legislation.

## **1.1 Background**

South Africa is still in a state of socio-political transition. The change began in the early 1990s and continues to impact upon all areas of South African life as it slowly moves towards racial equality. The introduction of democracy in 1994 saw official governmental policies promoting equity over discrimination and inequality, which characterised the country's history prior to 1994. Every sphere of life had been affected by racist laws and policies, and it is in all spheres that the repercussions of these discriminatory laws and policies linger.

Transition is a slow process, especially in view of more than 350 years of oppressive history to overcome. Some change is demonstrable, though, and one interface at which it can be examined is in education. Such a statement necessitates a caveat, however: not all South Africans have been in a position to benefit from the new democratic dispensation. For the majority of working class and unemployed South Africans, little has changed since the end of apartheid. The focus of this thesis is on those Cape Town youths whose lives have been transformed by the transition from apartheid to democracy, particularly with regard to their education.

I begin with a brief history of language contact in Cape Town as it has shaped the current linguistic situation in the area. Prior to the establishment of democratic governance in 1994, two dispensations, both based on racial discrimination, operated in the Cape. The first, colonialism, began soon after the arrival of Dutch settlers in the Cape in 1652, and the second, apartheid, was a legislated system of racially based segregation, which was in place between 1948 and 1994.

Each of the respective rulers of the colony, which later became a Union and then a State, enforced their self-serving policies regarding language in education. The history of Cape Town follows with particular reference to language policy in education promoted by the rulers of each era.

### **a) The period of colonialism**

The history of the Cape Colony since the seventeenth century shows that it was a linguistically rich community, as speakers of many languages and diverse origins

settled in the area. The only indigenous groups were the Khoe-San. European settlers and immigrants started arriving in the mid-1600s, and slaves and exiles arrived in the decades that followed. Each group brought with it a language from their place of origin. Speakers of Bantu languages were not a presence in the Cape until the end of the nineteenth century (McCormick 2002: 29). The languages of those who were politically and economically most powerful in the colony – the Dutch and British – are the languages that survived and are still dominant in the area today, although the present-day forms of the languages are not precisely what they were when the Cape was a colony. Dutch, for example, progressively developed into what is now Afrikaans.

The colony produced the ‘coloured’ community, which has been the largest population group in the Western Cape for some time and remains so presently (Statistics South Africa 2003: 12). My informants and their families form part of the broader coloured community. The following account of the history of Cape Town, its languages and its population is an attempt to position the informants within the historical framework of the area. I draw on Kay McCormick’s (2002) extensive research on the history of language contact in the greater Cape Town area. Her focus is on those factors which led to the development of District Six, a suburb close to the Cape Town city centre which was home to many coloured families, as well as to immigrants and black South Africans before the residents were forced to move to various other locations and the area was demolished.

I begin prior to the arrival of Dutch settlers in the Cape, when indigenous people were the only residents in area.

### **Indigenes**

The original people living in the Cape were the San and the Khoe<sup>2</sup>. The San were hunter-gatherers and the Khoe were herders and coastal foragers, though some historians do not believe that the distinction was always clear-cut. The groups were

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Traill (2002: 45) describes the usage of the terms ‘San’ and ‘Khoe’ as follows: ‘San’ is a term which replaced the ethnonym ‘Bushman’. There is no family of ‘San’ languages, however, and some San people spoke Khoe languages. The term ‘Khoe’ is adopted instead of the more popular ‘Khoi’. This spelling extends to related terms, such as ‘Khoesan’ and ‘Khoekhoe’. Khoe refers to a family of languages: Khoekhoe is the branch of this family which is indigenous to South Africa. derogatory ethnonym ‘Hottentot’.

distinguished primarily by these occupational characteristics, although there was regular interaction between the Khoe and San people, which resulted in cultural and linguistic diffusion between the groups. Together, they were labelled Khoesan. Anthony Traill (2002: 45) says that it is not possible to prove on purely linguistic grounds that Khoe and San languages belong to one language family. Rather, linguists see Khoesan as a 'phylum', which is divided into three loosely related language groups, namely Northern, Central and Southern families.

The west coast of Africa formed part of the trade route between Europe and the East, so the indigenes had contact with European traders and crews of ships since about 1500. For the purpose of bartering with these Europeans, the local people learnt bits of Portuguese, Dutch and English and used these jargonised forms exclusively for trade (den Besten 1989)

### **Dutch settlers**

About 150 years later, in 1652, the first settlers arrived in the Cape. The Dutch settlers were to control the colony for the next 150 years, so their language dominated during this period, although its form changed to include features which now characterise Afrikaans. The developing language carried the label 'Cape Dutch' before it became known as 'Afrikaans' (Combrink 1978).

Initially, the settlers arrived to set up a refreshment station in the Cape for the crew on the ships en route to the East from the Netherlands in order to provide sailors with fresh produce and meat. The station quickly grew into a settlement as slaves were imported in order to fill labour requirements. The organisation of land usage changed with the expansion of the Dutch settlement, making it impossible for the San and Khoe people to maintain their pastoral lifestyles. They were forced to settle in the town or move inland

French and German were added to the repertoire of languages spoken in the area when voluntary immigrants arrived from France (Huguenot religious refugees) and Germany. Slaves and other involuntary immigrants were imported from various parts of east and west Africa, Madagascar, India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and South-East Asia. Each group spoke one or more of the languages of their place of origin.

Because slaves were imported from such diverse backgrounds and separated from their families and others who shared a country of origin and language, their family and community life was often eroded, making it impossible for their languages to be maintained. The immense linguistic diversity combined with the nature of the socio-political system in place at the time created a clear need for a lingua franca in the Cape. Malay and Portuguese Creole went some way to fulfilling this need: Portuguese Creole had taken the role of lingua franca along many trade routes, so many slaves and other residents in the colony were familiar with it, and Malay was used among Malayan and Indonesian slaves (McCormick 2002: 15-17). While the Dutch ruled the colony, Dutch became the most dominant lingua franca in the colony (McCormick 2002: 21).

### **British Rule in the Cape**

With successive occupations of the Cape in 1795 and 1806, the British took control of the colony from the Dutch. An influx of British immigrants in 1820 preceded an intense process of Anglicisation in the Cape under the leadership of Governor Charles Somerset in 1822. The primary aim of Anglicisation was to weaken the power of the Dutch-speaking people, but its effect was felt throughout the colony. English was declared the only official language of the colony and dominated in all domains, including government, commerce, education, religion and public life.

State-funded schools were no longer allowed to use Dutch as a medium of instruction; English was the only language which could fill this purpose. Private schools were established to provide education in Dutch, but they were too expensive to maintain without state subsidy, so English quickly became the only language in which all children in the Cape could be educated.

There was widespread migration within the colony after the British abolished slavery in 1834. Former slaves and free blacks in the Cape, who were referred to as 'coloured' or '*kleurling*' ('coloured' in Afrikaans) became free citizens who were free to move within the colony. Many of them chose to exercise this right and move to areas surrounding Cape Town city centre. Their freedom did nothing to elevate their status on the hierarchical social structure, however. The population, now divided into

‘coloured’, ‘white’ and ‘native’<sup>3</sup>, was increasingly being stratified along class and colour lines (McCormick 2002: 29).

English was a very important language in the Cape at this time as it served as a lingua franca in the linguistically diverse community in Cape Town, which included Cape Dutch speakers, European immigrants and migrants from southern Africa, especially Xhosa speakers from the Eastern Cape. It was also the language of business and employment in the nearby city, where many people sought employment. Those interested in doing business in the city or interacting with residents in the suburbs south of the city required some command of English. Most residents of the inner city areas learnt it either from neighbours, who may themselves have been L2 (second language) speakers, or from contact with immigrants, many of whom spoke non-standard dialects of English. Among members of the coloured community, however, Afrikaans remained an important unofficial lingua franca. The conditions of L2 acquisition of English account partly for the non-standard variety of English which is now spoken by coloured people in Cape Town.

English and Afrikaans were both widely spoken languages in Cape Town and more political change was yet to influence the nature of social relationships within the country as a whole. Its effect on education is relevant to the current study.

## **b) Apartheid**

In 1910, the Union of South Africa was declared as the official end to British colonial rule. The Union was comprised of two former British colonies, the Cape and Natal, and two former Boer Republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The British government granted the demands of whites that voting rights not be extended to persons of colour, so coloureds were removed from the common voter’s roll in 1956 (Adhikari 2005: 18). This accompanied a policy of racial segregation that had been implemented in all domains of life from 1905 onwards. This policy saw the forced removal of blacks to designated locations separate from whites and coloureds, so black people no longer lived in inner city areas.

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Native’ referred to black people who had migrated from other parts of South Africa to the Cape Colony (McCormick 2002: 29).

In 1948, the Afrikaners assumed power as the first South African government of what later became the Republic of South Africa. Their apartheid regime imposed strict laws of segregation and banned the African National Congress (ANC) and other organisations who opposed their racialised policies, exiling or imprisoning many of their leaders and activists. South Africans were categorised into four racial groups: black, white, coloured and Indian<sup>4</sup>. The Population Registration Act of 1950 ensured that the race of all citizens was recorded. This categorisation was historically based and where there was a dispute, a Race Classification Board took the final decision. English and Afrikaans speaking, fair-skinned descendents of European settlers and immigrants were classified white. The black group was comprised of many groups of diverse linguistic, religious and geographical origin – descendents of indigenous people from other parts of southern Africa who had immigrated to the Cape. Coloureds were a mixed-race group, descendents of marriages between white settlers and the original Khoesan residents of the Cape or imported slaves or descendents of ‘pure’ Khoesan lineage who were Afrikaans speaking. The Indians are a diasporic group, historically from India, living in South Africa as descendents of indentured labourers or a smaller number of traders (McCormick 2002: 33; Bornman 2006: 387).

Apartheid legislations prohibited mixing between racial groups, enforcing segregation and separate development in all areas of life. The government passed laws such as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, which disallowed marriage between white and black people and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950, which prohibited sexual relations between whites and blacks.

The Group Areas Act of 1950 resulted in zoning of Cape Town’s residential areas according to race. Each race group was assigned designated areas in which they could live – if their place of residence at the time did not fall within the delimited area for their group, they were forcibly removed from their homes and relocated to other areas. Coloureds living around the Cape Town city centre and the southern suburbs were forced to move to the Cape Flats – a large, sandy expanse of flat land relatively far away from the city centre. Besides the Cape Flats, some other residential areas were

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<sup>4</sup> I use the terms ‘black’, ‘coloured’ and ‘white’ (beginning with lowercase letters, rather than capital letters) to refer specifically to those classified as such under the Population Registration Act. This differs from the more popular, generic usage of ‘black’ to signify all those who were discriminated against by the apartheid system i.e. coloureds, Indians and blacks.

designated for coloureds, particularly in the Northern suburbs of greater Cape Town. This legislation resulted in complete residential and communal segregation amongst racial groups.

### **c) Education during Apartheid**

Education did not escape the segregationist legislations of the Afrikaner government. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was an attempt by the new Afrikaner government to promote the use of Afrikaans above all other languages spoken in the country (Hartshorne 1987). The aims of the policy in black schools were to reduce the influence of English, to use both English and Afrikaans as media of instruction and to promote mother tongue education in African languages from grade 4 to grade 8. Black children were thus being taught in three languages: English, Afrikaans and their mother tongue – an African language. Their attitudes towards each of these languages differed significantly. English was considered to be the language of opportunity, advancement and liberation, so parents wanted their children to be educated in English; Afrikaans was regarded as the language of oppression; and African languages were deemed unsuitable for educational purposes (Kamwangamalu 2003: 230).

The effect of this policy on coloureds was perhaps not as severe as for blacks because only one language was used as a medium of instruction in their schools. The policy simply stated that their mother tongue was to be the medium of instruction in which they were taught (Kamwangamalu 2003: 230). While seemingly reasonable, this policy was not well-received by the coloured community. Prior to the establishment of this policy, many coloured children whose home language was Afrikaans were attending schools which used English as a medium of instruction. Because of the new education policy, these schools were forced to switch to Afrikaans to accommodate the children whose mother tongue was Afrikaans, or at least add an Afrikaans stream. Despite the fact that Afrikaans was their home language, parents were not happy that their children were being educated in Afrikaans, because they believed that English provided children with better opportunities for employment and further studies (Finn 2004: 967).

In 1984, a new constitution was introduced for the Republic of South Africa (Bunting 2002). A tricameral parliament was established, which consisted of three chambers: the House of Assembly represented whites; the House of Representatives represented coloureds; and the House of Delegates represented Indians. Black South Africans were not represented in the 1984 constitution. A distinction was drawn between ‘own affairs’ and ‘general affairs’. The latter were issues which impacted all racial communities, the former referred to matters specific to the ‘cultural and value frameworks’ of the respective racial communities (Bunting 2002: 60). Education was considered to be an ‘own affair’, so departments run by the respective houses were responsible for the education of white, coloured and Indian children. Each department operated independently of the others. Education of black South Africans was considered to be a ‘general affair’ so was organised by the Department of Education and Training (DET).

Overwhelming evidence suggests that these departments were not equally resourced – the departments responsible for black, coloured and Indian education were under-resourced in terms of administration, curriculum and pedagogical provision (MacKenzie 1993: 287). The education that black, coloured and Indian children received under the reign of the apartheid government was thus significantly impoverished as they were subject to conditions such as ‘shortage of schools, the lack of books and other learning resources, the overcrowded classrooms, unqualified teachers, the low level of literacy and numeracy ... [and] the vastly inadequate facilities in the rural areas’ (Samuels 1992 cited in MacKenzie 1993: 288).

While the legacy of this education system continues to affect the standard of education of many black South Africans, the system was formally abolished in 1991, when the government, in consultation with negotiators from the ANC, proposed that the system of separate education be replaced by a single education system which would serve all South Africans. This would begin the process of balancing the inequalities promoted by the old system. A committee was established to develop an Education Renewal Strategy, which recommended that race no longer be used to determine educational provision (MacKenzie 1993: 288). The new policy allowed for schools to be restructured equitably, as resources were to be equally distributed.

During apartheid, certain private schools had maintained non-racially based criteria for admission, accepting pupils of all races who met the entrance requirements. In these schools either race quotas or the cost of school fees served to keep the number of black, coloured and Indian children low. Private schools received no financial support from the government, and were highly regarded for their role as providers of non-racial education, but because parents were required to pay high school fees, private schools were often labelled as elitist (MacKenzie 1993: 289).

White schools (those formerly controlled by the House of Assembly's Department of Education and Culture) were required, after the passing of the new legislation, to decide on one of three proposed Models for Schooling. Model A involved privatisation of the school; Model B involved changing admission policy and semi-privatisation; and Model C allowed for state-aid and the establishment of a Governing Body, which would be responsible for the financial management of the school (MacKenzie 1993: 290).

Model A would have significant financial implications on fee-payers because schools that took this option would no longer be subsidised by the state. Model B allowed schools to determine their own admission policy and criteria for admission. They would also have had to assume semi-private status, however, resulting in some loss of state funding in the form of teaching posts.

The implications for schools that adopted the Model C option was that they would be subsidised by the state to a total of approximately 75% of the operating expenses and they would have to appoint a Governing Body, with a Principal at its head. This body would be responsible for administering the subsidised funds, raising requisite extra funds, primarily in the form of school fees (MacKenzie 1993: 293) and determining the admission criteria. The majority of white schools (94 %) opted for the Model C option (Tikly and Mabogoane 1997: 162).

The schools thus amended their admission criteria to allow for racial mixing in schools. Children of any race were, in theory, able to enrol at any school. In practice, however, there were two factors which prohibited *de facto* racial integration in white schools: firstly, the cost, which was significantly higher than former House of

Representatives (henceforth HOR) schools because of privatisation and/or loss of full governmental subsidy. Coupled with the fact that whites earned significantly higher incomes than blacks at the time of the change in education policy (MacKenzie 1993: 293), the likelihood that many black children would attend white schools was slim.

The second factor is a result of the Groups Areas Act, which grouped the population in residential areas according to race. The catchment area for white, coloured and black schools was made up of white, coloured and black people, respectively (MacKenzie 1993: 292). So if black children were to be accepted to white schools, they would have to travel long distances outside of their immediate community in order to get there each day.

Along with the change in education policy, the early 1990s saw the apartheid regime begin to disintegrate when negotiations between the Afrikaner government and ANC leaders resulted in the laws of segregation being abolished. A democratic system of governance, under the leadership of the unbanned ANC, formally replaced the apartheid system in 1994. People of all races were free to associate with whomever they wished to and live wherever they could afford to. Some black, coloured and Indian families thus uprooted and moved to former white areas, creating a situation in which children of colour fell into catchment areas for former whites-only schools. In such situations, the natural progression would be for these children to attend schools in the area in which they lived.

The social networks of coloured children who attend former white schools would differ significantly from those who attend former HOR-run schools in a coloured community. Coloured children in a white school would form part of a racial minority in a majority white environment, whereas children in an HOR school would be exposed almost exclusively to coloured children. In the next chapter, I give details about the informants' areas of residence.

Given that the thesis is concerned with rapid social change, my research focuses on the relatively few coloured children who attended either private schools or Model C schools. The effects of their unique educational circumstances will be investigated on two levels. Firstly, I examine three salient phonetic markers of White South African

English (Lass 2002) and typical coloured English (also called Cape Flats English) (Malan 1996; Finn 2004) and draw conclusions about the social allegiances of each of the informants. The second level of investigation involves examining how these informants have constructed personal and social identities within this unique situation of racial and linguistic contact in the school environment.

## **1.2 Literature Survey**

In this section, I contextualise this interdisciplinary study within the body of literature related to the disciplines drawn on. The study examines sociolinguistic variation and identity construction within a subgroup of the coloured community of Cape Town. This research falls within the Labovian variationist paradigm, and is enriched by theories of identity. A brief discussion of Labov's work is followed by the work on South African phonetics by the most prominent South African phoneticians of old, Hopwood, Lanham and Lass, as well as the more recent work on different varieties of South African English, with a focus on phonetics and phonology. I then discuss the origins and development of the three sociological theories of identity, viz. Speech Accommodation Theory, Social Identity Theory and the theory of the Linguistic Market, suggesting, at each stage, the relevance of the work to the current project.

### **a) The Labovian Paradigm**

Because the Labovian paradigm is so well-known to sociolinguists, I provide just a brief overview of Labov's work on sociolinguistic variation, focusing on those studies which have most bearing on this project. Labov's seminal study of sociolinguistic variation was conducted in Martha's Vineyard (1972a), using innovative and effective methods to observe sound change. Drawing on the argument that all linguistic change is preceded by variation (Weinreich et al. 1968: 101), Labov studied the variation of salient variables in the Vineyard in order to observe a sound change in progress. Phonetic variables are often socially significant and can be used as markers of identity in a similar way in which clothing and hair style are chosen by people in order to outwardly reflect their ascribed identity (Chambers 2003: 170 – 1).

Labov (1972a) studied variation of the diphthongs [aɪ] and [aʊ] in different areas of the island of Martha's Vineyard, as used by people of different occupations, ethnic groups and age groups. The results showed that centralisation of the diphthong's onset carried the meaning 'Vineyarder', as it was used by those who felt strong allegiance to the island, regardless of age, ethnic group or occupation. Use of the centralised diphthong was increasing among younger Vineyarders. Further studies in New York confirmed the social significance of sociolinguistic variation (Labov 1972b). Recently, Labov and his colleagues (2006) have produced the *Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology and Sound Change*, which is a large-scale study of the variation in English across North America, drawing on decades of research. A key aspect of the *Atlas* is its attention to the Northern Cities Chain shift and the Southern Shift (in the USA).

Following Labov's findings that phonetic variation is an indicator of social change, this project seeks to discover the significance of phonetic variation within this subset of the coloured community.

#### **b) South African English (SAE) Phonetics**

South African English phonetics has been empirically studied by eminent phoneticians since at least the 1920s. The first of these, David Hopwood, wrote *South African English Pronunciation* (1928), in which he discussed, phonetically, the variety of English spoken by white South Africans in relation to British English speakers. Lanham (1967) and Lanham and Macdonald (1979) describe the characteristic features and pronunciation of SAE, describing the emerging trends during the 1960s and 1970s.

Partly because of the political organisation of the country at that time, only the variety of English spoken by white South Africans received attention from these scholars, who tended to focus on L1 varieties of English. All varieties of South African English (SAE) have the same historical root, however. Roger Lass (2002: 105) explains that all mother-tongue varieties of SAE are daughter varieties of Southern British English (SBE), as are Australian and New Zealand English. Because of their shared ancestry, these varieties all exhibit a set of specific SBE features. The most

important of these features, according to Lass (2002: 106) are: the use of [æ] or a higher vowel in the TRAP set; the STRUT/FOOT split; lengthening of [æ] before voiceless fricatives and /nt, ns/, as in *bath, dance* etc; lengthening of the TRAP vowel before voiced stops and nasals, except [ŋ], as in *bad, bag, man*.

Lass (2002: 104) suggests that the varieties of English spoken by white, coloured and Indian South Africans are distinct 'ethnolects'. This study is concerned with two of these ethnolects, WSAfE and CFE, because of the significant contact the participants in this study had with both varieties.

The history of empirical phonetic study of CFE does not stretch as far back as that of WSAfE, but there are two studies in particular that provide a very useful phonetic description of this variety. First, Tahir Wood's (1987) study of attitudes towards and perceptions of the coloured community in the Cape provides a description of the phonetic variation found in his sample of CFE speakers. Secondly, Peter Finn (2004) provides a detailed description of the phonological system of CFE. This account of CFE, as well as the most recent phonological account of WSAfE (Bowerman 2004), appears in the first volume of *A Handbook of Varieties of English* (Schneider et al. 2004). More research on 'coloured English' was conducted by Hastings (1979) and Steenkamp (1980), who looked at the phonetic systems of this variety as used by children. Steenkamp's study focused particularly on pronunciation of /r/ as a function of socioeconomic status.

There is also a growing body of work on Black South African English (BSAE), including Bertus van Rooy's (2004) account of BSAE phonology and a recent sociolinguistic analysis of BSAE in a PhD by Arista da Silva (2007), which focused on young black South Africans on the Witwatersrand University Campus.

Until relatively recently, phoneticians relied almost exclusively on an impressionistic method of acoustic analysis, using their 'ears' to determine the phonetic quality of a sound. Some researchers have begun using instrumental acoustic techniques to study phonetics (e.g. Bekker and Eley 2007 on WSAfE), because of the somewhat impressionistic and thus subjective nature of the traditional methods. Computerised

tools for acoustic analysis are now available which allow one to analyse large sets of data in a way that is relatively objective and replicable, provided the researcher has chosen his/her questions and approach carefully. The present study employs one such technique for data analysis, which is described in detail in chapter 4.

I aim to add to the body of knowledge on the phonetics of coloured English speakers and identify phonetic trends within a group of coloured people whose contact with WSAfE has been significant. The second aim is to make links between the phonetic change and changing social identities of this subgroup.

The demise of the apartheid system impacted upon South Africa's social system as it allowed for mixing between racial groups. The effect of the changing policy on language use has been significant and this, in turn, raises questions about the relationship between language and identity. Language and identity are so closely linked that language variety can serve as a clear indicator of one's membership to a particular social group (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 317). Studies have been conducted which investigate the issues around language and identity involving African languages and English (e.g. Barkhuizen and de Klerk 2000).

A study investigating the relationship between language and social identity in the coloured community of Wentworth in Durban was conducted by Nkonko Kamwangamalu (2004). He argues that language use is an act of identity projection. He looks at how members of the community use language to respond to the challenges of identity construction (who am I, how do others perceive me and how do I want to be perceived?) in a post-apartheid setting. The results of the study revealed that the Wentworth community perceived themselves to be a distinct group because their variety of English is different to that of other English-speaking communities in Durban. The older members of the community do not explicitly approve of the 'slang' that characterises the variety, suggesting that it is 'degrading' to the community, an 'uneducated' variety and 'standard-lowering', but agreed that it was those features which characterised the variety as Wentworth coloured English (Kamwangamalu 2004: 127). While it is slightly odd to characterise a variety based on the use of slang, Kamwangamalu (2004: 128) draws an interesting and notable

conclusion – that the social identities of members of this community are indexed by the particular variety of English they speak.

If '[l]anguage features are the link which binds individual and social identities together' (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 317), I seek to discover the importance of the variety used by my informants in binding them to a particular social identity. I used three theoretical models to investigate this: They are Speech Accommodation Theory, Social Identity Theory and the theory of the Linguistic Market.

### **c) Speech Accommodation Theory**

Sociolinguistic research is concerned with discovering the processes that govern linguistic behaviour (Giles and Smith 1979: 45). Giles' (1973) work on 'accent mobility', in which he demonstrated the use of interpersonal accent convergence in an interview situation, led to the development of a model which accounted for one aspect of linguistic behaviour – accommodation. The theory is known as the Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT).

Giles and his colleagues (1977: 322) argue that people 'adjust their speech styles, or accommodate, as a means of expressing values, attitudes and intentions towards others'. They do this through convergence, divergence or non-convergence (maintenance). Convergence has been widely studied; one study by Giles et al (1973) investigated convergence strategies used by English Canadian speakers in response to a French Canadian listener and found that there are different types of convergence and that particular types are related to the perceived accommodative effort of the speaker.

Few studies have focused on divergence and non-convergence (Giles et al. 1997: 322). Non-convergence is especially important because it allows social groups to assert their cultural distinctiveness and to maintain their group identity (Bourhis 1979: 126). The informants in this study show interesting patterns of convergence and non-convergence. I investigated speech accommodation as reported by the informants, which gives an indication of the informants' desires to be integrated or accepted into the white community or allegiance to the coloured community. This is discussed further in chapter 4.

#### **d) Social Identity Theory**

Looking further into social group allegiance, Social Identity Theory (SIT) is able to expand on the results that the SAT produces. Social identity theory has, since its inception, become an important theoretical paradigm for studying various identity-related phenomena and is used by researchers in various disciplines, including Psychology and Sociology (Bornman 2004: 155). The theory originated with Henri Tajfel's 'minimal group experiment' (Tajfel et al. 1971), in which a group of British schoolboys were randomly divided into two groups. Each person was told which group he belonged to and given the impression that membership was based on one's preference for the art of two famous painters. None of the boys were told who the other members of his group were or who had been assigned to the other group.

The boys were tasked with allocating money to two other people – one member of his ingroup and the other, a member of the outgroup. The allocation was done a number of times and each occurrence was subject to a number of rules, which changed with each allocation. Each time, the boys had to decide how to allocate the money within the bounds of the rules, believing that the representative from each group would receive the money allocated to him.

Interaction and contact between participants was prevented by putting each boy in a separate cubicle to complete the task. No personal gain was possible as they could not allocate money to themselves. Because of the experimental setting and the anonymous identities of in- and outgroup members, all factors associated with intergroup tension, such as cultural difference and personal preference, were eliminated.

The results showed that the boys were consistent in their discrimination in favour of ingroup members and preferred the allocation rules in which the difference between the amount allocated to the in- and outgroup members was largest. Tajfel and his colleagues (1971) concluded that group categorisation resulted in bias towards the ingroup. Similar studies conducted subsequently with groups of all ages confirmed and added to these findings, suggesting that when people are divided into any group, they immediately and automatically conceive of themselves as a member of that

group, display allegiance to the ingroup and behave in such a way as to place the ingroup in a better position relative to relevant outgroups.

Following this, in the South African context during apartheid, the relative arbitrariness of racial allocation, especially to the group labelled 'coloured', would have little bearing on the ingroup members' allegiance to the group. According to the conclusions which led to the development of the SIT, the mere fact that people were categorised as coloured will have led to a sense of group membership and community. Sinfree Makoni (1996: 265) confirms this, arguing that people labelled under the apartheid classifications tended to internalise the labels and conceive of themselves in terms of those labels. The externally imposed (etic) definition of group membership became an internal self-definition (emic). Coupled with the living arrangements as dictated by the Group Areas Act, communities of coloured people developed, along with feelings of ingroup membership, as is reflected in the Afrikaans phrase '*een van onse mense*', translated as 'one of our people', which is commonly used by coloured people to refer to other coloured people.

I applied this theory to my data to investigate how the informants developed social identities and where their social group allegiance lies.

#### **e) Linguistic Market**

The larger social system within which the informants live, and the effect of language variety on their daily experience, present and future, is an interesting aspect of this research. The informants' position within the linguistic market is considered in terms of the final theory of identity.

The idea of the *marché linguistique* was developed by Bourdieu and Boltanski (1975). Bourdieu's work, in particular, has gone a long way in clarifying understanding of the relationship between language and political, social and economic power (Alexander 2003: 184). Linguistic markets come about through interaction between people who speak different languages or dialects which might have different social and economic histories (Alexander 2003: 185). In this process, one variety becomes dominant (called the *legitimate language* by Bourdieu) and its speakers are advantaged over speakers of other varieties because they are in possession of a larger amount of

*linguistic capital* within the market. The market is unified, as one variety attains the status of the legitimate language and all other varieties are ranked hierarchically against it (Bourdieu 1991: 45). A significant characteristic of the market is that it places pressure on language users who operate within the market to standardise their variety towards the legitimate language (Chambers 2003: 195).

In South Africa, WSAfE has long been the legitimate language because of its relationship to people and institutions of power in the country. This study seeks to discover where the informants feel they are positioned within the market, according to the hierarchical rank of their linguistic variety in relation to WSAfE. Social pressure thus comes from two directions: the pressure from the symbolic linguistic market to standardise speech, and the pressure on informants to maintain their speech variety to signal that they identify with the coloured community as a social group, as the SAT and SIT suggest. The outcomes of this analysis are discussed in chapter 5.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

Studies of both phonetics and social identities in the coloured communities of South Africa are scant. To my knowledge, this study is the first to bring these aspects together in conducting empirical research on the sociolinguistic and sociological impact of private and/or model C education on coloured youth in a post-apartheid school environment. This research project aims to fill the gap slightly by offering a phonetic account of three salient vowels for a sub-group within the coloured community.

The following chapter on Research Methodology describes the methods of data collection and analysis.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Research Methodology**

The task of examining the sociolinguistics of social change required a suitable sample of speakers and adequate data collection and analytical methodology. This chapter describes the methodological process, beginning with the criteria for informant selection. This is followed by a discussion about the instrument employed for data collection. The final section of this chapter examines the various methods of data analysis. The data are analysed on two levels: firstly, phonetically; and secondly, using three theoretical models which allow for an investigation into identity construction.

#### **2.1 Selecting the sample**

I pre-selected categories with specific criteria which the sample was required to satisfy. Informants were thus selected by judgement sample (Feagin 2002: 27) according to their fulfilment of the criteria described below. The research sample consisted of 20 young people who meet the following criteria which are described further below:

- a) Self-identify as coloured
- b) English speaking
- c) Raised, schooled and permanent resident in Cape Town
- d) 18 – 25 years old
- e) Middle-class
- f) Some private or former Model C education<sup>5</sup>

The categories served to ensure that the sample included 10 males and 10 females and adequately represented each of the three types of schools, viz. private, former Model C and ex-House of Representatives schools. The particular categories included variations on the criteria e.g. male/private school and female/former Model C school. In reality, the categories are not that neat because most of the informants attended

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<sup>5</sup> It was a prerequisite that informants had attended a private or former Model C school at some stage in their schooling career, even if it was not for very long. People who attended ex-House of Representatives schools (as well as a private or MC school) were included in the sample.

more than one school during their schooling careers, often moving between the three types of schools. The parameters and reasons for the specific criteria are detailed below.

#### **a) Coloured**

As described in chapter 1, people classified as ‘coloured’ under the Population Registration Act made up a heterogeneous group. Despite this, people who were classified as such were forced to live in neighbourhoods designated for coloureds. As a result, they developed into a coloured community, which makes up 53,9% of the population of the Western Cape (Statistics South Africa 2003: 12). This community speaks a distinct variety of both Afrikaans and English.

It is from this group of people that my informants were selected. Each of the informants self-identified as coloured during the course of the interview. Their feelings of allegiance to the coloured social group will be discussed in chapter 4. The coloured community of Cape Town is religiously diverse. Both Christian and Muslim people were classified ‘coloured’ under the Population Registration Act. The two religious groups lived as neighbours in close and constant contact throughout the apartheid period. The sample includes five Muslim informants (25%) and 15 Christian informants (75%).

#### **b) English-speaker**

The focus of this project is the features of English spoken by this subgroup within the coloured community. I thus limited the sample to English speakers. Of my 20 informants, 19 used English as the primary language in the home. One informant spoke Afrikaans with his family at home, but is bilingual, studying and communicating with friends both in the neighbourhood and at university in English. The rest of the informants have differing levels of proficiency in Afrikaans. Some do not speak Afrikaans fluently, but have a comprehensive understanding of it and are able to use it when necessary, while others feel completely comfortable using it.

In the coloured community there has been an increasing shift to English-Afrikaans bilingualism, or even dominance in English (McCormick 2004; Stone 2002: 382). Stone (2002: 382) notes that since the 1960s, functional differentiation between

English and Afrikaans has become increasingly common in coloured homes: parents converse with one another in the local variety of Afrikaans, with their children in a variant of English and prefer the English mass media. This is confirmed by McCormick (2002: 993) who notes that coloured parents commonly speak to one another in Afrikaans, but speak only English to their children. This is because of the ubiquitous belief that English would provide children with better opportunities for further study and employment (Finn 2004: 967).

### **c) Cape Town resident**

The third criterion for informant selection was that informants had lived and been schooled in greater Cape Town for all or most of their lives. As the focus of the project is on Cape Town residents and the features exhibited in their use of English, too much sustained exposure to other varieties of English might have skewed the results. I excluded one informant from the study after discovering that he had lived in the United Kingdom for five years during his primary school career<sup>6</sup>. I delimit greater Cape Town in its current political terms: the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality (known colloquially as the Cape Town Unicity) is comprised of six main areas. They are:

- i. Cape Town
- ii. South Peninsula
- iii. Blaauwberg
- iv. Tygerberg
- v. Oostenberg
- vi. Helderberg

Each of the above-mentioned areas is represented in my sample, but two, Cape Town and Tygerberg, feature more prominently than the others. All of the informants lived and were schooled in one of these areas throughout their schooling careers, with two short and minor exceptions: two informants left greater Cape Town with their families during primary school – one to England for one year and the other to Port Elizabeth and East London for two years.

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<sup>6</sup> This excluded informant does not form part of the total of 20 informants; he was excluded before the end of the interview process so the category he filled was subsequently filled by another informant.

#### **d) Age**

The age delimitation for my informants was 18 – 25 years. Considering that the change in legislature regarding admission policy was introduced in 1991 and given that the average age at which children start Grade 1 is six, all of my informants would theoretically have been allowed to attend former Model C schools for all of their schooling careers. There was only one exception – the eldest informant, who was born in 1983 and started school in 1989 at the age of five, two years before the policy change. Details of the informants' schooling careers will be given below.

The lower age limit of 18 was set so that informants would have completed high school by the time of the interview, allowing them to reflect on their experiences of their schooling career as a whole.

My informants, at the time of the interview, were aged between 18 and 24 years, with a mean age of 21.85. All of them had some tertiary education, 6 of the 20 (35%) had attained their degree/diploma and 14 (65%) were still studying; 12 full-time and 2 part-time. As either students or relative newcomers to the professional world, the group is generally still financially dependent on their parents. Most (80%) live in their parents' homes. They thus fall into the category of late adolescence/early adulthood, where adolescence is defined as a period in which young people are still dependent on their parents' or guardians' household and early adulthood as the period in which that dependency begins to diminish (Chambers 2003: 186). Some have reduced their dependency on their parents by working part-time in order to generate a small income.

#### **e) Social class**

Cape Town, like all societies, is stratified into social classes. Class hierarchy exists because of disparities of income, education, occupation, opportunity and privilege. Unequal access to these elements, combined with the manner in which larger society values these elements, leads to social stratification by class (Chambers 2003: 39).

Class can be distinguished along a continuum from Working Class to Upper Class<sup>7</sup> (abbreviated as WC and UC respectively), with the Middle Class falling between the two. Each major class category can be further divided into upper, middle and lower, creating sub-categories such as Upper Middle Class (UMC) and Lower Working Class (LWC). The UMC is made up of those with greatest access to the abovementioned factors.

Unlike the other two primary social partitions, age and sex, social class is not easy to assign people to. Placing informants in a class category is a subjective task, but the use of certain indices reduces the subjectivity of the classification. Occupation of the breadwinner in a household serves as a good index for social class because most other factors which index class are a function of occupation: education is a determinant of occupation, and occupation, in turn, determines income. Certain occupations are regarded as typical for particular class categories: occupations such as business owners, directors, professionals and managers index MC status (Eckert 2000: 26; Chambers 2003: 43).

Using occupation as the sole determinant of class has been quite successful in previous sociolinguistic studies (Chambers 2003: 53). Following this, I chose to index social class based on occupation alone. Because my informants are relatively young and are either students or new to their respective professions, the occupation of their parents were considered in order to ensure that they met the class criterion for the present study. The occupations listed in table 2.1 below support the categorisation of my informants as MC. While some occupations in the table, such as teaching and nursing, are not likely to index MC on their own, the occupations of each pair of parents definitely do<sup>8</sup>.

Linguistic stratification in Cape Town can be said to parallel social stratification. L1 speakers of CFE tend to belong to the MC, while the WC tends to speak English as an

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<sup>7</sup> William Labov (1966: 170 - 174) distinguished a Lower Class, which comprised those who were unemployed or homeless.

<sup>8</sup> Parents of the informants are not necessarily pairs in the sense that they are married and living in the same home. Five of the 20 sets of parents are either divorced or had never been married.

L2<sup>9</sup>. English is regarded as highly prestigious amongst the majority of South Africans as it is seen as the ‘key to upward social mobility’ (Kamwangamalu 2002: 162).

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Parents</b>
Manager	12
Business owner	9
Teacher	3
Housewife	3
Attorney/Magistrate	2
Nurse	2
Receptionist/Personal Assistant	2
Doctor	2
Director/Executive	1
Lecturer	1
Engineer	2
Priest	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

Table 2.1 Occupation of informants’ parents

During the struggle against apartheid, English was seen as the language of liberation. Many parents, including L1 Afrikaans speakers, chose to raise their children as English speakers and send them to English-medium schools, with the belief that English would provide the children with the best opportunities for success (de Klerk 2000: 199; Finn 2004: 967).

#### **f) Schooling**

The final criterion was that informants had to have attended private or former Model C schools at some stage in their school career. There are different combinations of private, former Model C (henceforth MC) and ex-House of Representatives (HOR) schools within the sample, as illustrated in table 2.2 below. Two of the informants (10%) attended private schools from Grade 1 through Grade 12; five (25%) attended

<sup>9</sup> Code-switching and code-mixing of local varieties of English and Afrikaans are common phenomena in the coloured communities of Cape Town. Kay McCormick (2002) argues that the mixed code is in fact a vernacular in itself.

both MC and private schools during their schooling career; five (25%) attended only MC schools; seven (35%) attended both HOR and MC schools; and one (5%) attended a combination of HOR and private schools. There are thus five groups of various combinations of schooling:

<b>Type of Schools</b>	<b>Informant Initials</b>	<b>Number of Informants</b>	<b>% of Informants</b>
Private	KP	1	5
MC and Private	DG, DMD, ST, TD, WS	5	25
MC	AS, GR, KH, LC, YJ	5	25
HOR and MC	AC, DM, DV, JK, JD, ZP, YR	7	35
HOR and Private	KPL, TL	2	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2.2 Informants' combinations of schools according to school type

As described in chapter 1, political and social factors created a situation in which the racial demographic at MC and private schools was predominantly white. Coloured children formed a minority in these educational environments. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of this environment in terms of socio-phonetic and identity construction.

This sample of young, coloured, middle-class English speakers from Cape Town is, I believe, an adequate representation of the relatively small group of people who fit this social profile. Between the 20 informants, they attended 29 different primary and high schools in four of the six districts which make up the Cape Town Unicity.

## **2.2 Informant Profiles**

Each of the informants filled the criteria set out above. The sample was made up of 20 informants; 10 male and 10 female. Table 2.3 profiles all of them, identifying them by their initials, sex, age, which schools they attended (with the classification of each school in parentheses) and areas of residence. The schools have been labelled as HOR or MC depending on their status under the apartheid government and during the

<b>Initials</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>High Schools</b>	<b>Areas of Residence</b>
AS	M	22	SACS (MC)	SACS (MC)	Walmer Estate (C), University Estate (W)
AC	F	22	St. Augustines (HOR), Kenridge (MC)	Fairmont (MC)	Belhar (C), Durbanville (W)
DG	F	20	Wynberg Girls (MC)	Reddam (P)	Wynberg (C)
DM	M	24	Bergsig (HOR), Goeiehoop (HOR), Labiance (MC)	Bellville (MC)	Glenhaven (C)
DMD	M	22	Blaauwberg Ridge (MC)	Bishops (P)	Atlantis (C), Rondebosch (W)
DV	M	23	Jan Bosman (HOR), Golden Grove (MC), Kenridge (MC)	Fairmont (MC)	Kuilsrivier (C), Durbanville (W)
GR	F	22	Rustenburg (MC)	Rustenburg (MC)	Crawford (C), Rondebosch East (C)
JK	M	23	Vanguard (HOR), Golden Grove (MC)	Westerford (MC)	Surrey Estate (C), Athlone (C)
JD	F	22	Zonnebloem Girls (HOR), Mountain Road Primary (MC)	Livingstone (HOR)	Northpine (C), Woodstock (C), Sybrand Park (W)
KPL	M	22	York Road Primary (HOR)	Bishops (P)	Mitchell's Plain (C), Lansdowne (C)
KH	F	18	Wynberg Girls (MC)	Wynberg Girls (MC)	Grassy Park (C), Wynberg (C)
KP	F	20	Springfield Convent (P)	Springfield Convent (P)	Retreat (C)
LC	M	23	Rondebosch Boys (MC)	Rondebosch Boys (MC)	Fairways (C), Ronebosch East (C), Pinelands (W)
ST	M	23	Waldorf (P), Golden Grove (MC)	Westerford (MC)	Rondebosch East (C), Plumstead (W)
TD	F	23	El Shaddai (P), Kenridge (MC)	Fairmont (MC)	Glenhaven (C), Durbanville (W), Pinelands (W)
TL	M	23	Bishops (P)	St. Augustines (HOR), Bishops (P)	Strandfontein (C), Somerset West (W)
WS	M	20	Mary Kihn (P), St. Georges (P)	Pinelands (MC)	Retreat (C), Pinelands (W)
YJ	F	23	Rustenburg (MC)	Rustenburg (MC)	Northpine (C), Goodwood (W), Plumstead (W)
YR	F	19	Turfhall (HOR)	Westerford (MC)	Crawford (C)
ZP	F	23	Turfhall (HOR), Rustenburg (MC)	Rustenburg (MC)	Rondebosch East (C)

Table 2.3 Informant Profiles. M – male; F – female; HOR – ex-House of Representatives school; MC – Former Model C school; P – Private school; C – coloured area; W – white area

transition. Information about each informant's area(s) of residence are also provided in the table, indicating whether they were reserved for coloureds (C) or whites (W) under the Group Areas Act.

Access to these schools is determined largely by the fee structure rather than their historical categorisation. The private schools do not receive financial support from the state, while MC schools do receive state support, primarily in the form of teachers' salaries. Governing Bodies are responsible for raising funds for extra costs these schools incur. This takes the form of school fees, which are set at the discretion of the Governing Body. At some MC schools, fees were set much higher than at others. SACS, for example, charges R21 500<sup>10</sup> per annum for school fees, while Pinelands High charges R12 650 and Wynberg Girls High School charges R14 550. The private schools generally charge more than MC schools: Bishops Diocesan College charges annual school fees of R57 120, Reddam House charges R43 500 and Springfield Convent R28 800. Fees at some MC schools are almost as high as some private schools, however, e.g. SACS and Springfield Convent.

### **2.3 Data collection**

I conducted sociolinguistic interviews with the 20 informants between July 2006 and May 2007 to collect the data for this project. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. They were recorded with an MP3 recorder with the consent of each of the participants. Recording the interviews in this digital format enabled me to work closely with the data after the interviews had taken place. Pseudonyms have been used to ensure the anonymity of the people involved in the study.

Each person has a repertoire of speech styles, which is accessed as and when the context requires it (Giles and Powesland 1975: 135). There are internal and external factors which influence style choice. Internal factors are such things as physiological and emotional state of the speaker e.g. whether or not the speaker feels comfortable. External factors include topic of conversation and level of formality in the context of speech (Giles and Powesland 1975: 134). I was interested in comparing different

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<sup>10</sup> All fees are according to the fee schedules for 2008.

speech styles used by my informants in the interviews, because I suspect that when using more formal styles, speakers would tend towards WSAfE norms. Conversely, when using more casual styles, I hypothesise that informants might have reverted to using elements of CFE which naturally form part of their vernacular.

The interview was constructed so as to elicit different styles of speech from the informants. It was made up of three sections: a word list, a reading passage and interview discussion (the interview questionnaire, reading passage and word list are included as Appendix 1, 2 and 3 respectively). The most formal style is used when reading the word list. The list was made up of 25 lexical items, 24 of which were the labels used by John Wells (1982) for his lexical sets. Wells developed a system whereby he chose a monosyllabic word to label each vowel. The word was taken to represent the set of words which contain the same vowel as the word which represents the set e.g. PRICE represents the set of words that have the same vowel as *price* e.g. *nine, right, guy* etc. This labelling system accommodates dialectal variation in the pronunciation of each set because it is not reliant on phonetic symbols. It, however, assumes that lexical sets roughly correspond in different dialects of English.

Each of the informants read a full set of 25 lexical items one at a time and very carefully. Because of the nature of the task, the speaker would be most conscious of his/her speech during this reading exercise. The result would be a formal, highly self-monitored style. This style is called *word list style (WL)*.

The reading of a reading passage elicits a slightly less formal style because there is less of a focus on individual words being spoken and more of a focus on the reading of a coherent text. In doing this, they produce less monitored speech in what has been called *reading passage style (RP)*.

The third section of the interview can be divided into two parts, occasionally distinguished by style. When two styles are apparent, they are *interview style (IS)* and the *vernacular*. These are the two least formal styles. The first, IS, is used in response to typical interview questions designed to elicit demographic information, such as date of birth, area of residence etc. Parents' occupations and details about siblings and extended family were also discussed at this stage.

In addition to WL, RP and IS styles, I wanted to elicit the style that is used when people are least conscious of their speech. This style is the vernacular. It is one's most casual and natural style, used predominantly with close friends and family members in a relaxed, informal environment (Labov 1972a: 208). Getting informants to use this style in an interview situation is quite a challenge, however, because of the phenomenon of the *observer's paradox*. The vernacular is only used in situations where the speaker is not being observed, but the presence of an observer would immediately cause an informant to adopt a more formal style. The dilemma is that researchers cannot access the vernacular without being present, yet in their presence, that particular style would not naturally occur (Labov 1972a: 208).

William Labov (1972b) developed a method of overcoming this constraint, accessing a style which comes as close to the vernacular as is possible in an interview situation. Realising that the key was to make interviewees essentially forget that they were in an interview situation and revert to their most natural, casual style, Labov posited that by getting informants involved in telling a narrative, the researcher could gain access to a style close to the vernacular. Narrative is a means for speakers to partially relive their experience. They often become so involved in the story that they pay little or no attention to the immediate context (Schiffrin 1996: 41). Because they are reliving the experience in their own memory, they do not monitor their speech as they usually would in the face-to-face interview situation (Labov 1972b: 355).

In his study in Harlem, New York, Labov used what has come to be known as the 'danger of death' question in order to get interviewees to talk about a situation in which they felt that their life was being threatened. He asked if they had ever been in a situation where 'you thought you were in serious danger of being killed – where you thought to yourself, "this is it"?' (Labov 1972b: 354). In response to this question, speakers often became so involved in the narration that they temporarily forgot that they were being interviewed and reverted to their vernacular for the period of the narration.

Of course, the 'danger of death' question would not achieve the same response in all communities as it did in the New York Inner City. The key is to get informants

talking about topics which stir strong emotions, which can be achieved by asking about memorable events. In the present study, informants were asked to talk about favourite memories from high school, such as their Matric Dance or how they met their boyfriend/girlfriend. Encouraging informants to tell narratives is the most successful way of eliciting the vernacular in a contrived interview context.

When speakers are emotionally absorbed by a particular narration, there are particular cues which indicate that a change in style from IS to vernacular has occurred (Labov 1972a: 95). These include changes in tempo, pitch, volume, breathing patterns and occasional laughter, depending on the subject matter. However, in some interviews, it was difficult to establish a distinction between IS and narrative style during the informal section of the interview. Phonetic tokens from this section will thus all be analysed as IS and compared to RP and WL styles, rather than distinguishing four distinct styles. This will prevent producing contrived results in cases when there was little or no discernable difference in style in an interview.

In order to make the interviewees feel most comfortable, I interviewed them in their homes when possible. A total of 9 (45%) of the informants were interviewed in their own homes; 6 (30%) were interviewed in my home; and 5 (25%) were interviewed on the University of Cape Town campus in a quiet room. In each case, the informant chose a location that was most convenient for him/her at the time.

## **2.4 Analysis**

Each interview was downloaded to computer as soon as possible after it had taken place. Analysis of the interview data took two forms. The first, phonetic analysis, involved a number of computer software programmes which allow users to work with large quantities of data very efficiently. The procedures are explained below.

The second form of analysis involved an investigation into the ways in which the informants have constructed personal and social identities within their unique social circumstances. Three theoretical frameworks are used for this analysis.

### 2.4.1. Phonetics

#### a) Praat

Praat is a software programme which allows one to ‘do phonetics by computer’ (Boersma and Weenink 2008) i.e. do acoustic analysis on one’s computer. It was developed by Paul Boersma and David Weenink of the Institute of Phonetic Sciences at the University of Amsterdam. The software is free and downloadable from [www.praat.org](http://www.praat.org).

The programme measures formant frequency values of acoustic energy. A formant is a concentration of acoustic energy which occurs at a particular frequency in a speech wave. The frequencies at which formants occur correspond to the resonances of the vocal tract of individual speakers. Several formants occur at different frequencies, at a rough average of one formant per 1000Hz (Boersma and Weenink 2008). Formants are displayed as dark bands on a wideband spectrogram: the darker the band, the stronger it is, which means that it has more energy and is louder. Both vowels and consonants have formants, but as the focus of this project is on vowel acoustics, I will use examples of vowel sounds to illustrate how the programme was used.

In figure 2.3, a spectrogram of the GOOSE vowel is displayed, showing four clear dark bands at 1447.85 seconds. For the purposes of this study, the first and second formants, known as F1 and F2 respectively, are most important. F1 is affected by how open the tongue and jaw are in the production of a vowel – F1 is higher when the vowel is more open. F2 is affected by whether the tongue is back, mid or front when producing a vowel. F2 is higher when producing a front vowel (Watt and Fabricius 2003: 1).

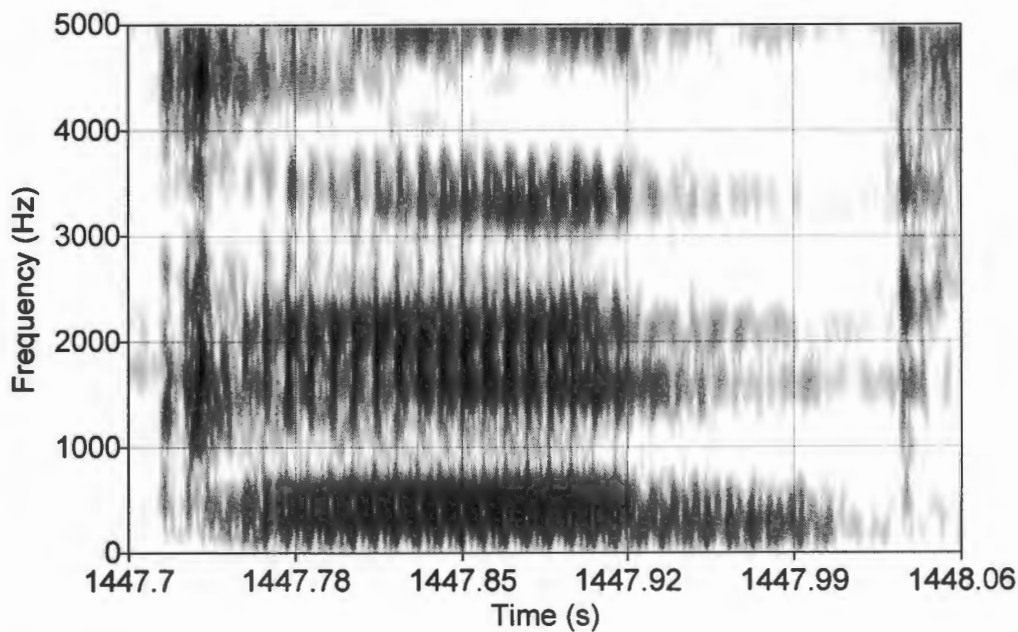


Figure 2.3 Spectrogram of the GOOSE vowel for speaker WS

Praat allows one to listen to recordings, or excerpts of recordings in WAV format<sup>11</sup>. Once one has identified and isolated the vowel, one can measure the frequency of the formants in Hertz. Vowels can usually be identified by bands of formants which run parallel to one another, so in figure 3.4.1 above, [u:] would be measured between 1447.85s and 1447.92s.

In order to facilitate analysis of a large corpus of data in the most efficient way, Philip Harrison of JP French Associates and the University of York developed a script for Praat, which allows one to log data in files created in a Praat folder on one's computer. With a specified combination of keys (Control + F12), a dialogue box appears into which the user enters the code for the particular vowel being measured, as well as the source word for that vowel. In the spectrogram above, the source word for [u:] is *good*. The code is provided along with the script and identifies a symbol for each vowel in the IPA. The code for [u:] in the example above is 'u:'. The script then creates a separate document for each vowel logged with the same code and one document with all tokens logged. For each token it logs values for F1, F2 and F3, the

<sup>11</sup> This required conversion of the sound files from MP3 into WAV. Free downloadable software for this conversion is available on the internet e.g. dBpoweramp Music Converter

start and end time for the measured selection in seconds, the code for the vowel and the source word.

Using this programme and script, I logged a total of 4290 tokens for the GOOSE, START, DRESS, FLEECE, TRAP, STRUT and KIT vowels.

### **b) Measuring Diphthongs**

The script is used for measuring monophthongs, but because two measurements are required for each diphthong, I used a different method for capturing data for the PRICE set. Once the diphthong had been identified in Praat (in the same way as described above), the glide between the [a] and [ɪ] became evident, as in figure 2.4 below. The dark bands of formants do not run parallel for the diphthongs, as they do for monophthongs. They show the pattern of movement from one vowel to the other, so at the leftmost side of the spectrogram in figure 2.4, the dark bands representing F1 and F2 are much closer together than towards the rightmost end of the spectrogram, which represent the sounds [a] and [ɪ] respectively.

I measured the formant values near the beginning of the selection and again near the end of the selection to get values of the formants for the onset and offset of the diphthong. The values were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet, enabling me to work with the data at a later stage. Using this method, I collected 120 tokens of the PRICE set.

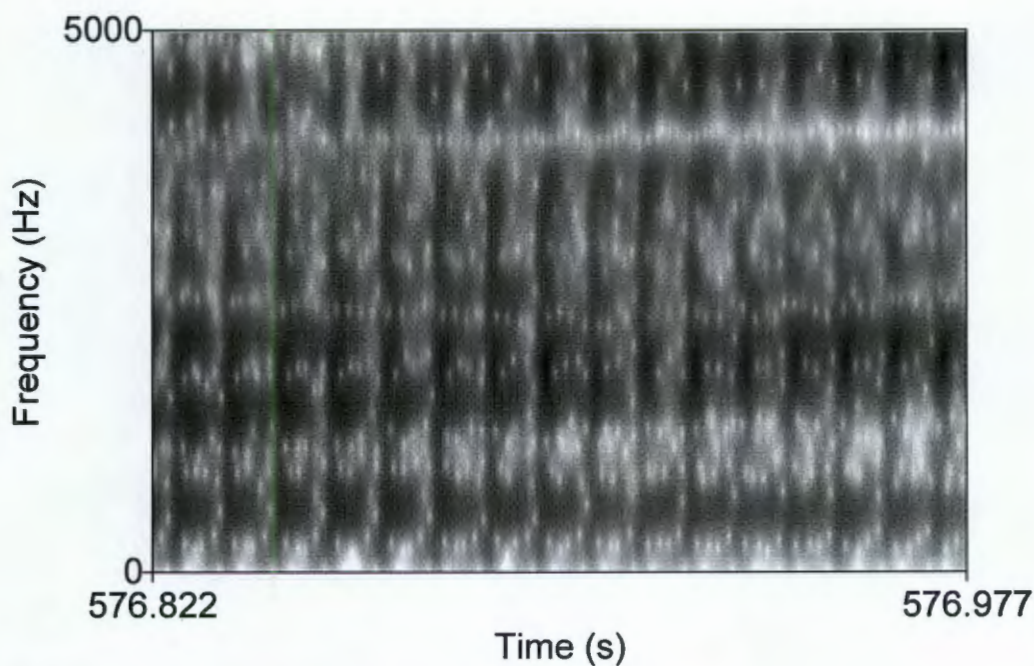


Figure 2.4 Spectrogram of PRICE vowel for speaker WS

### c) Graphs and Vowel Charts

Once the data had been logged using Praat, I was able to create graphs to illustrate the data clearly. By plotting F1 and F2 against one another (with F1 on the Y-axis and F2 on the X-axis) and reversing the values of the axes so that the X-axis runs from maximum to minimum from bottom to top and the Y-axis runs from maximum to minimum from left to right, one gets a graph which represents a vowel chart. In figure 2.5 below, all the tokens of GOOSE produced by Wesley (WS) are represented by blue diamonds. For the most part, the formants are quite high and back as would be expected for GOOSE, although there is significant variation along the F2 axis where about half the tokens are central or centralised. This variation will be discussed in Chapter 3.

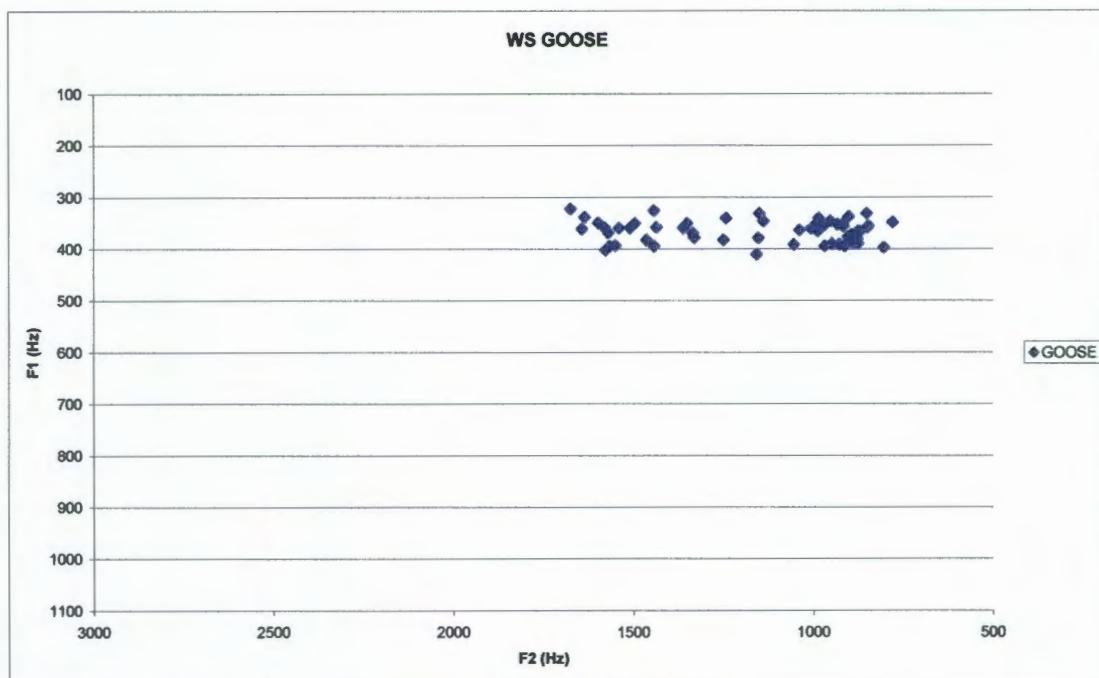


Figure 2.5 All GOOSE tokens for speaker WS

By plotting values for different lexical sets on the same graph, one can compare different vowels produced by the same speaker. In figure 2.6 below, all tokens of FLEECE are fronter than those of GOOSE and all tokens of BATH are lower than those of GOOSE. However, as I discuss later, the BATH vowels are raised compared to many other dialects i.e. it occurs in the mid-back area, with some tokens showing centralisation.

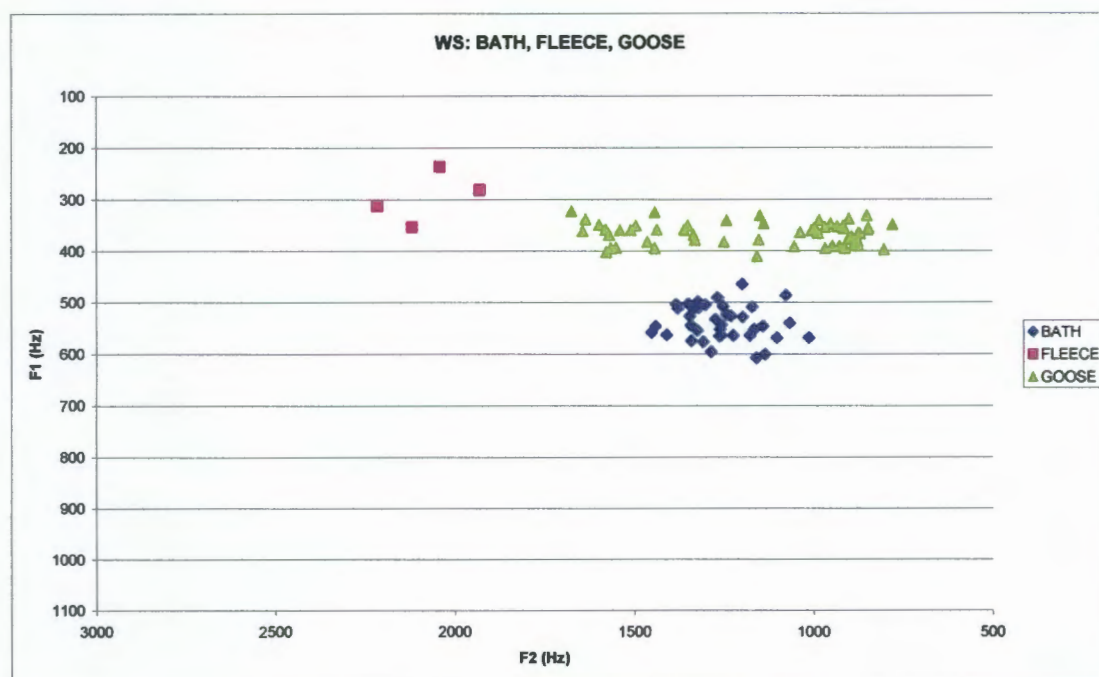


Figure 2.6 All tokens of BATH, FLEECE and GOOSE for speaker WS

#### **d) Normalisation**

Comparing tokens of different vowels for the same speaker is straightforward, but comparing tokens for different speakers presents more of a challenge. Equivalent sounds produced by different speakers display large differences, attributable to differences in vocal tract length (Watt and Fabricius 2003: 2). Men, women and children's mouths vary in size, which means that their vowel spaces are not the same, and are therefore not directly comparable. In order to compare speakers' vocal spaces, physiological differences must be eliminated (Thomas and Kendall 2007).

The differences can be eliminated by a process of vowel normalisation. By normalising the values of the tokens for each speaker in a dataset, one obtains comparable data for speakers of different sexes and ages. Once the data for different speakers have been normalised, thereby removing the physiological factors contributing to variation, only socially and sociolinguistically significant differences remain (Thomas and Kendall 2007).

I used the Watt and Fabricius Method for normalising the data as it allows for 'direct visual and statistical comparison of vowel spaces for different speakers' (Watt and Fabricius 2003: 3). The Watt and Fabricius method creates what the authors have called an 'S transform' (Watt and Fabricius 2003: 3), which is calculated using the centroid on the F1 ~ F2 plane. The centroid is labelled *S*, which is the grand mean of F1 and F2 frequencies at three points on a triangular plane. The apices of the triangle represent F1 and F2 maxima and minima for each speaker, which ideally correspond to [i], [a] and [u'], as in the figure 2.7 below. The symbol [u'] is discussed below.

The procedure for calculating normalised results follows (Watt and Fabricius 2003). The first step is to assume that the average F1 and F2 of the FLEECE set represents each speaker's minimum F1 and maximum F2. Assume also that the average F1 for the START set represents the speaker's maximum F1.

An average of the F1 and F2 values for each set is used rather than the highest and lowest F1 and F2 values in the dataset. This reduces the potential of distorting the geometry of a speaker's vowel space as extreme values may be a result of inaccuracies in individual formant measurements.

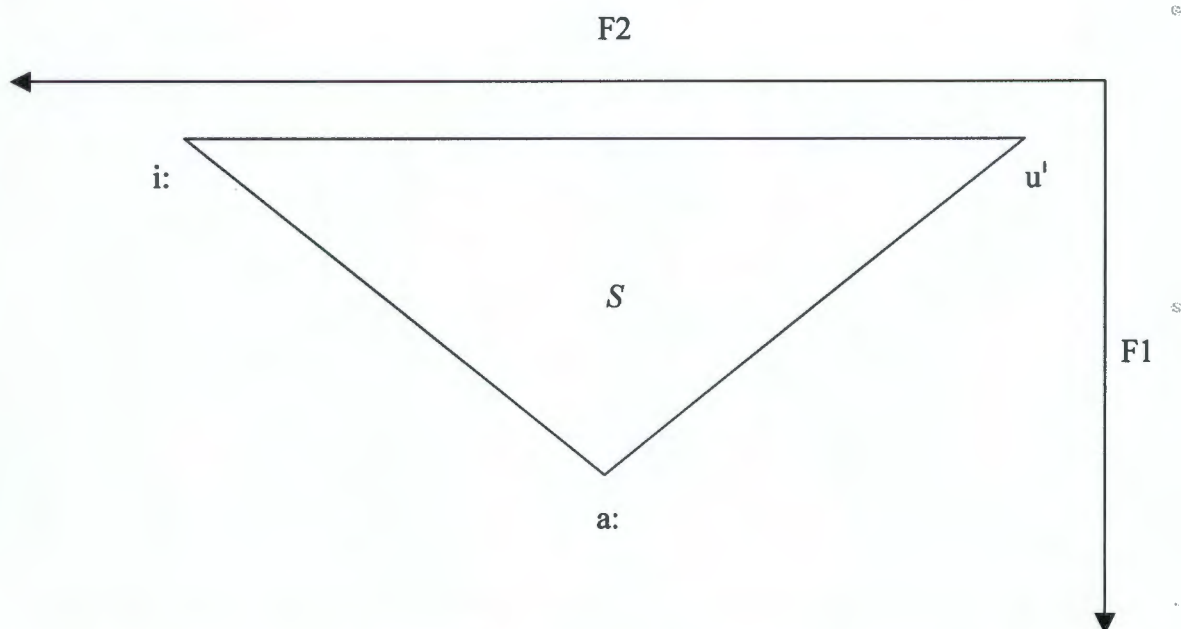


Figure 2.7 Schematised representation of the 'vowel triangle' used for the calculation of S.  $i = \text{min. F1, max. F2}$  (average F1 ~ F2 for FLEECE);  $a = \text{max. F1}$  (average F1 ~ F2 for START);  $u' = \text{min. F1, min. F2}$ , where  $F1(u')$  and  $F2(u') = F1(i)$  (Adapted from Watt and Fabricius 2003: 6)

To arrive at F1 and F2 minimum values, one could simply use the GOOSE vowel to represent the most back vowel in each speaker's vowel space. Many accents of English do not have a fully back, fully close and fully rounded GOOSE vowel, however. As I will show in chapter 3, this is often true of the variety of English spoken by my informants. In this case, the average formant frequency values for GOOSE are not representative of the minimum F1 and F2 values a speaker could theoretically produce. Watt and Fabricius thus suggest the use of hypothetical F1 and F2 minima, which, together, are labelled  $[u']$ . The values are arrived at by taking the F1 minimum for FLEECE to represent the F1 minimum for the speaker, thus  $F1$  of  $[i:] = F1$  of  $[u']$ . F2 cannot have a lower frequency than F1 because formant frequencies are measured on the same linear plane, but F2 often has a frequency which is so close to F1 that they are in fact indistinguishable from one another. It can thus be assumed that the speaker's closest, backest vowel would have an F2 value which is exactly equivalent to its F1 value. F1 and F2 of  $[u']$  are thus equal to the mean F1 value for FLEECE.

When these values are plotted on the F1 ~ F2 plane, a triangle results with the values for [i:], [a:] and [u'] forming the apices of the triangle (see figure 2.7 above). The centroid, *S*, is then calculated as follows: the centroid's F1 value is the sum of the mean F1 values of [i:], [a:] and [u'], divided by three. The F2 value of the centroid is the sum of the mean F2 values of [i:], [a:] and [u'], 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. What results are normalised data for each speaker, which are comparable to all other speakers.

The resultant values are no longer in Hertz, but are expressed as a ratio of *S* i.e.  $F_n/S(F_n)$ . Dividing the centroid,  $S(F_n)$  by itself would be equal to 1, thus the coordinates of *S* will always be (1,1). Any tokens with low F1 or F2 values on the Hz scale will thus have  $F_n/S(F_n)$  values between 0 and 1, and tokens with high F1 and F2 values on the Hz scale will have  $F_n/S(F_n)$  values higher than 1.

I normalised my data with the help of a web-based software package, NORM, a vowel normalisation and plotting suite (Thomas and Kendall 2007). NORM processes a spreadsheet of raw vowel measurements submitted to the website in a specified format and normalises the data using any one of five normalisation methods. The motivation for NORM was to help researchers to discover what the best method of normalisation would be for a particular dataset. It allows one to run the data using two methods simultaneously and produces comparable results immediately.

NORM implements the Watt and Fabricius method slightly differently to the description above (Thomas and Kendall 2007). The website uses the minimum mean F1 value in each speaker's dataset as the minimum F1, rather than necessarily using the mean F1 for [i:]. The maximum F2 value is arrived at in the same way. This point forms the leftmost apex of the triangle. The maximum mean F1 value for the lowest vowel in each speaker's dataset is used regardless of which vowel it represents. It could thus be START, TRAP or STRUT etc. depending on what has been recorded for each speaker. This forms the bottom apex of the triangle. The rightmost apex is derived as described above, using the F1 value of [i:] (or whichever vowel has the minimum mean F1 in the dataset) as the F1 and F2 value for [u'].

The mean values for each vowel are calculated before  $S$  is calculated for each speaker. Normalised values are computed by dividing each vowel's mean F1 and F2 by F1 and F2 of  $S$  for each speaker.

NORM allows the option of scaling the results to Hertz-like values. This option should only be used when all speakers' formant values are submitted to the website in one spreadsheet. Scaling to Hz without submitting all speakers' data at the same time would effectively undo the process of normalisation (Thomas and Kendall 2007). In order to compare the normalised data to the unnormalised data, I submitted my raw data for all 20 speakers and chose the option of scaling the results to Hz.

In figure 2.8 below, all Wesley (WS) and Adelle's (AC) unnormalised tokens for FLEECE, GOOSE and BATH are represented. On the whole, Adelle's vowel space *seems* to have a wider range along both axes than Wesley's. Conclusions cannot be drawn about the two speakers' vowel spaces, however, because of the possible differences in the size of their vocal tracts.

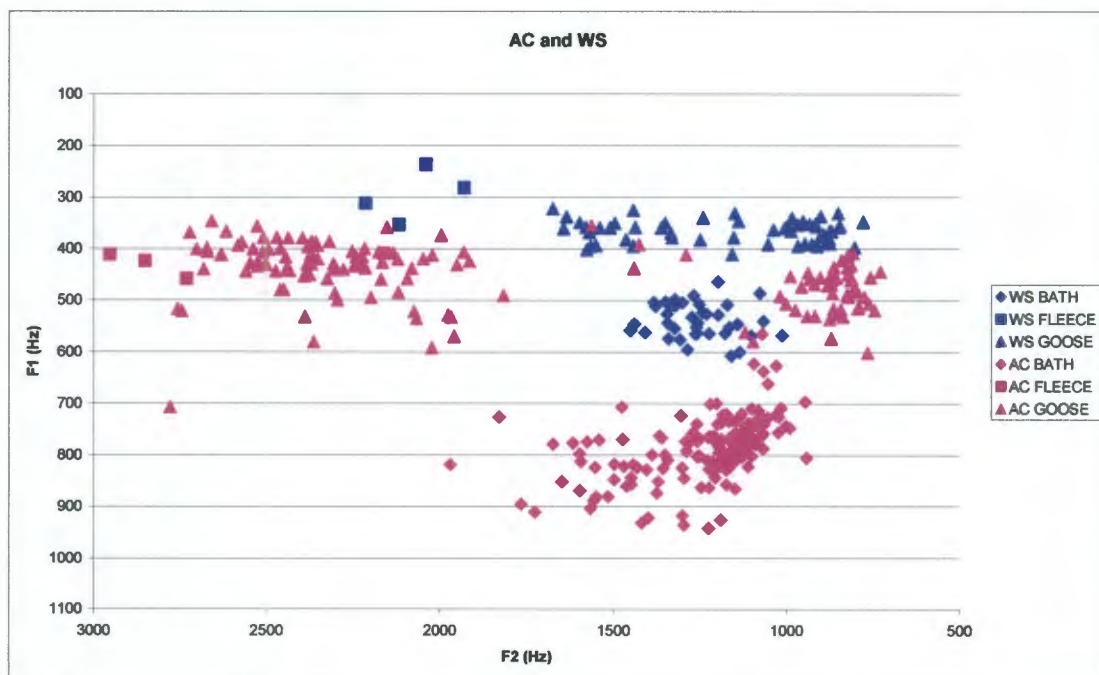


Figure 2.8 Unnormalised tokens of FLEECE, GOOSE and BATH for speaker AC in pink and speaker WS in blue

Once the data have been normalised, however, the vowel spaces of the two speakers can be compared as in figure 2.9. Each point on the graph represents a normalised mean value for each vowel. The graph shows that there is considerable overlap between the speakers' vowel spaces. Using this method of vowel normalisation, I was able to compare normalised data for all 20 speakers, drawing conclusions about the sociolinguistic differences which remain after the physiological differences have been eliminated. The results of this analysis are presented in chapter 3.

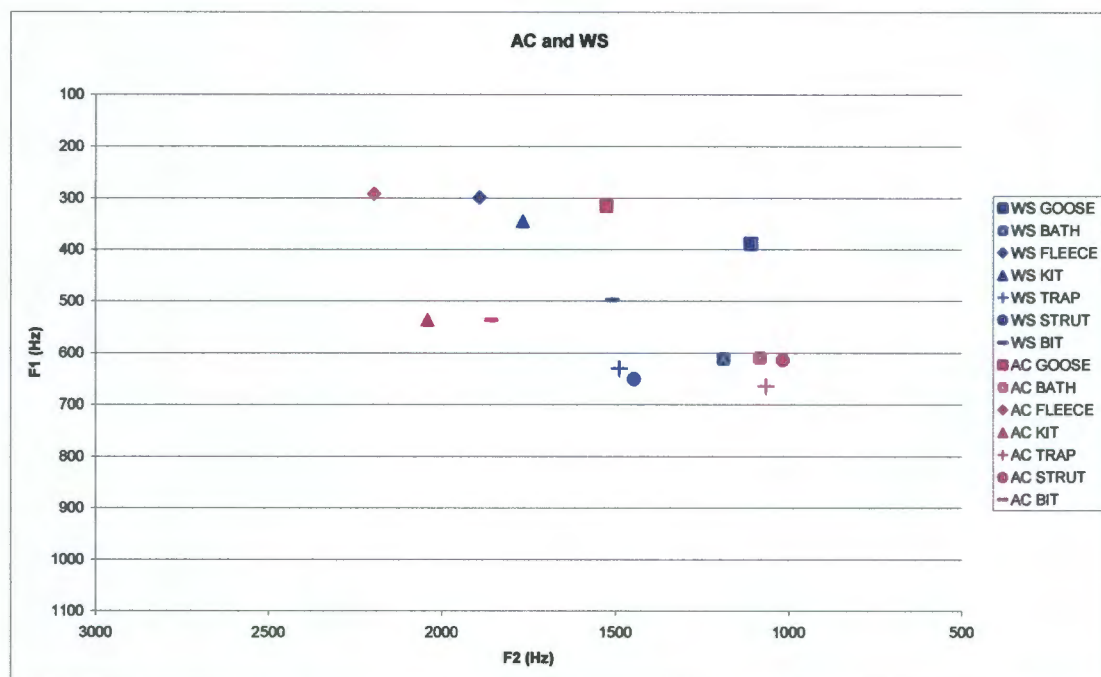


Figure 2.8 Normalised mean values of GOOSE, BATH, FLEECE, KIT, TRAP, STRUT, BIT for speaker AC in pink and speaker WS in blue

### e) Comparative data

I will use Roger Lass' (2002) description of White South African English (WSAfE) and Peter Finn's (2004) phonetic description of general Cape Flats English (CFE) as anchor points for comparison with the data from my sample of speakers.

### 2.4.2 Identity

Chapter 4 is an analysis of the way in which informants construct personal and social identities, based on the information they provided in the interviews. I have used three theoretical frameworks in order to assess how the informants negotiated their place as

coloured people in an educational environment dominated by white people. The three theoretical models are Speech Accommodation Theory, Social Identity Theory and the theory of the Linguistic Market, the origins of which were described in the Literature Survey in chapter 1. A short description of the theories follows, with a discussion of how each was applied to the data.

**a) Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT)**

Howard Giles proposed the SAT, arguing that people adjust their speech style in order to express values and attitudes towards others (Giles cited in Tajfel 1978: 22). The theory has four feeder theories (Giles and Smith 1979: 47 – 53). The first is similarity attraction theory, which suggests that people are most likely to be attracted to others who share similar attitudes and beliefs. The second contributing theory is the social exchange theory. In any social exchange, one assesses the costs and rewards the interaction may bring. Speakers weigh all the relevant factors, which contribute to their choice of accommodation pattern.

The third feeder theory is the causal attribution theory, which argues that we evaluate others and interpret their behaviour in terms of what we believe their motives and intentions to be. Listeners evaluate speakers' use of one of the accommodation patterns and judge them either to be showing solidarity or emphasising difference, thereby stirring either positive or negative emotions in the listener.

Tajfel's theory of intergroup distinctiveness is the final feeder theory. It proposes that members of particular groups construct their social identities in relation to other groups with which they are in contact.

Considering all of these factors, speakers then choose one of three accommodation patterns: convergence, divergence or non-convergence. Convergence is accommodation towards the interlocutor's speech variety, divergence is accommodation away from this variety and non-convergence is maintenance of one's own variety, with not change.

Many of the informants in the sample had strong views about accommodating to other speakers, both coloured and white. In terms of SAT, I investigate the informants' views on accommodation, based on their reported accommodative behaviour.

#### **b) Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

Social Identity Theory is based on the assumption that individuals define and evaluate themselves in terms of the social group to which they belong. Social identity can be either positive or negative, depending on the subjectively assigned status of the group. Group prestige is assigned relative to other groups in the social environment (Turner and Brown 1978: 203 – 204). Comparison between groups results in either favourable or unfavourable perceptions within a group, thus group members will have either a positive or negative social identity. Groups and individuals strive for positive self-definition and re-evaluate negative identity using tactics which elevate either the individual's identity or that of the group as a whole.

Using SIT, I investigated the extent to which my informants define and evaluate themselves as members of the coloured community, and the mechanisms they use to elevate their personal status or that of their social group.

#### **c) Linguistic Market**

The Linguistic Market is a model whereby language is conceived of in economic terms (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1975). In this system, language variety provides one with symbolic capital and is potentially convertible into actual economic capital (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 97). In South Africa, WSAfE has long been the *legitimate language*. The market places pressure on speakers with less symbolic capital to standardise their dialects, which would elevate their position on the hierarchy of varieties (Chambers 2003: 195). Using this theory, I evaluate the pressure felt by informants to use the legitimate language as spoken by a majority of peers in the school context.

The three theories of identity will be described in greater detail in chapter 4.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

I believe that the research methodology for this project has facilitated a thorough analysis of sociolinguistic change in progress in this group of young, middle-class coloured English speakers. I will discuss what their use of salient phonetic markers reveal about their social allegiances (chapter 3) and how they have constructed their personal and social identities as coloured people, often a minority, in a school environment which is dominated by white pupils (chapter 4). In conclusion, I look at how the two levels of analysis speak to one another, highlighting and discussing the comparative results.

## Chapter 3

### Phonetics

Roger Lass (2002: 111) states that ‘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’. This project seeks to investigate one such complex cross-over, that of coloured children entering a white schooling environment and interacting with both WSAfE and CFE speakers as part of their daily interactions.

Phonological markers tend to be most sociolinguistically salient because of the high frequency with which they occur relative to other linguistic markers such as morphemes, lexical items or constructions (Lass 2002: 112). For this reason and because phonetic analysis of these speakers’ speech was bound to yield very interesting results, I have studied the phonetic variation of three salient vowels produced by the informants during their interviews. As the quote below suggests, coloured people in Cape Town are expected to sound ‘coloured’. This expectation is held by both in- and outgroup members, probably because there is such a strong correlation between each race group and the linguistic variety typically used by members of the group. When that expectation is not met, people seek explanations for the anomaly:

A lot of the time people tell me I don’t really sound like ... other Cape coloured people do ... People who don’t know me will ask where I’m from and I think it’s partly because of the way I speak (TD)

The environment in which my informants were schooled contributed to the way they speak. According to the informants’ reports on the racial composition of the pupil body at their respective schools, the majority of pupils at MC and private schools were white<sup>12</sup>. The figures differed from one school to another and would also have changed between 1991 and 2006 (when the last of the informants matriculated). In 1991, relatively few children of colour attended private and MC schools; 17 years

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<sup>12</sup> I am aware that recollections from 1 up to 20 years previously are prone to inaccuracies, though I think that people’s memories of school days are usually good.

later, this is likely to have changed significantly. The general situation for the informants in the sample is that they formed part of a minority of coloured pupils in a predominantly white school environment (this excludes periods when informants attended HOR schools). It is important to note that it is not only the majority of pupils who were white, but the teaching staff in these schools was also made up predominantly of white people.

My informants were thus in a unique position in which they were exposed to WSAfE in a linguistically influential setting – the school – where most of their peers were Respectable SAE speakers, according to Lass' (2002) categories (explained below). Children of school-going age tend to speak more like their peers than their elders, so although family provides the first model of speech, this model is soon replaced with that provided by school friends (Chambers 2003: 175). Since friends are most influential in the development of one's sociolinguistic identity, this study should investigate who the informants' closest friends were during their school careers. This will be addressed in the next chapter.

When, as school children, the informants returned home, it was often to 'coloured areas' – those designated for coloured people under the Group Areas Act. Nine of the families represented in the sample (45%) had not moved into former whites-only areas by the time of the interview, 55% of the families had moved into such areas after apartheid laws had been abolished. For at least the first eight years of their lives, all of the informants lived in coloured areas, which means that most significant interactions outside of school would have been with coloured people. The variety of English spoken in these areas would have been CFE, and perhaps more specifically a MC rather than WC subvariety of CFE. It is possible that in some of the neighbourhoods, some people had Cape Vernacular Afrikaans (CVA) as an L1 rather than CFE, so the informants might also have had some contact with CVA speakers.

The informants whose families had moved from coloured areas into white areas would not have lost contact with CFE speakers. It is reasonable to assume that most of their family members, including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins etc. were CFE speakers. Most informants said that their extended family was a significant part of their family life, especially during childhood.

The aim in this chapter is to examine the sociophonetic effect of these unique social circumstances. I provide descriptions of the most salient distinguishing phonetic features of White South African English (WSAfE) and Cape Flats English (CFE), as set out by Roger Lass (2002) and Peter Finn (2004) respectively. Because the vowel systems of English dialects are more variable than the consonant systems (Lass 2002: 112), I have chosen to examine the variation in the sample in terms of three sociolinguistically salient markers of whiteness or colouredness. They are the PRICE, GOOSE and BATH lexical sets, labelled by Wells' (1982) class names.

I propose a WSAfE-CFE continuum, along which the informants are positioned phonetically. In order to position the informants on the continuum, normalised data for all informants are compared, followed by a detailed description of four informants' realisations of GOOSE, BATH and PRICE in various styles. I then position the speakers along the WSAfE-CFE continuum.

### **3.1 White South African English (WSAfE)**

English was brought to South Africa by the British settlers and diffused from white mother-tongue speakers to other South African communities, which shaped the structural properties of each of the offshoot varieties, such as CFE (Lass 2002: 104). Lass (2002: 111) proposes a lectal hierarchy for (W)SAE:

*Conservative SAE:* A variety which closely resembles a slightly archaic RP. This variety is spoken by the UMC, some English school teachers and what Lass calls 'first families' living in old urban centres like Cape Town, but is not used by youth any longer.

*Respectable SAE:* This is the local standard variety, used by white speakers e.g. educated professionals.

*Extreme SAE:* This variety is associated with WC, poorly educated or non-professional work. The most extreme varieties are indistinguishable from L2 Afrikaans English.

A description of the typical values for the GOOSE, BATH and PRICE sets for each of these lectal groups of WSAfE follows. All details are from Lass (2002), unless otherwise indicated.

GOOSE. Conservative speakers have a backish [u:]. Respectable and Extreme SAE speakers never use a variant backer than central [ʊ:]. Young Respectable speakers, especially females, use fully fronted [y:]. This seems to be quite fashionable amongst young whites and is considered to be a very 'white' feature by speakers who are not white (Lass 2002: 116).

BATH. Conservative SAE speakers use centralised back [ä:]. In Respectable and Extreme varieties it is backer, sometimes fully back [ɑ:]. In Extreme SAE it can round to [ɒ:] and raise to [ɔ:]. These Extreme variants are stereotyped as being 'South African' (Malan 1972).

PRICE. Conservative and Respectable speakers use the diphthong [aɪ]. However, glide-weakening is a feature of Respectable SAE speakers, who use [a:] in covariation with the diphthong. The variation is related to tempo and register – monophthongisation is more common in fast, casual speech. Rajend Mesthrie (personal communication, 3 March 2008) suggests that the variation might be class-based: UMC retain the full diphthong more frequently than the LMC. This is being investigated empirically by him.

Another tentative suggestion by Roger Lass (2002: 117) is that glide-weakening features more prominently in the speech of younger white speakers, and more amongst females than males. In Extreme SAE, PRICE has a back onset [aɪ], which also monophthongises to [ɑ:]. Along with the rounding and raising of BATH, monophthongisation of PRICE is a stereotypical feature of WSAfE.

### 3.2 CFE

CFE shows the closest phonological resemblance to Extreme SAE (Lanham and Macdonald 1979: 35). CFE has its own varietal hierarchy, however. Wood (1987) argued that Extreme and Respectable varieties of CFE correlate with WC and MC speakers respectively. Finn (2004: 968) argues that the hierarchy is actually based on whether speakers have CFE as an L1 or L2: L1 CFE speakers tend to be MC, while L2 CFE speakers are WC, with CVA as an L1. In this hierarchy, L1 CFE speakers would use Respectable CFE, and L2 speakers would be Extreme CFE speakers.

The typical values for GOOSE, BATH and PRICE for these lectal groups of CFE are described below. Unless otherwise stated, the details below are from Finn (2004).

GOOSE. This vowel distinguishes CFE from SAE described above because of its old-fashioned back, rounded [u:]. Lass (2002: 112) suggests that GOOSE can be even backer than that of Conservative SAE speakers and that coloured speakers avoid using fronter GOOSE values even in standard registers. Finn records some Respectable CFE speakers using the centralised variant [ɯ:], however.

BATH. CFE speakers typically use [a:] or [ɑ:], with an optional [ə] following either of the variants. For the subset DANCE the realisation is typically [æ:] amongst Extreme CFE speakers (Wood 1987: 123). I included DANCE to my word list to check whether any of my informants use this variant. None did, preliminarily suggesting that none of them are Extreme CFE speakers. Mesthrie (2007) found that Cape Town coloured speakers typically use a back vowel in BATH, which is often rounded and raised.

PRICE. Wood (1987: 123) claims that there are two distinct realisations of PRICE, one with raised onsets e.g. [ɛɪ] [æɪ] or [əɪ] and one with low onsets and offset weakening e.g. [aɪ] or [a:]. He argues that the raised onset variants are most typical of Extreme CFE speakers, while the low onset, glide-weakened variants are associated with Respectable CFE speakers. I found no occurrence of the raised onset variants in my data. Finn (2004: 972) argues that glide-weakening occurs predominantly when the

vowel occurs in an unstressed position, especially for the frequently occurring pronoun *I*.

Finn (2004: 969) found that non-low onsets occur before voiceless consonants e.g. [ɪ], [ʌɪ] and [əɪ] in BITE. [aɪ], [ɑɪ] or rounded [ɔɪ] occur in other environments. I investigate the occurrence of these variants in my data.

### 3.3 WSAfE-CFE Continuum

The unique contact the informants in the sample had with WSAfE and CFE speakers would position them somewhere along a phonetic continuum between the two varieties. The range of the continuum extends from Respectable SAE on one end to Extreme CFE on the other. Conservative SAE has not been included as a point on this continuum because most white speakers with whom my informants interacted during their schooling careers will have been Respectable speakers, rather than Conservative speakers. Conservative SAE thus was not a significant influence on the speech variety used by the people in my sample.

A description of the WSAfE-CFE continuum follows:

GOOSE. [y:] – [u:]. The continuum ranges from fully front, rounded [y:], as used by young, white, female Respectable speakers, to fully back, rounded [u:], as used by CFE speakers.

BATH. [ɑ:] – [ɔ:]. One end of the continuum is represented by the back, Respectable SAE [ɑ:] and the other by the raised and rounded Cape Town CFE variant [ɔ:].

Fronted Extreme CFE [æ:] was excluded from the continuum because it only occurs in a small subset of words e.g. *dance*. Other possible variants include [a:] and rounded [ɒ:].

PRICE. [aɪ] – [a:]. The full diphthong with back onset [aɪ] forms the starting point on the continuum, as used by Respectable CFE and WSAfE speakers. The other end is

marked by the use of the monophthong [a:], which is a prominent feature of WSAfE. Significant monophthongisation in the sample would reveal a social allegiance to the white community. The use of back [aɪ] would signal membership to the coloured community.

An examination of the variation in the sample allows for the positioning of each of the informants on the continuum. Because variation is affected by speech style, three distinct styles (described in chapter 2) have been generated in the data: WL, RP and IS style.

### 3.4 Variation in the sample

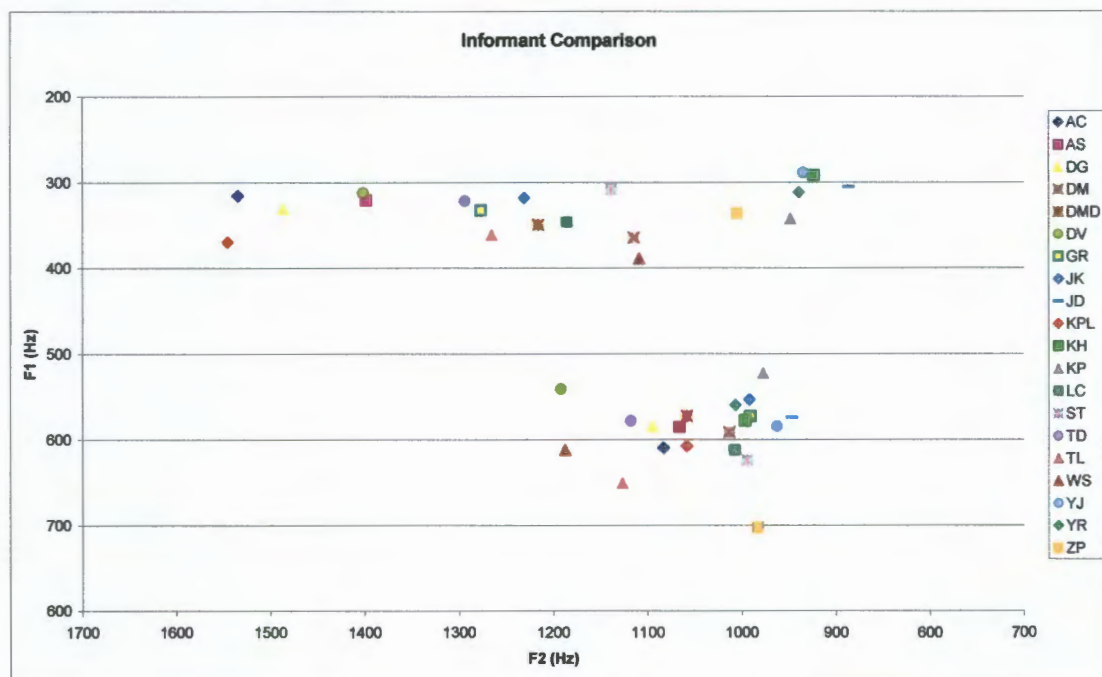


Figure 3.1 Mean values of GOOSE and BATH for all informants (normalised data)

Figure 3.1 compares normalised data for GOOSE and BATH for all 20 speakers in the sample. The graph has two points for each speaker: one for GOOSE, the other for BATH. The points on the graph represent mean values of about 100 tokens of each set for each speaker. The values for BATH range from 886Hz to 1545Hz along the F2 axis, a significant range from back [u:] to centralised [ʊ:]. GOOSE tokens are represented by the points lower than 400Hz on the F1 axis (i.e. above the horizontal line labelled 400Hz). The BATH vowels are all higher than 500Hz (i.e. below the

horizontal line labelled 500Hz), and all but one are well below 700Hz. The sample shows a smaller range of variation relative to the GOOSE vowel for the same set of speakers.

The PRICE set was not included on this graph because the data were collected using different methods. The data for this set were not amenable to the same analysis using NORM, the vowel normalisation suite, as are monophthongs. The data for GOOSE and BATH are sufficient for this initial stage of the analysis, however, because they enable the identification and selection of speakers who represent different points along the WSAfE-CFE continuum. The PRICE set will be brought into the analysis of individual speakers below. Six tokens of PRICE were recorded for each speaker: 3 IS, 2 RP and 1 WL style.

Frontness and backness was calculated using normalised data from all 20 informants on a typical vowel chart. This is illustrated in figure 3.2 below. On the F2 plane, I assigned the frontest value in the normalised dataset to the front of the chart i.e. [i] = 2200Hz. The backest value in the dataset was assigned to the back of the chart, so [u] = 900Hz. Central realisations will have values at about 1550Hz, so [ʊ] = 1550Hz.

On the F1 plane, I assigned the lowest value in the normalised dataset to the highest position on the chart, so [u] = 300Hz. The highest value was assigned to the lowest position on the chart, so [ɑ] = 700Hz. Open-mid [ɔ] occurs at 567Hz and close-mid [o] at 433Hz. The typical Hz values for RP vowels were also considered during these assignments, with RP GOOSE at (300: 940) and RP BATH at (680: 1100) (according to Harrison's code for measuring vowels using Praat).

Considering figure 3.1 above in light of these values, the frontest GOOSE value (KPL) falls at (370: 1454) and would therefore be assigned [ɪ:]. The backest GOOSE (JD) is at (305: 886), so is assigned [u:].

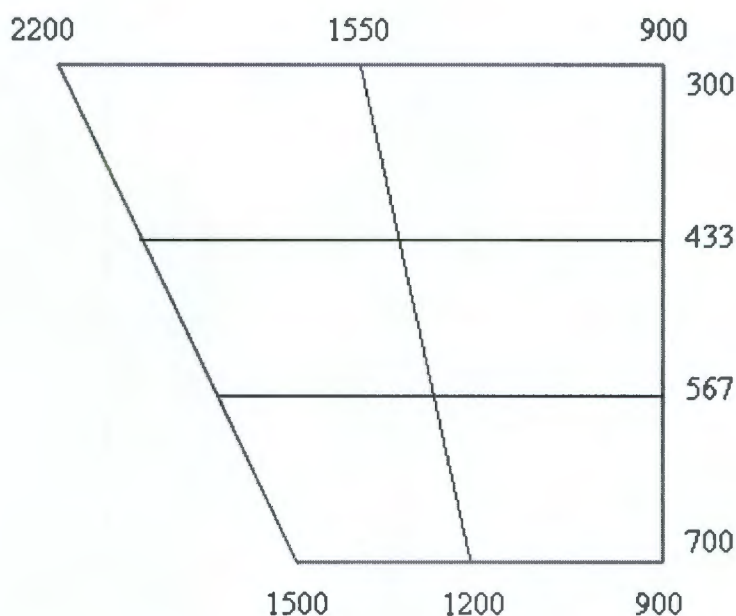


Figure 3.2. Vowel Chart with values in Hz

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 [ʊ:]. For BATH, there is little variation in the sample relative to GOOSE, as all values fall within a small area of the vowel chart i.e. between 946 and 1192Hz for F2 and 522 and 703Hz on the F1 axis. This includes realisations of [ɔ:] and [ɑ:], but not [a:].

From the sample, I have chosen to examine the variation of four speakers who represent a range of combinations for GOOSE and BATH. Yasmine Richards (YR) uses back [u:] in GOOSE and [ɔ:] for BATH in the normalised sample above; Adelle Carr (AC), who uses [ʊ:] and [ɑ:] for GOOSE and BATH respectively. These female speakers represent the two extremes along for GOOSE and differing values for BATH. Levy Christians (LC) has a backish GOOSE and uses back, raised and rounded [ɔ:] for BATH. Daniel Veldman (DV) uses a more centralised GOOSE than Levy, but uses a mid-central BATH vowel. These speakers are good representatives of the full sample, in terms of the sociolinguistic variation shown in the normalised data. In these individual cases, analysis of the PRICE set will be included.

There is one graph for each speaker. It shows all tokens of GOOSE, BATH and PRICE recorded for the respective speakers. The tokens are distinguished by style, with WL and RP styles represented in pink and purple respectively, and IS style in green. Triangles represent GOOSE; BATH is represented by diamonds; and squares represent PRICE, with arrows indicating the trajectories of the diphthongs. The endpoints for the PRICE set are represented by smaller squares on the graph, hence the double entry for PRICE in the legend. Each of the graphs represent the data in the same way. Note that because these data are unnormalised, the vowel chart above (figure 3.2) designating backness/frontness and height no longer applies to these Hertz values.

### a) Yasmine Richards

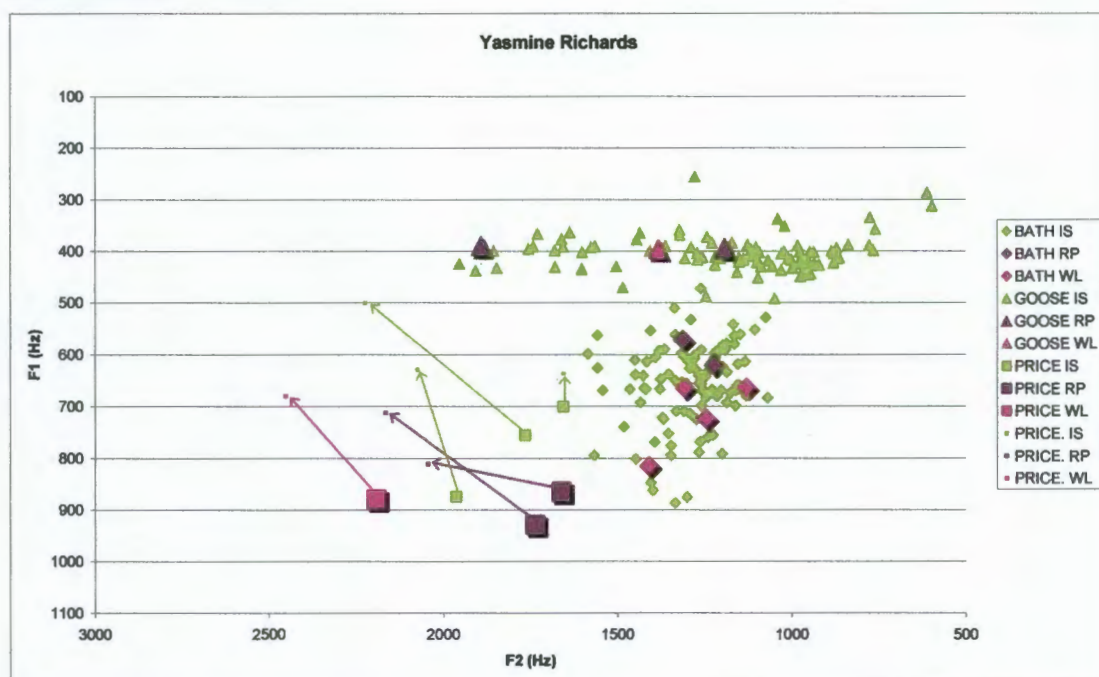


Figure 3.3 All BATH, GOOSE and PRICE tokens by style for Yasmine Richards. The two entries for each style of PRICE on the legend represent onset and offset values.

GOOSE. The variation in this set ranges from very back values to some central values. The tokens in IS style are predominantly back, however. The WL style value is more central than the bulk at about (450: 1000). One of the RP style values is very central, while the other is slightly backer, but not fully back. This suggests that when using more formal styles, Yasmine approximates WSAfE speakers by using centralised variants of GOOSE.

BATH. IS style tokens show more variation along the F1 plane for this speaker, ranging from [ɔ:] to [ɑ:]. In RP style, both tokens are higher at [ɔ:], but WL has slightly lower, centralised values.

PRICE. The trajectories for all but one of the diphthongs is long, suggesting that glide-weakened PRICE is not a significant variant in Yasmine's speech, especially because the longest trajectory occurs in IS (as does the only monophthongised token, which has a very short trajectory). In formal styles, the diphthong is used.

On the whole, this speaker falls towards the CFE end of the WSAfE-CFE continuum because WSAfE variants are not very prominent in her speech. Her occasional use of centralised GOOSE hints of her associations with WSAfE speakers, however. Raising and rounding of BATH indexes her associations with coloureds. Her use of non-gliding PRICE is challenging, as this variant commonly marks UMC whites, but is also typical of CFE.

### b) Adelle Carr

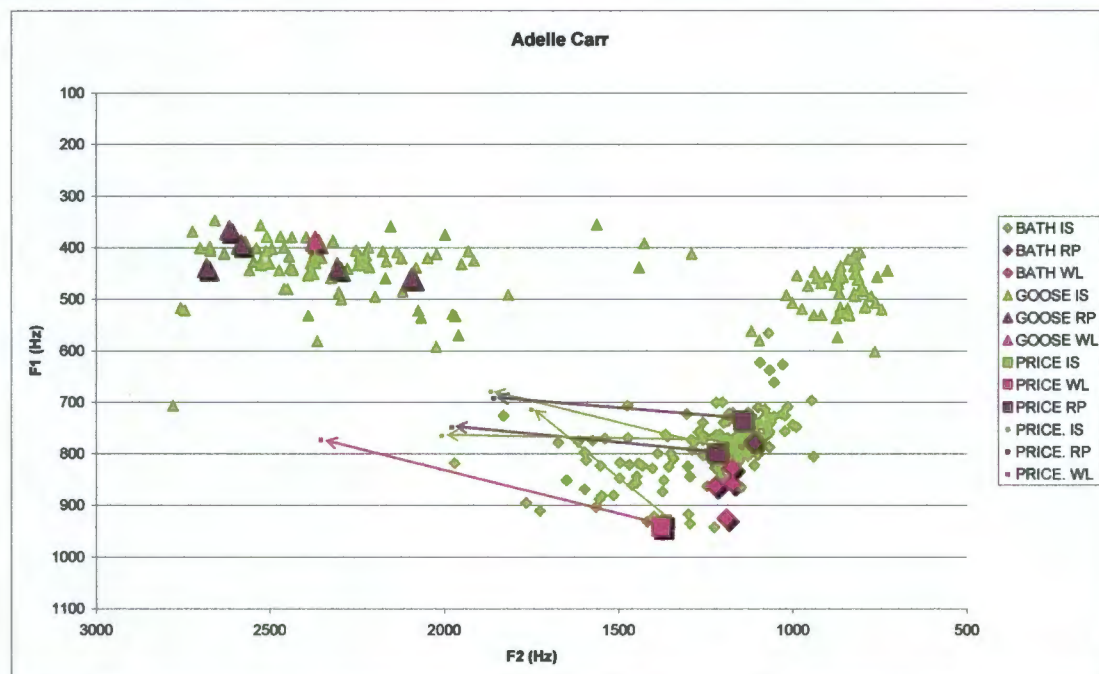


Figure 3.4 All BATH, GOOSE and PRICE tokens (unnormalised) for Adelle Carr. The two entries for each style of PRICE on the legend represent onset and offset values.

GOOSE. Adelle's GOOSE set clusters at two points, front and back. Note that figure 3.1 shows that her mean value for GOOSE is central [ʊ:], not fully fronted [y:]. This is

clearly a result of the averaging process, which eliminates the extremes. In Adelle's case, her tokens cluster at the two extremes – fully front and back, as figure 3.4 shows. In WL and RP styles, she uses the WSAfE fronted variant, using the back variant only in IS style.

**BATH.** The BATH tokens are clustered at [ɔ:], with RP style also occurring here. WL style tokens are lower, at [ɑ:], suggesting that this speaker uses Respectable WSAfE variants in more careful speech.

**PRICE.** The diphthongs have back onsets and long trajectories, even in IS style. No glide-weakening occurs for this speaker.

Adelle's contact with WSAfE speakers is evident in her use of fronted and centralised GOOSE, especially in careful styles. Her links to the coloured community become clear in her use of back GOOSE and the full diphthongs for PRICE, although as mentioned above, this is also typical of UMC WSAfE. She uses a raised BATH vowel, which is characteristic of the coloured community of Cape Town. Overall, I would place her closer to WSAfE on the continuum than Yasmine, because of her extensive use of fronted and centralised GOOSE.

### c) Levy Christians

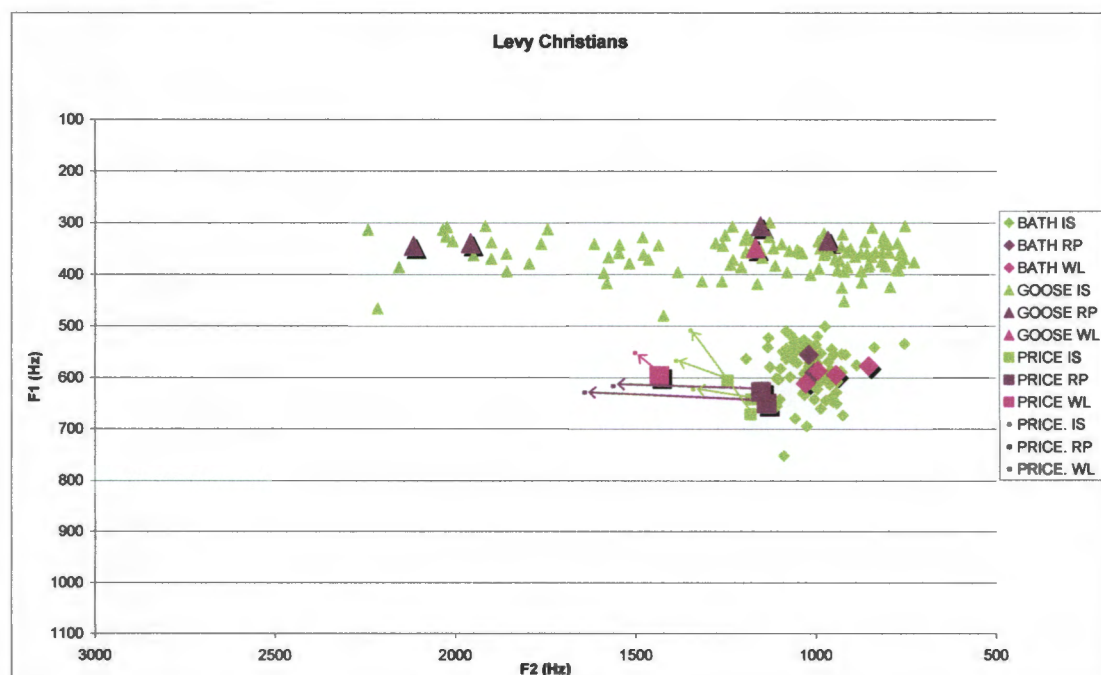


Figure 3.5 All BATH, GOOSE and PRICE tokens by style for Levy Christians. The two entries for each style of PRICE on the legend represent onset and offset values.

GOOSE. Levy's GOOSE set shows a lot of variation, but his IS style tokens are more concentrated in the region of back [u:]. In RP style, two of the tokens are centralised, but the other two, as well as the WL token, are backer, so in formal styles, Levy does not correct towards the WSAfE end of the continuum.

BATH. The tokens for BATH are clustered in the same area, regardless of style. They are in the region of [ɑ:], although slightly raised (see figure 3.1).

PRICE. This speaker's PRICE tokens show a rather anomalous pattern. The RP style tokens show longish trajectories, but with the second element fronted, rather than raised i.e. [ɑɑ] rather than [aɪ]. The WL style token shows significant glide weakening. The trajectories for the IS style tokens are longer than for WL style, but not very long.

Levy tends to monophthongise his PRICE set, which suggests that he is positioned closer the WSAfE end of the WSAfE-CFE continuum because glide-weakening is a feature of the white MMC and LMC. His use of raised, back GOOSE suggests a position closer to CFE, however, and his BATH set would also place him closer to the CFE side. Altogether, his position is probably midway between the two varieties.

#### d) Daniel Veldman

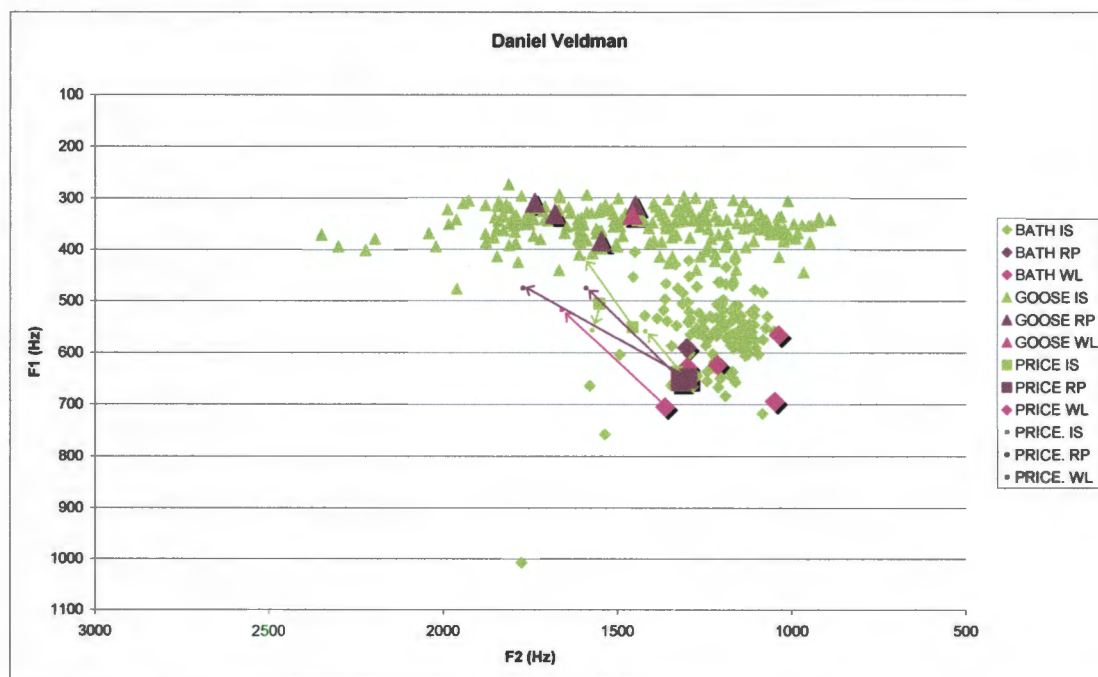


Figure 3.6 All BATH, GOOSE and PRICE tokens (unnormalised) for Daniel Veldman. The two entries for each style of PRICE on the legend represent onset and offset values.

GOOSE. The GOOSE set for this speaker ranges from back [u:] to central [ʊ:] in IS. The WL and RP style tokens are more centralised than back, suggesting that Daniel uses the WSAfE variants in formal styles.

BATH. Daniel's BATH set is represented in the normalised graph for all speakers (figure 3.1) as mid-central. His variant is raised, although not as back as is typical for CFE speakers. In figure 3.6, his tokens are slightly raised and cluster in the same area, although WL and RP style tokens are lower than most of the IS style tokens.

PRICE. WL and RP style tokens are full diphthongs with long trajectories. IS style shows some variation: 2 tokens are diphthongs with slightly shorter trajectories than in the more formal styles and the third is a monophthong. This indicates a small tendency for glide-weakening in less formal styles, but a general tendency to produce diphthongs.

Daniel falls towards the WSAfE end of the continuum because of his use of centralised GOOSE and slight tendency to monophthongise PRICE. He is not positioned at the WSAfE extreme, however, as his raised BATH vowel shows links to the coloured community.

### **3.5 Conclusions**

The informants in the sample are placed at various points along the WSAfE-CFE continuum. Some are closer to the WSAfE end, evident in their use of a fronted GOOSE variant, which is widely reported in WSAfE. None of the speakers in the sample fall at the extremes of the continuum, however, using either WSAfE or CFE consistently. There are no instances of Extreme CFE variants, such as raised onsets in PRICE (as Wood (1987: 123) suggests is typical of Extreme CFE speakers) or the front realisation of BATH in the DANCE subset.

The variation in the sample suggests that the three variables index different social allegiances: for the GOOSE set, there is some evidence of use of the fully fronted [y:] variant typically used by young, white females (Lass 2002: 116). Centralised [ʊ:] is quite commonly used by some of the informants, especially in RP and WL styles, but

the back variant is used by all of them, most often in IS style. The use of back [u:] signals their membership in the coloured community. Their use of centralised variants indicates their links to the white community. The GOOSE set thus indexes the significant contact the informants had with both CFE and WSAfE speakers during their schooling careers.

The informants' realisations of the BATH set were concentrated between [ɔ:] and [ɑ:] – back and raised. None used [a:] consistently. Use of the raised, rounded variant [ɔ:] is common in the sample, which signals their links with the coloured community of Cape Town.

The diphthong PRICE reveals that the informants are positioned towards the Respectable CFE side of the continuum. Glide-weakened PRICE is commonly reported for whites, but this feature is not prominent in my data. Even in IS style, there was very little evidence of glide weakening for any of the speakers. Some had shorter trajectories than others, possibly indicating the beginning of a shift to more prominent monophthongisation, but most commonly, they used full diphthongs. The use of this variable by these speakers also indexes their allegiance to the coloured community, as they use the full diphthong, which is typical of Respectable CFE speakers, most of the time. On the other hand, full diphthongs are also characteristic of UMC than LMC WSAfE, as is being investigated by Rajend Mesthrie (personal communication, 3 March 2008). The use of this variant could index an emerging UMC within the coloured MC.

According to their use of these three variables, the speakers in the sample seem to fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum between WSAfE and CFE, occupying an intermediate space between the two varieties and, perhaps, the two communities. This is not surprising given the significant contact with WSAfE speakers at school and CFE-speaking family members in their homes and neighbourhoods. Their speech exhibits some features of WSAfE, such as the fronted GOOSE, but phonetically, they maintain links with the coloured community in their use of the BATH and PRICE sets, such as their lack of monophthongisation of PRICE and the raised back variant often used for the GOOSE set. The three variables signify links with their home communities

while also signalling some differences, which are a function of class, youth and their links with young speakers of WSAfE.

The next chapter investigates what the informants say about where they feel they fit on the continuum in terms of group allegiance and social identity. Correlations from the two levels of analysis are discussed in the concluding chapter.

## Chapter 4

### Identity

‘The underlying cause of sociolinguistic differences, largely beneath consciousness, is the human instinct to establish and maintain social identity’ (Chambers 2003: 274). Individuals construct social identities in relation to social groups with which they are in contact. Their group membership is reflected in the linguistic variety they use. The most significant social groups with which the informants in this project were in contact were coloured CFE speakers and WSAfE speakers. During the interviews, informants talked about their experiences of attending schools in which they formed part of a racial minority and who their closest friends were in that educational environment. I believe that these discussions uncovered underlying feelings about where they feel their place is within the social system of South Africa. The speaker is identified by his or her initials, which appear in parentheses after each quote.

Each of the informants had attended a private or MC school at some stage in their schooling careers. Many of the informants stated that their parents sent them to these schools because they wanted to give them the best education and opportunities possible:

If you could afford it, you’d try and send [your children] there [private schools] so that’s where I went (GR)

They wanted to open us [my sister and I] up to a newer way of living, like not just staying in the same community (DV)

My dad just wanted us to move to a Model C school. He wanted us to have a better grounding (JK)

My parents thought I had academic potential so they didn’t want to send me to a school in Atlantis. So they sent me to Blaauwberg Ridge Primary (DMD)

Generally, the informants believe that the schools they attended gave them access to good opportunities, which they may not have had access to had they attended only HOR schools. This is illustrated in the quote below:

If I could, I would never change it because I do believe that it's for the best and I think opportunities will be easier for me because I went to that school [Rondebosch Boys] (LC)

The private/MC setting was not always an easy and comfortable environment to be in, however. Despite the *de jure* abolishment of apartheid racial categorisations early in the informants' schooling careers, race continued to be a significant factor in determining social identity. As Dustin (DM) stated '[race] is like a shadow, it's always there, you feel it'. Their ties with both the coloured and white communities were somewhat compromised because of their exposure to both:

I don't think people realise it's really hard for these people, um, for people like me because it's like you never really fit in anywhere and sometimes you just, all you wanna do is fit in, especially in high school. And like you don't fit in with the white kids and you don't fit in with the coloured kids and sometimes you just wanna fit in you know? And it's kind of tough, it puts you in a weird position in the social system (DV)

If you're in that environment you want to be a part of that, especially as a child, you want to be like everybody else and you don't want to be different and all that kind of thing so I did I think everything humanely possible to make me like everybody else... like whites (YJ)

In this chapter, I aim to find evidence in the interviews to support conclusions about how the informants construct their social and personal identities, and where their social allegiances lie. First, I describe the key characteristics of coloured identity during apartheid. I then use three theoretical frameworks to analyse how the informants in my sample have constructed their social identities. The first theory focuses on the informants' attitudes regarding Speech Accommodation. It is concerned with reported linguistic variation in particular social contexts. The second

theory, Social Identity Theory, is concerned with the informants' allegiance to a particular social group. I investigate whether their social allegiance lies with the white or coloured community, or neither one. Because of their unique social circumstances, it is possible that a 'third space' (Bhabha 1994: 53ff) has emerged into which these informants fit most comfortably. The third theory investigates their stake in the symbolic linguistic marketplace. Finally, I draw conclusions about how coloured social identity has changed during the 14 years of democracy.

#### **4.1 Coloured Identity during Apartheid**

Mohamed Adhikari (2005: 6) argues that throughout the period of white rule in South Africa, coloured identity was quite stable. 'Colouredness' was stigmatised by the colonisers and by apartheid rulers as racially impure. Because of this, coloured people had deep-seated feelings of shame and discomfort which informed their group identity (Erasmus 2001: 17).

Adhikari identifies four characteristics which formed the foundation of coloured identity during that time (2005: 8 – 19). The first is the desire to assimilate into white society in order to assert their worth as individuals and citizens of South Africa. Coloured people endeavoured to be accepted by whites as their equals. Their efforts at assimilation were unsuccessful, however, and when they realised this, they decided instead to defend the rights they had as coloureds and promote the interests of the group.

This leads to the second characteristic of coloured identity, which concerns the intermediate status of coloured people in the racial hierarchy. Coloureds were positioned between white and black on this hierarchy (Stone 2002: 381). Sociologist Zimitri Erasmus illustrates this when she says that for her, 'growing up coloured meant knowing that I was *not only* not white, but *less than white*; *not only* not black, but *better than black*' (Erasmus 2001: 13; original italics). The relative superiority assigned to coloured people was important because it afforded them more privilege than blacks had. The coloured community defended this relative privilege because it served the interests of the group to have a higher status within the social system than black people did. The most consistent expression of coloured identity during

apartheid was to associate with whiteness and distance the group from blackness, wherever possible. This was evident in the value placed on a fair complexion, straight-hair, white ancestors and conformity with 'white culture'.

The third characteristic of coloured identity is largely a result of the intermediate status held by coloureds on the racial hierarchy: coloured identity carried a range of negative and derogatory connotations. This was firstly because of their lack of political and economic power and because they formed such a small group within the racial hierarchy. The second reason was that coloured people tended to be defined in negative terms, as was exemplified in an interview with former first lady, Marike de Klerk, when she described the coloured community as a 'negative group', 'the leftovers', 'someone that is not black, and is not white and is also not an Indian' (*Sunday Tribune*, 5 February, 1989). The negative associations associated with being coloured caused most (MC) coloured people to reject their personal and social identities as coloured, perceiving the identity as shameful (Wood 1987: 38-47). Wood (1987: 49) notes one group of coloured people who did not aspire for higher status and thus accepted their coloured social identity. This group refers to themselves as *gam* and is comprised of WC individuals. The term *gam* is discussed below. Despite the general negativity associated with the coloured social identity, there was a feeling of 'underdog communal solidarity' (Stone 2002: 394) within the community, which was reflected in the use of the Afrikaans term *bryn* (literally 'brown') to refer to communities of coloured people.

The fourth characteristic of coloured identity is its marginality. Marginality provides an explanation for coloureds' negative perception of themselves as a social group and was the cause of much frustration and anger within the group. Coloureds were marginal in number and power: the group never comprised more than 9% of the country's population and as such a small community, they had little political clout with which they could bring about change, despite the fact that they were a majority in the Western Cape province. This led to intense frustration within the community.

These are the key characteristics of coloured identity during apartheid. I now investigate the degree to which the identities constructed by the informants conform to or reject these historical characterisations. Naturally, the feelings and experiences

of the informants are not uniform. I present all positions held by different informants with regard to the three theories.

## 4.2 Identity Construction in the Sample

### a) Speech Accommodation Theory

This theory is made up of four feeder theories (Giles and Smith 1979: 47 - 53), viz:

*Similarity-attraction*: people are most attracted to those with whom they share similar attitudes and beliefs

*Social Exchange*: speakers evaluate the cost and rewards of their communicative actions

*Causal attribution*: people evaluate the behaviour of their interlocutors in terms of perceived motives and intentions

*Intergroup distinctiveness*: members of groups construct social identities in relation to other groups with which they are in contact

Sociolinguistic behaviour is evaluated in terms of these sub-theories. There are three accommodative outcomes: convergence, non-convergence and divergence.

Convergence is a process whereby speakers alter their speech to sound more like their interlocutors in order to be better received in a given speech situation. Non-convergence is when no change in speech occurs. Divergence is the converse process to convergence – where speakers alter their speech to sound less like their interlocutors. Convergence decreases social distance between interlocutors and divergence increases the social distance. Non-convergence is a means for people to assert their cultural distinctiveness and maintain their group identity (Bourhis 1979: 126).

Convergence is used to present oneself as more acceptable to one's interlocutor e.g. when talking to someone of higher social standing or in a position of authority. It can also be used to indicate that one is a member of the same social group. Two types of convergence are distinguished: upward and downward. Accommodating to a more prestigious variety is upward convergence; accommodating to a less prestigious variety is downward convergence. Non-convergence allows speakers to assert their

identity by not altering their speech. Divergence is used to distinguish oneself from members of outgroups (Giles et al. 1977: 322).

Some of the informants were aware that they accommodated their speech in certain speech contexts:

I spoke in a coloured accent at home, I mean I obviously flattened out my accent a little bit more when I was at home, but also because my cousins would like mock me or something like that (YJ)

I definitely speak differently, it's what I feel comfortable with you know? ...In the right setting I'd change to '*ja bra, kan jy nou sien*' ('yes brother, can you see' in CVA) (TL)

I can obviously take on a more of a typical coloured accent (AS)

I speak differently around my extended family – a bit more coloured. It sounds like I'm judging them but I'm not, but I articulate my words better, it's very different. I think where they're concerned it's more of a fact that they're very judgemental and it'll be a scandal if I speak like a white person around them. But it's not an issue for me because I don't choose the way I speak, it just happens (AC)

These are all examples of downward convergence to CFE in the presence of CFE speakers. There was a strong feeling amongst some of the informants that upward convergence was negative and should be avoided:

It's a subconscious way of trying to fit in and it's something that actually comes from our past, you know? That it's deep-rooted, it stems from our past, you know the whole divided country and the racial divisions and the class divisions that go with that and where you fit in on the social ladder in terms of your colour, and so it's, it's a way of us respecting them [whites] or trying to fit in with them or for them to accept us more (KPL)

People need to learn to accept you for who you are, yet some people will change the way they speak to fit in with the crowd and all that. And eventually you know, it doesn't work, it's gonna backfire (LC)

I had to consciously train myself to speak in the same way all the time because it would just come out as a habit (YJ)

It irritates me about others when you change your accent to suit a certain crowd (DM)

While not explicit in the last three quotes above, each of the speakers was referring to coloured people accommodating to WSAfE. As Kaleb (KPL) suggests, the feeling that it is unacceptable may be due to the inferiority that coloured people historically feel relative to whites. One converges if one desires approval of one's interlocutor and wishes to integrate with them (Giles et al. 1977: 322). Through their negative attitudes towards convergence to WSAfE, the informants show that they do not wish to be integrated into the white community. It may be that they feel they should assert their newly acquired democratic right as equal members of South African society. As such, they should not feel that their linguistic variety is inferior to that of their white peers, so should not converge in order to seek acceptance from whites. There is a feeling that coloured people should be proud of who they are and be proud to 'sound coloured' when they talk:

My friends at Westerford taught me that it's cool to be coloured, and to be very coloured and to be proud of it. And people must like you for who you are and you don't have to speak like them or act like them or do what they do (ST)

Normally if a coloured person goes to a white school, their accent changes, but it wasn't like that at all because we didn't care (YR)

There are no negative feelings about downward convergence to CFE, however, as the first set of quotes in this section shows. This is possibly because downward convergence does not imply that their linguistic variety is inferior. It maintains a sense of relative superiority vis-à-vis their CFE-speaking family members because

they are aware that their linguistic variety affords them more symbolic capital in the linguistic marketplace (described below). Kay McCormick (2004: 992) mentions that use of a standard variety of South African English when in the company of certain CFE speakers indicates social distance and is avoided by coloured people who have both the standard and CFE varieties as part of their linguistic repertoire.

Speech accommodation is a natural response to one's social environment. Some of the informants recognised this, saying that they did not actively accommodate to WSAfE, but that they could not control it. This is revealed in Yolaan's (YJ) comment above about consciously training herself *not* to accommodate.

The similarity-attraction model accounts for why 15 of the informants (75%) said that their friends at school were predominantly coloured:

It's natural for you to possibly befriend people who have similar cultural backgrounds and similar value systems as you. I think you naturally meet other coloured people and have a relationship with them (KPL)

There was also consensus across the sample that at high school and beyond, people of each race group tended to 'stick to their own', as Zulfa (ZP) put it. This is not always true, but seems to be a general trend when children reach high school:

I don't know how this happens, it just happened naturally sort of. In junior school we had like, our group of friends was massive you know? And it was multi-racial, completely mutli-racial because we didn't like, what's the difference to us, you know? And the minute we hit high school, it was almost like the white people migrated towards the white people, the black people migrated towards the black people, and then the coloured people migrated towards the coloured people (KH)

Three of the informants (15%) were part of mixed white and coloured friendship circles, but this excluded them from the coloureds-only clique at their respective schools:

Girls from other [HOR] schools couldn't understand why we were friends with white children because where they came from, they weren't friends with white children (GR)

The coloured girls in my grade didn't appreciate the fact that I had white friends. The coloured girls at the time, they broke away a lot from the rest of the group and they didn't like me because of the fact that I mixed with the white children in our grade (AC)

In terms of the social exchange theory, the informants had to weigh the costs and benefits of befriending only coloured peers or mixing with white pupils too. For some, the cost of interacting with white pupils meant that they were cut off from the coloured pupils. They considered this loss worth the benefit of having the friends they had. Others felt that it would benefit them most to have predominantly coloured friends as this allowed them to maintain a coloured identity in a white-dominated environment.

The coloured informants might have perceived the motives of coloured peers to be positive – signalling solidarity and pride in a historically undervalued social identity. They might have perceived downward convergence of white pupils to CFE as condescending, non-convergence as disinterest and divergence as a deliberate attempt to increase social distance. Levy's (LC) statement suggests that white pupils imitated the CFE-like variety used by him and his friends, but this was not an attempt at convergence in order to present themselves as more acceptable to their coloured peers:

[white children] used to make fun about the way you talk and how you sounded. It's not my fault I talk the way I do, it's the way I've grown up (LC)

The white children's appropriation of presumed linguistic features of the variety spoken by the coloured children is similar to the sense in which Hill (1993) uses 'mock Spanish' to describe the code used by English speakers in the southwest USA to stigmatise Spanish dominant speakers. This 'mock language' was used by the white boys for ridicule, thus increased social distance between groups in the same way that

divergence would. There was some reciprocation by the coloured children, who mimicked features of WSAfE to tease white peers about their accents, as Levy's (LC) quote shows:

[white boys] always used to mimic the way you sound, but eventually we just did it to them and we speak the way they speak and they look at us like, you know, 'what are you doing?' And I'll say to them 'what the hell are you doing?' (LC)

The informants constructed their identities in relation to the white and coloured groups with whom they had significant contact. Most (75%) formed predominantly coloured friendship groups with other coloured children at their schools, thus evaluating white peers to be outsiders. The rest (25%) had mixed-race friendship groups and regarded the members of racially exclusive groups as narrow-minded and conservative.

On the whole, the informants acknowledged a tendency to accommodate their speech, even though the practice of upward convergence to WSAfE was negatively evaluated. They converged downwards when in the company of CFE speakers, such as family members. Informants show a strong allegiance to the coloured community through their choice of friends, particularly at high school and after school.

### **b) Social Identity Theory**

Three primary assumptions form the basis for this theory:

1. Individuals define and evaluate themselves in terms of their social groups. Social groups provide a social identity for their members
2. An individual's social identity is positive or negative (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) according to the subjective status of the groups which contribute to it
3. Other groups in the social environment constitute the frame of reference for evaluating [one's] own group's prestige. The ingroup's prestige depends on the outcome of comparisons between ingroups and relevant outgroups. These comparisons take place in terms of valued characteristics and behaviours

(Turner and Brown 1978: 203 – 204)

In the South African context, and more particularly in the context of this research, the individuals referred to in (1) are the informants. Their social group, as ascribed by the apartheid government, is coloured. Whether or not they subscribe to this group is what this project seeks to investigate. Coloured identity is historically negative because of the low status of coloureds during apartheid. White identity, on the other hand, is positive according to the same hierarchical structure. The relevant social groups for evaluating the prestige assigned to this particular group of coloured people would be CFE speakers and WSAfE speakers, each of which might be considered an outgroup relative to this group.

This theory is primarily concerned with how individuals construct social identities in relation to these outgroups. Individuals compare their ingroup to relevant outgroups, and if one's ingroup is favourably evaluated in comparison to outgroups, social identity is positive; negative social identity results if comparison produces unfavourable results for the ingroup. Individuals strive for positive social identity, and measures are put in place to maintain or attain this, as the case may be. There are three ways to achieve this (Turner and Brown 1978: 204 – 205):

- Individual mobility
- Social creativity
- Social competition

Individual mobility is a means to elevate one's personal identity by dissociating with one's social group and associating with a more prestigious outgroup. Social creativity is concerned with elevating group identity. Positive re-evaluation is achieved through social creativity when groups collectively redefine group characteristics so as to view themselves more positively. From an objective standpoint, nothing changes except the group's evaluation of themselves. The final method for redefining negative social identity is to engage in direct competition with an outgroup.

Between the informants, each of the methods for positive re-evaluation of social identity was employed. Some informants elevated their personal identities by associating themselves with a more prestigious group, but never dissociating themselves from the coloured community:

The low car, tinted window thing<sup>13</sup>, I'm not amused. I know lots of coloured people who are not like that, you know. No one recognises us. No one cares about you (GR)

I got told because of the way I spoke 'oh I was trying to be white' and everything and I used to be 'listen here, just because I'm eloquent in my speech and I speak properly does not make me anything other than what I am. Do I look coloured to you? Because if that's the case, then clearly I am coloured (KH)

We were acceptable coloureds because we didn't have accents, well, we had white accents (YJ)

This applied not only to individuals, but also to family units, usually with the mother as the driving force. In the first quote below, Kerry (KH) suggests that regardless of which language her mother uses, she always sounds 'proper' or 'white', which are used almost synonymously:

My mother, when she speaks Afrikaans she sounds like a white Afrikaans speaking woman, so she's very bilingual, but when she speaks English, she's very proper, very proper. That's why I speak the way I do (KH)

My mother doesn't like associating herself with the local coloured community. She says 'I don't associate myself with them' and I'm like 'woman, you're coloured, accept it! Like, you know, you don't have to speak like them, it's fine, but you are part of the coloured community (KP)

Personal identities are thus re-evaluated by associating with the more prestigious white South Africans, particularly by the speech variety used. The loaded terms *proper* and *eloquent* used by Kerry (KH) in the two sets of quotes above suggests a belief that she and her family have higher status than other coloured people, which

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<sup>13</sup> This informant is referring to the stereotypical view held by members of both the coloured and white communities that all coloured people 'supe up' (accessorise) their cars by lowering the suspension, tinting the windows and fitting a sophisticated sound system, amongst other things.

could signal the emergence of an UMC within the coloured MC. Significantly, they did not deny their coloured social identity by making this association, their allegiance to the coloured community remained strong. This is in keeping with Tajfel's (1971) conclusions about ingroup membership (see the section on SIT in chapter 2). The quote by Kendra (KP) above tentatively suggests a separation of the CFE accent and the coloured community i.e. that one can belong to the community without using the accent which historically marked one's membership to the community.

The identity of the coloured community as a social group is elevated by the informants:

I realised that I don't have a white accent and I have no intention to be like a white person (YJ)

My friends at Westerford taught me that it's cool to be coloured, and to be very coloured and to be proud of it. And people must like you for who you are and you don't have to speak like them or act like them or do what they do (ST)

I was a coloured boy, I was fair of complexion but I still know where my roots lie (LC)

It appears that coloured identity within this group of young coloured people no longer appears to be negative and shameful, as it was during apartheid. It has been re-evaluated as something to be proud of, something 'cool'. In order to assert this, two of the informants engaged in a form of direct competition with the white pupils:

[white boys] always used to mimic the way you sound, but eventually we just did it to them and we speak the way they speak and they look at us like, you know, 'what are you doing?' And I'll say to them 'what the hell are you doing?' (LC)

I guess I elevated myself in class as well, like I was second in class throughout my career there and I guess that was one of the ways I got back at them, I was like 'look at me, look at me' (DMD)

The social identity of this group appears to be quite positive, although speech variety is used by some to elevate their personal identities. The group shows no desire to disassociate themselves from the coloured community. In fact, there is a notable sense of pride in their identity as coloured people.

### **c) Linguistic Market**

Pierre Bourdieu and Luc Boltanski (1975) proposed the theory of the *marché linguistique*, which is translated into English as the linguistic market<sup>14</sup>. Linguistic markets ‘come about as the result of historically determined interaction between peoples who speak different dialects or languages’ (Alexander 2003: 185). Bourdieu calls the dominant or standard variety the *legitimate language*. Relative value is assigned to each variety which participates in the market, creating a hierarchy of varieties, with the legitimate language occupying the highest position on the hierarchy. Speakers of the respective varieties are afforded symbolic capital in the market in accordance with the position of their linguistic variety on the hierarchy. The value and power of one’s speech is thus largely determined by the linguistic variety in which it is uttered (Eckert 2000: 13).

In the South African context, WSAfE has long been the legitimate language, so speakers of WSAfE have access to more symbolic linguistic capital. The market places pressure on speakers of non-legitimate varieties to standardise their speech in order to attain more capital to benefit them in the marketplace.

The initial theory proposed the existence of a single market in which the dominant standard variety was spoken by global elites. It has since been argued that sociolinguistic research benefits from a conception of a broader symbolic market in which people develop themselves as commodities (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 97; Eckert 2000: 14 – 25). Linguistic variety is only one aspect of one’s commoditisation in the market. Many other factors are important, such as one’s level of education. Language plays a significant role in the marketplace because of its relationship to other symbolic resources, so the legitimate language is most powerful because it is

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<sup>14</sup> This translation does not capture the true meaning of the concept and might be better translated as the ‘marketplace dialect’ (Chambers 2003: 195)

associated with institutions of power and authority (Eckert 2000: 19). The most powerful institutions in South Africa during apartheid were controlled by white people, hence the status of their language variety as the legitimate language.

As speakers of the legitimate language, WSAfE speakers have most capital at their disposal in the marketplace. Informants were aware that WSAfE is the most prestigious dialect in South Africa, hence the positive way in which it is described below. CFE, on the other hand, is described rather negatively:

White people articulate their words better, coloured people tend to speak with more of your jargon-based language, just very – I can't say *flat*. White people tend to articulate their words better, their language better, whereas coloured people tend to shorten their words, speak with more – I can't say *gangster language* either, but you know, like slang if you wanna call it that and coloured jargon (AC)

CFE, a stigmatised variety, affords its speakers little symbolic capital in the marketplace. It is least prestigious and not highly regarded even by the informants, who have shown themselves to be proudly coloured:

They [stereotypical coloureds] have a strange accent I would say, not like mine. Ya, it sounds very funny and inappropriate. It's just not proper English ... it's very ugly (DG)

I think [the way I talk] is more kind of proper in a way than other people, or other coloured people (TD)

I'll make sure I'll pronounce my words properly and clearly (LC)

I might not speak like a coloured boy, like you know, I'm *gam* and whatever, but I am. I was privileged to go to a white school or a predominantly white school from the get-go ('beginning') (LC)

The idea of speaking *properly* was a common theme in the interviews, indicating that their unconscious awareness of the stake one's linguistic variety affords one in the symbolic market. The informants clearly separate themselves from what Levy (LC) refers to as *gam* coloureds. *Gam* is Afrikaans for Ham and is used pejoratively as a label for coloured people. The term is a reference to the 'Curse of Ham', which was a biblically derived justification for the enslavement of Africans (Adhikari 2005: 198). This term has not been positively re-evaluated, and is regarded as negative and undesirable. It is used to refer predominantly to WC coloureds who use CFE (or CVA):

If you *gam*, you like speaking like a coloured (ZP)

I would say *gam* ... it's just not proper English (DG)

Kaleb (KPL) acknowledges his downward convergence to CVA in certain company, describing the variety he uses as 'very *gam* almost'. Adding the proviso *almost* indicates his unwillingness to describe himself as *gam*, despite his use of a variety which is also referred to as *Gamtaal* (Stone 2002: 385).

In the symbolic market, 'white' represented the best of everything and the informants were aware of this:

What white represents is this kind of nuclear kind of home, like where you don't really struggle for anything and everything is nice and pretty and you got the best pencil crayons and, you know what I mean (YJ)

All the white kids had these nice [rugby] boots and everything and um we couldn't, my parents couldn't afford to get brand new boots, so we went to the second hand shop and I'll never forget, all the other kids, they weren't buying boots there, it was more like blazers and stuff, but I bought my second hand boots there (TL)

I never saw the Bishops boys as white, coloured and black. The only time I thought like that was when they came across as being better than me and then it was hard for me not to stereotype that these white kids are like this (TL)

Even though they were not white and did not have the best of everything like their white peers seemed to, some of the informants felt that they belonged in private/MC schools rather than in HOR schools. They believed from early on that they held a higher position on the social hierarchy than other coloured children did:

I was always sort of like well spoken and even like people at Turfhall thought that I was too advanced for them. They were always like ‘why do you speak like that?’ and like ‘why you like that?’ and I was just like whatever, like ‘go to hell’ (ZP)

The school [Turfhall] wasn’t challenging enough for us, we needed to be challenged like more and so [the teachers] spoke to my mother and said that they should try sending us to a different school (ZP)

My parents thought I had academic potential so they didn’t want to send me to school in Atlantis, so they sent me to Blaauwberg Ridge Primary (DMD)

The informants realised that the private and MC schools they attended gave them access to better resources and opportunities, all of which add to the symbolic capital they have in the market:

At Wynberg Girls, everything just looks so nice, everything was so inviting, the library was so inviting, everything was so neat ... if you look at it from an academic perspective and all the things that they have to offer, they have every sport under the sun – things I’ve never even heard of (KH)

We buy all our teachers from all the good schools, that’s why our school fees are like so expensive (DG)

At first it was like amazing, like wow, there's actually a school like this [Bishops], just the facilities they had, the structures, there was like a huge chapel where the whole school can go every morning, there was the history that the institute has. There were just like so many opportunities at your disposal added to the fact that there's a lot of belief that runs through the school, it's like you're going to amount to something, you're like a Bishops boy, you're gonna do something with yourself (DMD)

Access to the best schools, teachers, resources and opportunities did not equate to automatic success for all of the informants, however. Two of them felt that their position in the symbolic market was predetermined because they were coloured. They felt that teachers did not encourage or expect them to succeed:

Stuff that they'd say indirectly, like certain things are straight away expected from you because you coloured, like 'it's ok, you don't have to do that well' you're not really pushed. That's how I felt, like it wasn't really a big push to reach your full potential (DM)

We were the only coloured girls in the grade so we felt like we were like the minority, which we were, but we felt like no, they [white girls] get better than us, which was a stupid mentality because we knew that the teachers didn't want to see it that way, but because of the lack of diversity we still saw it that way (KP)

The informants appear to be acutely aware of the functioning of the linguistic market and how elements within it are valued, even though none of them expressed their sentiments in economic terms. They were aware of their position within it relative to both white and coloured people, as determined by the linguistic variety they speak and the quality of education they had.

#### **4.3 Conclusions**

The three theories shed light on the informants' feelings about the social identities they subscribe to and where they feel they fit into the South African social system.

This position seems to be somewhere between the *gam* coloured and white communities – a ‘real middle ground’, as Shakil (ST) described it. This could be associated with the negative feeling that they do not fit in anywhere, but for the most part, they subscribe to a coloured social identity, acknowledging that their roots lie in the coloured community. They are aware of, and appreciate their elevated status in the symbolic marketplace, which has been afforded to them by the education they had and the opportunities resulting from it.

They do not seek to sever ties with the coloured community and associate themselves with the white community. They are proudly coloured and seek to elevate the status of this social group, either through re-evaluation of elements of coloured identity, by associating themselves somewhat with more prestigious linguistic variety and sometimes through direct competition with the white outgroup.

The pressure placed on the informants to standardise their speech does not seem to have had as much impact upon them as the other pressure they faced to maintain their links with the coloured community. While their linguistic variety reflects the pressure from the market somewhat, their pride in their social identity as coloured is strong.

This differs from the historical coloured identity in the following ways: the shame associated with the coloured social identity has been replaced with pride, as mentioned above. This group of coloured people do not desire to assimilate to white identity, as signalled by their negative views on convergence to WSAfE. The intermediate status of coloureds on the racial hierarchy has been renegotiated by this group – they seem to be asserting their right as equal citizens of South Africa and have re-evaluated the inferior position coloureds historically held relative to whites.

The coloured community in South Africa is still small, making up just 8.9% of the country’s population (Statistics South Africa 2003: 12). Marginalisation thus remains a feature of coloured identity for this group, but positive re-evaluation and pride in this social identity go a long way in reversing its negative effects. I suggest tentatively that this positive re-evaluation applies most strongly to the coloured community in the Western Cape because coloureds are a majority group in this region, making up 53,9% of the population (Statistics South Africa 2003: 12).

In the final chapter I bring together the two levels of analysis – phonetic and identity construction. The results are compared and discussed in terms of the sociolinguistic changes taking place amongst young coloured people post-apartheid.

## Chapter 5

### Correlations and Conclusions

At the beginning of this thesis, I set out to examine the sociolinguistics of social change amongst a sample of young coloured people whose schooling experience included significant contact with white peers and teachers at the private or MC schools they attended. I used two levels of analysis to investigate the impact of these educational circumstances upon the informants. The first was at the level of phonetic output, focusing on three variables which had previously been recognised as salient markers of either the white or coloured ethnolect (Lass 2002), viz. GOOSE, BATH and PRICE. The second level of analysis was an investigation into how these informants construct their social identities in relation to language use.

What follows is a summary of the findings from each of these levels of analysis. I then discuss the correlations between the levels of analysis. The implications of the findings are discussed in terms of the ever-changing social and political environment in South Africa, and what this might mean for future research in this area.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

##### a) Phonetics

The results of the phonetic analysis show that the variants used by the sample of speakers for the three lexical sets signal their ties with both the white and coloured communities. Each speaker's use of GOOSE shows widespread variation between the typical CFE variant [u:] and the centralised variant [ʊ:] and in some cases it is as front as [y:], which is characteristic of WSAfE. This variation seems to index their unique linguistic exposure to the two varieties during the highly influential years at school. In their homes and neighbourhoods and with members of their extended families, they were constantly exposed to CFE speakers, whose GOOSE value is likely to have been back [u:]. At school, the majority of the children and teachers at the private and MC institutions they attended were white. The variety spoken by these people would have been Respectable WSAfE. Their contact with both varieties was thus constant and significant, as the input came from people close to them – either family or friends.

The informants' use of the GOOSE set reveals their contact with the two varieties, as they use variants used by both communities.

The BATH vowel indexes the informants' membership to the coloured community because of their relatively constant use of a back, raised and rounded variant [ɔ:], which is a typical value for coloured speakers of English in Cape Town, irrespective of class. However, in the white communities, the variable might be interpreted differently.

The informants' use of the diphthong PRICE is the most notable association with the coloured community. Glide-weakening is not prominent in their use of the PRICE set, as it is for WSAfE speakers. Typically, CFE speakers use a full diphthong for this set. Glide-weakening occurred only in unstressed positions e.g. *I*. Only two of the informants (10%) consistently had relatively short trajectories (e.g. see graph 3.5 of Levy's PRICE set in chapter 3). Ironically, these two informants do not dissociate themselves from the coloured community, nor do they come across as negative about a coloured social identity, despite their use of the glide-weakened variant. The rest of the informants (90%) use a full diphthong with long trajectories in almost every token of the data. This probably signifies their ties with the coloured community, although further work needs to be done on how differentiated PRICE is by class in WSAfE.

The distinct styles (IS, RP and WL) did not have consistent correlations with formality across the three lexical sets. For the GOOSE set, the informants tended to use the centralised WSAfE variant in the more formal styles. This means that when these speakers are more aware of their speech, there is a movement towards the historically more prestigious variety.

For the BATH set, the variation was not significant in terms of style because all of the tokens clustered in the same area, regardless of the different levels of formality. The PRICE set was realised by the full diphthong in formal styles. The same pattern would be expected in formal styles of WSAfE speakers, however, so this is not surprising. What is notable (and has already been mentioned) is that the speakers in my sample tend not to monophthongise even when using the more casual IS style.

## **b) Social Identity**

Three theories were applied to the data to assess which social group the informants in the sample feel allegiance to. They are Speech Accommodation Theory, Social Identity Theory and the theory of the Linguistic Market.

The analysis of the SAT revealed that for the most part, the informants felt most comfortable with the few other coloured children in their classes at school, opting to befriend them ahead of the white children. They felt strongly against converging towards WSAfE, with the strong suggestion that they should not have to conform to the linguistic norms of the white environment in which they were educated. Their non-convergence is a significant, but unconscious stand for their identity as coloured people. It suggests that they do not feel ashamed of their coloured social identity.

The informants reported convergence towards CFE when speaking to CFE speakers, however. This occurred particularly in the company of family members, who were thought to look down on people who tried to sound 'white', as this is (historically) a signal that they think they are better than the rest of the coloured community. There were negative associations with upward convergence towards WSAfE and this practice was actively avoided, but downward convergence to CFE was considered acceptable.

In terms of the SIT, the informants seem to have constructed positive personal and social identities in three ways. Firstly, by means of individual mobility, where they elevate their personal identities above that of the coloured social group to which they have been ascribed. They do this by associating themselves with prestige, usually attached to their speech variety i.e. they felt that they do not sound 'coloured'. Secondly, they re-evaluated certain elements of the coloured social group, suggesting that it's 'cool to be coloured', which was not the case during apartheid. The coloured social identity was characterised by shame and negativity, with few people taking pride in their group identity. Finally, some of the informants engaged in direct competition with the white outgroup in order to elevate the status of the coloured social identity e.g. through academic performance.

In terms of the symbolic market, the informants generally felt that they got the best education that Western Cape schools could offer and that this afforded them more symbolic capital in the marketplace. Linguistically, they felt that they were ‘well-spoken’, eloquent and did not sound like ‘*gam*’, which places them in a good position in the Linguistic Market relative to those coloured people who did not have the same educational opportunities and are CFE speakers. There was little evidence amongst my informants of any desire to sound ‘white’, even though this was more welcome than the corollary, which was sounding ‘*gam* coloured’.

Elements of CFE are considered acceptable to use in certain environments, however. Many of the informants retain not only phonetic, but also lexical and grammatical elements of CFE<sup>15</sup>, which they used with their coloured friends. They often added that their speech was always appropriate to the situation, so never used slang (particularly) outside of their friendship circles.

On the whole, these informants seem to subscribe to a coloured social identity. They do not identify with WC coloureds, however, whom they label *gam*, but still feel that they are part of the coloured community. It seems that there is a positive re-evaluation of coloured identity, but that the typical coloured accent is still stigmatised and undesirable. This hints at the emergence of a coloured UMC, who identify themselves as coloured, but do not associate with the lower classes.

The data suggest that there is a separation between the community and the accent. In a recent conversation with a coloured woman, who also regards herself as well-spoken, she said the following:

‘It doesn’t matter how I speak because at the end of every day I still put my hair in *swirlkous* before I go to sleep’ (female, 23)

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<sup>15</sup> Examples of lexical items from CFE include slang, much of which is borrowed from Afrikaans, such as *bra*, an alternative to *broer* ‘brother’ (Stone 2002: 395). This is used to refer to friends or acquaintances. An example of a characteristic CFE grammatical element is the generalised use of *by* in environments in which Standard English would use another preposition e.g. *I was living by my granny that time* (McCormick 2004: 1002).

A *swirlkous* is an old stocking, knotted at one end, that many coloured women wear while they sleep. First, they ‘swirl’ their hair around their head and then place the stocking over their heads to hold the hair in place. This is in order to straighten their otherwise *kroes* (‘curly’) hair, because hair texture and facial features are as important in distinguishing coloured people from white people as skin colour is (Ridd 1981, cited in Wood 1987: 39). During apartheid, hair straightening was one of the primary activities undertaken by coloured women in order to appear more ‘white’, thus more acceptable. The practise continues today and is deeply entrenched in the coloured community as a symbol of colouredness. Essentially, this woman is stating that her linguistic variety cannot change the fact that she is a member of the coloured community. This, I believe, is the attitude which characterises the informants in my sample in terms of their social group allegiance.

## **5.2 Correlations**

Phonetically, the informants fall somewhere in the middle of the WSAfE-CFE continuum. Elements of CFE are evident in their usage of the GOOSE, BATH and PRICE lexical sets, signalling their allegiance to the coloured community. This is confirmed in the results of the study on the social identities of the informants. Overall, they feel allegiance to the coloured community and subscribe to the coloured social identity, positively re-evaluating this historically undervalued social group. They feel that their education, and the linguistic variety they use as a result of that education, has made opportunities available to them which they may not have had otherwise. They place themselves in an intermediate position between white and coloured in terms of the symbolic market, believing that they have better opportunities for success than other coloured people. Despite this, they do not indicate any desire to sever ties with the coloured community, and are proud to be coloured.

The two levels of analysis thus seem to have produced complementary results, both supporting the claim that the informants have links to both communities, but associate most strongly with a coloured social identity.

### **5.3 Implications and Future Research Possibilities**

These findings suggest that despite a loosening of the former rigidities around race since the early 1990s, it remains salient in close-friendship networks. This is most evident in the commonly reported pattern that affects friendship circles in high school – that children from the same historical racial categorisation tend to befriend one another, leaving behind mixed-race friendship groups which they had in primary school. This pattern continues after school, where close friendship networks were reported to be predominantly coloured.

It would make an interesting study to see whether this pattern persists amongst the next generation of school-goers or whether integration is becoming more apparent as time passes. If friendship groups are becoming more integrated, a study of continued sociolinguistic change concerning accent is desirable.

### **5.4 An ‘intermediate’ space**

This interdisciplinary study of sociolinguistic change amongst young coloured people has revealed fascinating processes of identity construction, which is revealed through use of a particular linguistic variety. A new, ‘intermediate’ variety seems to have emerged, which is made up of elements of both WSAfE and CFE. The people using this variety also fill an ‘intermediate’ social position between what is thought of as ‘typically white’ and ‘typically coloured’, showing definite links with both communities, but placing particular value on their historically ascribed social identity as part of a coloured community.

The educational circumstances in which the informants were taught by white teachers and as peers to white pupils is unprecedented in South Africa, and it is these circumstances which lead to this unique sociolinguistic situation. The socio-political change is not complete, however, and so the sociolinguistic trends are likely to continue in the directions embarked upon by the young people in this study.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Questionnaire

1. Do I have your consent to record this interview?
2. What is your full name?
3. What is your date of birth?
4. What is your residential address?
5. Which neighbourhood did you grow up in? When did you move? Why?
6. Which neighbourhood did your parents grow up in?
7. What neighbourhood did you live in? Racially mixed or predominantly coloured/white? Do you like living here?
8. What the crime like in this area?
9. Have you ever been a victim of crime? Can you tell me what happened? (house break-in, car stolen etc)
10. What do your parents do for a living?
11. Siblings: how many, what do they do?
12. Grandparents: are they alive, do they live with you?
13. Extended family: are you close, how often do you see each other?
14. When did you start attending any kind of crèche or school?
15. Which pre-school did you attend?
16. What do you remember from that time? Teachers, friends, activities? What are your favourite memories from that school?
17. What childhood games did you play with your friends?
18. What was the racial mix of children at your school?
19. Tell me about your primary school
20. How would you rate your experience of primary school?
21. Who were your friends? Do you still see them?
22. Tell me about your first day at school? How did you feel? What do you remember?
23. How big were your classes?
24. Which high school did you go to? Is it a good school? What made it good or not?
25. Do you still see your high school friends?
26. What do you remember about your first day at high school?
27. What are your favourite high school memories or stories?

28. Was high school a big change from primary school? How did you find the adjustment?
29. Who do you interact with on a regular basis? (gym, home, friends etc) Can you think of and describe a normal day and the people you come into contact with?
30. Were you ever blamed for anything you didn't do? Or get into trouble for something you did do?
31. Tell me about your matric dance/valedictory day.
32. What was the racial mix of teachers at your school?
33. Do you think your teachers were good teachers? Why?
34. What was your favourite subject? Why?
35. Who did you hang out with at break? After school? On weekends?
36. Describe the racial mix of this group of friends.
37. Which neighbourhoods did your friends live in?
38. Have you travelled? Where to? What's your favourite place you've visited?
39. What do you do now? (studying, work)
40. Who are your friends now? (University/ boys only/ community/ neighbourhood)
41. Did you speak like your school friends when you were at school?
42. Do you speak the same way now? Why or why not?
43. Do you feel you speak differently around some people compared with others?  
Like with your family vs. white friends/teachers/coloured friends etc?
44. Has anyone ever commented on the way you speak? Saying you speak well or badly, sound fancy? Or been surprised by the way you speak?
45. What does the term 'coconut' mean to you? Can it be applied to coloured people or only black people?
46. What features come to mind when you think of typical coloured speech?
47. Do you notice anything different about the way people from Durban or Jo'burg speak or words they use?

## **Appendix 2: Reading Passage**

Two cats were having a conversation. 'How can I hoist this load of bricks to the top of that building?' said one. 'Use mice,' said the other. 'But where can I find mice?' asked the first cat. 'Look, you should try over there at the construction site,' said the second one. 'They use them as cheap labour.' A third cat joined the party: 'I saw a programme about them on TV. The idea is, they work for their keep, and their food is only peanuts. And the beauty of it is that when the job is finished you can eat them all up.'

### Appendix 3: Word List

- 1a. KIT
- 1b. BIT
2. DRESS
3. TRAP
4. LOT
5. STRUT
6. FOOT
7. BATH
8. CLOTH
9. NURSE
10. FLEECE
11. FACE
12. PALM
13. THOUGHT
14. GOAT
15. GOOSE
16. PRICE
17. CHOICE
18. MOUTH
19. NEAR
20. SQUARE
21. START
22. NORTH
23. FORCE
24. CURE
25. DANCE