'Beyond the Offline': Social Media and the Social Meaning of Variation in East London

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Abstract

Recent sociolinguistic analyses have emphasised that a diversification of tools is needed to isolate the social meaning of variation (e.g., Campbell-Kibler, 2010; Drager, 2016). Yet to date, few studies have considered social media in their accounts of offline patterns of variation. Given that the current era is often described as a period of 'digital culture' (Gere, 2002), it seems necessary for variationist sociolinguistics to take stock of both the 'offline' and the 'online' practices of speakers to fully understand the implications of social media for linguistic differentiation and its social meaning.

Taking this empirical gap as a point of departure, this thesis presents a 'blended ethnography' (Androutsopoulos, 2008) of a youth group that I refer to as 'Lakeside' based in a working-class neighbourhood in East London. Data were gathered over the course of a 12-month offline and online blended ethnography, resulting in the collection of over 40 hours of recordings (self-recordings and interviews) from 25 adolescents (aged 11-17) and over 850 social media posts (Snapchat Stories and Instagram posts) from a subset of participants and entertainment channels. To examine patterns of sociolinguistic variation at Lakeside, variationist analyses were conducted on three features that represent distinct levels of the linguistic system: Phonological variation in the interdental fricatives (TH/DH-fronting and TH/DH-stopping); grammatical variation in the use of the man pronoun; and discourse-pragmatic variation in the use of an innovative attention signal ey.

Although previous variety-based accounts of linguistic variation in East London have shown the distribution of some of these features to be largely constrained by 'macro-level' factors such as ethnicity and homophily of friendship networks (e.g., MLE: Cheshire et al., 2008; 2011; Cheshire, 2013), this thesis presents a more style-oriented account of the variation observed. Using distributional, statistical and interactional analyses to examine the three variables, I show that the use of these features can be largely accounted for by the individuals' membership of a specific CofP – in particular the self-defined 'gully' – an exclusively male group that is characterised by an orientation towards an 'urban' subculture. Interpreting these patterns, I then turn to the social media data (Snapchat Stories and Instagram posts) to explore how the social context of Lakeside becomes networked in digital space. I focus on the ways in which entertainment channels on Instagram and individuals' Snapchat Stories facilitate the enregisterment of the 'Digital Road' – where the Road cultural aesthetic becomes reconfigured in the online context. Concluding, I link the gully to their macro-level social reality, suggesting that this CofP adopt and emulate the physical, ideological and personal characteristics of an enregistered characterological figure that has become commodified in common culture (Agha, 2003; 2011) – the Roadman.

Acknowledgments

Undertaking this thesis has been both emotionally and personally challenging, but it has been a privilege to write. I am greatly indebted to a number of people who have shared with me their lives, their knowledge, and their kindness throughout. These words may be attributed to me as the sole author, but this thesis is, in Bhaktin's terms, imbued with the voices of Others.

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This thesis, of course, would have not been possible without the very many people who have helped me climb – what I perceived to be – the ivory tower of academia. From primary to secondary school, undergraduate to postgraduate studies, I have benefitted from the knowledge and time of people who have helped me gain the best education I could. Whether that was my secondary English teacher, Ms. Yeadon, who first suggested taking Linguistics at University, or the department at Sussex who persuaded me to embark on my postgraduate studies, I have been lucky enough to have benefitted from so many inspiring people who have helped me get here. I am particularly thankful for the financial support provided to me by the Economic Social Research Council, without which, I would not have been able to embark on this path in life.

My foray into academia has often been impeded by own insecurities. At school, I was average (at best!) and as the first generation to attend University, there was no template for me to follow. I often felt stifled by the notion that there was 'one

way' of doing academia. But, over the course of my education, I am grateful to have been part of communities that constantly force me to revaluate my preconceptions and show me that there are *multiple* ways of doing academia. And, of course, conference karaoke *does* feature as part of this. In a way, then, this thesis is dedicated to those who can't find their place in life, who realise they may be slightly unconventional or, like me, was laughed at for going to the "shit school" (as it was known in the local area). You can do it too.

One of the greatest privileges of this experience is undertaking my PhD research at an institution has been so much more than a workplace, QMUL. I feel so grateful that I have been able to benefit from an immensely diverse and world-leading group of researchers who have gone above and beyond their call to contribute ideas, provide feedback and generally help me make this thesis the best it could be. Of course, most of this help and advice can be attributed to my supervisor, Erez. I could not have asked for anything more of a supervisor. He has constantly provided me with extensive feedback, read endless drafts, suggested new approaches, and has, ultimately, had a huge impact on the type of academic I am. I constantly amazed at his academic ability to publish relentlessly, give keynote lectures in multiple areas of the field, teach an overwhelming variety of courses and summer schools, yet all whilst remaining a highly grounded person who always had time for me. I am eternally grateful to you for teaching me *how to do* academia.

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Transcription Conventions

(.)	pause
(0.2)	timed paused
{laughs}	paralinguistic communication
- -	false start
[hello]	overlapping speech
CAPS	shouting/loud speech
?	question intonation
!	exclamative intonation
{NS}	noise
(( ))	unclear speech
bold	to draw attention to a particular feature
[...]	speech has been omitted
[Jack, SR]	name of speaker, **SR** = self-recording, **INT** = interview

1 Introduction

In an era of 'Digital Culture', the convergence of offline and online space has
enabled a "seamless digital mediascape" (Gere, 2002:10), where our interactions,
social networks and are increasingly mediated by digital technologies. Social life is no
constrained to those face-to-face interactions, but it is constituted at the nexus of the
on- and off-line (Miller, 2016). This seamless media experience has been facilitated
by the omnipresence of mobile technologies. With the advent of smartphones and
data roaming, the user no longer has to 'log-on' to get online (cf. Turkle, 1984).
Rather, the individual user is constantly networked – always on(line) (boyd, 2014).
The apparent hyperconnectivity that characterises contemporary networked society
has enabled a state in which the boundaries between 'digital' and 'physical' space
have become virtually indistinguishable. These innovations are likely to have
dramatic consequences for society, language and communication, not least for our
understanding of language variation and change. Perhaps, these issues are not more
relevant than for adolescents who are often considered the trailblazers in adopting
social media and technological innovations. In 2017, 95% of 16-24-year olds
reported using at least one social media platform (Statista, 2018), with the average
teenager spending 35.2 hours a week online (Ofcom, 2019).

Given the omnipresence of networked communication in the contemporary
era, it seems necessary for social scientific research to examine not only the offline
practices of a given society or community but also the ways in which these practices,
styles, and norms are influenced by their engagement with digital culture. This thesis
approaches this issue from a variationist sociolinguistic perspective, integrating both
offline oral language patterns and online social media trends to examine the socially

meaningful patterns of linguistic variation in a community of adolescent speakers.

Since the emergence of a unified field of variationist sociolinguistics in the 1950's (Fischer, 1958; Labov, 1963), scholars have sought to describe and explain the inherent structural and social variability in *spoken* language. But with interactions increasingly migrating online, the need for integrating digital data in variationist sociolinguistics becomes abundantly clear (Androutsopoulos, 2016). Yet, whilst there is a wealth of research which examines the discursive, pragmatic and interactional features of digital communication, there is comparatively less variationist research on the topic (Hinrichs, 2016). When digital and social media data are examined from a variationist perspective, scholars have tended to analyse online patterns of language use with little or no consideration of the ways that these practices relate to offline patterns of social organisation (see *inter alia,* Collot & Belmore, 1996; Crystal, 2006; Iorio, 2010; Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015; Nguyen, Doğruöz, Rosé & de Jong, 2016).

However, as scholars working in other areas of sociolinguistics have long since acknowledged, the online practices of users are often deeply embedded in the offline networks, practices and norms of communities (e.g., Androutsopoulos, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2016; Tagg, Hu, Lyons & Simpson, 2016; Page, 2018). It therefore appears necessary for variationist sociolinguistic research to take stock not only of digital patterns of communication but also the ways in which these practices are interwoven with offline sociolinguistic systems. To date, however, there are few variationist analyses which examine the digital practices in reference to everyday language use (see Stæhr, 2014 & Mortensen, f.c. for notable exceptions) and there are even fewer (if any) quantitative third-wave accounts which examine the social meaning of variation beyond the offline. This thesis aims to fill this empirical gap.

Extending the remit of variationist sociolinguistics to the digital sphere, however, is not without its issues. With the majority of sociolinguistic theories developed in relation to spoken language phenomena, it is unclear to what extent these concepts and approaches can be unproblematically applied to online analyses of language use. Although recent analyses have demonstrated that written variation patterns in ways that are systematically similar to speech (e.g., see *inter alia* Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015), few variationist analyses have attempted to model this approach beyond examining textual patterns in digital communication. However,

the recent shift away from more textual-based social media platforms to more 'image-based' social media platforms, such as Snapchat and Instagram, suggests that an approach which accounts for such data is increasingly necessary. Of course, modelling this data is likely to prove challenging. With user-generated content largely pictorial in nature, it becomes clear that examining textual patterns of orthographic variation, as is typically operationalised in variationist analyses of social media, is unsustainable (cf. Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015; Hinrichs, 2016; see Androutsopoulos, 2006; 2008; 2016 for a similar argument).

Nevertheless, whilst exploring multimodal data and the offline/online nexus may prove challenging for current analyses, I argue that contemporary variationist sociolinguistics is well placed to adopt this methodological approach. In particular, the emergence of the third-wave variationist perspective (Eckert, 2003; 2012) appears to be compatible with the approach that I am advocating for here. In recent years, researchers adopting a third-wave approach have sought to examine the situated linguistic patterns in a given community by participating in sustained periods of ethnographic fieldwork (e.g., Eckert, 1989; 2000; Moore, 2003; Lawson, 2011; Kirkham, 2015; Gates, 2018; Drummond, 2018a, b). Whilst few (if any) third-wave analyses have extended the ethnographic interpretations beyond the offline, I will argue that this approach is compatible with an analysis that integrates data from the speakers' offline and online networks (cf. media studies: Abidin, 2013; Miller, 2016).

Following this rationale, in this thesis, I present a 'blended ethnographic' (Androutsopoulos, 2008) account of speech variation in an adolescent youth group in East London. By combining spoken language and social media data, I examine the offline-online nexus, to explore the social meaning of the variable patterns in the data. In doing so, I seek to understand not only the offline networks, social systems and interactions of the individuals, but also the ways in which these become networked in digital space.

In this introductory chapter, I situate the current study in regard to the existing literature and provide an overview of the structure of the thesis. First, I introduce the existing sociolinguistic literature that examines digital language and communication. I then go to provide an exposition of how I conceptualise the apparent dichotomy between the 'offline' and the 'online', critically examining this binary in relation to the emergence of 'digital culture' (Gere, 2002). From here, I

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introduce the 'blended ethnographic' approach that informs my arguments. Lastly, I provide an overview of the rationale and structure of the following chapters.

1.1   Digital Communication & Sociolinguistics

Within the past thirty years, the advent of the internet has cemented the study of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) as an independent field of inquiry in (socio-)linguistics. As a consequence, an outpouring of work has sought to document the trends, features and the apparent 'distinctiveness' of digital language and communication. Most of this work was largely motivated by a more general interest amongst scholars in examining the ways in which the language used on the internet resembled more or less spoken or written registers. Following this trend, a sustained body of research in the 1990's set out to document the 'unique' features of CMC (e.g., Ferrara, Brunner & Whittemore, 1991; Collot & Belmore, 1996). These accounts led scholars to produce taxonomies that characterised the "new variety", attributing features as components of either spoken or written registers (Collot & Belmore, 1996:13). Pointing to the apparent 'hybridity' of CMC in combining spoken and written register forms (Ferrara, Brunner & Whittemore, 1991:10), scholars defined CMC as a 'new variety' that "exists on a continuum between the context-dependent interaction of oral conversation and the contextually abstracted composition of written text" (Foertsch, 1995:301). The preoccupation with examining the 'hybrid' nature of CMC, largely influenced the trajectory of the following years' study, with investigations directed specifically at what Crystal defines as the fundamental question that was at the "heart" of the CMC research: What features does the new variety take from speech and writing? (2006:20).

Seeking to define the 'emergent register' (Ferrara et al., 1991) as halfway between face-to-face and written modes of communication, in the following years, a number of accounts attempted to describe the variety. This included the emergence of terms that reference the hybridity of CMC, such as 'netspeak', 'netlish' (Crystal, 2006), 'Electronic Language' (Collot & Belmore, 1996), 'chatspeak' (Vandekerckhove & Nobels, 2010) and 'Interactive Written Discourse' (Ferrara et al., 1991) among others. Prevalent throughout these descriptions was an assumption that CMC was in some way distinct from that of the language used offline. This perspective is evident in Crystal's use of the term 'netspeak', which he defines as "a

type of language displaying features that are unique to the Internet" (2006:20).

The assumptions made in this work were largely influenced by the belief that technologies independently influence social practice – a type of technological determinism (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016). A determinist perspective on the relationship between technology and society presupposes that technology inherently influences societal structure and cultural values. These perspectives were largely influential in early CMC research. In early research, scholars perceived the medium to be the primary influence on language use, such that "claims [...] that some features of computer technology— its textual basis, asynchronicity, lack of nonverbal cues, or unfamiliar turn-taking mechanisms—determined users' experience" were widespread (Squires, 2010:461). This approach has since become referred to as the 'first-wave' of CMC research (Georgakopoulou, 2006).

Whilst this work was important in establishing the foundations of CMC research as an independent field of linguistic inquiry, these accounts tended to examine digital communication as removed from the offline contexts in which it emerged. Indeed, the assumptions made in these accounts have since been heavily critiqued for taking a determinist perspective and the over-essentialised accounts of digital language use that they provided. For instance, Androutsopoulos notes that many of the conclusions made in first-wave research were based on anecdotal observations, or small datasets (e.g., Crystal, 2006), whilst the relevance and importance of the "socially situated discourses in which [the] features are embedded" (2006:420), was rarely considered. Rather, the conclusions made were extractions based on the generalisation of patterns from small datasets to larger populations and communities, with little or no consideration as to how these patterns operate beyond the digital medium.

At the same time, the issues of the first-wave of CMC research were no doubt compounded by the absence of theories and concepts that were emerging in other areas in sociolinguistics, including third-wave variationist studies. In fact, Georgakopoulou suggests that CMC research remained largely "resistant" (2006:549) to benefitting from these inter-disciplinary perspectives. As a consequence, scholars inevitably dealt with issues that had already been discussed at length in other disciplines, whilst the research aims of the field remained heavily focussed on examining the medium and its influence on online-specific patterns of language use.

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Addressing the limitations of the first-wave, in her overview of the field Georgakopoulou (2006) advocates a move beyond this research agenda, suggesting that there are "messier" (2006:549) questions that CMC research can answer. This includes a move beyond those typical first-wave research questions of defining features of CMC in relation to spoken-written registers, examining how a particular medium shapes language use or how macro-identities, such as gender, can correlate neatly with language choice. Instead, Georgakopoulou argues for a greater focus on the contextual aspects of CMC, calling for analyses to examine the ways in which these interactions are embedded within the everyday lives of users – signalling the move towards the 'second-wave' of research.

1.1.1   The 'Second-Wave' of Digital Communication Research

In the last 15 years, the shift away from medium-related analyses of digital language towards research which benefits from the cross-fertilisation of interdisciplinary perspectives has signalled what has been referred to as the 'second-wave' of language focussed CMC research (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Androutsopoulos, 2016). Whereas the first-wave focussed on the effects of the medium on language use (cf. Squires, 2010), the second-wave of research views "digital environments as multi-layered spaces", where language use is analysed in relation to the "users' activities and practices" (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016:3). This turn symbolises a much greater focus on synthesising approaches from diverse areas of sociolinguistics, offering a more nuanced perspective of digital communication.

Following this line of inquiry, a great deal of research has set about exploring the online discourse practices of self-presentation (Androutsopoulos, 2008; Page, 2012), the interrelationship between offline and online identities (Stæhr, 2014; Tagg et al., 2016; Page, 2018) and the networked practice of the 'selfie' (Georgakopoulou, 2016; Zhao & Zappavigna, 2017). Evident throughout these accounts is the shift away from conceptualising the influence of technology and the internet as bounded and discrete towards analyses which view digital modes of communication as *embedded* within wider contexts of social organisation. Consequently, research in this area considers less the effects of the medium on language use, but rather seeks to understand the digital practices of users in relation to their everyday lives (Georgakopoulou, 2006).

1.2   Variationist Perspectives on Digital Communication

Whilst the move towards embracing the 'second-wave' of digital research seems to be largely underway in other areas of sub-disciplines of sociolinguistics, such developments seem to have largely bypassed variationist sociolinguistics. As noted in earlier sections, there are comparatively few variationist perspectives on digital communication (Hinrichs, 2016), and the existing literature tends to focus mainly on non-standard orthographic patterns, usually in relation to the orthographic representation of spoken vernacular features.

A case in point is Iorio's (2010) analysis of orthographic (ING) in online Role Playing Games (RPG). In that research, Iorio examines the variability of (ING), orthographically realised as the alternation between <ing> and <in>, in relation to audience design. Tracing the variable realisation of (ING) across different interactional contexts associated with different levels of awareness, Iorio's results show a strong correlation between the level of audience awareness and the realisation of (ING), with private messages showing ostensibly higher levels of <in> (366 instances) than public messages (96 instances). These patterns are largely interpreted in relation to the spoken language distribution and function of the feature.

Even when variationists have examined digital communication beyond identifying similarities between spoken and written registers, scholars have tended to focus on examining orthography and orthographic variation. For instance, Squires (2010) examines sociolinguistic variation in the use of the apostrophe <'>, focusing on the enregisterment of internet discourse with certain social identities, whilst Harris and Hiltunen (2014) examine the stigma attached to the use of non-standard variants in YouTube comments, namely the use of *your* in place of *you're.* As noted by Squires, the persistent focus on orthography in variationist studies is largely motivated by the general aim of these accounts in modelling the variable constraints that influence written language (2010:293).

In more recent years, the emergence of 'Computational Sociolinguistics' (henceforth CS; Nguyen et al., 2016) has signalled a renewed interest in examining patterns of orthographic variation in relation to patterns of spoken language use. CS, which offers synergy between the methodological toolkits of the computer sciences and the theoretical perspectives of variationist sociolinguistics, attempts to examine

the structural variability in social media texts by modelling author characteristics inferred from metadata as variable constraints (Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015). Overwhelmingly, these analyses have tended to show that written variation patterns in ways that are systematically similar to those identified in speech. Based on these findings, a number of scholars have emphasised the potential of using such data to construct dialect maps based on geo-tagged tweets (Jones, 2015; Eisenstein 2017; Grieve, Nini and Guo 201), as well as analyses which use social media data as a proxy for speech (Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015). Again, here, the focus has been to patterns of orthographic variation in relation to their spoken language counterpart.

Whilst the emergence of CS suggests that studies of digital media are becoming commonplace in variationist sociolinguistics, the approach taken in these analyses is necessarily restricted.In the move towards a 'sociolinguistics of social media' (Androutsopoulos, 2016), it becomes increasingly clear that an altogether different approach is needed to integrate social media data in the variationist paradigm. This model should be able to account not only for textual patterns in digital communication but, given the shift towards more image-based platforms, multimodal data. And given the inseparability of the 'online' and 'offline' practices of users (e.g., Stæhr, 2014; Tagg et al., 2016; Georgakopoulou, 2016; Page, 2018), it seems necessary that variationist perspectives examining digital practices should also include a consideration how patterns of variation and the related personae, styles and identities, emerge in both offline and online space. This thesis aims to provide a model of how this can be achieved from a variationist perspective.

1.3   Beyond the Offline: Digital Dualism & Augmented Reality

So far, I have discussed the relationship between the digital and non-digital practices of individuals in terms of the 'online' and 'offline', roughly corresponding to the notions of 'digital' and 'physical' space. Whilst I have used these terms without problematising these standpoints so far, it is necessary to acknowledge that these terms – and indeed the dichotomy they infer – are potentially contentious notions. A possible interpretation of this bipartite distinction is that I am suggesting that social phenomena can unproblematically and straightforwardly be categorised as part of either the 'offline' or 'online'. Although this approach was influential in earlier media accounts of the internet (e.g., Turkle, 1984; 1995; Danet, 1998) and in many 'first-

wave' accounts of CMC (cf. Georgakopoulou, 2006), in the contemporary networked era, this approach is no longer tenable. Indeed, contemporary media research has often problematised this characterisation, pointing to the convergence of digital and physical space and refuting what has become known as a 'digital dualist' perspective (Jurgenson, 2012). To clarify my position on the matter, I explore how the offline-online binary has been historically been conceptualised in media research.

In early internet research, the offline-online was viewed as a dichotomy, such that behaviours, norms and values could unproblematically be described as characteristics of one dimension or the other. This perspective was most prevalent in 'post-humanist' accounts of the internet, where the individuals' digital identity was perceived to be disparate from their offline selves. For instance, writing on the nature of online identity, Turkle (1984) predicted that users would adopt 'cyborg'-style identities that were inconsistent with the individuals' offline – or 'physical – persona. For Turkle, the computer was not merely a 'tool', but rather part of a transformative experience in which the user was forced to reconsider their preconceptions and understandings of themselves (Turkle, 1995). With the offline offering an alternate 'world' removed from the social realities of the everyday, scholars optimistically predicted that the internet would facilitate a community free from the social inequalities of the 'real world'. To mitigate the effects of sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination, the user could simply 'shed' their offline self and instead adopt a disparate virtual identity – or, in Turkle's (1984) terms, a 'second self'.

This is the perspective that Danet (1998) assumes in her observation of 'gender-play' in online communication. Citing the pervasive and damaging effects of sexism, Danet argued that the online world offered users the opportunity to queer gender, such that women could masquerade as men and men could masquerade as women (1998:129). Since the internet offered a world in which offline identities were redundant, the user could effectively 'write' themselves into being. Text, in Danet's words, became a 'mask' (1998:129).

Earlier media research therefore appeared to conceptualise the online as a distant 'world' where users could adopt diverse identities that were removed from their offline selves. For these scholars, social media interactions were seen to largely displace offline face-to-face connections. Thus, the digital was conceived as the

'virtual', whilst the offline was perceived to be the 'physical' or 'real' (e.g., Turkle, 1984; 1995) – hence the widespread use of the internetism 'IRL' ('In Real Life', see Abidin, 2013, for example). This approach is best defined by what Jurgenson (2012) refers to as the 'digital dualist' perspective.

To some extent the pervasive influence of the dualist perspective in earlier media accounts can be attributed to the relative recency and novelty of technological innovations at the time (e.g., the Cyborgs: Turkle, 1995). In contemporary research, however, citing the increasing convergence of digital and physical space, scholars have stressed that a dualist perspective is untenable given the prevalence of digital culture in networked society (Jurgenson, 2012). The novelty of the internet has resided and instead has become an unremarkable aspect of life that is deeply embedded in our everyday practices (Miller, 2016). Rather than the utopian and emancipatory digital spaces predicted by earlier accounts, digital contexts are largely thought to provide an extension of the offline. In fact, empirical research on the matter have shown that users often maintain digital identities and social networks that largely mirror those 'in real life' (West et al., 2009).

However, perhaps the dramatic transformation in recent years that has influenced the integration of digital culture in everyday life is the emergence and subsequent expansion of smartphone technology. With the introduction of mobiles and data-roaming, the very notion of the 'online' is called into question. Whilst the individuals in Turkle's studies (1984; 1995) could 'log-off' and leave their digital selves in realm of the 'virtual online' world, the pervasive use of networked devices in recent years have enabled a state in which the user is continuously networked – or 'always on' (boyd, 2014). Facilitated by the increasing availability of mobile internet and public WiFi, communication, practices and norms transcend the medium in which they emerge, such that the spatial boundaries between the 'online' and the 'offline' become virtually indistinguishable. Consequently, the networked capability of mobile technologies enables a context in which social media 'texts' are produced that simultaneously reference aspects of both the online and the offline social realities of the individual (Page, 2018). A case in point is the 'selfie', a networked photograph that simultaneously references the online – in that it is circulated and uploaded in digital space – and the offline – in that it co-references the physical social or geographic context in which the photo is taken (Tiidenberg & Gómez-Cruz,

2015; Zappavigna & Zhao, 2017).

Given these issues, it appears that digital dualist perspective is unsustainable in the contemporary era of digital culture. As such, following other scholars, I argue that the offline-online dynamic should be rejected as a false dichotomy. Rather, I adopt what Jurgenson refers to as an "augmented reality" (2012:83) approach in which the digital and physical are considered as enmeshed, inseparable and mutually constitutive of one another. When approached from this perspective, users' social media identities are not perceived to be disparate from the users' habitual identity, but rather are viewed as complementary to and dependent on the individuals' offline self.

Here, I acknowledge a possible interpretation on part of the reader that by maintaining the use of the terms 'offline' and 'online', I am somewhat contradicting my justification for adopting an augmented reality perspective. Acknowledging the potential issues with the terms the 'offline' and the 'online', and indeed the inference of maintaining this binary, my decision to frame this analysis as such is solely to increase the coherence of my arguments presented herein and to interrogate the "porous" relationship between the two (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016:12). I argue that by maintaining the offline/online distinction, it is possible to contextualise digital (i.e., online) practices within physical (i.e., offline) space. Here, I draw inspiration from Abidin's (2013) research on influencers in Singapore, in which she maintains this distinction to be able to contextualise certain digital practices in relation to societal and cultural practices in the offline. Using a combination of offline and online ethnography, Abidin examines both the digital practices of her participants, including their social media content, their interactions with fans, as well as the practices of those same individuals 'in real life', such as accompanying them at business meetings and to fan meetups. Although several of these practices transcend either dimension, by examining both the offline and the online behaviours of influencers as a whole, Abidin is able to ground the specific digital practices within the wider sociocultural context in which they occur. For instance, Abidin discusses the unique language variety used by influencers that, by observing both their online and offline practices, she defines as combination of Singaporean colloquial English and internet slang.

1.4 Toward a 'Blended Ethnography'

By conceptualising the digital and physical as a type of "augmented reality", it is necessary to assume a methodology which permits an exploration of language use across both digital and physical space. In this thesis, I adopt an approach that is best described by what Androutsopoulos (2008) refers to as a 'blended ethnography' (see also Kozinets, 2010). When conceived of in these terms, the researcher is encouraged to consider not only the offline practices of individuals through typical ethnographic methods (e.g., field-notes, participant observation; e.g., Hymes, 1962; Tedlock, 1991) but also the online behaviours of users as examined through digital ethnographic methods (e.g., 'lurking', website scraping, digital field notes, and so on; Murthy, 2008; Abidin, 2013; Tiidenberg & Gómez-Cruz, 2015).

Contrasting this methodology with discourse-centred/orthographic perspectives on digital communication (cf. Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015; Page, 2018), a blended ethnographic approach can be seen to facilitate a greater focus on the ways in which individuals' digital practices are situated within the broader social context in which they occur (see also Miller, 2016).Whilst other monomodal approaches may privilege concerns of the digital over the physical (or vice versa), by taking a blended ethnographic approach, the online is afforded less (or the same) amount of attention as the offline practices of the community under study (Androutsopoulos, 2008).

Whilst this approach appears compatible with contemporary variationist sociolinguistic methodologies (e.g., The third-wave, Eckert, 2003; 2012), it is perhaps unsurprising that there are few studies which integrate combine online and offline data in their analyses of language variation and change. The few studies that combine these approaches are mainly qualitative in nature and are mainly found in the work by scholars at the University of Copenhagen. This includes the largescale Dialect in the Periphery project, which included data from Snapchat conversations between adolescents (Mortensen, f.c.). In that project, Mortensen examines how the young people index notions of their 'local identity' in offline and online contexts. Similarly, in other work by the department, Stæhr's (2014) used a blended ethnographic approach to examine social media practices in relation to everyday language use amongst Copenhagen youth. In that project, he uses a combination of online and

offline ethnographic methods to explore young people's engagement with certain rap subcultures in relation to the uses of non-local linguistic styles, such as African American Vernacular English.

Nevertheless, whilst there are relatively few variationist analyses which explore both online and offline data, in other areas of the field such as Interactional Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics, blended ethnographies feature much more prominently. For instance, in research which takes a small stories perspective on the posting of selfies, Georgakopoulou (2016) combines an auto-phenomenological approach – considering her own experiences and engagement with media – with ethnographic observations and discussions with a sample of adolescents. Similarly, in the large-scale TLANG (Translation and Translanguaging) project led by the University of Birmingham, researchers have used a blended ethnographic approach to examine the languaging practices of a range speakers in a number of 'superdiverse' communities.

Thus, whilst variationist analyses which adopt a blended ethnographic approach are comparatively rare, the existing research in other areas of sociolinguistics illustrate the effectiveness of combining offline and online methods in examining patterns of language use (cf. Stæhr, 2014; Mortensen, f.c.). This thesis aims to fill this empirical gap by adopting a blended ethnographic approach in examining the social meaning of variation in adolescent speech in East London.

1.5   Structure of this Thesis

The thesis presented here is a 'blended ethnographic' account (Androutsopoulos, 2008) of an East London Youth group – referred to throughout as 'Lakeside'. In what follows, I use variationist sociolinguistic, ethnographic, interactional and media approaches to examine the distribution, function and social meaning of three linguistic variables: variation in the interdental fricatives, the *man* pronoun and the attention signal *ey*. East London is a particularly fertile research ground in which to conduct this research not only because of the high degree of cultural and ethnic diversity in the area (Neal, Mohan, Cochrane & Bennett, 2016), but also because this area has more recently been the focus of the large-scale linguistic projects, 'Linguistic Innovators: the English of Adolescents in London' (2004-7) and 'Multicultural London English: The Emergence, Acquisition and Diffusion of a New Variety'

(2007-10) (Cheshire, Fox, Kerswill & Torgersen, 2008; Cheshire, Kerswill, Fox, Torgersen, 2011; Cheshire, 2013). Whilst this research has been seminal in identifying and describing a new linguistic variety – Multicultural London English – a number of questions persist. In recent years, there has been some discussion as to whether MLE constitutes a youth style or variety (Kerswill, 2013), whilst other scholars have drawn similarities between MLE and other urban vernaculars (e.g., Denis, 2015; Drummond, 2018a, b).

Against this backdrop, I take a stylistic approach that is grounded in long-term ethnographic observations to examine language variation in an East London community. As such, my research attempts to answer the following two main research questions:

1. How can a stylistic approach better inform our knowledge of sociolinguistic patterns of variation in East London?

2. What can the individuals' use of social media tell us about the social meaning of that variation?

In answering these questions, I not only examine the variable patterns in relation to the specific context of Lakeside, but also develop an approach grounded in variationist sociolinguistics that uses multimodal social media to examine the social meaning of the variable patterns of language use. In particular, I propose an approach which uses social media data to scale-up my interpretations of micro-level practices in relation to broader societal and structural factors.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 introduces the variationist paradigm, providing a chronological development of the successive 'waves' (Eckert, 2003; 2012) that characterise the differing approaches. Chapter 3 provides the ethnographic discussion of the offline field site – the youth group referred to as 'Lakeside'. In the following three Chapters (4, 5, 6), I provide three linguistic analyses of three features at different levels of the linguistic system. In Chapter 4, I examine phonological variation in the interdental fricatives; in Chapter 5, I examine grammatical variation in the use of the *man* pronoun; and in Chapter 6 I analyse Discourse-Pragmatic (henceforth DP) variation in the attentional signal *ey*. In Chapter 7, I shift my focus to the 'online', discussing the digital ethnographic

component of the research, before analysing the individuals' engagement with social media platforms and content in Chapter 8. Here, I explore the individuals' engagement with social media as a resource for exploring the social meaning of variation. I conclude by relating the linguistic analyses to the emergence of a particular type of characterological figure (Agha, 2003) that is reified in social media posts – the 'Roadman'. Finally, in Chapter 9, I summarise the findings of this thesis and offer some suggestions for future research.

2 The Variationist Paradigm

2.1   Introduction

This chapter introduces the variationist research paradigm which forms the theoretical underpinning of the spoken language analyses in later chapters. The discussion is organised chronologically, examining the successive 'waves' of sociolinguistic research as defined by Eckert (2003; 2012). In doing so, I situate the 'third-wave' approach which this thesis assumes within the broader development of variationist sociolinguistic studies. The chapter first critically examines the first-wave of sociolinguistic research which sought to examine variable patterns at the macro-level, before introducing the second- and third-wave of research which employ ethnographic methods to explore more local patterns of variation.

2.2   The Variationist Paradigm & the First Wave

The roots of the variationist sociolinguistics paradigm can be traced back to the late 1950's (Fischer, 1958; Labov, 1972), where the approach emerged as a response to the apparent inadequacies of using traditional dialectological methods to analyse social patterns of linguistic variation. The central aim of the research enterprise was to examine patterns of linguistic variation systematically, exploring the social stratification of language use, thus, in turn, providing a structural account of language variation (Weinrech, Labov & Herzog, 1968). This approach informs Labov's seminal publication of 'the social stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores' in 1966. In that research, Labov establishes a central tenet of the field, observing that social stratification is reflected in the distribution of linguistic variation (Labov, 1972:118).

In the late 60's and early 70's, an outpouring of research in the so-called

'Labovian' tradition sought to examine variation in a diverse number of locations, including Detroit (Wolfram, 1969), Panama City (Cedergren, 1973, 1988), and Norfolk (Trudgill, 1974). These analyses all tended to examine the variable patterns of a given feature in relation to the speakers' membership of a given macro-demographic category, such as age, gender and social-class. Across a diverse number of speech communities, this research found that the patterns of variation could largely be explained in terms of the speakers' membership of a given social category. In turn, these categories were considered to be variable constraints on language use. Consequently, correlations between social factors and language use were perceived to reflect a 'grammar' of sociolinguistic variation, thereby permitting the analyst to make generalisations across communities of speakers. In the following sections, I explore the main contributions of this line of inquiry, defined by Eckert (2012) as the 'first-wave' of variationist research.

2.2.1   Social Class

Since the emergence of the field, a wealth of research has illustrated the central role of social class in constraining the speakers' use of a particular variant. A consistent finding of this line of inquiry has shown that working-class speakers exhibit higher frequencies of non-standard variables than their middle- and upper-class peers (e.g., Wolfram 1969; Trudgill, 1974).

Explaining this trend scholars argued that the observed patterns of socially stratified variation could be attributed to the 'prestige' of linguistic variants. Extending this notion, Trudgill (1974) suggested that the prestige ascribed to linguistic forms differs across speakers of different social classes, such that class members orient towards opposing models of prestige: working-class speakers towards covert prestige forms and upper-class speakers towards overt prestige forms. An underlying assumption of this account is that the linguistic prestige continuum is directly mirrored by class stratification, such that the use of a 'non-standard' variant is perceived to inversely correlate with the speakers' socioeconomic status. Speech, then, is perceived to operate across a continuum of 'standardness', where non-standard speech – the vernacular – is measured in terms of its relationship to the 'standard' – the variety legitimised by education, political entities and those in power (Eckert, 2003).

A case in point is found in Labov's (1966) study of /r/ in New York City. In that research, Labov argues that the higher frequency of /r/ in the speech of the workers in *Saks,* a store with an upper-class customer base, could be attributed to the overt prestige of this variable and the increasing shift away from British r-less speech norms. Further evidence for his theory is found in the stylistic differentiation of the feature. In word-reading tasks, aware of the perceived prestige of /r/, Labov noted that lower-class participants often pronounced /r/ in words that did not have /r/ at all. Interpreting this finding, Labov argues that these speakers are aware of the prestige ascribed to /r/-ful pronunciation, such that in a more closely monitored environment, lower-class speakers attempt to emulate the speech patterns of their upper-class peers.

2.2.2 Gender

Another consistent finding of first-wave research demonstrated that linguistic variation could be modelled in terms of speakers' gender, with women overwhelmingly using more standard forms than men (e.g., Labov, 1966; Wolfram, 1969; Trudgill, 1974). In fact, this finding has been so consistent that Trudgill has claimed that the patterns of gendered variation are "the single most convincing finding to emerge from sociolinguistic studies over the past 20 years" (1983:162). This generalisation is captured by Labov's principle of 'the linguistic conformity of women', which describes the tendency that, "[f]or stable sociolinguistic variables, women show a lower rate of stigmatized variants and a higher rate of prestige variants than men" (Labov, 2001:266).

Cross-tabulations of social class and gender show that these two factors strongly interact, and proponents of the first-wave argued that this interaction could too, like social class, be explained in terms of prestige. While in the case of stable sociolinguistic variables women appear to be more conservative, for innovative (i.e., incoming variants), the gendered-patterns of variation differ between change from above and change from below. In change from above, i.e., contexts where the form is consciously and overtly prescribed by society, "women adopt prestige forms at a higher rate than men" (Labov, 2001:274). Women are therefore perceived to be the leaders of linguistic change (e.g., Labov, 1966). However, in change from below, i.e., where the variant enters the language below the level of consciousness, women are

seen to most often be the innovators (Labov, 2001:292). Here, Labov notes what he terms the 'Gender Paradox' – the almost contradictory finding that "[w]omen conform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed but conform less than men when they are not" (Labov, 2001:293).

A case in point is found in Trudgill's (1974) analysis of (ING) variation in Norwich. There, Trudgill observed that women consistently favour the standard [ɪŋ] more than the men and that women tended to over-report their use of standard forms, whereas men tended to under-report their use of standard forms. Interpreting these findings, Trudgill argues that the patterns of variation can be interpreted in the orientation of speakers' towards two opposing sets of gendered norms: Women to overt, standard-language prestige norms and men to covert prestige norms. The gendered norms associated with language use, Trudgill argued, could be traced to the social evaluation of the 'type' of prestige attached to a variant, with overt prestige forms associated with refinement and covert prestige associated with masculinity and toughness. Trudgill claimed that women's orientation towards overt norms could be conceptualised in terms of their position in society. While men are typically defined in terms of their professional achievements, women are typically evaluated in terms of their appearance, and are often perceived as being submissive or powerless. Trudgill argued that the social inequality between men and women could explain the patterns of language variation suggesting that, through language, women could assert themselves in society by developing linguistic strategies for upward mobility.

2.2.3   Age

Whilst social-class and gender have been analysed as variables in uncovering socially stratified variation, age has been generally been as a means of uncovering generational patterns of language variation and change. This research has largely sought to examine speakers' age in relation to the apparent time hypothesis (e.g., Bailey, Wilke, Tillery & Sand, 1991; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2009). Conceived in Labov's early research (1966), the apparent time hypothesis is a theoretical construct that has served as the basis for observing diachronic change in synchronic contexts. In the absence of historic data, the apparent time approach acts as a proxy, allowing the analyst to make inferences regarding historical patterns of variation and change. The apparent time construct assumes that differences across successive generations

of speakers are reflective of diachronic change in the community. Underlying this hypothesis is the assumption that most patterns of language are acquired during childhood. After this period, the individuals' linguistic system remains relatively stable and resistant to change. Observed variation in the speech of an individual, then, could be taken to reflect the linguistic tradition of the community at the point of *stabilisation* – the period in which the linguistic system of the individual becomes fixed. Based on this hypothesis, the speech of an individual who has passed this period of stabilisation is perceived to be more or less reflective of the language norms of the generation when it was acquired. For instance, the speech of, say, a forty-year-old speaker now would reflect the community norms and the speech of twenty-year olds 20 years ago. Analysing variation across age groups, then, allows the researcher to explore change related to social change in successive generations. Thus, differences observed across successive generations are presumed to reflect changes in community norms, through the transmission of incoming (i.e. innovative) forms, described as 'change in progress'.

The apparent time hypothesis is reliant on the notion that age-related linguistic change operates in a step-by-step direction – a process of *incrementation*. This assumption is based on the idea that successive generations advance change beyond the level of their caretakers and role models, thereby exhibiting increasing frequencies of variable usage across age cohorts (Labov, 2001: Ch. 14). In early research it was assumed that the apparent-time construct would filter through to the early-years of the individual, such that the youngest age cohorts would exhibit the highest frequencies of incoming variants (cf. Trudgill, 1974). The expected apparent-time trajectory is what Labov refers to as "the monotonic function of age" (2001:171).

However, by and large, variationist accounts of language change have not borne out this hypothesis. Rather, studies which have included adolescent and preadolescent cohorts of participants have identified a steady trajectory of incrementation, amounting to a peak in variable usage at adolescence (e.g. Cedergren 1973, 1988), as opposed to the expected continued upswing (Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2009). A consistent finding of these studies has shown that, once past childhood, the individual's linguistic behaviour diverges from the speech patterns of their family and/or primary caregiver, and towards the norms of the

speech community. This course is marked by a peak in the frequency of incoming forms at approximately seventeen years of age (Labov, 2001:447) – the so-called 'adolescent peak' (Labov, 2001; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2009). This finding has been reproduced in a variety of contexts and research projects, confirming that the frequency of innovative forms is most frequently observed in adolescent groups; preadolescents consistently exhibit lower levels of incoming forms than adolescents, whilst those post adolescence use the same innovative forms least frequently – a pattern which has often been interpreted that adolescents are the 'leaders of linguistic change' (Labov, 2001).

2.2.4   Social Meaning in the First-Wave

Influenced heavily by traditional methods used in dialectology, the approach that characterises the first-wave of sociolinguistic research (Eckert, 2012) has been to explore linguistic variation across large populations, analysing the co-variance of language variation with broad socio-demographic categories including age, gender and social class as discussed in prior sections (e.g., Labov, 1966; Wolfram, 1969; Trudgill, 1974). The principal objective of this research was to provide replicable descriptions of language use in context, establishing regular and systematic patterns of variation in relation to extra-linguistic and socio-demographic factors. Subsequently, these patterns could be formalised as a probabilistic model of language variation, codifying observed between macro-sociological factors and language use as 'principles' of linguistic change (e.g., Labov, 1972; 2001), intended to describe cross-linguistic patterns of variation across societies. Such principles were envisaged as a 'grammar' of linguistic variability in order "to connect theoretical questions with a large body of intersubjective evidence which can provide decisive answers" (Labov, 1966:757) regarding the structural mechanisms of linguistic variation and change. In turn, these generalisations were often used to predict expected patterns of variation across speech situations, including the tendency for women to lead in sound changes as 'women's changes', and the difference between men and women's speech analysed in terms of gendered patterns of speech (Eckert, 2003:47).

By examining variable patterns in relation to category membership, first-wave approaches therefore make central the community as the locus of linguistic

variation and change. As Labov concludes, variation in language occurs within "the speech community and exterior to the individual" (2012:266), such that the individuals' speech patterns are perceived to be a reproduction of the sociolinguistic norms of a given speech community. From this perspective, the observed variability across speakers and sociodemographic groups, is therefore perceived to reflect the boundaries of social convention (Williams, 1992:79). Consequently, variation in an individuals' speech is therefore interpreted as a representation of the norms of the speech community as a whole (Labov, 1966; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2009).

The focus of the first-wave approach on macro-sociological structures as reflecting deterministic patterns of speech behaviour has in turn necessitated a view of variation in speech as a probabilistic result of the individuals' socialisation. The social meaning of variation in the first wave paradigm, then, is taken to be a direct entailment of the demographic characteristics of a given individual. The use of a particular variant, then, is assumed to directly index the speakers' association with a particular social group. As a result, macro-demographic categories such as age, gender and class are taken as essential factors in governing and constraining variable use.

A case in point is Trudgill's (1974) study of (ING) in Norwich. In that analysis, the social meaning of (ING) is assumed to be directly related to or even determined by macro-level social factors. Specifically, the propensity for a speaker to realise (ING) as [ɪn] or [ɪŋ] is a probabilistic relationship dependent on a speakers' social characteristics, such as their age and social class. Since the individuals' membership of a particular macro-demographic category is perceived to be relatively stable, identity, in the first-wave approach, was interpreted as a relatively static quality of the speaker (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). The individual, then, was ascribed very little agency, such that "speakers emerged as human tokens – bundles of demographic characteristics" (Eckert, 2012:88).

2.3   From Macro- to Micro- Levels of Analysis

Whilst first-wave studies revealed more general patterns of language use, research in ethnographic and anthropological linguistics sought instead to emphasise the importance of considering the specific socio-cultural context of a given community as an important factor in constraining patterns of communication (e.g., Hymes, 1962;

Gumperz, 1964; Ochs, 1992). Indeed, critics of the structural-functionalist approach of the first-wave have tended to problematize the notion that macro-demographic categories would affect language variation in similar ways across cultures, societies and individuals (e.g., Eckert, 1996; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Indeed, first-wave analyses tended to conceptualise social factors such as age, gender and class as social universals regardless of the relevance of these constructs in the research context.

This ethnocentric view, whilst problematic, has served as the theoretical undergird for the development of the principles of linguistic variation and change (e.g., Labov, 1972; 2001). For instance, age, a factor which has been instrumental to the variationists' understanding of diachronic linguistic change, has relied on the construct of 'age as chronological', grouping speakers in terms vaguely corresponding with childhood and adulthood. The vast majority of variationist work which has explored age in relation to variation has done so in relation to disambiguating age-stratified data, examining whether the observed trends show evidence for change in apparent time or age-grading. Such studies have generally analysed speaker ages 'etically' – that is from the outsider's perspective (Pike, 1967) – categorising speakers into incremental classifications of age (e.g. Trudgill, 1974; Labov, 1966). This methodological approach is largely motivated by what these scholars perceived to be the central function of variationist sociolinguistics, as examining diachronic sound change in real time across successive generations in relation to social change.

Nevertheless, whilst analyses of generational change have shown consistent patterns of age-graded variation, critics of the first-wave approach have argued that the characteristic methodological approach of grouping speakers into arbitrary age-categories vaguely corresponding to adulthood and childhood, cannot account for changes in the social environment of the individual. The effects of milestone life events such as marriage, family status and employment and the influence that these may have on the individuals' linguistic repertoire are rarely (if ever) considered. Given the vast differences in life trajectories between speakers, it is unlikely that the individuals' speech patterns would be unaffected by these events. As Eckert notes, although the ageing process is universal, "it is incorporated into social structure and invested with value in culturally specific ways" (1996:155), such that the effects of ageing on language variation and change may be idiosyncratic to particular communities. Since chronological age does not move in tandem with the individuals'

biological or social development, the exploration of chronological age as providing a means to explore generational and age related variation, therefore, can only be taken as an "approximate measure of the speaker's age-related place in society" (Eckert, 1996:155).

In similar ways to age, the interpretation of gendered language variation in first-wave analyses has been critiqued as an oversimplification of the division between gender and biological sex. By examining gendered variation, analysts have sought to categorise participants along the lines of the traditional gender binary, identifying speakers as 'males' or as 'females'. The purpose of this approach is to identify features that reflect typical instantiations of women's and men's speech, with the speakers' variable patterns analysed in terms of their adherence towards gendered norms.

Whilst this approach has been fruitful in identifying broad patterns of gendered language use, it has also been critiqued for as promoting an essentialised conceptualisation of the gender binary that conflates biological sex and the socio-cultural construct of gender (cf. Ochs, 1992). By treating sex as a proxy for gender, first-wave accounts are therefore unable to account for the diversity of ways in which individuals align with 'gendered' social constructs such as masculinity and femininity and the ways in which these constructs manifest in and through language (cf. Ochs, 1992).

To what extent macro-demographic categories can fully explain patterns of language variation, then, is a subject of intense scrutiny in contemporary sociolinguistic research, and it has served as the impetus for a diverse and ongoing debate in the literature. In the 1980's, Eckert (2012) discerns what she refers to as the 'second-wave', which advocates a move from analysing co-variance between macro-level social structures to more local levels of social organisation, thereby signalling a departure from the work of the first-wave.

2.4   The Second Wave

The prevailing assumption of first-wave research was that social-class is the main aggregate in organising society, thereby permitting analyses which investigated the co-variance of linguistic features between speakers at different ends of the socio-economic hierarchy. However, increasingly, scholars examined cases where speakers

and their language use could not be distinguished in terms of social-class, but rather could be located in more local levels of social organisation. This signals the emergence of the 'second wave' of research (Eckert, 2012). Central to this agenda is a beyond the macro-level correlations typical of the first-wave towards more ethnographically informed analyses that seek to understand how local levels of social organisation influence and constrain patterns of variation.

Milroy's (1980) ethnographic approach to studying variation in Belfast, Ireland, for instance, is one such study which investigated language use beyond the Labovian paradigm, seeking to avoid the linguistic determinism typical of the first-wave. Extending the concept of 'social networks' from sociology and anthropology, Milroy argued that the patterns of variation apparent in her data could not be "accounted for in terms of corporate group membership" (1980:135), but rather were reflective of the density and integration of the individuals' ties with other members of the community. In dense social networks, such as those typical in working-class communities, Milroy demonstrated that the multiplex networks would have strong norm-enforcing power, such that speakers were more likely to exhibit the local norms and patterns of the vernacular (1980:175). Rather than viewing speakers' linguistic behaviour as reflective of overriding norms forcing the speaker to match the prestige set by the upper classes, Milroy notes that vernacular is attributed local value by speakers, commenting that "it may be in direct conflict with standardized norms, utilized as a symbol by speakers to carry powerful social meanings and so resistant to external pressures" (1980:19). Thus, in Milroy's data, the patterns of variation cannot be explained in terms of speakers orienting towards overtly prescribed prestige norms, but rather an understanding of the networks speakers maintains reveals that, for these speakers, the vernacular is ascribed its own local currency.

In this sense, Milroy argues, the patterns of the local vernacular cannot be explained in the Labovian framework as consequences of the speakers' socialisation. Rather, Milroy interprets her findings in relation to Le Page & Tabouret-Keller's 'Acts of Identity' model (1985), claiming that the social network approach presupposes that "speakers use the resources of variability in their language to express a great complex of different identities" (1980:115). In making these assertions, Milroy's approach departs from the implicit linguistic determinism of the

first-wave, and instead attempts to interpret the patterns of ethnically stratified variation in terms of the local networks that individual speakers maintain.

In the years following, Milroy's (1980) seminal research has served as the theoretical undergird for a body of research which has sought to analyse the use of variable features in relation to locally-defined micro-social categories. A case in point is Eckert's (1989; 2000) research at Belten High School. There Eckert demonstrates how the locally constituted networks, 'jocks and burnouts', which relate to the broad social hierarchy and middle and working-class cultures, influences and constrains the members' language use. Entering Belten High, Eckert noticed that the social division of the school could be divided into two groups, the jocks and the burnouts, who could be separated in terms of their orientation towards the school institution and their networks. On one hand, the jocks – a group of individuals who participated in extracurricular activities and valued education, deriving from a mostly middle-class background. On the other, the burnouts – a group who rejected the school institution, instead valuing the norms and social practices of the urban working-class neighbourhood.

In addition to the aspirational and cultural division between jocks and burnouts, Eckert noted observed that the two social networks adopted differing clothing styles. The jocks, who were frequently seen dressed in preppy styles and pastel colours, differed wildly from the burnouts, who favoured rock concert tees, dark eye makeup and long straight hair (the girls), jeans jackets or Detroit and auto factory jackets, and wallet chains (the boys). Interpreting their aesthetic style as part of a broader semiotic system, Eckert argued that the jock and burnout style constitutes the groups' wider agenda and their distinctive orientation towards the institution. For instance, she argues that the burnouts' urban alignment is reflected in the use of symbols that appear to be street smart, such as Detroit jackets and their engagement with urban life is reflected in symbols of toughness (e.g., wallet chains, leather jackets, dark clothing).

Eckert argues that these locally constituted social divisions between the jocks and the burnouts, however, is not superficial, but is also reflected in the linguistic patterns of speakers. In the backing of /e/, and /uh/, and the raising of the nucleus of /ay/, changes which are apparently progressing outward to the suburbs from the urban area, it is the burnouts who are the primary users of these variables.

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Interpreting these patterns, Eckert argues that characteristic traits of the wider group and the perceived orientation towards the institution is directly mirrored by the individuals' linguistic behaviour. The burnouts, who are characteristically anarchistic and value the wider urban conurbation is reflected in their use of negative concord and use of innovative urban variants. In contrast, the jocks who are characterised by their institutional alignment, avoid the use of these features, thereby avoiding any association with 'urban-ness' and thus, importantly, distinguishing themselves linguistically from their peers.

In Eckert's study, the social meaning of the variation, can therefore not be interpreted in terms of its co-variance with macro social categories, since as Eckert (2000; 2003:47) notes the social class distinctions are a distant reality. Rather, Eckert argues, the social meaning of a given variable can be located within micro levels of social structure where the variable is attributed in-group symbolic value as indexing 'jock' or 'burnout' membership.

Together, Milroy's (1980) and Eckert's (1989; 2000) seminal research demonstrates an increasing movement towards examining micro-level patterns of variation and symbolises a departure from the deterministic models of language variation in earlier work. Along with this movement, there is a theoretical shift from the first-wave approach which characterised speakers as implicit actors reproducing redefined patterns of variation (cf. Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974), to one which attempts to ascribe some agency to the speaker in viewing the speaker as an actor who makes specific linguistic choices to assert group membership. This shift suggests that "linguistic variables do not index categories, but characteristics" (Eckert, 2012:93).

However, whilst second-wave studies made efforts to explore the local structures of social organisation in situated communities, the conception of identity and category membership is still perceived to be fixed and static. Consequently, the use of a given variable is viewed as directly indexical of the speakers' membership to a particular group. Such an approach cannot capture the often-fleeting identities of speakers which manifest in interaction (cf. Rampton, 1995) and, as a consequence, could somewhat be perceived as inheriting the deterministic perspective of the first wave.

To account for these issues, one particularly fruitful theoretical development

in recent years, termed the 'third-wave' approach to studying linguistic variation (Eckert, 2003; Podesva, 2006; Moore & Podesva, 2009; Eckert, 2012), has sought to develop a more comprehensive understanding of variation in shaping and constructing speakers' identities in specific socio-cultural contexts. Shifting the scope of analysis away from correlations between social groups and variables, third-wave analyses have instead sought to investigate the *social meaning* of variation. In doing so, such studies have reinvested a great deal of interest in the notion of 'style', emphasising the centrality of this concept in understanding how speakers manage, construct and deploy identities in interaction. In following sections, I introduce the construct of 'style', exploring the development of this construct and its central role in third-wave sociolinguistics.

2.5   Style

2.5.1   Style as 'Attention'

The first-wave of variationist research defined 'style' in terms of intraspeaker variation, where style-shifting occurred primarily in response to some external stimuli. For Labov (1966), style-shifting was observed in the tendency for lower-class speakers to adapt their linguistic behaviour in more speech situations which result in greater degrees of self-awareness. In more formal situations, such as reading tasks, lower-class participants appeared to adapt their speech patterns to imitate those of the upper-class, even exhibiting cases of hypercorrection by inserting /r/ in environments where /r/ does not occur. Speech can be therefore be conceptualised as a scale where "the individual's speech range occupies a total range within the sociolinguistic continuum" (Eckert, 2003:43), where style-shifting occurs in response to external standard language norms.

        Consequently, for Labov, the extent to which an individual style-shifts could be "measured by the amount of attention paid to speech" (1972:208), defined in degrees of response on part of the individual to attend to those overtly prescribed norms. By conceptualising stylistic variation in terms of attention, these scholars tended to view style as a continuum of formality, with casual speech, the least self-monitored, at one end of the spectrum and formal speech, the most monitored at the other. Subsequently, it was argued that methodologies that require greater or

lesser degrees of attention would result in more or less formal speech: informal speech situations would result in more casual speech whereas more formal situations would prompt speakers to produce more careful speech. Thus, it was possible for the analyst to manipulate the stylistic context of a speech event in order to elicit the locus of sociolinguistic analysis – the vernacular (Labov, 1966).
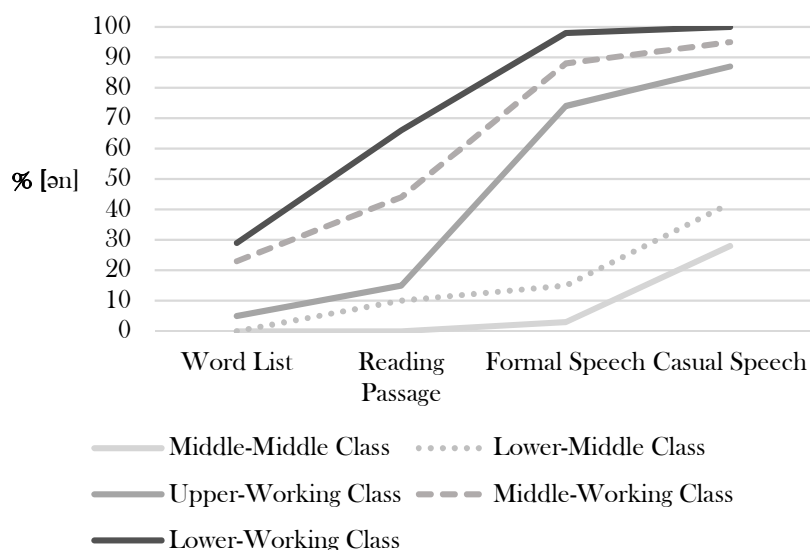
Figure 1 *ING variation across stylistic context and socio-economic group*

Trudgill's examination of ING in Norwich, for instance, shows that stylistic variation is operationalised in terms of the speakers' alignment to the standard. Figure 1 shows that members of lower socio-economic groups in Trudgill's sample tended to display greater degrees of style-shifting in more formal contexts than higher-class speakers. Formality, in his analysis, is characterised as degrees of attention to speech, with more formal tasks requiring greater degrees of awareness on part of the speaker – a generalisation reified as the 'vernacular principle' (Labov, 1972). Tasks with supposedly higher degrees of self-monitoring, such as the word list or reading passage are designed with the intention of eliciting formal speech and more informal tasks, such as casual speech recordings show higher frequencies of non-standard usage. As the figure shows, in more monitored situations, i.e. formal contexts (e.g. word list, reading passage), the frequency of the non-standard [ɪn] decreases significantly across all groups. However, this pattern operates in relation to social class. He suggests that lower-class speakers respond to overtly prescribed prestige

norms by adapting their linguistic behaviour to imitate the upper-classes in situations where they are more attentive to their own speech.

2.5.2 Audience Design

In Labov's model of style, stylistic variation was conceived as the speakers' *response* to pre-existing norms and situations, monitored by the perceived degree of formality of the speech task. However, critics of this approach pointed to contexts where the 'attention paid to speech' model failed to account for patterns of style-shifting. Drawing on his research on the speech of radio broadcasters in New Zealand, Bell (1977) argued that the style-shifting he observed in the speech of the newscasters could not be operationalised in terms of formality, but rather in relation to the audience. Bell observed that the newsreaders often style-shifted when presenting the news on two different radio stations even though the formality of the speech context was consistent. Examining the distribution of /t/ as either a stop or flap in the same individual newsreaders' speech, Bell found higher frequencies of the conservative, stopped variants on the classical station than on the popular radio station. Interpreting his findings, Bell argued that whilst the topic and activity were kept constant throughout, a plausible explanation for the observed patterns in the data is that speakers actively attune their speech in relation to their interlocutor.

Extending the remit of style analysis beyond a model of 'attention paid to speech' (cf. Labov, 1972), Bell (1984) introduced his theory of 'audience design'. In that model, Bell proposes a conceptually radical description of intraspeaker variation which, rather than attempting to locate style on a continuum of formality (cf. Wolfram, 1969; Labov, 1966; 1972; Trudgill, 1974), takes into account the discursive contexts in which interaction takes place. Adapting Giles and Powesland's (1975) theory of accommodation (Communication Accommodation Theory), Bell argued that "speakers design their style primarily for and in response to their audience" (Bell, 1984:143). Intraspeaker variation, then, is perceived to be some response on part of the speaker to some factor of the extra-linguistic environment.

In addition to his theory of a responsive audience design, Bell also proposed that speakers can also utilise linguistic features to redefine aspects of the speech situation, thereby *initiating* a style-shift. Bell refers to this dimension as *referee design* whereby the speaker is seen to diverge linguistically from the style of the addressee,

instead "creatively us[ing] language features [...] from beyond the immediate speech community" (2001:147). In these circumstances, Bell argues that speakers adopt the features of a non-local identity to index their affiliation with that particular social group.

By acknowledging that style does not only occur as a *response* to the extralinguistic speech context, but also can be *initiated* by the speaker to create and reshape situations, Bell's model injects a degree of speaker agency into a theory of style. This is a fundamentally different exposition of style-shifting than had been argued for in Labov's (1972) model. However, whilst Bell's formalisation of audience and referee design addresses some of the shortcomings of earlier notions of style, his model still assumes that speakers style-shift in relation to the communicative norms of a fixed 'imagined audience'. This is problematic insofar that this perspective "does not allow for creativity and change" (Eckert, 2003:45) in the styles and identities that speakers assume. As such, rather than seeking to understand the context specific stylistic moves that speakers make in interaction, the audience design model attempts to model generalisations of speech events beyond the contexts in which they take place.

2.6 The Third Wave

Other approaches which have focussed less on style as a responsive phenomenon have instead argued for a model of style as a means through which the speaker is able to constitute, develop and deploy aspects of the speakers' identity. It is from this perspective that Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) propose their 'acts of identity' model. Seeking to understand identity beyond macro-level demographic membership (cf. Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974), Le Page and Tabouret-Keller argue that speaker identity is a consequence of social action and that this is primarily achieved in and through interaction. The various linguistic choices made by the speaker, then, are taken to reflect 'acts of identity', where:

> "[T]he individual creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behaviour
> so as to resemble those of the group or the groups with which from time to
> time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he
> wishes to be distinguished" (1985:181)

For Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, then, stylistic variation is viewed as a semiotic resource through which the speaker displays linguistic behaviour which signals the speakers' identification with a particular social group. Speakers can develop intricate social relationships in interaction, displaying solidarity or difference by adapting their linguistic behaviour to reflect the linguistic characteristics of a particular social group. Thus, intraspeaker variation cannot be viewed simply as a response on part of the speaker to reproduce pre-existing situational and conversational norms, but rather the speaker is complicit in actively selecting and deploying linguistic features, or 'acts', to construct social relations.

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) Acts of Identity Model has served as theoretical undergird of a number of seminal theories that conceptualise the relationship between identity and language use (e.g., Rampton, 1995; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). These approaches signal a shift away from examining style as fixed and static, towards more micro-level approaches which examine style as an emergent quality of interaction. Here, it is it is possible to discern the emergence of the 'third-wave' (Eckert, 2012) of variationist research which views style as central to the interpretation of variable patterns of communication.

Whereas the first-wave of variationist research construed variation as the "incidental fallout from social space" (Eckert, 2012:94), where the individual complicity reproduces predefined patterns of linguistic behaviour, third-wave analyses view variation as fundamental to the construction of 'personae' (Eckert, 2003). The individual, then, is perceived to be an agentive social actor, such that that speaker may utilise the inherent indexicality of a linguistic feature to lay claim to a particular identity or signal allegiances with broader social groups.

By focussing on more local levels of social analysis, the third-wave approach emphasises that, prior to the speech event, the social meaning of variation only directly indexes activities, stances and attitudes rather than identities (Ochs, 1992). The social meaning of linguistic variation, then, is not to be assumed *a priori*, but rather it is interpreted in interaction (Eckert, 2003; 2012). It is in interaction that particular forms are utilised by members of social groups and, in turn, become stereotypes of these social categories. Thus, rather than simply viewing the social meaning as reflecting pre-existing social conditions, the third-wave views social meaning as the principal factor in explaining variation across socially stratified

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groups. By speaking, then, the individual does not simply reproduce an existing repertoire constrained by their membership to macro-demographic categories. Rather, variation is essential to defining personae (Eckert, 2003). Interaction, then, is the 'arena' in which the speaker creates, reproduces and develops aspects of their identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005:585).

Particular speech forms, however, do not exist a vacuum, nor are they "linguistically isolated" (Moore & Podesva, 2009:488). What allows us to interpret how linguistic variation becomes (re-)worked into socially recognisable personae is the potential that phonological, lexical and grammatical forms coalesce to form repertoires of linguistic behaviour – or 'styles'. A single variable, then, is simply part of a much broader repertoire of linguistic features which together constitute a socially recognisable persona or personae.

The reification of a style involves the appropriation of linguistic features from the larger world which are combined with other features and assigned locally based meaning. Styles emerge through continual repeated patterns of stance taking, which become associated with situations or social identities (Du Bois, 2002). In this sense, the process of style-making is better conceptualised as a *practice*, where speakers manipulate semiotic resources and combine these with other linguistic features through a process of bricolage (Hebdige, 1984). The embedding of linguistic features with other semiotic resources such as clothing and music genres, consequently become 'enregistered' (Agha, 2003; 2007) as socially recognisable personae, such as the jock or burnout style (cf. Eckert, 1989; 2000).

2.6.1   Indexicality

What permits us to interpret a given variable as typical of a given style, such as the association of negative concord with the burnout style (Eckert, 2012), is the complex semiotic relationship between the linguistic form and the social meaning. This mechanism through which inferences are made between the linguistic and its symbolic meaning has been formalised as a theory of the indexicality of language. A fundamental tenet of indexicality presupposes that a particular linguistic form (sign) carries with it a range of associated meanings (indexicals), that allow us to describe the pragmatic function of language and the relationship between language and society.

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Indexicality and its origins can be traced to Charles Pierce's Sign Theory (Atkin, 2006). Pierce's theory attempts to account for the complex relationship between the signification, representation and meaning of signs. Here, he distinguishes between *icons, indices* and *symbols*. An icon is directly connected to the signifier through the principle of *resemblance*. It is a sign which bears a direct likeness of the object in question, such as a photograph. An index is some sign which is connected to the signifier by some abstract association or casual connection (the principle of *contiguity*). Smoke is contiguous of fire, such that the process of seeing and smelling smoke can be considered an index of fire. A symbol is an object which is arbitrarily connected to the signified. The signifier is linked to the symbol only through the artificial connection of the two objects. For instance, the chosen national flag of a given country may be considered a symbol since the flag bears no intrinsic qualities which relate to the specific country in question. In this sense, Pierce's theory of signs and the concept of indices can be adopted in understanding how particular linguistic form(s) are attributed meaning in the wider social landscape, for instance how specific linguistic forms become associated with particular types of social information, such as the macro-demographic categories of age and gender.

In his influential work on 'indexical orders', Silverstein (1976, 1985, 2003) has expanded Pierce's concept of indexicality to the study of linguistic variation. In his (1976) paper, Silverstein argues that linguists have generally approached the study of meaning in terms of the referential properties ("semanticity") of a given variable and the pragmatic properties ("pure indexicality") of this feature. The former approach seeks to understand the pure referential meaning of a linguistic form. For instance, the denotation of plural or singular 'number' in English, is marked by the absence or presence of the plural affix *–s*, as in *the girls ran to school,* where the sign (*-s*) is purely referential to its meaning ('number'). Grammatical forms of the language depend on semanticity. As Silverstein notes, it is only possible to analyse a grammar of a language because of the semantic relations between structures in a sentence (1976:14). It is these referential properties of grammatical entities that allow us to categorise words into word-classes, such as 'verbs', 'nouns' etc. based on their semanticity, i.e., their relationship with other linguistic forms in a given structure.

However, importantly, not all linguistic forms hold pure referential meaning since, as Silverstein notes (1976:30), the functional properties of language are

culturally and socially specific. In other words, the meaning of a particular linguistic form cannot only be in its pure semanticity, but the linguistic feature is attributed meaning by the association of the form with the contexts in which it is used in. The question then is how to evaluate and analyse the meaning of a feature when that linguistic variable cannot be said to hold any pure referential meaning. Silverstein argues that speech events which do not have purely referential functions achieve their socially relevant ends through the designation of pragmatic meaning to a particular form. It is in context that this pragmatic meaning is elaborated and assigned to that feature. The social meaning of an utterance, then, or its "total linguistic fact" (Silverstein, 1985:220), is not only a consequence of its pure referential meaning, but in addition involves the "mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualized to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology" (1985:220). Thus, ideological constructions of the association between the use of a particular feature and the contexts and speakers who use them are central to understanding linguistic variation and change, as Silverstein (1985) convincingly demonstrates in his analysis of gender-power ideologies in influencing grammatical gender.

In later work, Silverstein (2003) has formalised the connection between linguistic forms and their indexical meaning in terms of *indexical orders.* He argues that interpretative process begins at the n-th order index, a stage which simply denotes the correlation between the use of a particular form and some social group or context of speaking. Once the form becomes salient enough within the community and value is attributed to it by a particular social group, the linguistic form may move to a higher indexical order. The n+1st order describes a period in which the form is subject to competing indexical orders, or metapragmatic meanings. It is possible that at this stage the original n-th order is reinterpreted or refocussed, such that the form may be assigned new meaning and/or social associations (Moore & Podesva, 2009:450). As a result of the possible reinterpretation of the n-th order, the n-th and the n+1st orders are in competition, such that the reification of a new n-th replaces the n+1st order.

Crucially, Silverstein has argued that the process of indexical order is mediated by an ideological schematization, in which "the different ideological positions, licensed in-and-by very different ritually-supported essentializations that

ground their indexical values" (2003:204). Based on his model, Silverstein (2003-216-220) reinterprets Labov's (1972) seminal study on New York City speech, examining his findings in terms of indexical orders. He argues that /r/ is invested in a constellation of ideological associations, where socio-economic class is perceived to be the first order, in which the "indexical value for rates of production of relatively "standard" vs. relatively "non-standard"" (2003:218). The n –th order, then, is the correlation between the socio-economic class of the participant and the use of the standard variant. The interpretation of the ideological connection between standard language and the upper-classes signals the attribution of the second order indexical (n + 1st order) - 'prestige' which is associated with the pronunciation of /r/.

Silverstein's theory of indexicality therefore allows us to conceptualise the nuanced interaction between patterns of variation and their co-variance with macro and micro levels of social structure. Similarly, since the process from the n –th to the n+1st order is not conceptualised as linear, interpreting variation in terms of indexical orders, explains how variables may simultaneously index multiple social meanings. Indeed, even once the variable has 'acquired' a socially recognisable distribution, the evaluation of the n+1st order is open to reinterpretation which allows for creativity and change. Indexical fields – the "constellation of ideologically related meanings" that are associated with a particular variable" – therefore, are not perceived to be fixed or unchangeable, but are "fluid" (Eckert, 2008:453-454), thus allowing for the (re-)interpretation of indexical relations between the sign and the social meaning based on the ideological connections made by the audience.

Nevertheless, it is clear that some indexical relations are more or less direct than others, reflected in Silverstein's (1985) distinction between semantic reference and pragmatic indexicality. In her seminal work on gender in variation, Ochs argues that "few features of language directly and exclusively index gender" (1992:340). This approach is a radical departure from first-wave analyses which viewed variables as *directly* indexing social categories.

For Ochs, however the relationship between a speech form and its meaning is, at first, arbitrary. Furthermore, she claimed that the indexical process by which the linguistic form becomes associated with its socially situated meaning, is only achieved indirectly. That is to say that, whilst grammatical forms such as the gendered pronouns, *he* or *she*, directly index gender, other linguistic forms, including patterns

of sociolinguistic variation cannot be conceptualised as a "catalogue of correlations" (Ochs, 1992:342). Rather, as Ochs argues, linguistic forms become associated with macro identities via the repetition of activities by individual members of particular socio-demographic categories.

The sedimentation of stances and activities with particular identities can be formalised by what Du Bois (2002) has referred to as a process of 'stance accretion'. Drawing on the indirect nature of sociolinguistic meaning, Du Bois refers to this process as an accumulation of stances which become indexical of social identities through habitual usage. When variation is perceived in these terms, it is therefore possible to examine the social meaning of a particular linguistic form in relation to the affective/epistemic stance(s) that the form encodes, as opposed to the macro-demographic identities that they are associated with (see Figure 2).
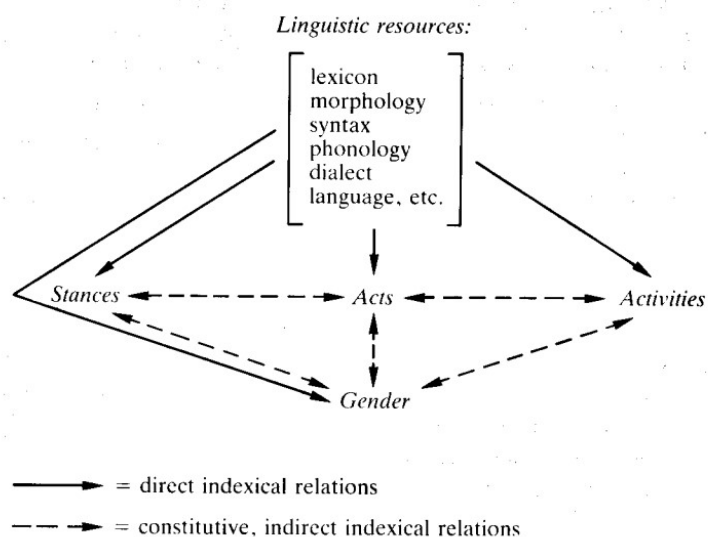
Figure 2 *The Indexical relationship between language and gender (Ochs, 1992:342)*

This account also explains the generalisations observed in earlier research. With the sedimentation of stances over time, the related linguistic forms become associated with the broader macro-sociological category of those who use a particular feature. A case in point is Ochs' examination of the Japanese address term '*wa*' (1992:341). Typically associated with instantiations of women's speech, *wa* is often perceived to be a feature of 'Japanese women's speech'. Ochs argues that there is nothing inherent about *wa* that directly indexes it as typical of women's speech, rather *wa* is often considered in terms of its phonetic properties as delicate in intensity and soft

sounding – a property which Ochs considers to be the *direct* indexicality of the form. In turn, the phonetic properties of *wa* become associated with the people who use the forms, eventually projecting evaluations such as 'delicate' and 'soft' onto women. These properties, thus, become indirectly indexical of women and 'women's speech'. However, as Ochs (1992) and Silverstein (2003) note, this process is inherently ideological. Stereotypes and social norms mediate the association of a particular linguistic form with the 'typical' association of a group. For instance, in the case of *wa*, the association of this form with women is related to a prevalent social stereotype of women as 'delicate' and 'soft'.

To reinterpret Trudgill's (1974) findings in Norwich in light of Ochs' model of indexicality, it is possible to consider the distribution of (ING) not in relation of correlations with socio-demographic factors such as social-class and gender, but rather in terms of the direct indexical qualities of the variable and the potential symbolic value for certain speakers. For instance, it is entirely conceivable that the high frequency of the non-standard [ɪn] in men's speech could be attributed to Trugill's assumption that the use of [ɪn] is associated with masculinity. Whereas Trudgill interprets the tendency for working-class male speakers to use [ɪn] as evidence of working-class social norms, reframing these patterns in terms of the third-wave approach, it is possible to suggest that the higher frequency of [ɪn] for working-class speakers is related to the potential for this feature to index masculine stances. Thus, the ideological association of working-classness and masculinity leads to members of this group to appropriate this feature based not on its potential to signal 'working-classness', but rather the in-group positive association of this feature with masculine modes of self-presentation. The continual deployment of this stance that the variable indexes becomes indirectly associated with the broader social group, i.e., working-class men.

2.6.2   Social Meaning in the Third Wave

Whilst earlier first wave accounts had conceptualised the relationship between linguistic variation and the speakers' identity as inherently predetermined and static, the shift towards more practice-based approaches emphasises that speakers exhibit a great deal of agency in determining which linguistic features, styles and identities are

deployed in interaction. Consequently, macro-sociological categories such as 'working-class' become less important to explaining patterns of linguistic variation, since identity is not in stasis. Rather, it is through the locally based networks Communities of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that the speaker makes, maintains and negotiates, that identity is continually "project[ed]" (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985:181), "deployed" (Coupland 2007:111) and "constructed" (Schilling-Estes 2004:163) through the various linguistic resources available to the speaker. Thus, the social meaning of variation can be located not within static macro-structures of social organisation (cf. Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974), but rather within the locally situated practices and common interests of speakers. Variation, then, can not only be defined in terms of a reflection of existing social space, but rather it is through language that the social identity of the individual is created based on social and linguistic potential of using particular forms (Eckert 2003; 2008; Moore, 2003; Snell, 2010).

To understand the patterns of observed variation, then, requires an appreciation of the meaningful networks that the individual holds and the social meaning of the particular variants in a given context. This approach may explain how linguistic variables acquire disparate indexical meanings across different speech contexts. For instance, Eckert (2008) discusses the release of intervocalic /t/ which has been analysed as in the speech of a number of unconnected social groups with very different social meanings. In an ethnographic study of a high school in California, Bucholtz (1996) notes that /t/ release serves to differentiate girls who identify as 'geeks' and those who do not. In this context, /t/ release appears to function to as a resource through which the girls fashion their distinctive intellectual repertoire. Similarly, Benor (2002) identifies this variable in the speech of children in the Orthodox Jewish community in California. Examining the pattern of /t/ release, Benor found that those who had been to Yeshiva released their /t/s more than those who had not, forming part of Yeshivish – an Orthodox style that is quite consciously influenced by Yiddish. Lastly, in an analysis of stylistic variation in the speech of a gay medical doctor, Podesva (2006) documents that the participant, Heath, shows a distinct pattern of t-release in relation to the persona that he deploys. Whilst at work in the medical profession, Heaths high frequency of /t/ release appears to function to present an intelligent, educated persona. Whereas, at social events such as during a barbeque, whilst the frequency of /t/ release is considerably

lower, the actual bursts are significantly longer. Interpreting these findings, Podesva argues that the differentiation of /t/ release functions to signal the different personas acted-out by Heath, such as the deployment of the 'bitchy diva' style during social events. During his work as a medical profession, however, the high frequency of /t/ release characterises Heath as 'the caring doctor'.

The myriad of functions that /t/ release served as observed by Podesva (2006), Benor (2001) and Bucholtz (1996) suggests that a given variable may simultaneously index a range of social meanings across multiple speech contexts, wherein its indexical field is based on its "iconic potential" (Eckert, 2012:97). In the case of /t/ release, it is likely that all three contexts and their meaning are related to the association of the feature with British English. As Eckert (2012) notes, this feature is no doubt related to historical American perceptions of the British as superior and intelligent. Consequently, in this context, notions of Britishness become indexical of /t/ release such that this variable may be used to evoke perceptions of 'clarity' and 'articulateness'. Thus, whilst /t/ release indexes the three contrasting identities of 'Geek' Girls, Orthodox Jews and gay males, it does so indirectly. Rather, the three groups positively utilise the indexical value of /t/ as a marker of articulate speech, deploying this variable in differing ways across the three contexts.

2.7   Repertoires and Style

2.7.1   Speech Repertoires

The theoretical shift from analysing correlations between linguistic patterns and socio-demographic features to a focus on analyses which aim to understand the social meaning of variation (Moore, 2003; Moore & Podesva, 2009; Eckert, 2012), has signalled a discursive shift from analysing pre-existing speech situations which are (re-)produced automatically by the speaker, to approaches which consider stylistic variation as a semiotic resource through which individuals actively manage and construct social identities or 'personae' (Eckert, 2003). Underpinning this movement has been a tendency to focus less on isolated, static entities of 'dialects' and the associated linguistic variants which define them, to analyses which view the organisation of linguistic variants as more "fluid" in nature (Benor, 2010:176).

Earlier approaches tended to conceptualise linguistic varieties as bound sets

of features, whereas third-wave approaches tend to view variables as constituting 'linguistic repertoires'. A repertoire approach holds that, in interaction, speakers selectively and adaptively utilise a 'pool' of linguistic resources. By deploying a given linguistic form in interaction, the individual is able to evoke the indexical associations of that particular feature. This approach draws largely on anthropological and ethnographic research which argues that the socially distinctive forms of linguistic variation constitute components of the speakers' 'verbal repertoire', defined as "the totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the course of socially significant interaction" (Gumperz, 1964:137).

In the context of ethnic variation, Benor (2010) has argued for a shift away from the traditional view of defining ethnic linguistic variation as 'languages', 'dialects' or 'ethnolects'. Instead, she proposes the term 'ethnolinguistic repertoires', defined as a pool of linguistic features from which the speaker may selectively deploy elements of in interaction. The social value of speech repertoires in allowing speakers to create, demark and reconfigure social alignments, depends on what Benor (2010) terms 'distinctive features', that is the linguistic elements of a given variety, such as the phonological, morphosyntatic and prosodic features which are recognised as distinctive of that particular variety, and are marked in usage from the language of other groups. Irvine and Gal (2000) argue that these elements combine to form socially recognisable styles, and it is the 'distinctiveness' of these elements which allow us to single out and analyse particular styles as belonging to socially recognisable identities and personae. These features are combined through a process of 'bricolage' (Hebdige, 1984; Eckert, 2003) to constitute ingroup styles. For instance, the burnout style which is marked by the use of negative concord distinguishes this group from their peers, thereby emphasising the in-group behaviour to the wider school population (Eckert, 2000).

2.7.2 Enregisterment and Characterological Figures

The association of a given linguistic feature with a distinctive repertoire assumes that the particular feature is interwoven with other variables as a component of some social identity. Agha (2003) refers to this process as 'enregisterment', describing the process through which linguistic repertoires become recognised as registers that are associated with some social identity. Enregisterment involves the creation of

indexical links between particular linguistic forms and their stereotypical association with some social personae.

A particularly salient case of enregisterment can be found in the example of Received Pronunciation (RP) in Britain, as discussed by Agha (2003). In his discussion of the register, Agha argues that the association of the register with British upper classes involved "a gradual sedimentation of habits of speech perception and production across particular social domains of persons" (2003:269). He shows that what was once a regional variety used by socially privileged speakers in South East England has since been gradually promoted as the language of the upper classes. What facilitated this 'sedimentation' is the general promotion of prescriptivist ideas and metapragmatic discussion which enregistered a set of features associated with the regional variety, thereby forming a collectively imagined 'variety'. The association of the use of the variety with the wealthy and the privileged reinscribes the social value of this variety and its indexical link to social status and correctness.

However, for Agha the relationship between a register and the social identity it indexes does not operate in some abstract sense, rather he argues that styles and registers are embodied as 'characterological figures' – embodied characters, who are stereotyped as the 'users' of a given register. In this sense, uttering a particular linguistic form not only evokes the associated ideologies linked with the use of that style, but also the imagined characters – or social personae – who are typically linked with its usage. For instance, in his discussion on RP Agha (2003:240) observes that metapragmatic commentaries not only focus on the status of the register as a language of the upper-classes, but also evoke images of the imagined typical speaker. These descriptions often allude to the personal and aesthetic characteristics of its users, such as the speakers' intelligence, ambition and good-looks – descriptors which Agha interprets as the evidence of the characterological figure that embodies the status linked register of RP.

Consequently, as in the case of RP, styles and their social meanings cannot be said to exist in a vacuum, but rather are ideologically related to imagined characterisations of 'typical' speakers. By uttering a given form, the speaker activates and personifies the particular characterological figure, performing not only the associated social meaning but also the stereotypical and indexical qualities of the character too. In this respect, the style and the associated characterological figure,

becomes available for wider consumption via the commodification of the stereotyped linguistic features of the character and can be deployed at will for social or linguistic gain (Agha, 2011).

2.7.3 Stylisation

One particularly salient context in which linguistic forms and the characterological figures they index are managed is in what Coupland refers to as 'stylisation', defined as "the knowing deployment of culturally familiar styles and identities that are marked as deviating from those predictably associated with the current speaking context" (2001:345). The term stylisation, largely associated with the literary and philosophical work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981; 1986), captures what Bakhtin refers to as the 'heteroglossia of language' or the linguistic dialogism, denoting the vicarious quality of speech. For Bakhtin, stylisation is intertextual. In a literary sense, Bakhtin argues that the novel articulates both the direct intentions of the character and the indirect intentions of the author, what he believes constitutes a form of 'double voicing'. Stylisation involves not only the deployment of particular styles and their associated meanings, but is imbued with heteroglossia – the 'voices' of Others who have spoken the utterance before. As such, in speaking, one does not simply produce an utterance devoid of all indexical meaning, but rather "he stylizes [...] the proclamatory genres of priests, prophets, preachers, judges, patriarchal fathers, and so forth" (Bakhtin 1986:132).

Applied to speech situations, a heteroglossic view of language assumes that individual repertoires consist not only of linguistic structures such as languages, dialects and styles, but also the 'polyphony' or the multiple voices of the utterance. Articulating or producing a given utterance, then, not only involves the speakers' own voice, but the hypothetical voices of Others, and the memories, associations and the characterological figure(s) with which the speaker associates with the particular utterance. As such, speech events are replete with past usages. However, similarly, by using a given sign, the speaker is able to not only call on the existing heteroglossia, but is also able to reconfigure and challenge the existing associations to add new meaning. Stylisation, therefore, is inherently reflexive; inviting the audience to evaluate and interpret the intended meanings – a process of constant (re-)interpretation.

In his research on stylistic variation in performative contexts, Coupland has explored how the (re-)interpretative process of stylisation manifests in performative contexts. Applying Bakhtin's literary theories to spoken language data, Coupland argues that speakers draw on the dialogic nature of language to rework existing cultural, political and ideological associations for new purposes (Coupland, 2007:150). Examining dialect stylisation in Welsh radio talk, Coupland (2001) suggests the deployment of what is considered 'typical' Welsh features by the presenter, John Dee (JD), acts as a semiotic resource through which JD is able to manage personae and to act out cultural signifiers. A case in point is JD's variable patterning of the monophthongization of (ou) and (ei) which Coupland argues evokes a "really Welsh" persona (2001:357). What allows JD to present himself in such a way is not only the use of the Welsh dialect feature: the monophthongization of (ou) and (ei), but also the knowledge that of this feature as a stereotype of a 'typical' Welsh persona. As Coupland concludes, JD's use of features perceived to be typical of the idealised Welsh character, evokes a certain type of 'Welsh' persona "without overtly subscribing to the norms of tradition and cultural continuity, but also without discrediting their cultural value" (2001:372).

However, the stylistic options and the characterological figures available to the individual are not purely limited to the bounds of the speakers' *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1991:12). Rather, speakers are able to stylistically appropriate features that traditionally do not form part of their habitual repertoire, deploying the imagined characterological figures by appropriating the style(s) associated with the particular personae. Research by Rampton (1995; 2006) has demonstrated that individuals often temporarily appropriate stylistic features of a given repertoire in order to utilise the symbolic value for interactional gain. Rampton has termed such instances as 'crossing' – the use of a given style associated with a particular group which the speaker does not logically or naturally belong to.

Drawing on data collected at "Ashmead", a South-Midlands secondary school, Rampton studies the use of Panjabi by those of Anglo and Afro-Caribbean decent, the use of Creole by Anglos and Punjabis and the use of stylised Asian English (SAE) by all three (1995:4). For adolescents at Ashmead, Rampton reports the use of Creole for mockery and for jocular purposes; though it is primarily Asians, as opposed to Anglos, who are considered eligible to participate in Creole crossing.

Panjabi crossing, however, was most often exhibited by Anglo speakers and was subject to pejorative evaluations by Panjabi speakers. SAE crossing, on the other hand, like Creole, was "least likely, least appropriate, or indeed most hazardous for Anglos" (Rampton, 2006:69). Generally, Asian youths described their use of SAE as a resource through which they could undermine white authority figures, deploying a 'babu' persona – a stylised identity characterised by minimal competence in English based on historical stereotypical images of the 'Asian Other'.

Rampton's seminal research on crossing emphasises the highly dynamic nature of stylistic variation, where appropriating features of a marked style can serve to create, maintain or divide social relations between speakers. As Coupland (2001; 2007) and Rampton (1995; 2006) so convincingly demonstrate is that stylisation can seek to subvert traditional ideological constructs, underscoring how speakers adapt features of styles beyond their traditional identities, by reworking them for specific interactional purposes. In the case of SAE, Rampton notes that when used with figures of authority, the use of this style and the unexpected paradoxical identity that is deployed, "promise[s] to *destabilise* the transition to comfortable interaction and the working consensus that phatic activity normally facilitates" (1995:79, original emphasis). Consequently, the audience is invited to interpret a persona which is neither the speakers' own nor the identity of the target group, but rather the "preferred or designed persona" imagined by the speaker (Coupland, 2007:150).

2.7.4   Style and Authenticity

The movement towards more practice-based approaches, exploring how linguistic variables are deployed by speakers to perform certain identities not emphasises a necessary reconsideration of style, but also forces us to reconsider the notion of 'authenticity' in sociolinguistics. If, as in the case of Rampton's (1995; 2006) research, speakers are able to 'cross' into (non-)local styles and identities of out-group members to deploy imagined personas, then questions arise as to how to categorise the speaker as an 'authentic' member of a speech community.

In early variationist research (e.g., Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974), "the authentic speaker" was a prerequisite for uncovering the focus of sociolinguistic research – 'the vernacular'. To isolate and analyse what was considered "the most systematic data" for variationist analyses (Labov, 1972:208), sociolinguists set about

examining speech in fairly homogeneous, densely populated communities who had little or no interaction beyond the immediate speech community. This methodological choice has, in part, been promoted by the pervasive idea that the most authentic speech is removed from external influences – an influence of the dialectological heritage of sociolinguistics (Bucholtz, 2003:399). Such an approach assumes authenticity to be the 'typical', 'everyday' speech of an individual, resembling the least monitored and therefore, most systematic style for analysis.

The consequence of this approach has been to define identity and voice in monolithic terms – as inherent fixed qualities of speakers (Coupland, 2001:349). Stylistic analyses such as those by Rampton (1995; 2006) displace this notion, forcing sociolinguists to reconsider the role of authenticity in constituting identity. In challenging these assumptions, we can discern an analytical shift from analysing 'authentic' speech as the "ordinary speech of ordinary people" (Labov, 1972:69) to analyses which complicate the notion of 'real' speech by analysing the deployment of style in interaction, which Bucholtz (2003) describes as the movement from 'authenticity' to 'authentication'. Whereas the former approach interprets authenticity and identity to be monolithic, 'authentication' suggests that identity is "the outcome of constantly negotiated social practices" (Bucholtz, 2003:408).

The notion of the 'authentic speaker' is further complicated when we consider the reflexive nature of stylisation. Coupland, amongst others have argued that stylisation is a form of "strategic inauthenticity" (2007:25, see also Rampton, 2006:235), in which the identities deployed by the speaker are not intended to be taken on face value, but rather imagined identities are deployed which are held up for scrutiny and comment. This process thereby "breaks the semiotic chains that are the basis of their supposed authenticity" (Coupland, 2007:182), subverting and questioning notions of 'real language'. In stylisation, there is a conscious knowing on part of the speaker and hearer that use of particular linguistic features indexes both a recognised social identity, but at the same time is realised as 'not authentic' or 'not the speakers own' – what Rampton has described as "the image of another's language" (2006:235). Authenticity, then, is consciously manipulated through the guise of stylisation as a process of "deauthentication" (Coupland, 2007:183).

Thus, in moving away from the notion of 'authenticity' to instead focussing on the processes through which identities become 'authenticated', we are forced to

reconsider the assumptions made in early variationist work which located the authentic speaker within an isolated speech community. Particularly, what about those circumstances in which the speech of the individual is not considered 'spectacular' nor can be conceptualised in terms of strategic authenticity' (cf. Rampton, 1995; 2006; Coupland, 2001)? For instance situations in which the speaker is considered inauthentic but his/her language use is rendered as authentic by peers. Sweetland (2002) has reported on one such case, the language of Delilah, a 23-year-old White female who, although biographically is defined as White, had acquired a number of distinctive African American Vernacular (AAVE) features and was accepted as an in-group member by her peers. As Sweetland notes, Delilah's acceptance as an AAVE speaker relies on her sensitivity to the norms of the community and her orientation towards cultural practices generally considered to be typically 'Black'. Thus, regardless of Delilah's physical appearance, her linguistic style appropriated from AAVE renders her as "basically black" (Sweetland, 2002:525). Thus, as Sweetland (2002) and others have demonstrated (Rampton, 1995; 2006; Coupland, 2001; 2007), by focussing on the stylistic moves of speakers, it is possible to move beyond a one-dimensional understanding of authenticity and identity, to an account of language use that considers the often fleeting identities that speakers create in and through interaction (Bucholtz, 2003:407).

2.8   Summary

In this chapter, I have sought to provide an overview of the 'Variationist paradigm', which informs the theoretical approach taken in this thesis. In particular, I have focussed on the development of the 'third wave' of sociolinguistic research which seeks to understand the social meaning of variation beyond identifying broad level correlations between a given macro-level social factor and a particular variable. From this perspective, I have discussed how concepts such as 'style' (e.g., Moore, 2003) and 'enregisterment' (Agha, 2003), become central to our understanding of examining the ways in which speakers utilise the indexical potential of linguistic features to construct personae and related characterological figures.

3 The Offline:

An Ethnography of Lakeside

3.1   Introduction

This chapter provides an ethnographic description of the field site in which data
were collected. I first introduce the concept of 'ethnography' as methodology within
variationist sociolinguistics. I then go on to situate the field site – a youth group
referred to throughout as Lakeside – within the wider socio-political context of
London and the borough in which it is located. This leads me to examine the social
distinctions that speakers at Lakeside make. Finally, I discuss the methodologies
used in obtaining the self-recording and interviews that constitute the spoken
language data in this thesis. I turn first to a discussion of ethnography as an analytical
tool for locating and understanding the social meaning of variation.

3.2   Ethnography and Sociolinguistics

The fieldwork component of this research project is a year-long (October 2016-
October 2017) ethnography of a youth group based in East London[1]. Ethnography
can be broadly defined as a methodology which requires the extensive participation
of a researcher in a community over an extended period of time (Blommaert, 2007).
In adopting an ethnographic approach, the researcher attempts to understand and
investigate the contextually meaningful practices that speakers engage in, examining

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[1] Although I state the period of fieldwork as a calendar year, I was actually involved with the
youth group for well over a year (until the end of 2018) after I had collected data. This was
entirely for personal as opposed to empirical reasons.

how "these interactions are embedded within wider social contexts and structures" (Copland and Creese, 2015:13). Since these contexts differ from one community to the next, an ethnographic approach holds that "the contexts for communication should be investigated rather than assumed" (Rampton, 2007:585). Thus, the analytical categories, labels and descriptions used to describe populations, are those that emerge during the period of sustained observation and participation. Whilst these categories may be related to macro-level factors (e.g., Social class: Snell, 2010; Ethnicity: Kirkham, 2013), the focus of ethnography is on understanding the situated relevance of these factors in the community under study, rather than assuming their influence *a priori*.

The origins of ethnography can be traced back to early anthropological research, such as the seminal work of Boas and Malinowski at the turn of the twentieth century (Rampton, 2007). Work in this tradition employed ethnographic practices, such as participant observation, fieldnotes, photography and so on, to record a range of sociocultural phenomena. This line of inquiry sought to document social practices of diverse communities, including examining the organisational principles of a society, such as their political and governance systems as well as their cultural artefacts, by exploring the artistic, musical and folklorist traditions of the society.

In the earliest ethnographic accounts, language was a central concern. Those in the so-called Boasian tradition, often provided rich taxonomies of the languages spoken by the populations they studied. However, these accounts, which Duranti (2003:324) refers to as the 'first-paradigm' of ethnographic and anthropological work, focussed mainly on language documentation. This includes the publication of a number of ethnographically informed descriptive grammars and vocabularies, as well as those accounts which theorised the relationship between language, culture and the mind (e.g., the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis).

However, it was not until the late 1950's/ early 1960's with the emergence of the unified field of 'Sociolinguistics' in the US that ethnography took centre ground in linguistics. Drawing on earlier ethnographic research in anthropology, Dell Hymes' (1962; 1964) proposed an approach termed the 'ethnography of speaking'. Setting out his vision of the field, Hymes (1964:3) maintained that the community should be considered the primary frame of reference, with the researcher

"investigating its communicative habits as a whole, so that any given use of channel and code takes its place as but part of the resources upon which the members of the community draw".

For Hymes, then, language was perceived to be just one component of a much larger semiotic system through which individuals discursively construct meaning. This is reflected in the shift from the 'ethnography of speaking' towards a more general theory of the 'ethnography of communication' (Gumperz and Hymes, 1964) wherein language is viewed as constituted within the wider context of the social and cultural practices and beliefs of the members of a particular culture.

Alongside these developments, the emergence of (quantitative) variationist sociolinguistics in the 1960's signalled the beginning of a fruitful area of research which used ethnographic methods to examine socially meaningful patterns of variation (e.g., Fischer, 1958; Labov, 1963). However, as the newly emerging field developed, in the years following, variationist sociolinguistic research in the so-called 'Labovian tradition' tended to focus less on the situated patterns of language use, instead seeking to account for the systematic patterns of sound change across populations of speakers (e.g., Wolfram, 1969; Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1974; cf. Eckert, 2003; 2011).

Whilst Hymes' and Gumperz' 'ethnography of communication' placed emphasis on examining 'emic' patterns of language use, i.e., "studying behaviour as from inside the system", work in the Labovian tradition tended to favour 'etic' accounts of language variation, i.e., from the outsiders' perspective (Pike, 1967:37). This methodological approach was largely motivated by the central aim of these accounts in producing a systematic account of patterns of sound change by examining the influence of macro-level social factors on those changes (see *inter alia* Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974; Cheshire et al., 2008). As such, whilst these accounts have demonstrated the inherent structural systematicity of language change, they have often been critiqued for privileging 'linguistic' concerns over the nuanced 'social' properties that are thought to constrain them (Williams, 1992).

Nevertheless, within the past 40 years, other analyses outside of the Labovian framework have sought to emphasise the potential of ethnographic methods in examining variable patterns. Milroy's (1980) research into social networks in Belfast, Northern Ireland and Eckert's (1989; 2000) ethnographic

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research into adolescent friendship networks in Belten High, for instance, both demonstrate the importance of examining local social distinctions in relation to patterns of language use. Similarly, and more recently, the emergence of a distinct research trajectory which places ethnography at its centre – 'Linguistic Ethnography' (LI) – signals an increasing diversity of interdisciplinary perspectives in examining contextually-specific linguistic patterns (Rampton, 2007; Copland & Creese, 2015).

However, whilst these developments signal greater cohesion between the two fields, establishing a unified field of ethnographic inspired variationist research has not been without its issues. Indeed, due to the somewhat differing epistemological positions of ethnographic and variationist perspectives, certain methodological tensions between the two disciplines have emerged. These issues relate not only to material concerns of what constitutes 'data', but also in regard to more epistemological "debates between realist and constructionist views" (Tustin & Maybin, 2007:578).

These epistemological differences can largely be attributed to the differing research agendas of the two disciplines. On the one hand, scholars working in the Labovian tradition sought to examine the inherent variability of language from a structural perspective, documenting the 'orderly heterogeneity' of language (Weinreich et al., 1968: 100). For proponents of this tradition, sound change is located "*within* social variation" (Mendoza-Denton, 2008:217 emphasis original), such that large-scale patterns of sociolinguistic variation are examined in relation to diachronic change. Indeed, these assumptions have been central to the development of 'principles' of linguistic variation (Labov, 1972) and have been influential in a number of sociolinguistic theories, such as the 'apparent time hypothesis'.

Ethnographic approaches to the study of variation, on the other hand, have sought less to understand the implications of variable patterns of language for large-scale patterns of sound change, but rather have analysed the ways in which individuals use variable forms for specific social purposes within certain contexts (e.g., Eckert, 1989; 2000; Mendoza-Denton, 2008). The focus here has been less on the 'structural' consequences of linguistic variation, but rather more on the specific ways in which features accrue social indexical meaning and the ways in which those variable patterns can be seen to be socially differentiable.

Nevertheless, contemporary research has, however, increasingly

demonstrated that a synergy of these two traditions is, indeed, possible and fruitful. Over the past few decades, a growing body of work has demonstrated the utility of a cross-fertilisation of variationist and ethnographic perspectives, particularly in locating the social meaning of variation (e.g., Eckert, 1989; 2000; Moore, 2003; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Snell, 2010; Kirkham, 2013; Drummond, 2018a; Gates, 2018). This research has demonstrated that language, and linguistic variation, is bound to and by the contextual, historical and cultural space in which it is used. In this line of inquiry, scholars have sought to understand the social meaning of variation emically, rather than identifying broad correlations with etic categories that are assumed to affect populations in similar ways (cf. Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974). As noted in earlier Chapters, this work has been fundamental in the development of the 'third-wave' of variationist sociolinguistic research (Eckert, 2012; see §2.6 for a thorough discussion).

Following my exposition of ethnography in variationist sociolinguistics, in the next few sections, I introduce an ethnographic description of the field site – Lakeside. My focus here is mostly the 'offline' context of the research. As noted in earlier sections, whilst I acknowledge the possibility that my presentation of the 'offline' and 'online' ethnographies as separate components may contradict my earlier justification of a 'blended ethnography' (Androutsopoulos, 2008), the intentional presentation to separate these components is motivated solely by a practical decision to increase the coherence of and relevance of the discussion in relation to the following analyses.

3.3   Identifying a Field Site

As this thesis explores the intersection of offline and online space, it was necessary to identify a field site that would enable the collection of both spoken and social media data from adolescents. Initially, I had intended to recruit participants and obtain data in secondary schools, following a considerable body of (ethnographic) variationist research which has been conducted in this context. As a field site, schools are particularly favourable research contexts for a number of practical and methodological reasons. With secondary education coinciding with the transition from childhood to adolescence, the school context is often one where there is an intense pressure on adolescents to develop their own social identities (Eckert, 2000).

At this time, issues concerning self-presentation and group affiliation become magnified and individuals often form peer groups based on mutual values. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that a great deal of research has been conducted in these contexts (see *inter alia* Eckert, 1989; 2000; Moore, 2003; Kirkham, 2013; Lawson, 2011; 2014; Gates, 2018).

I therefore contacted over 20 secondary schools based in the Inner London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Islington to locate a field site. These London boroughs were selected in particular as they represent some of the most culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse areas in the city (Neal, Mohan, Cochrane, & Bennett, 2016). I further limited the search to mixed-sex, secondary state schools which have been classified by the education regulatory board, OFSTED[2], as either 'good' or 'needs improvement'. These criteria were intended to serve as a proxy for the socio-demographic profile of the school, with schools matching this profile generally enrolling large numbers of students from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds. As such, this sample were intended to represent a comparable sample to those studied in the large-scale London-based projects: 'Linguistic Innovators' and 'Multicultural London English: the emergence, acquisition and diffusion of a new variety' (Fox, 2007; 2015; Cheshire et al., 2008; 2011).

To recruit schools, I sent letters to headteachers detailing the specifics of the research project and followed-up with a telephone call, usually a couple of weeks later. However, interest in participating in the project was poor and, after some promising discussions with multiple members of leadership, I was not successful in obtaining access to any schools. Amongst the reasons given, several schools felt they unable to accommodate the project due to periods of examination or staff availability, whilst others considered the project to be a strain on already stretched resources. However, the most often cited issue was concerns regarding the safeguarding of students and child protection matters. Although I had full DBS disclosure[3], many of the schools felt that the project could present potentially present

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[2] https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/
[3] A DBS check refers to the Disclosure and Barring Service certificate issued by the government which provides employers with a history of the applicants' criminal record. DBS checks are required in virtually all contexts which involve minors.

unique safeguarding issues.

Similar concerns of safeguarding have been encountered by other researchers working in UK educational settings (e.g., Drummond, p.c.) and as such, it appears that this issue is not specific to this research context. However, it is worth noting that it is possible that these issues were likely to be magnified by the incorporation of social media in the project (an issue I discuss more thoroughly in §7.2.2 and §7.2.3).

I therefore investigated the possibility of working alongside vocational youth organisations, including community youth projects and social clubs which were less constrained by curricula. As before, I restricted the search to Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets. However, this also presented its own issues. In the face of severe austerity measures, many youth organisations have had their funding dramatically cut. Consequently, a number of youth programmes have been forced to close whilst others have been forced to run a limited schedule of activities to minimise costs. Those which have been able to secure council funding tended to have more formalised procedures on collaborating with external bodies and many cited the same child protection issues as those encountered from schools. Nevertheless, after some persistence, a few youth organisations signalled their willingness to participate in the project and I was eventually able to secure a position at a youth group in Hackney, East London. I refer to this club throughout this thesis by the pseudonym 'Lakeside'.

Although I had not initially considered a youth group as a potential field site, there has been some variationist research which has been conducted in similar contexts. This includes Fox's (2007) research that examines variation in a youth group in Tower Hamlets, East London and Quist's (2008) work on the use of multiethnolect features across youth clubs in three areas of Copenhagen. Both accounts have demonstrated the suitability of the youth group as a field site. With the youth group unconstrained by curricula, the often unstructured nature of activities is often conducive to the elicitation of spoken language recordings. The young people are not compelled to participate in activities and, as I saw in my time at Lakeside, many young people often visit the youth group as a 'safe-haven' to simply hang out with their friends or watch TV. As such, the contexts that speakers find themselves in at a youth group (e.g., playing table tennis, using the computer suite) are particularly

amendable for ethnographic observation and collecting informal recordings of speakers in somewhat naturalistic environments.

3.4   The Community

3.4.1   Hackney[4]

The field site in which data were collected is a youth-group, Lakeside[5], based in Hackney – an inner-city borough with wards in East and North-East London (see Figure 3). Hackney is generally acknowledged as one of the most deprived areas of the country. Historically, the borough has been associated with high levels of gang crime and poverty. For instance, in 2002, following a spate of gun and drugs related murders in the borough, a stretch of road in Clapton (a neighbourhood in north-east Hackney) was branded "Britain's Murder Mile" by media (Mendick and Johnson, 2002). In 2004, the area served as the setting for the film 'Bullet Boy', a British drama that follows ex-convict, Ricky, and his battle to resist the subculture of gun-crime and gang warfare after leaving prison and returning to Hackney.

In 2010, owing to high levels of crime and poverty in the borough, Hackney was listed as the second most deprived area in the country on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (ID, 2010). In recent years, however, the borough transformed by council and community efforts, as well as the changing demographic of the area. Alongside these changes, there has been an overall decrease levels of crime and deprivation whilst levels of educational attainment and quality of living have increased. As a consequence, Hackney has seen an overall improvement in the levels of deprivation and, in 2015, it was ranked the eleventh most deprived authority in England overall (ID, 2015)– an increase of nine places in just five years. At the same time, property prices in the borough have increased exponentially. These changes have largely been spurred by a relentless gentrification campaign that has transformed the borough, particularly in South neighbourhoods such as those once working-class neighbourhoods of Shoreditch and Old Street. In these areas,

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[4] Statistics and other data pertaining to the demographic makeup of Hackney are drawn from the 2011 Census (ONS, 2011) and 'A Profile of Hackney, its People and Place' (Hackney Council, 2016).

[5] The name of the youth group and the names of the participants in this study are all pseudonyms

buildings which were once factories and workhouses have now been converted into luxury apartments and upmarket coffee shops, whilst social housing tenants have been forced to relocate outside of the borough. As a consequence, Hackney has experienced a great deal of population churn, with a large influx of people relocating to the borough from other neighbourhoods in London and, indeed, the rest of the UK. What was once a poor, working-class borough is today one of the most fashionable and popular places to live in London.

Nevertheless, alongside the economic growth and relentless (re-)development in the borough, Hackney is still home to many economically deprived, largely working-class neighbourhoods. These residents continue to face higher levels of deprivation than the rest of the country. Levels of crime and child poverty in the borough still far exceed the national and London-wide average and gang crime remains a topical issue. These issues are magnified in the ward where Lakeside youth group is based. Unlike the rest of the borough, this ward has largely avoided the encroaching gentrification and many residents still reside in poor quality post-war social housing estates. In 2015, the ward was classified in the top 15% most deprived wards in London (Hackney, 2016).

Figure 3 *Map of (greater) London. Hackney is in bold*

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Hackney is also one of the most diverse areas in London and is home to a significant number of migrants. Historically, the borough has seen inward migration from the 17th and 19th centuries, where large communities of French Protestant (Huguenot) refugees and Jews from Russia, Poland and Central Europe settled in the south of the borough. With the migration of individuals from these communities, came the formation of new industries, such as the silk-weaving trade which was established by the French Huguenot population in Spitalfields (Marriott, 2011).

The contemporary picture of migration in the borough can be traced back to the early 1900's. As early as the 1920's, owing to the introduction of the railways, a large population of upwardly mobile Haredi Jews settled in Stamford Hill (north Hackney) and neighbouring boroughs, relocated from dockland areas of the East End. Following the end of World War II, the borough (and London more generally) has experienced high levels of migration from the commonwealth, with the introduction of the British Nationality Act in 1948. The act conferred citizenship on members of the commonwealth, granting subjects the right to live and work in the U.K. without requiring a visa. From the 1950's high levels of migrants have relocated to the borough from Turkey, South Asia and the Caribbean in response to post-war labour shortages.

At an estimated 6% of the population of Hackney, the Turkish and Kurdish community are mainly concentrated to the Northern neighbourhoods of the borough, including Stamford Hill and Stoke Newington. This community comprises of migrants from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus who claimed citizenship in the 1940's as well as those more recent arrivals from who relocated to the borough in the 1970's and 80's as part of a more general wave of migration to Europe from mainland Turkey (Hackney, 2016).

Although the population of South Asian migrants is more concentrated in the neighbouring borough of Tower Hamlets, Hackney is still home to a substantial number of individuals from these communities. This includes those Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrants who have settled in the borough, constituting 9.8% of the population – approximately 19,700 individuals.

The borough is also home to a large and visible Vietnamese community, which is mostly concentrated to Shoreditch and, more specifically, Kingsland Road – an area which is affectionately referred to as the 'Shoreditch phở mile'. Many of these

migrants were settled in the borough after being released from refugee camps in Hong Kong following the end of the Vietnam war in 1975.

However, perhaps the most influential and visible migrant community in the borough is those hailing from the West Indies. Historically, Hackney has welcomed a diverse number of migrants from the Caribbean, with individuals from St Lucia, Antigua and Jamaica all settling in the borough. Individuals from these communities include those who served in the British Armed Forced during World War II and those who relocated to the borough following the introduction of the British Nationality Act. This includes members of the 'Windrush Generation' – those who arrived in June 1948 from the Caribbean via Tilbury, Essex on HMS Empire Windrush. More recently, in 1995, Hackney became home to a large population of refugee Monseratians who were displaced after the eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano.

Today, the borough vehemently campaigns for equality and celebrates the ethnic and racial diversity of its residents. However, this has not always been the case and migrants, particularly those of the 'Windrush generation' have not always been welcomed with open arms. Indeed, upon arrival many individuals experienced high levels of anti-migrant racism, intolerance and discrimination. When the first migrants arrived via HMS Empire Windrush, the White British community enforced a policy of segregation and disintegration, leading to ethnically homogenous communities. This policy was not specific to Hackney. Across London, Black individuals experienced higher levels of unemployment, poverty and health issues than their White peers. Racial tensions were so fraught and inequality so widespread amongst Black communities that a series of racially-motivated riots took place across the UK in the 1950's (Phillips & Phillips, 1999), including the notorious Notting Hill riots in West London in 1958. More recently, the murder of Stephen Lawrence in Plumstead, South East London in 1993 exposed several failings in the handling of the case by the Metropolitan Police Service, leading the public inquiry to conclude that the force was 'institutionally racist'.

Cast against a backdrop of racial inequality and prejudice in the UK more generally, the Black population of Hackney have experienced, and continue to experience, higher levels of poverty, crime and health issues than other migrant communities (Hackney, 2019). Recent council and community efforts have sought to

address these issues by establishing youth projects, social enterprises and mentoring schemes for marginalised young individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Today, Hackney (and the ward in which Lakeside is based) continues to be extremely culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse. The 2011 Census confirms that Hackney is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the UK. Just over a third (36%) of respondents described themselves as White British, with the remainder: Other White (16.3%), Black African (11.4%) and Black Caribbean (7.8%). The influence of the migrant populations is visibly evident: there are numerous ocakbaşi[6] restaurants, mosques inscribed with Turkish script and several Vietnamese supermarkets and restaurants across the borough. The influence of Caribbean culture is today still highly visible across Hackney: there are Caribbean fast-food restaurants, salons specialising in African-Caribbean hair and the annual Hackney Carnival which celebrates the borough's Black African and Caribbean history.

More recently, the borough has also seen high levels of inward migration from the 'A8' countries. Owing to the expansion of the European Union in 2004, a number of individuals from Eastern European and Baltic states (e.g., Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia), have settled in the borough and in London. Hackney, in particular, has seen a considerable number of migrants from Poland relocate to the borough, and this is reflected by an increasing number of specialist groceries and shops catering for this population. Hackney's (2016) census estimates this community to be at approximately 16,000 individuals strong.

Hackney is also home to Europe's largest Haredi Jewish community, representing an estimated 7.4% of the overall population of the borough. Whilst individuals from this community also reside on the estate in which Lakeside is based, due to cultural and religious traditions, they tend to remain socially insular and therefore have very little contact with the wider community. At my time at Lakeside, comments from both the youth-workers and the young people referenced an apparent tension between the two communities. For instance, in one interview with one individual – Sam – he claimed that individuals from this community would actively cross the street to avoid passing him on the pavement and that many were

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[6] A traditional Turkish restaurant that serves meats grilled on a charcoal fire

'racist'. In discussions with other youth workers, I was told similar narratives and many referenced the tension between the two communities. Since this is the only main ethnic community in Hackney not to be represented at the youth group, I do not discuss this community and their interaction with Lakeside further.

3.5   Language Variation in East London

The diversity of Hackney's residents is also reflected in the reported languages spoken there. Although the majority of respondents to the 2011 Census cited English as their main language (75.9%), 88 other languages were also listed, including Turkish (4.5%), Polish (1.7%) and Yiddish (1.3%). Hackney also has the fifth highest number of people who do not speak English in the country.

Given the extreme cultural and linguistic diversity of East London it is, perhaps, therefore unsurprising that a number of sociolinguistic research projects have been undertaken in the area (e.g., Hewitt, 1986; Fox, 2007; 2015; Cheshire et al., 2008; 2011; Pichler & Williams, 2016; Pichler, 2016; Gates, 2018). Historically, East London has seen a great deal of linguistic diversity, owing to large populations of Irish, Jewish, African and Chinese settlers who predominantly arrived in the East End via the docklands from the 1500's (Marriott, 2011). However, at this time, with these communities living in ethnically homogenous areas, it is unclear if this period of migration led to any changes in London English beyond the lexical level. In their overview of the influence of migration on London English in the Victorian age, Kerswill and Torgersen (2017) conclude that whilst the Irish community were the most visible and numerous migrant population, there is no evidence to suggest that this period of language contact had any influence on local varieties[7].

Traditionally, the East End has been home to a large White British population of working-class individuals who identified as 'cockneys'. Originally a pejorative term applied to all city-dwellers, the term 'cockney' was later restricted to those residing within the immediate vicinity of Bow Bells, before used more generally to refer to the entire East London working-class population. Along with various other customs, the identity is characterised by a distinctive speech style –

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[7] It should be acknowledged that this point seems to be based on a survey of the literature as opposed to empirical evidence

'Cockney English'. The linguistic variety spoken by many of these individuals is characterised by a number of distinctive phonological, grammatical and lexical features, and is stereotypically associated with 'cockney rhyming slang'. Although a full description of the variety is outside the scope of the current discussion, features of cockney include consonantal variation including l-vocalisation, h-dropping, and TH-fronting, as well as radically different vowel systems, particularly those relating to the diphthong system (see Wells, 1982a for an overview). Many features are persistent in the speech of cockneys today and are found in other varieties of London English.

Owing to several of the demographic changes mentioned in previous sections, however, the contemporary linguistic landscape of the East End has been transformed by multiple and extended periods of population churn. The catalyst for this shift can be traced back to the numerous social and economic changes which have transformed East London. This includes the post-war redevelopment and expansion of East London suburbs such as Elm Park, and changes in the local industrial economy, including the closure of ship-building yards in the Docklands in the 1960's (Fox, 2007). Along with the changing identity of East London, the cockney-speaking White British population largely relocated to more affluent areas in outer London and Essex (Fox, 2007; Cheshire et al., 2011) – often referred to as a period of 'White Flight'. At the same time, with increasing levels of migration, diverse communities of migrants settled in the area and many towns that were once the heartland of cockney East London were transformed into multicultural neighbourhoods. Along with these population changes came considerable levels of linguistic diversity, with many of those migrants settling in the borough acquiring English as an L2.

Along with the increasing linguistic diversity of the area, as well as the often closed ethnic networks of some migrant communities, East London has witnessed the emergence of a number of local 'contact' varieties. As one of the earliest arrived and most influential migrant communities, those hailing from the Caribbean could often be heard to speak London Jamaican English (Sebba, 1993). Other scholars have documented the use of other diasporic contact languages in the city, including the use of Creole (Hewitt, 1989) and Yiddish (Kerswill & Torgersen, 2017).

In recent years, owing to the extreme linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity

in the city, scholars have documented the emergence of new linguistic variety in the city, what Cheshire and colleagues (2008; 2011) have termed 'Multicultural London English' (henceforth MLE). Having emerged in the multicultural context of East London, the variety is defined as a multiethnolect in that it is a "repertoire of features" (Cheshire et al, 2011:154) used by "several minority groups [...] to express their minority status" (Clyne, 2000:87). Researchers documenting the emergence of MLE draw comparisons with other multiethnolects that have emerged over the past 30 years in Northern Europe, such as *Rinkebysvenska* in Sweden (Kotsinas, 1988) and *Kiezdeutsch* in Germany (Wiese, 2009). In all of these contexts, the multiethnolect variety is thought to have emerged as a result of the intense linguistic diversity of the inner-city neighbourhoods where they are assumed to have originated. These varieties are typically characterised by the combination of different heritage languages with the dominant mainstream language, as well as those features which are believed to have emerged as a consequence of the second-language acquisition of the host language (e.g., Cheshire, 2013).

In London, although many of these influences – or the 'feature pool' – of the multiethnolect can be attributed to a number of non-local varieties, including Creole and Jamaican English, MLE is typically described as an "ethnically neutral variety" (Cheshire et al., 2011:157). That is to say that MLE is spoken by speakers of both British and non-British heritage with diverse ethnic backgrounds. This finding has led some scholars to claim that MLE has largely replaced cockney as *the* working-class vernacular (Fox, 2007; Kerswill & Torgersen, 2017).

Research on MLE has documented a number of distinctive phonological, lexical and grammatical features of the variety, some of which are explored in more detail in this thesis. Features include radical diphthong shifts affecting the PRICE, MOUTH, FACE and GOAT lexical sets (Fox, 2007; Cheshire et al., 2011; Gates, 2018) as well as the emergence of a new pronoun *man* (Cheshire, 2013) and the loss of several cockney features, including h-dropping (see Cheshire et al., 2011 for an overview)[8].

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[8] The extent to which all of these features are tied exclusively to a London variety is disputable. Drummond (2018), for instance, finds several features typically defined as MLE in Manchester. Based on this observation, he proposes the term Multicultural Urban British English (MUBE) to describe an overarching multiethnolect appearing in multiple urban centres.

With the preceding sections establishing the social and linguistic context of the research project, I now turn to a discussion of the youth centre, Lakeside, which served as the field site for this thesis.

3.6   Lakeside

Lakeside is a youth group Initially founded in the 1960's. The centre provides youth services for residents living within the immediate bounds of the estate in which it is located. After making initial contact with the club manager, I commenced the year-long period of fieldwork in October 2016. I attended the youth group between 2-4 nights a week, with each session lasting two hours.

As an all-inclusive club, the youth group attracts a diverse range of individuals. In its promotional materials, the club markets itself as a 'safe haven' that attracts a 'diverse number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds'. The club is open each weekday evening for two hours, with children as young as five and as old as eighteen attending. However, most nights, the club was attended by a group of regulars. These were the younger children (self-defined as 'youngers') aged between 5-10, and an older group (self-defined as 'olders') aged between 11-18. Generally, around 30 children would attend each night.

The youth club runs a schedule of activities that is fairly flexible but with several fixtures including a football league, a table tennis tournament and several ongoing collaborations with social enterprises. Lakeside is a charitable organisation, funded privately by sponsorship and donations due to the lack of available council funding for youth services. The vast majority, if not all, of the attendees come from the immediate post-war estate in which the youth club is based. Walking to the youth group, I would encounter several of the young people hanging out around the estate and in local parks. The centre, in many ways, is a community hub for residents of the immediate housing estate. So local are the attendees that some individuals would often come to the club in their pyjamas and those attending without an I.D. badges, would be asked to return home to get it, often returning within 10-15 minutes of leaving.

Activities provided by the club are run by volunteers from the immediate community. Many of the volunteers, if not all, have grown up on the estate (or at least in Hackney). As such, they continue have strong ties to the local community,

with most still residing on the estate, or at least in the borough. Virtually of the volunteers knew the families of the young people who attended the youth group, and many have historic and hereditary ties to the centre, having attended in their youth themselves. The vast majority of the volunteers are African-Caribbean and an appreciation of this culture was evident from day one: in staff-to-staff interactions, Jamaican Creole (often referred to by those individuals as Patois/Patwah) was used as in-group code, bashment music was often played in the office and several of the volunteers took holidays to destinations in the Caribbean that they described as 'going home'. In this respect, the volunteers largely reflect members of the 'first-wave' of migration who relocated to Hackney in the 1960's – as opposed to the newer migrant populations since then.

3.7   My role at Lakeside

My role at the club was intentionally ambiguous. On one hand, I was a volunteer and on the other, a researcher. As a member of staff, I would help set-up activities, coordinate events, open-up or lock down the centre and complete various other duties to assist in the running of the youth club. I was listed on their website as a member of staff and was given the same responsibilities as any other youth-worker at the club. I attended staff events, socials and participated in activities outside of the centre to fully immerse myself in the local community.

Perhaps surprisingly, I was rarely asked by the young people why I was attending Lakeside – presumably they were used to a regular flow of visitors to the club. If asked about the project I informed them that I was interested in language use by young people in Hackney and the ways in which they use social media as part of my PhD research. However, with academia a distant prospect, many of the young people found this hard to comprehend. Like Moore (2003:39), I therefore resorted to telling them that I was writing a book on language and social media use by teenagers in Hackney.

For several months, however, I found it incredibly difficult to approach any individuals relevant to my study, primarily because of my 'outsider' status. As scholars working in similar contexts have acknowledged, young people exhibit a great deal of distrust towards adults who take an active interest in their activities (Moore, 2003; Kirkham, 2015; Drummond, 2018a). This was certainly the case in the current

study, and for some time, I was still perceived to be an outsider and there were times, often weeks, where I would attend and simply 'hang-about', unsuccessfully attempting to converse with any of the individuals. At other times, I would attempt to elicit conversation, but fail to get any kind of response. Whilst initially frustrating, I took comfort in the fact that other scholars have experienced similar issues (e.g., Eckert, 1989; 2000; Drummond, 2018a; Gates, 2018).

Eventually, after attending the group more regularly, the initial suspicion that was afforded to me receded and I started to build good relationships with the regulars. I would suggest that this has to do, in part, with my avoidance of the label of 'youth-worker'. Like Fox (2007), I consciously adopted both 'researcher' and 'volunteer' identities. This allowed me to, on occasions, selectively turn a 'blind eye' to activities other volunteers may have deemed inappropriate, such as the use of offensive language and discussions of (minor) criminal activities. I also involved myself in activities led by the club that were intended for the young people, including roller-skating and football, to further distinguish myself from the other volunteers. This worked to the extent that the young people would frequently differentiate between me and the other youth-workers and would confide in me details that they felt uncomfortable discussing with the other.

At the same time, however, there were situations where occupying the ambiguous ground between 'youth-worker' and 'researcher' highlighted tensions between these identities. For instance, when individuals were participating in activities deemed unsafe, I lacked the authority that many of the other adult volunteers had in reprimanding those individuals. And, if I were to reprimand those individuals, I was conscious that I would lose my 'in-between' status and be excluded from the ingroup discussions and behaviours that I had worked so hard to access (see Eckert, 1989; 2000; Fox, 2007; Drummond, 2018a for related discussions).

Alongside my participation in the club as a volunteer, I took detailed field notes regarding local community and social networks that I identified at the club and collected paraphernalia (e.g., leaflets, photos, minutes from meetings) that allowed me to further contextualise the social landscape of Lakeside. In this sense, as Drummond notes, the "field notes form a core part of the data themselves" (2018a:89). These ethnographic observations were also vital in informing the data collection procedure and analysis. Over the course of the year, I made notes that

documented specific linguistic variables of interest, identified the social distinctions that individuals made, and recorded aspects of the general operation of the youth group.

Field notes were also particularly valuable in developing interview schedules that concentrated on topics that I'd observed the young people engaging in. For instance, I had noted that one speaker was particularly forthcoming in telling me about gangs in the local area. Integrating this topic into interviews proved to be fruitful – most of the participants enjoyed talking about gangs and many spoke at length about gang networks in the area.

3.7.1   My positioning and Self-Reflexivity in Ethnography

Over the course of my time at Lakeside, however, I became increasingly aware of the ways in which my own social realities and privileges may impact and affect the degree to which I could integrate myself in the group whilst being able to provide an accurate description of the community under study. Although ethnography is often defined as a neutral account of the social complexities of a particular community (e.g., Kirk & Miller, 1986), in reality, ethnography is rarely objective in the true sense of the word. Hegelund (2005) views this issue as an inevitable consequence of the influence of the interpretative process involved in ethnographic research. As Tusting and Maybin observe, since ethnography involves the extended participation of the researcher, the "researcher is inevitably part of, and shapes, the research that is being produced" (2007:578). Ethnographic interpretations, conclusions and accounts are therefore highly likely to be influenced by the analysts' habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). As Irvine and Gal (2000:36) make clear, there is "[t]here is no 'view from nowhere', no gaze that is not positioned". For this reason, Bucholtz (2001:166) warns that, as a form of representation, ethnographic approaches, far from representing the empirical truth, have the potential to serve as sites in which unequal power distributions are reformulated and reproduced.

In the context of Lakeside, I became incredibly conscious that my social biases, as a White, middle-class, male academic, may bleed into my observations. In which case, far from presenting an objective account the social realities of Lakeside, I would instead provide a subjective interpretation tainted by social bias. Whilst I, like my participants, had grown-up in London and, having lived in a neighbouring

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borough preceding and during fieldwork, knew the area relatively well, I was (and still am) incredibly conscious that there remain stark differences between "I" – the researcher – and "them" – the community. I had grown-up in a middle-class suburb of South-West London and, at the time of fieldwork, lived in a gentrifying area in neighbouring borough, Tower Hamlets. My social realities both when I was a comparable age to my participants and at the time of my research, were starkly different.

In the context of my education and my experience as a teenager in a relatively diverse area of South-West London, narratives of tolerance and inclusion were prevalent, with racial and ethnic differences between individuals downplayed in favour of upholding 'equality'. This agenda, Eddo-Lodge (2017) argues, has led to an illusion of meritocracy, such that when racial issues are raised, there is an insistence that people 'don't see race'. Such claims, whilst intended to be good-natured, lead to a state of 'colour-blindness' (Bonilla-Silva, 2010) in which the significance of individuals' ethnic and racial identities is underappreciated in order to maintain a system based on upholding equality.

Whilst I am not naïve the effects of these narratives, as someone who has been educated within a system that positively supports this agenda, I am not immune to the influence of the 'colour-blindness' either. My education, my politics and my worldview are biographical facts of my person, but in the ethnographic process, they have potential to become social and interpretative biases (Hegelund, 2005; LeCompte, 1987).

Such issues are no doubt magnified given the disparity between the 'researched' and the 'researcher'. I often felt somewhat conscious of the power relations between I, the researcher as a White Middle-class academic, and the researched, a group of predominantly Black, working-class individuals. Indeed, my own ethnicity was often explicitly marked at Lakeside. As the only White youth-worker, I was invariably referred to by the other adults and the young people as 'the White guy'. As Eddo-Lodge (2017) makes explicitly clear, Whiteness affords the individual a level of unearned power. As such, I became increasingly aware that there was a possibility that my account could result in an 'exoticisation of the Other', thus reproducing existing systems of structural inequality (Bucholtz, 2001).

Such issues are magnified when issues of social-class and gentrification are

taken into account. With Lakeside based in the now-fashionable district of Hackney, the effects of gentrification were experienced by many at the club. Several of the youth workers were forced to relocate to neighbourhoods in outer-London (e.g., the North London borough of Enfield) in search for more affordable rent, whilst local shops and restaurants were transformed into upscale chains. Whilst these issues were not vocalised by the youth-workers at Lakeside, there is often a perceptible tension in the area between the new middle-class gentrifiers and local community members. Acknowledging this tension meant that I had to confront that I may have been viewed as 'part of the problem'. As someone who is both middle-class and adopts a clothing style that is often labelled as the typical gentrifying identity of the 'hipster', I became increasingly aware that this perception could influence the degree to which I was able to access the community. I therefore committed myself to minimising this perception by actually taking an interest in the club and assisting in the events outside of my research agenda to become a true member of the community.

The difficulty of separating the subjective and objective issues associated with ethnographic fieldwork has led some scholars to abandon this dichotomy altogether, with many citing the inevitable subjectivity in the ethnographic process (LeCompte, 1987; Hegelund, 2005; Tustin & Mayin, 2007). For others, the social biases that are likely to influence the ethnography can be mitigated by the analyst exercising a degree of self-reflexivity in the interpretive process. Tedlock (1991) refers to this possibility as the shift from ethnography as 'participant observation' to a more reflexive 'observation of participation'. When conceived of in these terms, the researcher is forced to consider the "political, philosophical, and poetic implications" of their work (Tedlock, 1991:79). In practice, this shift necessitates a move from "ethnographic memoir to narrative ethnography" where the analyst considers both the Other and the interaction between the Self and Other, acknowledging his or her social biases in the interpretative process (Tedlock, 1991:81). Blommaert suggests that it is self-reflexivity that allows the analyst to uncover the "dialogical character of ethnographic knowledge itself" (2007:682). As such, I believe that by remaining self-reflexive throughout the interpretative process, I have demonstrated a "commitment to the modern project of rationality, empiricism, and quest for true descriptions of the world" (Hegelund, 2005:665).

Nevertheless, the perceptible differences between 'me' and 'them' – the

community – therefore became something of a concern, particularly the extent to which I could integrate myself in the community (for a similar discussion, see Drummond, 2018a). I was, by any measure, an outsider. In order to modulate these differences, I consciously adapted my fashion style by wearing non-descript clothes and stylistically tailored my speech, adopting what could be considered more (stereotypically) masculine and more vernacular – a style that I had adopted during my secondary school education in South-West London (see also Eckert, 1989:29 for a related discussion).

At the same time, there were elements of my person that I could not stylistically adapt. As someone who openly and outwardly identifies as a cis male, I was concerned that my sex/gender could prevent me from accessing female social networks. Whilst some researchers have mitigated this issue by exclusively focussing on speakers of their own gender (e.g., Moore, 2003), due to the size of the youth-group and the number of children attending, this was not possible. In practice, however, I actually found that, due to my own social networks (who are largely female), it was actually much easier to create bonds with the female members of the group than first thought.

I also encountered similar issues barriers related to my age. Like Kirkham (2015), I had entered the field whilst I was relatively young (24/25 at the time of fieldwork). Yet even though I was somewhat younger than most of the youth workers and organisers, I was conscious that the attendees' perceptions of my age could prevent me from accessing their peer groups. Indeed, the young people's perceptions of my age was often magnified: I was frequently asked questions relating to my marriage and how many children I had – even though these are distant (but possible) prospects. Eckert (2000:71) notes the "normative and power-laden" relationships that generally characterise adult-teenager bonds and I was conscious to avoid this stereotype. At the same time, I was equally aware that I could be perceived as being inauthentic if I made this approach all too obvious.

Nevertheless, the difficulties that I experienced engaging with the young people eventually resided after some time. I attribute this breakthrough to my ongoing participation in the club, my attendance at local events and the fact that I was able to engage in discussions about mutual interests and our shared London heritage. One advantage of conducting fieldwork at a relatively young age (mid-

twenties) is the fact that I still engage with what may be considered 'youth culture': I am still invested in music scenes, I use multiple social media platforms, and I engage heavily with pop culture. I could therefore involve myself in conversations about popular topics such as J Hus' new album, viral memes and my favourite filters on Snapchat. And, like my participants, hailing from London, I demonstrated a local knowledge of the city, affording me a degree of ingroup knowledge.

Eventually after an initial period of observation (approximately 6 months) and after I had deemed that I had asserted myself within the community, I decided to conduct recordings and self-recordings with the individuals. Whilst this period of time may be considered somewhat excessive, other ethnographic accounts have noted the importance of an extended period of observation to fully immerse oneself in the field (e.g., Levon, 2010; Gates, 2018). In the current context, these issues were magnified given the insular and close-knit social networks of the young people.

In order to gauge interest in the project, I approached individuals that I had built good relationships with, advertising the interviews and self-recordings to individuals as a way to learn more about language and social media use in Hackney. This raised several questions from participants who assumed that I was interested in 'slang' which led to several metalinguistic commentaries regarding the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' language. Several of the individuals were extremely vocal about this topic and, even before interviewing, gave lengthy narratives about the effects of standard language ideology and the maintenance of this amongst educators or parents/guardians. Whilst I had initially considered this framing to be problematic, the result was that more young people wanted to be involved in the project after realising that it was, in part, a contestation of standard language ideology.

3.8   Participants

3.8.1   Overview

As I have already alluded to, many of the relationships I had developed over the year of fieldwork were essential in the participation of the young people. Although some individuals were too difficult to approach – either they were too insular or would attend only occasionally – there were members of the group who I had developed very good relationships with. This meant that I was able to approach core members

of the group and gauge whether they were interested in participating. Eventually, this had a 'snowball' effect (Milroy, 1980), with other members of the group slowly becoming more interested in the project (see also Moore, 2003). Like Lawson (2011), I did not specify any formal sampling procedure, other than that: the individual should be over 11 years of age, born in the UK and have resided in London for at least 5 years.

Whilst, in principle, it would have been much more suitable to select a stratified sample of individuals (cf. Kirkham, 2013), in reality, this was not possible due to the unstructured nature of the youth group setting. Unlike schools where attendance is compulsory, visiting a youth group is voluntary. Over the year, many of individuals did not regularly visit the centre, whilst others had moved out of the area. Attendance at the youth group was therefore highly variable. It was therefore not possible to exclude speakers based on some criteria given that the number of speakers that I could approach was already limited.

In addition to the somewhat lower number of attendees than schools, the general operation of Lakeside constrained when recordings could be made. Although activities provided by the club were largely unstructured, it was incredibly difficult to find time for interviews where, i) there was an unoccupied room in which to conduct recordings, ii) the young people were not engaged in activities and, iii) the young people wanted to participate. Convincing a teenager to participate in an hour-long interview after a school-day is a challenging task at the best of times.

Whilst the unstratified sample presented here may, in some ways, be considered a limitation of this study, most notably in constraining the types of analyses that can be performed, what it does allow me to do is provide a very accurate picture of the community, as opposed to isolating a subset of participants on theoretical or scientific grounds. As Britain has acknowledged, the exclusion of certain populations based on specific criteria, as is typical in variationist studies, is potentially problematic. By excluding certain members of the community, this reifies a category of those who are deemed the "acceptable informant" (2016:225). In this sense, the unstratified sample here is intended as an accurate representation of the youth-group and the community itself.

At the same time, the inclusion of 'children' (i.e., those younger than 16) in the project highlights some safeguarding issues, with many youth organisations

maintaining strict policies to mitigate these issues. Following advice from the University's ethics board and Lakeside's policy, I completed a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. I also attended regular Lakeside meetings where we had training to deal with particular incidents. To ensure that the youth group understood the requirements of the project, I met with the club leader in the initial stages of my research and obtained consent from him to commence fieldwork. In later stages, when individuals had signalled an interest in participating in the project, those under sixteen years of age were issued a consent form and asked return this when signed by their parent/guardian. Assent was obtained from the individual themselves. The forms, although identical in the information they contained, are obviously adapted to whether the individual was asked to give assent or consent. Both forms required the addressee to not only confirm their/their child's participation in the study but also asked to the individual to respond to a series of 'opt-in' statements regarding the data collection procedure.

In total, 27 individuals participated in at least one aspect of the data collection (self-recordings, interviews, Snapchat). All 27 participants self-recorded (of which 25 are analysed here) and 18 participated in interviews (of which 16 are discussed here). I discuss the rates of participation in further detail in later sections. Table 1 gives an indication of the broad demographic characteristics of the speakers. In reporting this data, I am intentionally providing a level of abstraction typically reported in analyses of Language Variation and Change (LVC). I discuss the participants in more detail in the following sections. Note, ethnicity is reported in terms of the speakers' heritage, as all individuals are either British born or have resided in the UK for most of their lives.

In many ways, although unintentional, the sample is largely representative of the demographic of the local population. By far, the Caribbean and African speakers – generally described in census materials as 'Black British' – constitute the largest ethnic group of individuals at the youth group. This is reflective of not only the well-established Caribbean and African community in Hackney, but also the ethnicities of those who volunteered at the club. Perhaps, surprisingly, White British speakers are underrepresented. Only two males: Max, and Michael, and four females: Christina, Nicole and Laura, Talisha, are White British. Whilst this is unlikely to be

representative of the area as a whole, this *is* a representative sample of the ethnic characteristics of the youth club and the immediate neighbourhood.

Table 1 *Macro-Level Social Categorisation of Speakers*

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Age
Christina	Female	White British: English	16
Charmaine	Female	Black British: Caribbean	12
Beth	Female	Black British: Caribbean	16
Nicole	Female	White British: English	17
Kyra	Female	Black British: African	11
Charice	Female	Black British: Caribbean	14
Danni	Female	Mixed: Middle-Eastern & Caribbean	15
Laura	Female	White British: English	13
Talisha	Female	White British: European & English	13
Rochelle	Female	Black British: African	14
Max	Male	White British: English	12
Feliks	Male	White British: Polish	16
Bartek	Male	White British: Polish	12
Marcus	Male	Black British: Caribbean	14
Sam	Male	Black British: Caribbean	15
Ben	Male	Black British: African	14
Josiah	Male	Black British: Caribbean	12
Alex	Male	Black British: Caribbean	14
Harinder	Male	Black British: Caribbean	12
Daniel	Male	Black British: Caribbean	14
Henry	Male	White British: Middle-Eastern	14
Jack	Male	Black British: African	14
Michael	Male	White British: English	15
Adeep	Male	British Asian: South Asian	13
Chris	Male	White British: Middle-Eastern	12

3.9   Social Distinctions at Lakeside

A benefit of employing ethnographic methods in examining sociolinguistic variation, is that the analyst can move beyond identifying macro-level categorisations of speakers typical of the first-wave (Eckert, 2003; 2011), to analyses which explore the social distinctions relevant to the specific speech context in question (e.g., Moore, 2003; Drummond, 2018a cf. Table 1). As noted in §3.2, these distinctions are not to be assumed *a priori*, but *emerge* during the extended period of ethnographic participation and observation (Rampton, 2007).

Whilst this may suggest that macro categories are irrelevant in studying variation, the analytical categories used in third-wave work are often contingent on their indirect association with some macro-level demographic. For instance, Snell (2010) shows how children in North-East England use a dialect feature, possessive *me*, as part of a stylised performance of stances associated with a working-class identity. Whilst they are not performing a 'class-based identity' directly, they deploy stances that have become associated with working-class discursive styles.

In the following discussion, I introduce the social distinctions that I identified at Lakeside, relating these to the broad notions of age, gender and social class before establishing how these intersect to form the local manifestation of an a more local identity: The gully.

3.9.1   Age

Although events organised by the youth group were largely accessible to all individuals regardless of age, the discussions and activities that the young people chose to participate in were largely centred around distinctions of age. However, this distinction was not based on chronological age as such. Rather, in interviews and self-recordings, individuals would distinguish between what they referred to as 'youngers' and 'olders'. This terminology is borrowed via gang culture, in which the gang is conceptualised as 'fam' (family). In this unit, the labels of 'younger' and 'older' are assigned to an individual based on their ranking within the group (Storrod &

Densley, 2017), as opposed to chronological age[9].

By and large, 'younger' correlated with individuals aged up until about 12 years of age. However, there were some individuals who, although they met this criterion, oriented towards the 'older' group. For instance, Charmaine who was 12 years old, still attended primary school and in many ways seemed considerably younger than the rest of the group. Her mother volunteered at the youth group and would pick her up from the club, unlike the olders who walked home alone. However, her orientation towards the older group was clear: She would often hang out with them, make conscious efforts to participate in group activities and would actively engage in conversations about Snapchat, makeup, and boys, which the older group of girls participated in. Kyra, on the other hand, at 11 years old – just 1 year younger than Charmaine – actively oriented towards the younger children and mainly participated in activities oriented towards the younger children, e.g., arts and crafts. Thus, whilst the distinction between younger and older bears some relation to chronological age, orientation, responsibilities and behaviour were equally important factors in delimiting these boundaries.

The influence of responsibilities and behaviours to this category was evident not only in my observations but also in the discussions of the young people. For instance, in extract (1) I have just presented a flashcard with the word 'younger' on it to Daniel. Whilst he initially relates the younger/older distinction to chronological age (line 2), Daniel goes on to give a much more nuanced definition of what it means to be a younger, defining this label in terms of expectations and responsibilities.

(1)

1	Christian	younger?
2	Daniel	people that's younger than you
3	Bartek	like me
4	Christian	oh okay, fair enough
5	Daniel	n--n-- you can't jus-- you can't just say that

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[9] I would suggest that this terminology is not specific to this field site and that 'younger' and 'older' has been appropriated more widely amongst young people to differentiate between individuals. The relevance of its etymology in gang culture should therefore not be overstated.

6		he's my younger cos at certain points I'l--I'll
7		look up-- I'll like look out for him innit no
8		one can actually mess with him cos his
9		brother will come (.) people like (.) people
10		like Jamal like some random person I
11		don't know their (( )) you'll be like "ah he's
12		a younger"
13	Christian	yeah yeah
14	Daniel	or you'll say he's my younger you'll be like
15		he's just a younger kid over there, like a
16		minor

In line 2, Daniel asserts that the designation of someone as a 'younger' is primarily based on their chronological age. This is supported by his use the terms 'kid' and 'minor' (lines 15-16). This is corroborated by Bartek's description that he, himself, is a 'younger' at 12 years old. But, when I go onto question Daniel, he then revises his definition, instead relating this identity to the expectations and roles associated with this identity. In lines 6-8, he states that he would 'look out for him' and that 'no-one can mess with him'. In doing so, he draws on an ideology of the 'family' organisation, where the olders offer protection of the youngers in return for running petty errands. This is emphasised by his use of the possessive first-person pronoun 'my' throughout, symbolising some type of ownership over the younger individual.

As Daniel's narrative shows, whilst younger and older bear some dependence on chronological age, the relationship between these two factors is indirect, with roles and responsibilities also largely informing who is designated a 'younger' or an 'older'.

3.9.2   Sex & Gender

As a mixed-sex environment, Lakeside ran a schedule of activities that were open to all sexes. However, boys and girls mainly participated in stereotypically 'gendered' activities. Consequently, boys and girls would generally occupy different areas of the club. Typically, boys would play football, whilst the girls would participate in arts and crafts or singing and dancing. With football run on four of the five days of the week,

the gym became an exclusively male area. The girls, on the other hand, largely occupied a back room, where they had space and equipment to participate in dance lessons. The fact that the activities that the young people participated in were segregated along gender lines is perhaps unsurprising given that a wealth of research in similar contexts has documented that adolescents typically form same-sex peer groups (Moore, 2003; Fox, 2007; Lawson, 2011; Gates, 2018).

However, when activities were not being run, most of the olders (boys and girls) would congregate in one of the two back rooms or the 'ITC suite', where they would hang out. Over time, with most of the olders becoming less interested in the organised activities that were run by the club, the youth group would simply serve as a base where young people would attend to hang out with their friends.

Nevertheless, gendered distinctions and issues still manifested in ways that were less direct. Even in the mutual ground context of the ICT suite or the backroom, boys would adopt more stereotypically masculine modes of self-presentation (cf. Kiesling, 1998; 2005; Lawson, 2011). Boys were generally louder, more brash and occupied the conversational floor more than girls. Gendered ideologies were also rife. For instance, in a conversation with one individual, Danni, she told me that she aspired to be an electrician. But when I suggested that she start an apprenticeship at college, she admitted that she didn't want people to think that she did "a boy's job". These gendered ideologies were also enforced by many of the youth-workers. On several occasions, I witnessed boys who were told to "be a man" with any behaviour perceived to contravene these gendered expectations (e.g., crying), actively criticised.

3.9.3   Ethnicity

Research in similar environments has tended to show that ethnic identities tend to influence the formation of distinct adolescent peer groups (e.g. Hewitt, 1989; Fox, 2007; Kirkham, 2013; Gates, 2018). Overwhelmingly, adolescent peer tend to exhibit a degree of ethnic homophily (Leszczensky & Pink, 2015). For instance, Gates' (2018) sociolinguistic ethnography of a secondary school in Newham revealed that certain peer groups were not only distinguished based on their similar interests and orientation towards school, but also in relation to their similar ethnic identities. So prevalent were these social distinctions that the self-defined labels that the young

people applied to their peer groups directly referenced the dominant ethnic identity of the group. For instance, those who identified as the predominantly White British friendship group self-identified as 'the White Squad'.

At my time at Lakeside, however, I could not discern any ethnic homophily in the formation of peer groups. It is possible that the lack of ethnic stratification in terms of friendship groups is related to the social context of the field site. With the youth-workers and club well-known to the parents of the young people, the centre would often be considered a community hub and many of the residents on the estate would host parties and local events at the club. The club manager also was frequently called upon to deal with issues that affected the young people beyond the operation of the youth group. Owing to the central role of the centre in the local community, many of the young people who attended the youth club viewed themselves as a collective and would often refer to the club as the 'Lakeside family'. It is perhaps therefore unsurprising that the young peoples' peer groups were not distinguished by similarities in their ethnic identities.

Whilst this was the case for most of the individuals at Lakeside, there was one participant who appeared to interact with a more restricted peer group than the rest of the young people: Max. With three generations of his family residing in the area, Max was the only speaker in my sample who represents a member of the traditional East-End White British cockney population. When attending the club, his friendship group largely comprised other White British individuals who had similar heritage but were much younger than him (and who did not participate in the study). One possible interpretation of Max's networks is that his selection of networks is influenced by a degree of ethnic homophily (Leszczensky & Pink, 2015). Unlike the rest of the group, Max was considerably detached from the youth group 'family'. Indeed, when he attended, he would often isolate himself in the computer room and would play online games.

In stating the lack of direct ethnic differentiation of peer groups, however, I do not mean to suggest that ethnicity is irrelevant to examining the social distinctions at Lakeside. As I have discussed previously, the influence of the dominant Caribbean heritage of the young people and the youth workers was evident from the very beginning of my research. However, as I will explore in further in 3.9.5,

ethnicity is influential in that is enacted indirectly through the local identity category of the gully.

3.9.4   Social-Class

The estate in which Lakeside is located is, based on both the Index of Deprivation (ID, 2015) and the borough profile (Hackney, 2016), representative of a working-class inner-city community. As discussed previously, the ward in which the youth group is based has largely avoided the council's regeneration efforts. As a consequence, many of the residents still reside in social housing and experience higher levels of deprivation than others in the borough, and indeed in the rest of London (Hackney, 2016).

However, whilst these socio-economic facts are relevant to the context of Lakeside, these issues are primarily associated with the situation of the parents, as opposed to the young people themselves. Overstating the relevance of their parents' socio-economic class is potentially problematic since this does not take into account speaker agency in developing peer group identities. This issue is acknowledged in Eckert's discussion of the jocks and burnouts at Belten High, where she demonstrates that, of the seven variables that she investigates, only one – negative concord – showed a significant correlation with social class, with those working-class speakers using higher frequencies of the non-standard than their middle-class peers (Eckert, 2000). Even then, social group (i.e., burnout vs. jock) was a stronger predictor of the variation than the category of 'social-class'. As such, Eckert concludes that "[p]arents' socio-economic class is related to, but does not determine, category affiliation" (1988:183).

Nevertheless, by rejecting a structuralist approach to social class, Eckert's approach, and indeed other CofP studies (e.g., Moore, 2003; Gates, 2018), do not negate the importance of class altogether. Rather, the influence of social class is captured through analyses which examine the classed social (and linguistic) practices that speakers participate in in their everyday lives.

At the same time, the linguistic and social practices afforded to individuals be may be constrained the structural effects of class in the types of *opportunities* that individuals have access to. For instance, in Snell's (2010) ethnography of two primary schools in Teeside, North-East England, whether the children attended Murrayfield

school in the lower-middle class area of town or Ironstone in a lower-working class neighbourhood was likely to be dependent on their parents' socio-economic class, with the children attending schools in the local area. The extent to which the child can adopt stylistic preferences that are indirectly related to class is therefore not only mediated by the individuals' agency but also the structural effects of class in affording that individual the *opportunity* to acquire those in the first place.

In this sense, whilst parents' socio-economic status may not be a determinant of the types of peer-groups *formed* by an individual, the structural effects of social class are still important insofar that they constrain the types of communities of practice that the individual has *access* to. As Block (2014) has argued, the individuals' social class is important insomuch that it is a constraining factor on their access to certain social dimensions including the types of social networks that speakers maintain as well as their social and physical mobility. In the context of the field site, as I have discussed in earlier sections, Lakeside is located in the centre of a social housing estate, attracting individuals from the immediate community. Their friendship networks are therefore constrained to the neighbourhood in which Lakeside is based. And whilst Hackney has seen an influx of middle-class residents in recent years owing to regeneration and inward migration, these individuals were unlikely to reside within the bounds of Lakeside and so did not attend the youth club. As such, the group represents a fairly homogenous working-class community.

In that my field site can be characterised as representative of a working-class community, the structural effects of social class could be seen to constrain the individuals' access to both stylistic and social opportunities. For instance, in interviews, I would provide the interviewee with a map of the local area and ask them to identify areas that they visited regularly. In all cases, the young people would cite neighbourhoods that were often only a few miles away from their homes, all accessible by public transport. This observation potentially signals the individuals' restricted mobility and the influence of this on their social works, in that they were only able to form friendships with those in the immediate vicinity of the youth group.

Similarly, in terms of aesthetic style, as technically 'minors', the young people's fashion styles, self-presentation and orientation towards the latest 'trends' is constrained by the money afforded to them by their parents. Whether the individual had access to the recent fashion trends of designer clothing is directly correlated with

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the parents' socio-economic status. Thus, whilst they may have been able to orient towards certain subcultures or social groups, it is likely that this stylistic assemblage was constrained by family income.

Nevertheless, in making these arguments, I do not mean to suggest that a practice based approach does not take into consideration the structural effects of social class. Rather, what this approach allows us to do, however, is to consider social class as a more nuanced and complex social construct than has been typically discussed in first-wave research (cf. Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1974). Consequently, 'social class' is perceived to be not one heterogenous category, but rather this approach allows for the possibility of *multiple* class-based identities (e.g., Eckert, 1989; 2000; Moore, 2003; Lawson, 2013; Gates, 2018). It is with this in mind, that I now turn to one such working-class identity that I identified at Lakeside – the gully.

3.9.5   Subculture Orientation

Thus far, I have examined the social factors that distinguish the individuals at Lakeside in isolation. However, as third-wave sociolinguistic research has demonstrated, these social variables often intersect in the formation of local identities and styles (e.g., Eckert, 1989; 2000; Lawson, 2011; Gates, 2018). This is the case at Lakeside, where the most prominent social distinction was membership of an 'urban' oriented group: The gully. As an exclusively all-male group that comprised largely of olders, members of this group would actively refer to each other as 'gully' – with this term borrowed from Jamaican Creole referring to the 'streets' or, more strongly, 'a ghetto or slum' (Jamaican Patwah, N.D.). However, whilst the etymology of this term suggests some association between this identity and ethnicity, this group was comprised of both Black and White individuals, with and without Caribbean heritage. Thus, it is clear that whilst ethnicity is important in the formation of the gully, its influence on the formation of this identity appears to be only indirect.

In practice, the gully maintained an ingroup orientation that was generally characterised by an 'anti-establishment' stance. Some (but not all) participated in low-level crime, including what was referred to as 'deetzing' – a type of fraud involving obtaining personal details without the account holders' knowledge/consent. For others, they indexed this 'anti-establishment' orientation in more superficial ways, such as refusing to participate in the organised activities run by the club. Instead, they

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would often spend club time simply 'hanging-out' in the backrooms of the club, where they'd interact with one another and some older girls who were associated with them. Many engaged with hip-hop, grime, dancehall and other 'urban' music genres and would often spend a great deal of their time watching YouTube videos and engaging with urban culture via social media. Their fashion style was largely influenced by the latest trends in sportswear fashion and many would wear expensive designer brands and tracksuits. The group were, by any definition, the epitome of a Community of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992).

It should be noted here that whilst the 'gully' label and the practices associated with this group maybe specific to the community, as I will go on to argue in Chapter 8, this local CofP is dependent on a macro-level identity that is not unique to Lakeside. Indeed, during my secondary schooling years, which coincided with the emergence of grime music in the early 2000's, I witnessed the emergence and subsequent development of a distinct Black British identity (see also Baron, 2013; Boakye, 2017; 2019; Ilan, 2015) that is related to the practices identified at Lakeside. In the current context of Lakeside, this subcultural orientation and identity is indexed through the gully.

In interviews and self-recordings, gully membership was often the main social distinction that speakers made. They would refer to each other using the eponymous address term 'gully' and would refer to the Lakeside estate as the 'gully side'. And whilst these identities were observed within the confines of the youth-group, they clearly extend beyond this context, as is evident in extract (2), where Ben, Jack and Harinder discuss the gully identity:

(2)

1	Christian	so you got many friends on the estate that go to
2		your school?
3	Ben	yeah, the gully side, yeah
4	Jack	yeah
5	Christian	what they all know i– as the gully side?
6	Ben	yeah, all gully
7	Jack	yeah
8	Christian	what so everyone in here would know

9	Jack	no, not everyone, some
10	Ben	yeah some, yeah Feliks, Feliks and them they know
11		that (( )) gully's
12	Harinder	yeah (( ))
13	Christian	is it like g- is it gang then?
14	Ben	huh?
15	Christian	is it a gang?
16	Ben	erm no, it's not a gang
17	Harinder	you could call it that but you can call it a gang but
18		we don't do what other gangs do
19	Jack	it's not a gang, but yeah
20	Ben	we don't, you could call it that, but the stuff that we
21		do compared to other people

Referring to the estate as 'gully-side' (line 3), in this extract, Ben, Jack, and Harinder define the gully as a group that 'not everyone' is part of (line 9). In the following lines, the three boys distinguish themselves from a 'traditional gang'. In later sections of the interview, they emphasise that the difference is that they only participate in what could be considered low-level crime. Here, it is important to acknowledge that the three boys emphatically state that the gully are *not* a gang, at least in the sense of a unit of individuals who participate in organised crime (cf. Storrod & Densley, 2017). As Harinder notes, the gully "don't do what other gangs do" (line 18), but rather they are organised as a collective of individuals who hang out together. And for these boys, this identification clearly extends beyond the youth group. This is evident in the current extract but was also observed in discussions with other individuals who would use this label to refer to individuals who did not attend the club.

Here, it is worth mentioning why use the self-defined term 'gully' as opposed to assigning this group a pseudonym. I maintain the use of this term because I believe it to be incredibly relevant to examining the sociolinguistic identity of the gully. The relevance of this term is both in terms of its etymology in Jamaican Creole and its semantics which expresses the gully's orientation towards the 'street' or, more accurately, the 'Road' (see, for example, Bakkali, 2018). As other analyses have

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shown, the self-labels that groups attribute to themselves are important insofar that they reveal the salient social qualities that characterise those social identities (e.g, Eckert, 1989; 2000; Moore, 2003; Lawson, 2013; Kirkham, 2015; Gates, 2018). For instance, in Eckert's study of Belten High, the group who label themselves 'jocks' do so in relation to their physical prowess and the symbolic status of athletic achievement within this group. For this group, these achievements are central to their ingroup identity. In the context of the current discussion, for members, the term gully quite clearly refers to some symbolic orientation towards Black cultural practices and norms. Thus, to interrogate this orientation further, I maintain the ingroup term 'gully'.

Self-identification is also preferential because of the politics involved in describing certain populations of speakers. So far, I have alluded to this group as orienting towards aspects of 'urban' culture. However, whilst the term 'urban' and the related 'street' are widespread in discussions of youth styles and practices (e.g., Ilan, 2015; Madsen, 2013; Drummond, 2018a, b), these terms are rarely defined, and sociolinguistic accounts seldom acknowledge that these are potentially problematic terms. In the sociological literature, critics have argued that these labels are implicitly racialised insofar that they are often used as "code language for 'black people live here'" (Eddo-Lodge, 2017:195), whilst others have used these terms more generally to refer to the characteristics of inner-city living (e.g., Neal et al., 2015).

Issues with the terms 'street' and 'urban' are also seen in the extent to which they are embraced by individuals as descriptors of particular subcultures. For instance, popular entertainment channel, GRM daily, that promotes grime artists advertises itself as "the home of UK urban entertainment", whilst BBC Radio 1Xtra, an offshoot of BBC Radio 1 that plays, amongst other music genres, hip-hop, grime, and dancehall, describes itself as an "urban music radio station".

Acknowledging the potential issues with these terms, I follow other scholars in specifying my descriptions of 'street' and 'urban'. I avoid referring to the gully as 'street', because I cannot claim it to be used by this community (cf. Ilan, 2015). I maintain the use of the term 'urban' but with warning. I am aware of the potentially problematic connotations of this term but, as an ingroup descriptor used by the gully, I maintain this label as an accurate description of a particular type of orientation and

experience of the world. Following other scholars, I define 'urban youth' as those working-class young people (of all ethnicities) who reside in inner-city neighbourhoods. I define 'urban culture' as an orientation towards a non-mainstream (even underground) subculture that seeks to represent the lived experiences of those inner-city communities (Gunter, 2008; Ilan, 2012; 2015; Neal et al., 2015; Reid, 2017; Bakkali, 2018). When approached in these terms, 'urban culture' includes an orientation towards the 'Road' (Bakkali, 2018) but also music styles such as grime music and drill, since these genres are intrinsically "musical expressions of urban environments and urban lived experiences" (Barron, 2013:532).

Nevertheless, one caveat must be acknowledged in my discussion of the gully. Unlike other CofP approaches which categorise speakers into groups through self-identification (e.g., Gates, 2018), speakers were categorised into the 'gully' based on my ethnographic observations of the group. Whilst self-identification would have been preferable, it was not possible to do this in the current analysis. As discussed in earlier sections, gully members often exhibited an anti-establishment orientation, and some participated in low-level crime. Consequently, the gully was shrouded in a degree of mystery with speakers refusing to 'give too much away' by telling me the 'secrets' of the group. For instance, in an interview with Ben, I explicitly asked him to identify the members of the gully, to which he replied, "we're gully, we can't mention other gully's names". When I pushed him further on why this was, Ben simply stated "cos gully".

For the reasons stated here, then, the categorisation of a speaker as 'gully' was determined based on my own interpretations and observations. This was informed by the speakers' social networks, discussions of gully members (as in the case of Ben in the examples above) and the activities that the individuals discussed participating in. So, whilst I cannot be certain that my own classifications would mirror those self-identified by the ingroup, I am satisfied that the process of categorising speakers is principled, based on the extensive ethnographic observation of these individuals.

3.9.6 The Social Organisation of Lakeside

Table 2 *Micro-Level Social Categorisation of Speakers*

Pseudonym	Gully	Younger-Older	Sex
Christina	Non-Member	Older	Female
Charmaine	Non-Member	Older	Female
Beth	Non-Member	Older	Female
Nicole	Non-Member	Older	Female
Kyra	Non-Member	Younger	Female
Charice	Non-Member	Older	Female
Danni	Non-Member	Older	Female
Laura	Non-Member	Older	Female
Talisha	Non-Member	Older	Female
Rochelle	Non-Member	Older	Female
Max	Non-Member	Younger	Male
Michael	Non-Member	Older	Male
Feliks	Core	Older	Male
Marcus	Core	Older	Male
Sam	Core	Older	Male
Ben	Core	Older	Male
Daniel	Core	Older	Male
Henry	Core	Older	Male
Jack	Core	Older	Male
Adeep	Core	Older	Male
Alex	Core/Peripheral	Older	Male
Harinder	Core/Peripheral	Mid	Male
Josiah	Peripheral	Mid	Male
Bartek	Peripheral	Mid	Male
Chris	Peripheral	Mid	Male

In outlining the local organisation of Lakeside, I have exercised a degree of
abstraction in discussing the social factors that characterise this community. In reality,
however, these distinctions are much more fluid than suggested by this account, with

individuals' association with a particular social category (e.g., gully/younger) representing a point on a continuum rather some absolute categorisation. Thus, following Moore (2003:63), I would suggest that the descriptions of these individuals should not be read as a typology of fixed social categories, but rather as an attempt to explain the general "organising principles" (Eckert 1989:20) of Lakeside. These principles are summarised in Table 2.

What this table shows is that the overriding social grouping of the gully, is an intersectional identity, with membership determined by both whether the individual was an older and male. However, membership of the gully is not just defined by physical and ideological attributes, but being gully required the individual to actively orient towards the norms, values and cultural model of this identity. For example, Michael, who is an older male, although matches the description of the gully in many ways, actively oriented away from this group. He rarely spent time with the gully and preferred to play basketball when the others would hang out in the backroom for some time. He also explicitly distinguished himself from the contentious practices of the group, referring to these as immature.

Since I develop the gully identity over the course of the thesis, I do not discuss this identity further but rather, introduce the methodology used in obtaining the spoken data.

3.10   Collection of Spoken Data

3.10.1 Self-recordings

Self-recordings were conducted using the H2next Zoom with an external Audio-Technica ATR3350 omnidirectional lavalier microphone. Recordings were sampled at 44.1 kHz and stored in WAV format. These devices were selected as they are both lightweight and relatively robust, permitting speakers to conduct self-recordings in various environments[10]. After obtaining consent from parents and assent from the individual, the speaker was given a H2next recorder and a lavalier microphone was attached to their lapel. During the recordings, I was not present apart from my usual

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[10] The recorders also permit fine-grained analysis as they meet the requirements set out in Schilling (2013). This is to enable future research as the current analysis does not require acoustic analyses.

youth-worker duties and the speaker was free to continue in their normal activities. The self-recordings were restricted to the bounds of the youth-club and captured speech from when the speaker was participating in activities run by the club, such as when using the computer suite, playing table tennis or relaxing with friends in the lounge area. As such, the speech samples are highly comparable: They are with similar interlocutors (i.e., rarely with adults); the topic of interaction, whilst variable, remains mainly social; and the activities that the speaker participated in were comparable.

Self-recordings are beneficial for a number of reasons. Other studies have shown self-recordings to be useful in mitigating the effects of Observer's Paradox (Labov, 1972), whilst facilitating the collection of naturalistic conservational speech (Rampton, 1995; Snell, 2010; Drummond, 2018a). Whilst individuals sometimes made explicit reference to the recorders, they did so only fleetingly and several participants discuss issues and topics which suggest that the speaker was not influenced by the effect of the recorder (e.g., illicit activities). As a result, I believe that the self-recordings offer an insight into the individuals' everyday vernacular speech style.

Nevertheless, whilst self-recordings have a number of advantages over interviews, there are several limitations of using this methodology. Firstly, speakers were often recorded in environments that are not conducive to providing high quality recordings. For an acoustic analysis, this would be catastrophic, but even for the current analysis, at times, the quality of the recording was so poor that even auditory discrimination and transcription was not possible. Participants would often play music videos on YouTube in the computer suite or play football in the main gym whilst self-recording and, in both examples, the less than favourable acoustics of the hall and any background noise rendered the file as virtually unusable. Similarly, whilst some individuals wore the recorders for several hours, they did not interact with many peers during this time (e.g., in the case of using the computer). As such, extended periods of silence were common. Lengthy sound files therefore did not necessarily equate to long stretches of interaction. To account for these files, I disregarded or clipped these recordings, so that extreme periods of silence are not reported as a total of the recorded data. Nevertheless, even given these issues, I

would argue that poor quality of some of the recordings is necessary trade-off for the naturalistic, informal speech that they captured (see also Drummond, 2018a).

Table 3 *Self-recordings with I.D. and file information*

Self-recordings			
Recording I.D.	Speaker	Number of SR's	Total length
1	Christina	2	01:30:00
2	Charmaine	1	01:17:55
3	Beth	2	01:31:01
4	Nicole	1	00:55:30
5	Nessa	1	01:26:19
6	Charice	1	01:03:19
7	Danni	1	00:59:22
8	Laura	2	01:28:19
9	Talisha	1	00:25:13
10	Rochelle	1	00:47:21
11	Max	1	00:57:40
12	Feliks	1	01:14:58
13	Bartek	2	02:19:12
14	Marcus	1	01:48:40
15	Sam	2	01:59:26
16	Ben	2	01:37:08
17	Josiah	3	01:53:01
18	Alex	2	00:39:26
19	Harinder	2	01:47:43
20	Daniel	3	02:16:02
21	Henry	2	01:18:35
22	Jack	2	01:53:15
23	Michael	2	01:43:44
24	Adeep	1	01:12:00
25	Chris	1	01.11.27
Totals:		40	34:05:09

To recruit participants, I approached those individuals that I had built good relationships with in the six months before recording individuals. Initially, however, I experienced some resistance from the young people who refused to participate in the project. One particularly strong concern was that I was 'bugging' them. Many participants perceived the recorders and microphones as evidence that I was an undercover police officer. This concern was no doubt intensified by my interest in gangs and crime. Nevertheless, after explaining that I was not interested in *what* they spoke about as such, but rather *how* they spoke, the young people were much more forthcoming in participating. I have no doubt that my involvement in the club beyond the traditional 'data collection period' was essential in the shift in this perception of my research intentions.

Once the individual was issued with one of two H2next recorders and a lapel microphone, they were then instructed to continue in their activities as normal. Individuals were recorded for a maximum of the two-hour session over any given evening. For some individuals, I collected multiple recordings (see Table 3) to account for shorter files or technical issues. Self-recordings commenced in March 2017 with the last files recorded in October of that year.

In total, 27 speakers participated in the self-recordings. However, after compiling the corpus, I removed data from two speakers as one speaker was much younger than the rest of the individuals (9 y.o) and data from another speaker, although lengthy, contained virtually no speech. After removing these speakers, 25 individuals remained, resulting in just over 34 hours of self-recordings.

Self-recordings were transcribed in ELAN (Sloetjes & Wittenburg, 2008) using orthographic transcription conventions roughly based on the FAVE guidelines[11] and were segmented into speaker turns. As is typical in transcription processes, non-standard phonetic/phonological forms were transcribed as the standard target (e.g., *think* [fɪŋk] → <think>), whereas non-standard grammatical forms were preserved (e.g., *she were here* → <she were here>).

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[11] Conventions can be found on page 16

3.10.2 Interviews

In addition to the self-recordings, a subset of individuals participated in semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews, conducted individually or in small groups of up to three individuals. These were intended to be informal discussions with the young people, rather than typical sociolinguistic interviews (cf. Schilling, 2013).

Interviews were conducted alongside self-recordings from March-October 2017. The sound files range from just 30 minutes in length to an hour. They were recorded using a Zoom H4nsp with two omnidirectional lavalier AT803b microphones. As with self-recordings, the interviews were sampled at 44.1 kHz and stored in WAV format. Owing to the lack of free space at the youth group, interviews were conducted in a room at the back of the youth club or in the IT suite. Due to the informal nature of the interviews, other members would enter the room during the recordings and sit in on the interview or join in. In allowing for other individuals to enter and participate, I aimed to reduce the perceived level of formality participating in a task that many of the individuals emphasised as being 'strange' or feeling as if they were being interviewed by the police. Since sections of the recordings included group discussions with speakers other than those participating in the interview task, I analyse only the data from the consenting participants. Whilst I had initially perceived this interference to effect the flow of the conversation, in fact, the contribution of other individuals actually minimised the formality of the situation for the interviewee and, in fact, was conducive to an informal conversation (as opposed to an 'interview'-style speech) that I had planned to elicit (for a similar argument, see Fox 2007).

The interview schedule was designed to cover a diverse range of topics. Questions focused on local life on the estate, changes in the local area, their knowledge of crime in the local area, and their use and perceptions of social media. This interview schedule was designed to not only get a sense of the local area and their connection with it, but also to understand the individual and their positioning towards phenomena that typically perceived to be characteristic of 'urban' and 'youth' subcultures. This included: grime music, memes, social media and technology. The interviews facilitated a wide range of conversations, from narratives of holidays to descriptions of local gangs and their territories.

In addition to the semi-structured interview, and like Drummond (2018a), I also presented the participants with flashcards of words (commonly described as 'slang' by both the youth workers and the individuals) that I had noted in my field notes. These were intended as a way elicit definitions from speakers and to generate conversations regarding the perceived sociolinguistic distribution of those words and their meanings. These conversations were fruitful in eliciting metalinguistic commentaries of lexemes. Individuals would often comment that "I wouldn't use it, but my friends would", "I've used it when speaking to a teacher and got a detention" or "I can't tell you the meaning of it cos it's rude". Such descriptions helped to contextualise the enregistered patterns of variation as perceived by the community at Lakeside.

The interview was concluded with a map task, in which the participant was issued a map of North and East London, labelled with local place names and well-known areas of interest. The speaker was then asked to identify areas visited frequently. When the individual mentioned a locale, I asked probing questions to elicit perceptions of the area. This included what they did there, how often they went there, if they liked the area, and their perceptions of the type of people who live in the area. This exercise was intended to elicit a trajectory of the speakers' movements and to understand more about how the speakers interact with others from areas that may be culturally and linguistically distinct from the estate in which they reside.

Whilst some of the individuals enthusiastically contributed to the interviews, several of the others, particularly the boys, were less interested in participating. Several of the young people responded to the questions with little interest, whilst others found the interview setup to be unnatural. A small minority of the participants also took the opportunity of the interview to 'perform' an identity, that was vastly different from what I had observed outside of this setting. However, after addressing these issues, eventually I was able to record some good quality interviews and conversations with the young people and along with the self-recordings and ethnographic data, the interviews provide essential insights to the sociolinguistic context of Lakeside.

In total, I recorded a total of 18 individuals in interviews: 6 girls, 12 boys. Data from one interview including two (female) speakers (involving Kyra) was removed as self-recorded data from this individual was excluded. The final corpus

comprises data from sixteen individuals (4 girls, 12 boys), resulting in just under 7 hours of interviews (see Table 4 for an overview of the interview data). All sixteen individuals completed at least one self-recording. Due to modest corpus of interview recordings, the analysis of linguistic features in the following chapters focusses on data drawn from the self-recordings. Where appropriate, analyses are supplemented with interview data, but this is stated in text.

Table 4 *Interview recordings with I.D. and group information*[12]

Interviews		
Recording I.D.	Group	Length
1	Christina & Felix (Bartek)	00:43:52
2	Charice & Dani	00:57:04
3	Josiah & Marcus	00:56:46
4	Jack & Ben (Harinder)	00:32:30
5	Michael & Marcus	00:41:19
6	Max	00:52:15
7	Sam & Talisha	00:41:30
8	Henry & Harinder	00:44:45
9	Bartek & Daniel	00:42:55
Totals:	-	06:52:56

Individuals who did not participate in interviews: Adeep, Chris, Alex, Rochelle, Laura, Nicole, Beth, Natalie, Kyra*

3.11   Summary

This chapter has detailed the 'offline' ethnographic component of this thesis. I first introduced the socio-historical and political context of the wider area in which the fieldwork is conducted, the East London borough of Hackney, before situating the youth group, Lakeside, within this context. In taking a CofP approach, I discussed the relevance of macro and micro social factors in constraining and influencing the individuals' social networks at Lakeside. Finally, I provided the methodology used in

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[12] Speakers in brackets are those who were not initially involved in the interview but entered midway through the task and contributed to the discussion. Kyra is the speaker that was removed from the self-recording and interview datasets.

obtaining the spoken language data that is analysed in the following three chapters. In what follows, I provide analyses of three linguistic features that represent three levels of the linguistic system. First, at the level of phonology, I examine TH/DH-fronting/stopping. Second, at the grammatical level, I analyse the pronominal use of *man* [P]. Finally, at the discourse-pragmatic level, I analyse the use of an attention signal *ey*.

4 TH/DH- Fronting & Stopping

4.1   Introduction

This chapter examines phonological variation in the variable realisation of the interdental fricatives in the speech of the young people at Lakeside. I first provide an overview of the existing literature on the English voiceless and voiced interdental fricatives, /θ/ and /ð/, focussing specifically on the variable realisation of these forms – commonly referred to as TH/DH-fronting and TH/DH stopping. I then turn to an analysis of the variable realisation of these forms in the data. The first section of the chapter focusses on the variable realisation of the voiceless interdental fricative, /θ/, whilst the latter sections examine variation in the voiced interdental fricative, /ð/. In each section, I provide the methodology used to examine the variation in the realisation of these forms, before using distributional, statistical and interactional analyses to uncover the social meaning of the variation.

4.2   The Interdental Fricatives in English

The voiceless and voiced interdental fricatives /θ, ð/, orthographically represented as <th>, are found in words such as *mouth* [maʊθ] and *this* [ðɪs]. Although relatively frequent in English, the interdental fricatives are generally rare across language inventories (Wells, 1982a) and they generally acquired late by children (Tollfree, 1999).

Historically, in Old English, [ð] was restricted to word-medial position occurring between voiced sounds, whereas [θ] could occur in any word position (Dubois & Horvath, 1998). Owing to Greek and Old French borrowings, however, the distribution of [ð] was eventually extended to initial and final positions.

Nevertheless, in present day English, [ð] in word initial position is restricted to a small class of closed function words including *then, the, this, those* and *that*.

Variation in the realisation of the interdental fricatives is common in many varieties of English, both nationally and globally. In the UK, variation has been documented in areas such as London (Tollfree, 1999; Cheshire et al., 2008; Gates, 2018), Manchester (Drummond, 2018a, b), Hastings (Holmes-Elliott, 2015), Milton-Keynes, Hull, Reading (Kerswill, 2003), Derby (Milroy, 2003), Edinburgh (Schleef & Ramsammy, 2013), and Glasgow (Stuart-Smith & Timmins, 2006; Stuart-Smith, Timmins & Tweedie, 2007; Lawson, 2014). Since the interdental fricatives are rare across language inventories, variation in the realisation of /θ, ð/ is also common in those acquiring English as an L2 (Tollfree, 1999).

Typical non-standard pronunciations of the interdental fricatives include replacement with the stops [t, d] or the substitution with the labiodental fricatives [f, v]. In some varieties of English, such as those spoken in Scotland (e.g., Stuart-Smith & Timmins, 2006; Stuart-Smith et al., 2007; Lawson 2014; Schleef & Ramsammy, 2013), /θ/ may additionally undergo a process of debuccalisation, realised as [h]. However, [h] is rarely reported in varieties outside Scotland and therefore will not be discussed further (although cf. Drummond, 2018b:180 for low rates of [h] in Manchester adolescent speech).

Table 5 *A typology of TH/DH-Fronting and TH/DH-stopping*

Label	Process	Example
TH-fronting	/θ/ → [f]	*thing* [fɪŋ]
DH-fronting	/ð/ → [v]	*other* [ˈʌvə]
TH-stopping	/θ/ → [t]	*thing* [tɪŋ]
DH-stopping	/ð/ → [d]	*other* [ˈʌdə]

In the subsequent discussion of the interdental fricatives, I follow other researchers in adopting the terminology of 'fronting' and 'stopping', with TH-fronting referring specifically to /θ/ → [f], DH-fronting as /ð/ → [v], TH-stopping as /θ/ → [t], and DH-stopping as /ð/ → [d](see Table 5)[13]. At times, I refer to the more general

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[13] TH-fronting and TH-stopping are sometimes used to define the more general variability in both the voiced and voiceless interdental fricatives (e.g., Wells, 1982). To avoid any potential confusion, I reserve TH-/DH- fronting/stopping as separate terms to describe the specific processes outlined in Table 5.

processes of 'fronting' and 'stopping' to refer to the phonetic characteristics of the more 'front' variants, [f] and [v], and the 'stops' [t] and [d].

4.3   Fronting of the Interdental Fricatives

TH-fronting refers to the substitution of the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ with the voiceless labiodental fricative [f], as in [fɪŋ] for [θɪŋ] *thing*. DH-fronting, on the other hand, refers to the use of the voiced labiodental fricative [v] in place of the voiced interdental fricative /ð/, as in [əˈnʌvə] for [əˈnʌðə] *another*. The positional constraints on the fronting of the interdental fricatives in English are robust. Unlike [f] which can be substituted for /θ/ in any word position, [v] is restricted to word medial and final contexts, such that /ðat/ cannot become *[vat] (Milroy, 2003:212; see Table 6).

Table 6 *Positional constraints on fronting*

Position	TH-fronting	DH-fronting
Initial	*thing* [fɪŋ]	*that* *[vat]
Medial	*Birthday* [ˈbəːfdeɪ]	*other* [ˈʌvə]
Final	*youth* [juːf]	*smooth* [smuːv]

TH/DH-stopping is a common feature of many varieties of English, both those spoken within the UK, e.g., cockney (Wells, 1982a), and beyond, e.g., African American Vernacular English (Thomas, 2007). However, overwhelmingly, the sociolinguistic literature has tended to focus on rates of TH-fronting. This is in part due to the prevalence of word initial /θ/ and higher frequencies of TH-fronting overall, in comparison to /ð/.

In the UK, a great deal of research has sought to examine the diffusion of TH-fronting in relation to dialect levelling (e.g., Kerswill, 2003; Holmes-Elliot, 2015). Although the feature is prevalent in London where it is thought to have originated (Milroy, 2003:210), recent work examining a diverse range of varieties has shown that TH-fronting is rapidly spreading across urban accents of British English. The feature has been documented as far as Manchester in the north (Drummond, 2018a, b), Hastings in the south (Holmes-Elliot, 2015), as well as further afield in several Scottish varieties, including those spoken in Edinburgh (Schleef and Ramsammy, 2013) and Glasgow (Stuart-Smith & Timmins, 2006; Lawson, 2014).

4.3.1   The Social Meaning of TH/DH-Fronting

Although the variable realisation of [f,v] for /θ, ð/ appears in numerous varieties of English, the fronted variants are generally considered non-standard features of vernacular speech. Fronting is typically associated with working-class and adolescent speakers, particularly young men (Stuart-Smith and Timmins 2006; Ramsammy & Schleef, 2013), and in media, TH/DH-fronting is often discussed as a marker of adolescent speech, where it is characterised as a feature of so-called 'yoof culture' (Foulkes and Docherty, 2000:39–40).

To some degree, the association of TH/DH-fronting with adolescent speakers has been shown to correspond to some distributional reality. Kerswill (2003), for instance, finds rates of TH/DH-fronting of up to 90% in the speech of working-class boys in Hull in data collected between 1995-98. Similarly, Cheshire and colleagues (2008) find comparatively high rates of TH-fronting in the speech of working-class adolescents in their MLE dataset, with some speakers using [f] for /θ/ 89.7% of the time.

In London, where the feature is assumed to have diffused from cockney, TH/DH-fronting is still largely associated with this community of speakers. More often, however, the feature is perceived to be part of an enregistered speech style that is associated with the city. Indeed, it is common to see TH/DH fronting orthographically represented in merchandise sold in tourist shops, such as those t-shirts and mugs that are emblazoned with the slogans 'Norf' and 'Sarf' (North and South) London – areas typically not associated with large cockney populations. Thus, whilst the feature may still maintain some of its cockney 'flavour', it seems that TH/DH-fronting has become associated more generally with the city as a whole as part of an imagined 'London variety', comparable to the commodification of other enregistered varieties (cf. e.g., Pittsburghese; Johnstone, 2009).

Beyond a superficial appreciation of the feature in merchandise sold in the city, TH-DH-fronting remains heavily stigmatised. Indeed, when the fronted variants occur in the speech of children acquiring the labiodental fricatives, parents and caregivers will often correct that pronunciation for the standard realisation (Tollfree, 1999:172). Likewise, in media, anecdotal claims of an increase in TH/DH-fronting in the speech of adolescents is regularly cited as evidence to support claims of a

more general decline in Standard English. In fact, the moral panic surrounding the diffusion of TH/DH-fronting beyond London has led some social commentators to predict the eventual demise of the 'th-sound' altogether (Knapton, 2016).

Nevertheless, in London at least, TH-fronting appears to be relatively robust, with researchers reporting high rates of fronting in a number of varieties (e.g., MLE: Cheshire et al., 2008). The prevalence of TH-fronting in the city has led some researchers to suggest that the feature may have become a standard feature of London adolescent speech.

Support for this claim comes from Schleef and Ramsammy's (2013) comparative analysis of the feature in adolescent speech in London and in Edinburgh. In that analysis, the authors observe that in the speech of the Londoners, the only significant factor to affect the rate of fronting is morphological complexity, with morphologically 'complex' words (e.g. *thinks, anything, fourth*) more likely to be fronted than morphologically 'simple' words (e.g. *think, south*). In the speech of teenagers in Edinburgh, however, they find that TH-fronting is constrained by the prosodic position of /θ/ and the surrounding phonotactic context. Interpreting these patterns, Schleef and Ramsammy attribute these differences to the relative emergence of the feature in the dialects spoken in the two cities. Whilst in Edinburgh the feature has only recently emerged, in London where it is more established it appears that "TH-fronting may already be on its way to becoming morphologised in the speech of young adolescents" (2013:46).

In addition to these linguistic constraints, the authors also observe a lack of stylistic differentiation of the feature. Specifically, in London – but not in Edinburgh – TH-fronting does not appear to exhibit the inhibitory effects of the formality of speech context as one would expect. Notably, they observe that the fronted variant to be more common in formal read-speech than in informal casual conversation of adolescent speakers. In casual speech, speakers used [f] for /θ/ 53.7% of the time, while in a more formal reading task, speakers used fronted variants 54.2% of the time. Interpreting the lack of stylistic differentiation (at least in Labov's definition of style as 'attention paid to speech') of the feature, Schleef and Ramsammy suggest that these adolescents have become "unaware" of their use of fronted variants, with speakers unable to "monitor" their use of [f] as they are other non-standard features (2013:34).

Whilst this hypothesis seems plausible, at least based on Schleef and Ramsammy's arguments, it is also possible that the higher rate of TH-fronting in tasks considered more 'formal' may actually be attributed to context in which the data was collected. In fact, those tasks which supposedly require more executive control may actually be prime opportunities for speakers to do more conscious identity work, with the higher rate of vernacular features in these tasks indicative of this increased awareness. For instance, in their research on variation in Glaswegian English, Stuart-Smith and colleagues (2007) observe that working-class adolescents exhibit higher levels of non-standard variants of /θ/ in the 'formal' task of the word list than in casual conversation. Interpreting this pattern, the researchers suggest that heightened formality of the wordlist may have encouraged the speakers to 'perform' an identity, with the higher rates of non-standard forms attributed to cases "of conscious speech styling" (2007:247).

Whilst this may be the case in dialects where the feature has recently emerged and may operate above the level of consciousness, it remains debatable as to whether this hypothesis can explain patterns of TH-fronting in London. Indeed, there is some experimental research which seems to support Schleef & Ramsammy's interpretation that the feature operates below the level of consciousness. For instance, in their experimental analysis of the feature, Levon and Fox (2014) examine northern and southern UK listeners' perceptions of the relationship between TH-fronting and levels of professionalism. They show that the only significant effect on the rate of [f] and perceived levels of professionalism is region, with northern respondents perceiving higher degrees of fronting as less professional than those in the south. For southern respondents, on the other hand, the authors report a virtual absence of any effect on TH-fronting and perceived levels of professionalism. Interpreting these results, Levon and Fox argue that TH-fronting appears to operate below the level of consciousness for the southern listeners. For northern listeners, however, they may be "more attuned to the occurrence of [f] since the form is in a sense coded as being part of a highly codified "out-group" language" (2014:207). It is therefore possible to interpret these findings as support for Schleef and Ramsammy's (2013) suggestion that TH-fronting exists as a habitual feature of several London adolescent speech styles, operating below the level of consciousness.

Further support to suggest that TH-fronting has become relatively standard in the speech of London adolescents is found in Cheshire and colleague's (2008) analysis of the feature in MLE. In that analysis, they find only ethnicity to be a significant factor on the rate of TH-fronting, with Anglo speakers – i.e., those with White British heritage – exhibiting more fronting than the non-Anglos (p<0.05, 89.7% vs. 84.1%) Overall, however, the researchers note a more general lack of social constraints on the feature, conceding that "there are small and insignificant differences between the groups of young speakers" (2008:16).

However, whilst macro-level analyses have failed to find meaningful patterns of TH-fronting, it is possible that ethnographic and practice-based approaches may be able to uncover more local social meanings attributed to this feature. In other speech contexts, researchers have found the distribution of TH-fronting to correspond with individuals' membership of a particular CofP. A case in point is Lawson's (2013) ethnography of Banister Academy in Glasgow, where he demonstrates that rates of TH-fronting directly corresponds with the speakers' CofP membership. In this community, it is the 'Neds' – speakers who belong to a social group who actively reject an orientation towards the school – who use the fronted variant more frequently than their peers. Interpreting this pattern, Lawson suggests that by using a feature that has become indexical of working-class attributes, members of the Ned CofP rework the indexical potential of [f] – namely the notion of 'toughness' – to present themselves as 'anti-establishment', thereby establishing the unique Ned identity.

Similarly, in analysis of the variable from 54 speakers who participated in the West Fife High Pipe Band (WFHPB), Clark (2008) shows that the rate of TH-fronting can be predicted by the speakers' membership of a particular CofP within the band. In this context, it is the 'tiny wee pipers' and 'the new folk' members who use the fronted variant the most – groups composed of the youngest members of the WFHPB. Like Lawson (2014), Clark interprets the higher rate of TH-fronting amongst speakers of these CofP's as evidence that they are drawing on the association of the feature with 'working-class adolescents' to index their youthfulness and/or roughness.

More recently, and in the context of London, Gates (2018) finds TH-fronting to be partially constrained by the speakers' friendship networks more so

than ethnicity (cf. Cheshire et al., 2008). In this context, it is the 'White Squad' – friendship networks composed of exclusively White British boys and girls – who exhibit near-categorical levels of fronting. For other friendship groups such as the 'Nerd Girls' – an ethnically diverse group of females – TH-fronting is less pervasive, with rates of [f] account for less than 10% of /θ/ tokens. Following Lawson (2013), this leads Gates to consider [f] in relation to the peer groups' anti-/pro- school orientation, suggesting a similar indexical field related to 'toughness'. However, whilst this explanation accounts for the patterns of TH-fronting observed in the pro-school group the 'Nerd Girls', it is unclear if the same explanation can be directly applied to other groups, such as the 'Main Squad' who adopt an anti-school orientation, but yet exhibit some of the lowest rates of TH-fronting. Given that Gates claims that the Main Squad aspired to be "*the* trend-setters" (2018:80, emphasis original), it is questionable as to whether the 'tough' or 'anti-establishment' stances indexed by TH-fronting identified in other CofPs also apply in London.

4.4   Stopping of the Interdental Fricatives

An alternative realisation of the interdental fricatives is the fortition of the voiceless /θ/ and voiced /ð/ interdental fricatives to the voiceless and voiced plosives, [t] and [d]. Note here that whilst these plosives may be realised as alveolar, they may also be dental [t̪, d̪]. In the following discussion (and analysis), however, my concern is not the difference between the alveolar and dental allophones, but rather the featural differences between the major phonemic categories from [θ, ð] as [+continuant] to [t, d] as [-continuant]. In making this distinction, the term TH-stopping refers here to the substitution of the voiceless /θ/ with [t], such as [tɪŋ] for [θɪŋ] *thing* whereas DH-stopping refers to the substitution of the voiced interdental fricative /ð/ with [d], as in [dɪs] for standard [ðɪs] *this*.

Unlike TH-fronting which is subject to positional constraints on the variable realisation (e.g., [v] see Table 5), the stops [t,d] can (theoretically) be substituted for their standard counterpart in any word position. For instance, word initially: [dɪs] 'this', [tɪŋ] 'thing'; word medially: [əˈnʌdə] 'another', [bəːtdeɪ] 'birthday'; and word finally: [wɪd] 'with', [juːt] 'youth'.

In terms of its distribution, however, stopping of the interdental fricatives is

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generally less common than the fronted variants, occurring much less in regional varieties of British English (Wells, 1982a). Unlike fronting, TH/DH-stopping does not appear to be diffusing across varieties of British English[14]. In varieties beyond the British Isles, however, stopping is much more prevalent, with the feature recorded in several non-local varieties of English, such as those spoken in Ireland, the West Indies and New York (Labov, 1966; Wells, 1982b; Newlin-Łukowicz, 2013). In Irish English, stopping is near-categorical, such that the pronunciation of 'three' as [tɹiː] and 'this' as [dɪs] are standard realisations of these forms (Hickey, 2007).

Generally, however, [d] for /ð/, i.e., DH-stopping, is much more prevalent cross-linguistically than TH-stopping, with the feature typically found in the Englishes spoken in Liverpool (Watson 2007), London (Cheshire et al., 2008) and New York (Newlin-Łukowicz, 2013). In London, like TH/DH-fronting, DH-stopping is generally considered stereotypical of cockney. Recent research on the distribution of the feature in MLE has shown this association to still hold true. Cheshire and colleagues (2008) find that it is Anglo speakers who maintain homogenous Anglo social networks – those who are likely have cockney parents – who use word initial [d] in place of /ð/ the most of out their peers.

TH-stopping, on the other hand, is apparently much less widespread, appearing more commonly in varieties that originate from overseas, such as the Caribbean: West Indian English (Wells 1982) and British Creoles (Sebba, 1993); as well as Irish English (Hickey, 2007). Owing to the somewhat limited distribution of this feature, research on the distribution of TH-stopping in 'indigenous' varieties of English English, is limited. Indeed, when the feature is discussed in other sociolinguistic accounts of the interdental fricatives, it is often only mentioned in passing, presumably due to the low occurrence of this feature (London: Cheshire et al. 2008; Manchester: Baranowski & Turton 2015).

Nevertheless, recent research on urban multiethnolects, seems to suggest that TH-stopping may be making inroads in British English. For instance, in his research on the multiethnolect spoken in Manchester, Drummond (2018a, b) observes the feature to be relatively pervasive in the speech of adolescents in the city.

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[14] However, if we are to take Drummond's (2018a) claims of a more general Multicultural Urban British English (MUBE) seriously, then it is possible that TH-stopping *is* diffusing, albeit in much more restricted ways than TH-fronting.

Given the claimed similarities between the multiethnolect spoken in London and that spoken in Manchester (Drummond, 2018a) it is likely that this feature would be also found in other urban vernaculars. Indeed, anecdotal observations seem to confirm this. The feature is often represented orthographically across social media platforms and, as noted by Drummond (2018a, b), it is prevalent in 'urban' culture, including music lyrics produced by grime artists. For example, in the song 'man's not hot' – a parodic grime song by Michael Dapaah's ironic character 'Big Shaq' – 'thing' is frequently stopped, hence the iconic line: "the ting goes skrrrahh, pap, pap, ka-ka-ka".

Notwithstanding Drummond's (2018a, b) analyses, TH-stopping remains poorly understood in relation to its status in multiethnolectal adolescent speech. In London, Gates (2018) notes a virtual absence of [t] with the feature occurring at very low rates in the speech of a minority of the Black (African and British) and Arab females. Similarly, in their analysis of MLE, Cheshire et al., (2008) note the idiosyncratic use of [tʰ] in the lexeme *thief* by four speakers with West-Indian, Indian, and Ghanaian backgrounds. Following Hewitt's earlier observations of the feature in Creole spoken in the city (1986:130), Cheshire and colleagues suggest that the appearance of [tʰiːf] could be a case of lexical borrowing from West Indian varieties. However, given the lack of any in-depth discussion of the feature, it remains unclear whether the authors assume all uses of [t] for /θ/ to be evidence of borrowing, or whether these may be evidence of diffusion more generally.

In a more comprehensive analysis of the feature in the speech of Manchester adolescents, Drummond (2018a, b) finds further evidence to suggest that the feature is lexically constrained. He notes that TH-stopping is largely restricted to the words: thing (n=23), thief (n=5; everything (n=2); three (n=2); birthday (n=1); teeth (n=1); anything (n=1) (2018b:185). Such patterns seem to suggest that TH-stopping is not diffusing per se, but rather, suggests that words with initial [t] have become lexicalised. Although this possibility is alluded to in Drummond's analyses, he does not explore this hypothesis nor the mechanisms behind the lexical specification of [t] further. Thus, whilst Drummond's analysis provides evidence for the emergence of TH-stopping in multiethnolectal speech styles, it remains unclear as to why [t] has become lexicalised.

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4.4.1   The Social Meaning of TH/DH-Stopping

In the literature, TH/DH-stopping has principally been discussed as an ethnic marker. Indeed, stopping is frequently found in numerous ethnolectal varieties, including AAVE (Thomas, 2007), Cajun English (Dubois & Horvath, 1999) and the English acquired by Polish immigrants in New-York (Newlin-Łukowicz, 2013). In the context of London, the picture of DH-stopping is somewhat more complex. Historically, DH-stopping has typically been associated with White working-class cockney speakers. At the same time, owing to London's extensive history of inwards migration, the feature is also found in other varieties of English spoken in the city, including Jamaican London English (Hewitt, 1986; Sebba, 1993) and, more recently, in the English spoken by individuals who migrated from the Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland).

The complex social conditioning of this feature is analysed by Cheshire and colleagues (2008) who note that ethnicity is a significant factor in constraining rates of DH-stopping. Their findings suggest that this feature is more common amongst non-Anglo than Anglo speakers: 67.2% vs. 42.0%. However, when the social networks of the individuals are considered, it is the Anglo speakers with Anglo networks and those with African-Caribbean heritage who exhibit the highest rates of DH-stopping. These somewhat contradictory findings therefore seem to suggest that there are multiple indexical social meanings of [d] in London, related to two disparate ethnic communities. On the one hand, for the Anglo speakers who maintain homogenous Anglo networks, their use of [d] may be related to the homogenous White working-class networks that they maintain. On the other, for those speakers with African-Caribbean heritage, it is possible that is [d] is being used as an ethnic marker, most likely through association of DH-stopping in Creole and in the English varieties spoken in the Caribbean.

Whilst there is a considerable amount of research that demonstrates that the feature is most typically associated with ethnicity, other research has shown TH/DH-stopping can, too, acquire second-order indexicality beyond ethnic differentiation. In the case of Cajun English speakers in Louisiana, for instance, Dubois & Horvath (1998) show that TH/DH stopping has acquired separate indexical potentials for the older and younger generation of speakers. Whilst the high rates of TH/DH-stopping

in the older generation can be attributed to the L1 'interference' of French, they argue that the same explanation cannot account for rate of stopping the speech of the younger generation who had acquired English as their L1. Rather, Dubois and Horvath argue that the younger speakers in this community appear to use TH/DH-stopping strategically, as part of a performance of an 'authentic Cajun identity'. In a community which relies on the proceeds of the local tourist industry, stopping is one linguistic resource that speakers draw on to deploy this identity and deliver an 'authentic Cajun experience'.

More closely related to this current analysis is the possibility that the rate of TH-stopping could be associated with the individual's participation in particular urban music cultures. In his analysis of [t] in the multiethnolect spoken in Manchester, Drummond (2018) demonstrates that the rate of TH-stopping is accounted for by the speakers' participation in social practices associated with grime music, and to a lesser extent dancehall and hip-hop. Drummond argues that, although TH-stopping has principally been associated with ethnic differentiation, in this context it is not being used as an ethnic marker, but rather, as a stylistic variable. Specifically, by using [t], the speaker can index their belonging and identification with social groups based on their appreciation of particular urban music cultures, such as grime and dancehall. In certain environments, the speaker may use [t] to assume a 'tough' stance, made possible by the association of the feature with a grime lifestyle. Its relationship to ethnicity, Drummond argues, is a tangential one. He argues that the feature is indirectly related to ethnicity through the genealogy of the music styles with which it is associated such as dancehall and grime music, which emerged in Black communities. Such an explanation seems to account for the stereotypical use of 'ting' in the parodic grime song 'Man's Not Hot' by the character 'Big Shaq', as discussed in §4.4.

4.5   Research Agenda

A survey of the literature suggests that whilst there is considerable amount of research on the variation in the interdental fricatives, particularly in the geographical context of the study, the status of TH-/DH- fronting and stopping in London still remains unclear. Whilst more practice-based approaches have shown these features to be constrained by micro-level phenomena in other localities (e.g., Lawson, 2013;

Drummond, 2018a), there has been comparatively less research which takes a stylistic perspective (though see Gates, 2018).

The variable system of the interdental fricatives also offer a prime site to investigate the apparent stereotypical social meanings of these features (e.g., TH-stopping as an ethnic marker) and the ways in which these variables are appropriated in the context of group styles. In particular, this relationship is worth exploring in relation to the gully who adopt an identity that is only indirectly related to ethnicity. Lastly, by examining variation in across the interdental fricatives as a whole, it is possible to establish the relationship between well-established features (TH/DH-fronting/DH-stopping) and those apparently recent innovations (TH-stopping), particularly with regards to Drummond's (2018a, b) claims of an overarching MUBE. To assess these questions, I now turn to a discussion of the methodology used to code the variable forms of /θ/ and /ð/, before examining this variation in the dataset.

4.6   Methods

The analysis presented here is based on data collected from self-recordings of the 25 adolescents, as discussed in §3.10. To examine the status of /θ/ and /ð/ in the context of this study, I first extracted and coded all instances of the voiceless and voiced interdental fricatives in the corpus. A total of 4722 instances of /θ/ and /ð/ were identified in the dataset. This is the total sum of all occurrences of the interdental fricatives without exclusion of forms based on linguistic and methodological considerations. However, as is standard in variationist analyses, several tokens were removed from the analysis due to contextual inhibitory effects and/or difficulty in ascertaining the realisation of the form. These included: 1) 'don't count' contexts – such as neutralisation contexts (e.g., *both things* [bəʊθ θɪŋz]), where the preceding and following interdental fricative make accurate discrimination of the realisation impossible, 2) ambiguous and/or unclear instances of the word/realisation, 3) contexts with considerable background noise, and 4) instances that were part of 'performed' speech or "crossing"(i.e., the use of a non-habitual speech style, see Rampton 1995). Repeated tokens as in "Where's that? Where's that?" and false-starts as in "they're f —they're forty" were counted as one instance.

In addition to these inhibitory contexts and after scrutinising the dataset, several other contexts were excluded as they were identified as non-variable environments or exhibited unstable patterns of variation. First, all tokens of the lexical item *with/without* (n=119) were removed as the phonemic status of this word is unclear, being variably realised as both [wɪð] and [wɪθ][15] (cf. Bell & Gibson, 2008). Second, since word final /ð/ is rare in English (occurring only in the token 'breathe' in the corpus) the 2 tokens of this lexeme were removed from the analysis. Lastly, all tokens of the determiner *the* (n=946) and *their* (n=17) were removed because these forms were not found to be variable. Although this may suggest all content words containing word initial /ð/ should be removed, in other content words, /ð/ is variable such that forms such as [dat] and [dis] *that* and *this* are (relatively) common in the dataset (cf. Bell and Gibson, 2008).

This analysis presented here is therefore based on the remaining 3227 tokens (/ð/ = 2423, /θ/ = 804), which were auditorily coded as /ð/ ~ /θ/ ~ /f/ ~ /t/ ~ /d/ ~ /v/ ~ /ʔ/ ~ Ø/. Minor intermediate allophonic variants such as [tθ] and [tʰ] were subsumed under their corresponding major phonemic category, in this case [t] (cf. Cheshire et al., 2008). I analyse the replacement of /θ, ð/ with the glottal stop [ʔ] and the deletion of /θ, ð / (e.g., [ˈsʌmʔɪŋ]/ [ˈsʌmØɪŋ]) as one variable. This decision is partly due to a methodological inability to distinguish between full-glottal closure and deletion. This would be problematic in an analysis which considers *all* variable forms of the interdental fricatives, but in an analysis that focusses on the distinction between fronting and stopping, this methodological decision is justified.

As noted, the variants were auditorily coded. Although this procedure may appear rudimentary given the recent shift towards using acoustic measurements in analyses of sociolinguistic variation, there remain several issues with analysing the spectral qualities of consonants (see, for example, Thomas, 2011:90-93). As such, in comparable analyses of /θ, ð/, the realisation has most often been coded auditorily (e.g., Dubois & Horvarth, 1999; Cheshire et al., 2008; Schleef & Ramsammy, 2013; Drummond, 2018a, b). Whilst this may be challenging in other analyses of consonantal variation, due to the clear perceptual difference between the standard

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[15] It is worth noting that *with* is potentially an interesting lexical item in its own right. In the data it is much more frequently stopped [wɪt], [wɪd] than it is fronted [wɪf], [wɪv]. A more thorough treatment of this lexeme may be a worthwhile exploration for future research.

and the stopped or fronted realisations, an auditory coding procedure appears suitable for the current analysis.

In addition to the realisation of /θ, ð/, the data was coded for a series of linguistic and social factors. The coding schema included those which have been examined in prior work as well as those which emerged during the period of ethnographic fieldwork. Since this analysis focusses on the interrelationship between the voiced and voiceless interdental fricatives, I include (where possible) the same social and linguistic factors for both /θ/ and /ð/. Linguistic effects included: Absolute word position of token: Initial ~ medial ~ final; Morpheme structure of word: Monomorphemic ~ polymorphemic; Grammatical category of word: Nominal ~ verb ~ numeral ~ functional item; Word frequency: High ~ low. Word position is included since the well documented positional effects on the variable realisation of /θ/ (Stuart-Smith & Timmins, 2006:176; Drummond 2018b:183). Morphological complexity is included since Schleef and Ramsammy (2013) find that morphologically complex (i.e., polymorphemic) words more likely to be fronted than monomorphemic words. Part of speech was included to test for effect of grammatical category on the realisation of the form (c.f. Dubois & Horvarth, 1998), since lexical items are predicted to be affected more by variation than functional items (Labov, 1972). Lastly, word frequency is included due to the well documented effects of word frequency on the probability of variable realisations (e.g., Clark & Trousdale, 2009), with higher frequency words more likely to undergo change than low frequency items (Bybee, 2006).

Before discussing the methodology further, it is worthwhile clarifying how 'word frequency' was operationalised. In the literature, word frequency has been calculated in various ways, such as comparing the relative frequency of the token with some large spoken language corpora, such as the BNC, or equating the frequency of the item corpus internally (e.g., Clark & Trousdale, 2009). As such, the distinction between high and low frequency words is often made subjectively, varying between analysts and studies. In this analysis, it is necessary to calculate the frequency of words corpus internally due to the large number of lexical items that are frequently used by the community of speakers but would do not appear in corpora due to their colloquial nature, such as the derogatory term *thot*. I code 'low frequency' words as those occurring 0-100 times in the corpus (e.g., thirty, through), and 'high frequency'

words (e.g., three, thing) as those occurring more than 101 times in the corpus[16].

To examine the contribution of social factors, I included factors which emerged as a result of the ethnographic observation and well-documented social factors on the realisation of the variable under study. This included sex, age, gully membership, and interlocutor. Sex was operationalised as the gendered distinctions between 'females' and 'males' since, as discussed in §3.9.2, activities and friendship groups were largely divided into gendered groups. Age was entered into the models as the local social distinction between 'younger' and 'olders'. Gully membership was divided into 'non-member' vs. 'member'. In addition, since the rate of variation may be influenced by the interlocutor (e.g., Drummond, 2018b), I also include a binary distinction between 'friend' and 'not-friend' to capture these effects.

Before moving to the details of the analysis, however, it is worth discussing why 'ethnicity' is not included in this analysis, particularly given the association of variation in the interdental fricatives with ethnic populations (e.g., Newlin-Łukowicz, 2013). This decision is motivated both by methodological and empirical concerns. In short, the sample is far too diverse to include the specific individuals own ethnic background. Whilst one could make a case that this could be operationalised at a broad level, I do not feel satisfied that a broad-brush approach, such as the 'Anglo vs. non-Anglo' distinction operationalised by Cheshire and colleagues (2008), corresponds to any social reality at Lakeside. Categorising speakers into reductionist categories such as these is potentially problematic as it assumes an over essentialised perspective on the relationship between language and ethnicity.

To account for these issues, some scholars have examined the relationship between language and ethnicity at a micro level. A case in point is Gates' (2018) research where she uses emic categories to examine ethnic patterns of language use. However, whilst emic distinctions such as those used by Gates (2018) are helpful in avoiding essentialist accounts of language and ethnicity, these distinctions are likely to be specific to the research context. As noted, as discussed extensively in Chapter 3, with the social organisation of the individuals' friendship groups largely influenced by the character and format of the youth group, ethnicity/race did not constrain

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[16] The delineation of 'high' and 'low' frequency tokens was made on the basis that high frequency items are those individual tokens which constitute 1% of the corpus wordcount. Low frequency tokens occur at a rate that is less than 1% of the overall corpus wordcount.

individuals' friendship networks. Unlike Gates (2018), I did not observe any degree of ethnic homophily in the young peoples' friendship networks. It is therefore untenable to examine language and ethnicity in these terms.

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that by not including ethnicity in my own analyses, I do not seek to undermine the relevance of race and ethnicity in constraining sociolinguistic variation. Rather, I think the complexity of this matter is captured much more accurately by 'gully membership' – an identity which is indirectly linked with an ethnically marked identity, see §3.9.5. I return to this point in later sections of this thesis where I develop the 'gully' identity in relation to the social constructs of ethnicity and race.

To assess the significance of the social and linguistic factors discussed here, a series of binomial mixed-effects regression models were built in R, using the lme4 package (Bates et al. 2015; R Core Team 2016). For each variable, I introduce the dependent and the independent variables (often described as predictors or factors) that were entered into the models. The complete coding schema is shown in Table 7. Due to somewhat small sample sizes for some of the variables, factor levels were collapsed accordingly. Where necessary, I describe the process through which the data was releveled and give justification for the conflation of factors. Models were manually stepped down using log likelihood comparisons from 'maximal' models containing all factors, to those which contained only significant factors. The interpretations and conclusions that I make are therefore those based on 'best fit' models.

Table 7 *Factors and factor levels entered into lme4 models*

Categorical Variables	Factor Levels
Word position	Initial ~ Medial ~ Final
Frequency	Low ~ High
Morphological Structure	Monomorphemic ~ Polymorphemic
Grammatical Category	Numeral ~ Nominal ~ Functional Item ~ Verb
Sex	Male ~ Female
Gully	Member ~ Non-Member
Interlocutor	Friend ~ Non-Friend
Age	Younger ~ Older
Random effects: Word, Speaker	

4.7   Analysis of /θ/

Of the remaining 3229 tokens of orthographic <th> that were extracted, just 804 of these are the voiceless interdental fricative, /θ/. Whilst, at first, this may appear a relatively small corpus, similar analyses have been carried out on a comparable number of tokens, even given somewhat larger datasets (e.g., Schleef and Ramsammy, 2013; Drummond, 2018b). And indeed, whilst /θ/ does not occur very frequently, particularly in comparison to other fricatives, Schleef and Ramsammy (2013) suggest that relative infrequency of this form is still appropriate for statistical analysis. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the low token count overall will necessarily limit the scope of my interpretations.

Table 8 gives the counts and relative frequency of the variable forms of /θ/ across all speakers. As one can see, the fronted variant [f] is by far the most frequent realisation of /θ/, occurring in just over half the total number of contexts (52.1%), exceeding the standard, [θ] (37.7%). Given the prevalence of the feature in London and the fact that [f] is generally assumed to be the standard realisation for working-class speakers (e.g., Wells, 1982; Cheshire et al., 2008), the somewhat higher rate of TH-fronting is to be expected.

Table 8 *Absolute and relative frequencies of the realisation of /θ/*

/θ/ realisation	Initial	Medial	Final	N	%
[θ]	177	78	48	303	37.7
[f]	322	75	23	419	52.1
[t]	47	0	3	50	6.2
[Ø]/[ʔ]	1	29	2	32	4.0
Totals:	547	182	76	804	

The picture of TH-fronting presented here, however, appears more similar to the results reported by Schleef and Ramsammy (2013:33), who report comparative levels of [f] in their dataset (37.3%) and less like those rates of [f] reported in research on other multiethnolects. Drummond, for instance, reports very high rates of fronting overall in Manchester, with [f] accounting for 80.2% of the variability in /θ/[17]. The

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[17] It is worth noting that differences in rate of fronting may be attributed to differences in methodological procedures. Drummond (2018a:180) notes that "researchers had noted several times in our day-to-day observations the almost complete absence of [θ] in the speech of any of the participants". This was not the case in the current analysis and, as a consequence, unlike Drummond, I was not "predisposed to identifying genuinely in-between tokens as [f]". Similarly, Cheshire et al., (2008) do not provide a thorough description of their

differences here are even more dramatic when we consider that Cheshire and colleagues' (2008:16) found rates of word initial fronting in MLE to be as high as 86.5%. In a similar sample of speakers, the current analysis observes rates of word initial fronting to be just 58.9%[18].

Aside from differences in the rate of TH-fronting, the positional tendencies of the variable forms appear to follow previous observations made in other analyses. [f] is largely constrained to word initial positions (e.g., Drummond, 2018b), and the glottal/deleted realisations of /θ/ are limited to word medial positions. In fact, the distribution of [Ø, ʔ] mirrors those patterns observed by Schleef and Ramsammy (2013), in that these variants are limited to the three indefinite pronominal items: 'something', 'nothing' and 'everything'. As such, both [Ø] and [ʔ] appear to be in free variation, occurring primarily in word medial, interconsonantal positions (e.g., [sʌmɪn] and [sʌmʔɪn]). Although of limited relevance due to their low frequency, I return to a brief discussion of the relevance of these tokens in later sections.

However, perhaps the most surprising variant in the speech of these adolescents is the occurrence of TH-stopping. Considering that TH-stopping was apparently extremely rare in the speech of teenagers in London ten years ago (Cheshire et al., 2008), [t] appears to be, at least in word initial position, competing with [f] in word initial position, this may suggest why the rates of fronting differ amongst the datasets. I return to this possibility in later sections.

4.7.1   Distribution of /θ/

The relative frequencies of variation in /θ/, however, abstracts across individual speaker differences, of which there are many. Figure 4 teases out these differences by providing the rate of the fronted [f], stopped [t], standard [θ] and the deleted/glottal [Ø, ʔ] variables by individual speaker. As one can see, there is considerable interspeaker variation, with some speakers using [f] far more than

coding procedure of TH-fronting. It is therefore unclear whether the rates are directly comparable.

[18] Similarly, it is also possible that the reverse stylistic effects that Schleef and Ramsammy (2013) observed are at play here. Cheshire et al.'s (2008) data is taken from interviews whereas this analysis is based on self-recordings. If fronting is more likely to be found in more 'formal' contexts, then it is possible that the differences are purely methodological.

others, e.g., Laura [f] = 88.9% vs. Alex who does not front at all[19]. The variability is exacerbated by the incidence of [t], with 16/25 speakers using this variant, accounting for just 6.2% of the entire tokens of /θ/. As with [f] and [t], glottal or deleted realisations appear idiosyncratic.
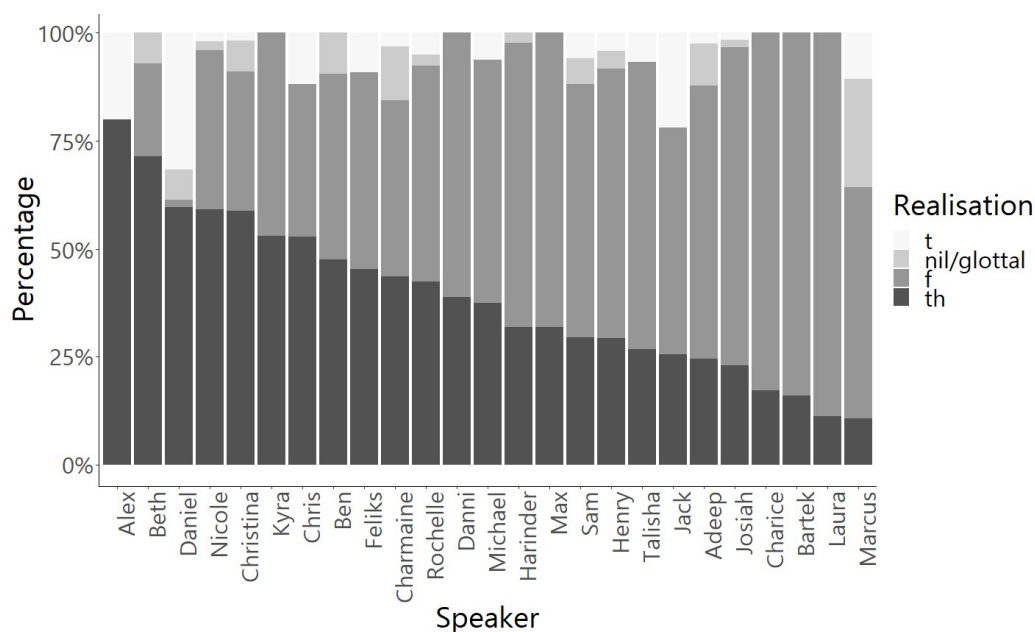
Figure 4 *Realisation of /θ/ (th) by individual speakers*

With the somewhat disparate rates of variation, the rates displayed in Figure 4 do not reveal any straightforward patterns of the variants, at least for [f]. Indeed, members of friendship groups that seldom interact (e.g., Max and Harinder), have comparable rates of TH-fronting. This is particularly true for the 'gully' group. Whilst some core gully members (e.g., Daniel) have lower rates of [f], there are others (e.g., Adeep) who appear more like their non-gully peers, exhibiting high levels of fronting.

The picture of TH-fronting is complicated by the incidence of [t], with [t] and [f] appearing, at least based on first impressions, in complementary distribution. In fact, those who are high users of [t] (e.g., Daniel) appear to have less fronting overall (though cf. Jack). The relationship of [t] to [f] is discussed in later sections where I explicitly address the social conditioning of TH-stopping.

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[19] One possibility that might be constraining the rate of fronting by Alex is a lack of data. He provided the least amount of self-recorded data of all the speakers. However, whilst this argument could explain the patterns in Alex's speech, it cannot account for Daniel's avoidance of [f], since he provided the most self-recorded data of all 25 speakers.

The distribution of /θ/ is further differentiated by differences in the lexical conditioning of the variation. The rates presented in Figure 4 abstract across the specific lexical items conditioning of the variation in that some lexical items appear to attract significantly more fronting and stopping than others. For instance, 81.9% (n=95) of the 116 tokens of *three* are fronted, whereas just 25.6% (n=10) of the 39 tokens of *thank* are fronted.

To account for the individual speaker and lexical effects discussed here, as previously mentioned, all models include both 'word' and 'speaker' as random effects. I now turn to statistical analyses of TH- fronting and stopping to examine the distribution of this feature amongst the community of speakers.

4.7.2   TH-fronting

The statistical analysis of [f] presented here considers data from 23 speakers, after removing two speakers due to the absence (Alex) or low variability of this feature (Daniel) in their speech (see Figure 4). As previously discussed, since this analysis models TH-fronting, i.e., variation of [f] and [θ], tokens of [t] and [Ø, ʔ] were not entered into the model. This methodological decision diverges from other analyses which have examined the variation between [f] and all other variable forms, such as [t] (e.g., Drummond, 2018b). The reason for considering only tokens of [f] and [θ] here is based on arguments that I make in later sections relating to the envelope of variation of [θ]. Specifically, both [t] and [Ø, ʔ] appear restricted to certain lexemes. Thus, to avoid these effects, I do not include these in a model of TH-fronting.

In total, 683 tokens from 23 speakers which were entered into a binary logistic regression model. As previously mentioned, 'speaker' and 'word' were selected as random effects to account for the relative strength of lexical and individual speaker effects on the rate of fronting. All factor levels specified in Table 7 were entered into a maximal model and manually stepped down. Due to the small token count and the subsequent model convergence issues, the factor of 'grammatical category' was collapsed into 'lexical' (i.e., numerals, verbs & nominals) vs. 'functional items'. The discussion henceforth focusses on the best fit model, whilst acknowledging that the somewhat low token count necessarily restricts the interpretations that can be made.

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Table 9 *Best-fit binomial mixed-effects regression model for [θ] vs. [f]*

Fixed effect	Estimate	t	z value	p
(Intercept)	0.6551	0.3857	1.698	0.090
Position (Initial)	-1.317	0.4345	-3.031	0.002
Position (Medial)	-0.7533	0.4977	-1.514	0.130

Number of observations: 683, groups: word (57, SD = .75); Speaker (23, SD= .61)

Table 9 presents the best fit quantitative model of the data. This model selects only word position as a significant predictor of TH-fronting. Specifically, there is a significant difference between the rate of [f] in word initial and final environments (p<0.01). However, pairwise comparisons show that there is not significant stepwise progression between word initial and medial positions nor medial and final positions. Thus, whilst rates of TH-fronting increase across word position: word initial < word medial < word final (see Table 8 & Figure 5), the significance of this effect is limited to the distinction between word initial and final positions. Nevertheless, the effect of word position seems to confirm previous findings that there are positional constraints on [f] (e.g., Stuart-Smith & Timmins, 2006; Clark & Trousdale, 2009). In fact, the cline reported here very closely mirrors that identified by Drummond (2018:180) and supports Cheshire and colleagues' (2008) observation that TH-fronting is most frequent in word initial environments in adolescent speech in London.

Although the remaining internal (linguistic) factors do not reach significance, the maximal model shows their distribution to be largely in the expected direction. As predicted by usage-based accounts of sound change (Bybee, 2006; Clark, 2008), low frequency words are more likely to be realised as [θ] (n=204/441, 46.3%) versus high frequency words (n=61/242, 25.2%). Further, and as expected, the effect of grammatical category follows the expected direction with numerals, verbs and nominals exhibiting higher levels of fronting (numerals n=112/162, 69.1%; verbs n=112/181, 61.8%; nominals n=113/205, 55.1%;) than functional items (n=71/135, 52.6%).

Similarly, of the remaining social factors which fail to reach significance, the majority follow the expected direction. As has been observed in other research (e.g., Schleef & Ramsammy, 2013; Gates, 2018), boys are more likely to use the fronted variant [f] (n= 237/400, 59.3%) than girls (n=145/283, 51.2%), whilst gully members exhibit more TH-fronting than non-gully individuals (n=236/344, 68.0% vs.

n=182/339, 53.7%) overall. Lastly, the possibility that the rate of TH-fronting could be influenced by the relationship between interactants is somewhat demonstrated by the fact that the fronted variant is more likely to be used in discussions amongst friends (n=348/542, 64.2%) than in interactions with non-friends (n=70/141, 49.6%). Although such patterns show strong divergences between groups (e.g., gully vs. non-gully), the fact that these factors do not reach significance is indicative of both the limitations of the smaller dataset as well as the addition of the random effect – 'speaker' – which controls for the contribution of individual speakers in the model.
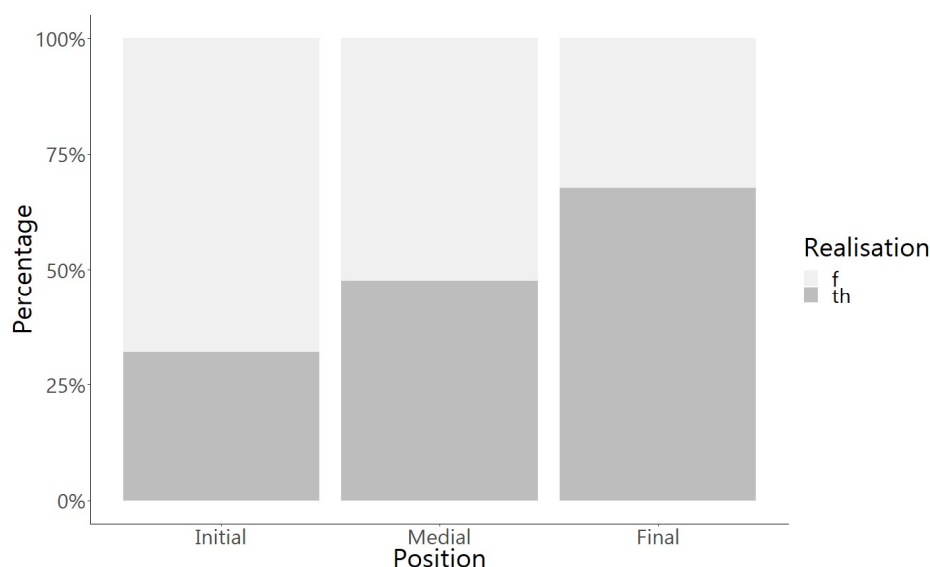
Figure 5 *Relationship of word position on the rate of TH-fronting*

Yet whilst most of these factors follow closely the observations made in previous analyses, morphological complexity and 'age' are found to operate in slightly different directions to those reported in other analyses. Unlike Schleef and Rasammy (2013) who find TH-fronting more likely in morphologically complex words, in the current analysis it is those monomorphemic which were seen to undergo more fronting. Specifically, monomorphemic tokens of /θ/ were realised as [f] 67.8% (n=311/473) of the time, whereas only 51.0% (n=107/210) of polymorphemic tokens containing /θ/ are realised as [f]. In fact, the rates reported here, show the exact opposite of Schleef & Rasammy's analysis, where they observe rates of fronting at 65.9% for polymorphemic words and 50.8% for monomorphemic words. It is unclear why the reverse pattern is observed but one plausible suggestion is that, as Schleef & Ransammy (2013:47) suggest, although the

process of TH-fronting may have become neutralised in the speech of London based adolescents, it "is not yet fully stabilised". Note, however, that whilst morphological complexity was significant in their model, this factor is not selected as significant in the current analysis.

A second surprising pattern concerns the distribution of the feature across younger/older speakers. In fact, for both groups, average rates of fronting are comparable, with the olders using [f] 61.5% of the time (n=375/610) and the youngers 58.9% (n=43/73) of the time[20]. Given that prior analyses have associated TH-fronting with distinctions of 'youth' (e.g., Clark, 2008; Holmes-Elliot, 2015), it is perhaps surprising that the olders, who actively orient towards a more mature, adolescent lifestyle, exhibit comparable rates of fronting to the youngers. Although the distribution of the feature is affected by a low token count of /θ/ in the younger category, if we are to interpret these findings as more general patterns of TH-fronting, it seems that the feature does not seem to index notions of 'youth', at least when 'youth' is operationalised in terms of younger/older.

Taken together, then, TH-fronting appears to be largely unconstrained by both the social and linguistic factors in the current analysis. Considering previous research on the feature in London, however, the lack of social and linguistic constraints on [f] may already be predicted. Recall that Schleef and Ramsammy (2013) find that, in London, TH-fronting is constrained primarily by the morphological complexity of the word, suggesting that the lack of social and linguistic constraints on this variable could be indicative that TH-fronting has become 'neutralised' in the speech of young speakers in London. Although the patterns identified in this analysis diverge somewhat from their observations, it seems possible that the findings in this analysis go some way to supporting their interpretations that TH-fronting has become a 'standard' feature of (working-class) adolescent speech in London. This is, perhaps, why we do not see a difference between rates in fronting between the olders and the youngers.

What I'm suggesting then is that whilst TH-fronting may be sensitive to social indexical meaning in other locales, particularly those where it has recently emerged (e.g., Lawson, 2013), in those where it is more established (London,

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[20] Token counts for the 'youngers' are relatively low, so caution should be exercised when interpreting these patterns

Manchester cf. Cheshire et al., 2011; Gates, 2018; Drummond, 2018a), it is possible that TH-fronting has simply become part of a set of vernacular youth norms in the city (Kerswill, 2003). Although not significant, the higher use amongst the gully may be indicative of that group's more general orientation towards vernacular forms. Of course, an alternative, and perhaps more straight forward interpretation, would be that the social factors analysed here are simply those which do not constrain the distribution of this feature.

One possible further consideration is the incidence of [t]. Thus far, the discussion has largely considered [f] in isolation, but as I have suggested in earlier sections, the somewhat unclear patterns identified for TH-fronting may be partially impacted by the occurrence of TH-stopping. Since these two phonemes are in free variation (e.g., [fɪŋ], [tɪŋ] *thing*; but also [juːf], [juːt] *youth*), it is possible that the incidence of the stopped variant may implicate the degree of fronting. To examine how [t] and [f] interrelate, I now turn to an analysis of TH-stopping at Lakeside.

4.7.3   TH-stopping

Unlike [f] which accounts for over half the variation of /θ/, [t] accounts for just 6.2% (n=50/804) of the variation (see Table 8). In addition, this variable appears considerably more restricted in distribution than [f], with the 50 tokens of [t] produced by just 16 of the 25 speakers. Whilst the limited distribution of this feature may, at first, appear unremarkable, other analyses have shown that relatively infrequent variables can acquire social-indexical meaning in much the same way as more frequent variables (e.g., Kiesling, 1998; 2009; Snell, 2010).

To analyse the distribution of [t] further, data from 16 speakers (those who use [t]) totalling 268 tokens of /θ/, were entered into a binominal regression model. Since models were run on a much smaller subset of the corpus, it was necessary to conflate factors which were no longer represented in this corpus or were too minimal to be included in their own right. For this reason, position is collapsed into initial vs. non-initial since there were no word medial tokens of [t]. Other factors which were removed included: sex, since this is accounted for by gully membership; grammatical category and morphological structure, since [t] occurs mainly in monomorphemic nominals, and age since only olders use [t]. The maximal model therefore considers

the following factors: Gully membership, frequency, interlocutor, and position. As regression analyses are relatively unstable on small datasets, Chi-Square tests were conducted to ensure the accuracy of the results reported in the model. These tests confirm the results reported here, with the additional effect of position (p<0.01)[21].

Table 10 Best-fit binomial mixed-effects regression model for [θ] vs. [t]

Fixed effect	Estimate	t	z value	p
(Intercept)	9.5871	2.3395	4.098	0.000
Gully (Member)	-1.652	0.6308	-2.619	0.009

Number of observations: 268, groups: word (38, SD = 8.6); Speaker (16, SD= .4)

The best fit model is reported in Table 10. As this table shows, the only significant finding is that [t] is more likely to be used by gully members than non-gully members (p<0.01). This confirms that gully membership is a significant factor in the use of [t]. It is perhaps therefore unsurprising that, as shows, the highest users of [t] are those that are core members of the gully: Daniel, Alex, Jack and Marcus (see Figure 6). Whilst other non-gully members are seen to use [t] (e.g., Talisha), they do so relatively infrequently.

Although other factors do not reach significance they follow the expected direction: [t] like [f], is more frequent in word initial than non-initial position (n=47/188, 25% vs. n=3/77, 3.9%), and stopped variant is also more likely to occur in high frequency than low frequency words (n=44/102, 43.1% vs. 6/166 3.6%). The significance of these effects is highly likely to be influenced by the inclusion of 'word' as a random effect in the model. Lastly, the effect of 'interlocutor' is as expected, with [t] favoured more in conversations with friends (n=39/208, 18.8%) than with non-friends (n=7/60, 11.7%). As before, I concede that the low token count necessarily restricts the generalisability of these observations.

With these distributional facts in mind, it is now worth examining the interrelation of [t] and [f] for /θ/. Of interest here, is the recent emergence of TH-stopping. If we are to accept my arguments that TH-fronting has become a youth vernacular norm in London, one possible explanation for the emergence of [t] is that speakers have attributed social meaning to the more innovative variant to account for the lack of indexical potential of [f]. This would explain the significant effect of gully

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[21] As noted, it is very likely that the significance of 'position' is not observed in the model due to the inclusion of 'word' as a random effect

membership in the model. In other words, it is possible that when a vernacular features' indexical potential becomes 'saturated' – or "neutralised" in the words of Schleef & Ramsammy (2013) – as in the case of TH-fronting, speakers may adopt more innovative forms that are less widespread, such as [t], to distinguish this style from others (cf. Irvine & Gal, 2000).

Figure 6 *Effect of gully membership on [t]*

Of course, however, this explanation and analysis does not take into account the fact that [t] appears to be heavily lexically constrained (Cheshire et al., 2008; Drummond, 2018a/b). Indeed, thus far, I have analysed [t] across all possible environments of /θ/. But given that previous analyses have found [t] to be largely restricted to a sub-set of lexical items (Cheshire et al., 2008; Drummond, 2018a/b), it is worthwhile to examine this constraint in the current dataset. In line with previous research, preliminary distributional analyses of [t] suggest that it is heavily lexically constrained with *thing(s)* constituting 88% (n=44/50) of all stopped tokens (see Table 11).

In fact, the results reported here very closely mirror those identified by Drummond (2018a, b). Thus, based on the potential that [t] is lexically constrained, I would argue that it is necessary to analyse *thing(s)* separately from other /θ/ word initial lexical items given the much higher incidence of [t] in this word (see Table 11). It is this analysis I turn to next.

Table 11 *Distribution of [f, t, θ, Ø, ʔ] for words that are also realised as [t]*

Word	[f]	[t]	[θ]	[Ø]/[ʔ]	Total
thing	70	40	47	0	157
things	10	4	6	0	20
youth	0	2	10	0	12
mouth	2	1	7	1	11
thiefs	0	1	0	0	1
thought	28	1	13	0	42
thumped	0	1	0	0	1
Totals:	110	50	83	1	244

4.7.4   [t]ing

As I have shown above, the distribution of TH-stopping appears to be, largely, socially conditioned by gully membership. But the extent to which we can truly categorise this phenomenon as 'TH-stopping' is debatable. Based on previous analyses and the distribution of [t] identified here, it therefore seems more likely that the distribution of this variant observed here concerns less a matter of 'TH-stopping', but more the lexicalisation of [tɪŋ]. If we are to follow this line of reasoning, it is questionable as to whether [t] can be considered within the envelope of variation for [θ].

Observing a similar pattern, Drummond (2018) runs a separate analysis on a subset of his data, examining [t] in *thing* and its pronominal derivatives (e.g., *nothing, something, everything, etc*.). He justifies this decision on the grounds that grammars and analyses of so-called 'TH-pro forms', generally consider *thing* and its indefinite pronominal compounds*,* as related, based on the similar grammatical and pragmatic functions of the set (e.g., Carter & McCarthy, 2006; Mendoza-Denton, 2008).

However, in this dataset, and as previously mentioned, the indefinite pronominal forms appear to behave slightly differently, with the standard [θ] or deleted [Ø, ʔ] typically the favoured realisation of /θ/ for these words. A possible interpretation of these patterns could be that [tɪŋ] represents the earliest stages of the lexical diffusion (Wang, 1969) of [t], with this likely to spread throughout the set. Whilst this is indeed a possible interpretation of these patterns, I believe that a more plausible explanation is that [tɪŋ] has become lexicalised to fulfil a set of very specific

interactional functions.

Upon re-examining my fieldnotes and annotations of the recordings, I noted that [tʊŋ] was often used by speakers to refer to some entity that was deictically referable in the discourse. By examining this possibility further across the dataset, it seemed that [tʊŋ] was overwhelmingly being used in contexts where the referent is both definite e.g., "look, look at that red [tʊŋ]", and where both the speaker and hearer have access to that referent in their discourse model. In other words, where the referent is some mutually acknowledged object/concept. If this argumentation follows, this may suggest why [t] for /θ/ does not occur in the indefinite pronominal set (*something, nothing* etc.). Indeed, if [t] fulfils some discourse function related to definiteness, then we would not expect this to carry over into the indefinite pronominal category (i.e., the TH-pro set), since this set of words do not refer to any specific entity – the reference of these items is generic.

The concepts of 'definiteness' and the status of the referent in the discourse model are, of course, related. Taxonomies that conceptualise the status of information status describe indefinite referents as those which tend to be discourse 'new' entities, whilst definite referents tend to be those which have already been introduced into the discourse – so called discourse 'old' or 'given' entities (Prince, 1992). Assuming this terminology in relation to [t], what I suggest here is that is worthwhile to examine whether [t]*ing* fulfils some a specific pragmatic function, which concerns the information status of the discourse referent.

Although examining [t]*ing* in relation to the information status of the inferring proposition may, at first, appear novel, some variationist research has demonstrated the utility of considering the discourse status of information in constraining the variability of a feature. For instance, in his analysis of High Rising Terminals (HRTs) in London, Levon (2016) examines the appearance of HRTs in relation to the information status of the referent to which it is attached. Not only does he observe a relationship between HRT and the discourse newness of a particular referent, but the pragmatic function of this feature is further distinguished by gender. Specifically, he shows that, for men, HRTs are used to "draw attention to interesting (and brand new) elements of their talk in narratives" (2016:155), whilst for women, HRTs are used to maintain the conversational floor and to present discourse-given information.

More closely related to the topic of this analysis is the application of information status to the so-called 'TH-pro' set, which includes *thing, something, etc.* In her ethnographic research of Latina identity, Mendoza-Denton (2008) separates out the TH-pro set from other lexemes in her analysis of the raising of /I/. She shows that although this set of words are generally sensitive to raising, it is the Mexican born *Norteñas* (Northerners) that exhibit highest levels of raising in this set. When Mendoza-Denton delves further into the data, she finds that this group have developed innovative functions for the use of the TH-pro forms. Rather than using this set of words to refer to discourse information status as expected, the *Norteñas* use TH-pro forms as discourse markers that serve as "youthful ethnic markers" (2008:285).

Thus, to examine the appearance of [t] in relation to discourse-newness, I coded the entire subset of the 179 *thing* tokens for whether the referent, i.e., the topic of the conversation was 'discourse new' or 'discourse old'. The coding schema is largely based on Prince's (1981; 1992) typology of discourse information, although somewhat simplified due to the small number of tokens examined here. Thus, I do not examine the status of information in regard to the hearer (cf. Levon, 2016), but instead analyse the binary distinction between *given* and *new* propositional information.

Whilst I have suggested in earlier sections that definiteness can be used as a proxy for discourse newness, with definite NPs typically referring to discourse given information and indefinite NPs referring to discourse new information, as Prince (1992) notes, the two are not mutually exclusive. For this reason, I therefore examined the definiteness of the referring NP in relation to both the context of the interaction and the development of the discourse (see also Levon, 2016). Here, I follow Mendoza-Denton (2008:271), in classifying any token as discourse-old/given if the referent could be recovered from the preceding interaction; and any token as discourse-new if, in the preceding discourse structure, that referent had not been previously discussed. In addition, any item that could be 'inferred' from the discourse was classified as discourse-old (cf. Prince, 1992). This included those situational objects where the referent could be recovered from the discourse/ interactional context.

The distributional facts largely confirm my initial suggestions: That [t] is

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strongly associated with 'discourse old' entities. Whilst both [f, θ] and [t] are more frequently used to refer to the discourse old entities, the difference in the rates between [t] and [f, θ] across new and old discourse are stark (see Table 12).

Discourse Status	[f, θ]		[t]	
	N	%	N	%
Discourse New	53	39.3	8	18.2
Discourse Old	82	60.7	36	81.8
Totals:	135		44	

Table 12 *Discourse newness of the referring preposition*

To analyse the variation, I entered 179 tokens of *thing* including derivatives *things* and *thing's* into a binominal mixed effects model. This sub corpus included tokens realised as [f] and [θ] vs. [t]. For this model, only the social factors of 'gully membership' and 'interlocutor' were included, following the results of the earlier analyses of [t]. Since this model only considers the lexeme *thing* and its derivatives, I removed 'word' as a random factor, keeping only 'speaker' to account for individual idiosyncrasies. To examine the effects of information status on the variable realisation of *thing,* I entered the discourse newness of the referring NP into the model, coded as either 'discourse new' or 'discourse given'. Again, because of the relative instability of regression models on small datasets such as this, I performed Chi-Square tests to ensure the results of the model were reliable. These tests confirm the significant effects identified by the model in Table 13.

As Table 13 shows, the best fit model is that which includes both 'gully membership' and 'discourse newness'. Specifically, [t] is significantly more likely to be used by those who are members of the gully (p<0.05), confirming the previous analyses of TH-stopping, and when the referent is given (i.e., old) in the discourse (p<0.05).

Table 13 *Best-fit binomial mixed-effects regression model for 'thing'*[22]

Fixed effect	Estimate	*t*	z value	p
(Intercept)	3.9410	0.8320	4.737	0.000
Gully (Yes)	-1.9478	0.8218	-2.370	0.018
Disc_Newness (Given)	-1.0612	0.4885	-2.172	0.030

Number of observations: 179, groups; Speaker (21, SD= 1.05)

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[22] The application value is [θ/f]. A negative coefficient in the table should be interpreted as disfavouring [θ]/[f] and favouring [t].

What this significant relationship seems to suggest is that the use of [t]*ing* by the speakers (primarily the gully group) is not simply incidental, but its use is also influenced by the discourse newness of the referent. In other words, [t]*ing* as a lexicalised item is used to specifically refer to things that the speaker and listener both already know and have a shared mental concept of. For the gully, it seems that the use of this feature not only indexes their association with the ingroup, but also fulfils a useful interactional function – that of identifying a definite referent which is shared by both interlocutors.

To demonstrate the interactional affordances of this feature, I now turn to analyses which examine how [t] is utilised at the discourse level. Specifically, I show that [t] is strategic and achieves a specific interpersonal meaning: that of appealing to ingroup solidarity amongst members of the gully.

4.7.4.1.   Interactional Analyses

In his analysis of TH-stopping, Drummond (2018a, b) relates the interactional function of [t] to the performance of an identity that is associated with the music subculture of grime. Drawing comparisons with the enregisterment of AAVE as 'Hip Hop Nation Language' (HHNL), Drummond suggests that the adolescents use [t] to perform a stance of 'toughness' made possible through the association of [t] with grime. Specifically, he argues that, in a similar sense to how individuals use features of AAVE to construct a 'tough' hip-hop persona (e.g., Bucholtz, 2010), [tɪŋ] could be used as a stylistic device that allows speaker to index their affiliation with others who orient towards a "grime lifestyle" (2018b:192).

Whilst Drummond's arguments are convincing, I will suggest in the following analyses that his arguments only really attend to half the issue. More specifically, I suggest that the sole focus on the use of [tɪŋ] in relation to performing an acculturated identity of the 'grime' listener obscures the fact that styles are interwoven with other practices (see Moore, 2003; Eckert, 1989; 2000; Kirkham, 2013; Gates, 2018), of which music is just one preference.

Rather, the arguments that I make in the following sections relate to the discourse function of [tɪŋ] as referring to discourse-old information which assumes a degree of in-group familiarity with the referent. Amongst the gully, this degree of

'assumed familiarity' (Prince, 1981) is useful in building rapport between members to establish a mutual understanding of concepts amongst the ingroup. To demonstrate how this plays out in the speech of the adolescents, I now turn to interactional analyses to ascertain the deployment of [t] in relation to the wider stances and practices that speakers participate in. First, I examine data which lends itself to Drummond's interpretation of [tɪŋ] as related to the speakers' affiliation with grime.

(3)

1	Jack	everyone (( )) they all copy my words at school
2		everyone knows about the song, they all want me to
3		put it out
4	Henry	you should put it out
5	Jack	dunno man, (( )) I'm thinking ergh it's long I need
6		to make an audio thing [tɪŋ] all that

A very obvious example of what Drummond (2018b) claims to be the core interactional function of [t] is seen in extract (3). In this example, gully members, Jack and Henry, are discussing a grime song that Jack had written which apparently is well-known at school (lines 1-2). Encouraging Jack to record and release the song, Henry suggests that he should 'put it out' (line 4). In line 5, refuting Henry's suggestion, Jack states that the process would be 'long' (requiring some effort) in that he would have to make 'an audio thing and all that' (line 6). In this line, *thing* is realised as [tɪŋ]. Here, both the topic of conversation and appearance of this feature therefore lend itself directly to supporting Drummond's (2018b:190) interpretation of [tɪŋ] in indexing the speakers' "participation (or desired participation) in [the] world of grime". Thus, it is possible that Jack is using [tɪŋ] here simply to index himself as an acculturated listener of grime music.

Although this interpretation is possible, I would argue that the focus on performing a 'grime identity' really only describes part of the semiotic potential of this feature. I would also add that my suggestions relating to the discourse function of [tɪŋ] (i.e., referring to discourse old entities) can go someway in explaining the appearance of [tɪŋ] more accurately than a straightforward account of identity.

Rather, I argue that, in extract (3), it seems more plausible that [tɪŋ] is fulfilling an interpersonal function. Specifically, the definite referring NP that [tɪŋ] refers to (Jack's record) is a reference that both speakers understand. By using [tɪŋ] to refer to this shared concept, it indexes the mutual and shared understanding of the group – the acculturated members of the gully (cf. Mendoza-Denton, 2008).

Thus, whilst it is possible to interpret this extract in terms of Drummond's arguments of [t] as indexing a 'grime identity', it seems more likely that this stance is only *part* of a much larger interactional ritual. I would argue that the individuals who use [t] are not simply deploying an identity that 'they are listeners of grime', but rather using [tɪŋ] in a novel way to refer to referents conceptually shared by the speaker and hearer, which has the effect of building rapport amongst their gully-peers.

To support my arguments, I now draw on two other examples from the dataset in which [tɪŋ] is strategically employed as by the gully – as the primary users of this feature – to communicate discourse old information. In both examples, I suggest that [tɪŋ] permits the speaker to evoke a discourse model that is mutually shared by the interlocutors, to clarify the intended referent of that pronoun and to build ingroup rapport.

In extract (4), Daniel has just aggravated Sam. Although it is unclear what the source of aggravation is, the interaction points to the unique interactional function of [tɪŋ]. In line 1, responding to the issue, Sam suggests that Daniel 'pattern' (i.e., behave), before semi-seriously threatening that he'd 'kick' him. After Daniel continues to aggravate him, Sam chases after Daniel, causing the recording equipment (that I'd given to Sam) to fall out of his pocket. Without acknowledging this, Sam keeps running, leading Talisha to exclaim "Sam! Sam! Sam! The thing, the thing, the thing!" (lines 4 & 5), encouraging him to acknowledge that the recorder had dropped on the floor. Here, in all three instances, Talisha realises *thing* with the fronted variant, [f]. As one of the heaviest users of TH-fronting, it is perhaps unsurprising that she uses this feature in this context (see Figure 4). However, when Marcus interjects in line 6, he does so using [t] rather than [f], exclaiming "the [tɪŋ]!", before handing the recorder back to gully friend, Sam. Here, whilst he essentially repeats Talisha's warning, using the same pronoun, *thing*, I would suggest that it is

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telling that he does not adopt the fronted pronunciation as was uttered by Talisha in the moments proceeding.

(4)

1	Sam	Pattern! I swear to God if you (( )) me I'm gonna
2		kick you
3	Marcus	{laughter}
4	Talisha	Sam! Sam! Sam! The thing [fɪŋ], the thing [fɪŋ], the
5		thing [fɪŋ]!
6	Marcus	The thing [tɪŋ]! (4.0) There you go Sam

[...]

| 7 | Marcus | you're gonna ma-- you're go-- you broke the thing |
| 8 | | [tɪŋ] (0.3) the thing [tɪŋ] broke, look! |

In the ensuing discussion, approximately 4 minutes later, we see a similar turn of events, where Daniel aggravates Sam again. Realising Sam may run after Daniel as before, Marcus warns that Sam 'broke the [tɪŋ]' before repeating 'the [tɪŋ] broke' (lines 7-8). Again, both instances of *thing* are realised as the stopped variant.

Here, it seems very unlikely that Marcus is attempting to present himself as part of the acculturated community who listen to grime nor assuming a 'tough' stance (cf. Drummond, 2018b). Rather, I would argue, it seems more plausible that his use of [tɪŋ] to refer to the discourse-old entity of the recorder is being used in a way that he is appealing to his gully friend, Sam, to take stock and accept his point of view: That the recorder could break. This reading is supported by the false starts in line 7, which suggest that he is vying for the conversational floor, and the use of the imperative, "look!", at the end of his utterance, used as part of a more general appeal to the wider to group to acknowledge his observation.

Similarly, in the following extract (5), Henry, Jack and Marcus are discussing a message from a friend received on Snapchat. Jack starts reading the message on Henry's phone before asking him to go on his 'thing'. Here, the 'barcode thing' refers to the Snapchat QR code, which is scanned to add that user as a friend.

(5)

| 1 | Jack | wh-- what did you say? [reading message] if you |

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2		wants bare food (.) five pound (.) wait shout ((let me
3		see))
4	Henry	yeah, in school he was like I'll deets you five pound
5	Jack	wait go on his thing [fɪŋ] (3.2) no like his thing [tɪŋ]
6	Henry	what?
7	Jack	his barcode thing [tɪŋ] or whatever that thing [tɪŋ] is
8		called

In the discussion that starts on line 5, Jack asks Henry to go on his [fɪŋ] *thing*, using the fronted variant. Clearly misunderstanding the referent of *thing*, Henry presumably shows Jack some other detail, hence the 3.2 second pause and Jack's response "no" in line 5. Realising that Henry has misunderstood the referent, Jack self-corrects the fronted *thing* [fɪŋ], using the stopped variant in the sentence "no like his thing [tɪŋ]" (line 5). Here, not only is there a shift towards the stopped realisation of this word, Jack also adds emphatic stress to the item suggesting that form is not directly synonymous with [θɪŋ]/[fɪŋ]. Rather, the shift from the fronted to the stopped realisation of this word appear to support my arguments made relating to [tɪŋ] referring to discourse inferred/old information. Specifically, it seems here that by self-correcting to [t], Jack is appealing to his friend, Henry, to recognise the referent of [tɪŋ] as an object that both speaker and hearer share in their discourse model. In the lines following, Jack again refers to the "[tɪŋ]" (line 7) again attempting to appeal to a mutual speaker-hearer awareness of what the 'barcode thing' refers to. In this case, the "barcode thing" is an inferred entity (Prince, 1992) in that Jack assumes that his interlocutor, Henry, would be able to deduce the meaning of the referent from both the preceding conversation (where they were talking about Snapchat) and the fact that he uses Snapchat himself. Finally, having clarified the referent, the conversation continues, and the issue is resolved.

Whilst I have argued here for an account of "[tɪŋ]" based on discourse information status, I acknowledge that this may not be the only interpretation of these patterns. Of course, another conceivable explanation is that "[tɪŋ]" is being used as a way to emphasise or make salient the discourse referent. Support for this interpretation is found in both extract (4) and (5), where [t] appears in emphatic contexts. In (4), it is the emphasis on getting Kieran's attention and in (5), it

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ascertaining the correct referent of the 'barcode thing'. Whilst this interpretation is plausible, I do not find it to be convincing for several reasons. First, such an account does not explain the use of "[tɪŋ]" in (3), where there is no emphatic reading. Second, it seems unlikely that this feature would be lexicalised for the purposes of adding emphasis, when there are multiple ways to index this in casual speech, e.g., increased intensity, stress etc.

If we are to accept my arguments relating to the interactional function of [tɪŋ], then it would appear that the occurrence of [t] has become lexicalised in [tɪŋ], developing distinct pragmatic values that differentiate this item from the standard and fronted realisations [θɪŋ]/[fɪŋ]. Here, I would argue that, based on the patterns in the data, [tɪŋ] is mainly used to refer to discourse old information. When used in interaction, [tɪŋ] calls on the hearer to draw on a mutual system of knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer in order to access the deictic reference of that pronoun. The fact that this feature relies on a mutual discourse model that is shared by speaker and hearer may go some way in explaining why this feature is significantly associated with the gully. As the only discernible CofP at Lakeside, the collective of the gully share a similar value system, establishing positive interpersonal bonds amongst the ingroup. Thus, it is possible that, as a resource which explicitly infers a degree of acculturated knowledge, [tɪŋ] has become a useful device for gully members to refer to entities mutually understood.

However, whilst this explanation can go some way to explaining the function of [t], it still remains unclear why it is *thing* that has become specified for this purpose. One possible explanation is related to the grammatical status of the lexical item *thing*. As a pronoun, *thing* occupies a mid-way point between a grammatical and lexical item, generally substituting a full NP. But, unlike other pronouns, grammars typically treat *thing* separately, since it behaves in comparable ways to full noun phrases (Quirk et al., 1985). As a consequence, several scholars have analysed this category separately, citing the unclear status of *thing* as a possible constraining factor in the variable context. Indeed, there has been some research to suggest that *thing* and its derivatives – the so-called TH-pro set of words – behave slightly differently to other /θ/ word initial and word internal words. For instance, Stuart-Smith and Timmins (2007) observe higher rates of non-standard [h] in the lexeme *thing* than

other words, whilst Mendoza-Denton (2008) observes that *something, nothing* and other TH-pro forms fulfil functions across the girl gangs.

If we are to accept the arguments presented here that [tɪŋ] largely references definite, discourse-old entities, it is possible this suggestion can go some way in explaining why it is lexical item *thing* that has become lexicalised. As with other pronouns, the deictic reference of a pronoun, i.e., the NP which it substitutes, must be established by the interlocutors (Wales, 1996). The innovative marking of [tɪŋ] here suggests that the [f] and [θ] variants do not fulfil the same function. Thus, the appropriation of *thing* seems logical since this lexeme most closely resembles the noun antecedent that it references. This suggestion may then explain why the other TH-pro forms (e.g., *something, nothing;* see Mendoza-Denton, 2008:267) which refer to 'vague' entities are not realised as [sʌmtɪŋ] and [nʌtɪŋ], since they do not reference any specific NP, but instead refer to some generic entity.

4.8   Analysis of /ð/

To investigate how /θ/ relates to its voiced counterpart, I now turn to a discussion of the variable realisation of voiced interdental fricative, /ð/. After excluding the tokens classified as 'don't count' (see section 5.5), 2423 individual tokens of /ð/ were identified and extracted. Table 14 provides the absolute and relative frequencies of the variants.

As one can see, there is somewhat less variation across both initial and medial positions than in comparison to /θ/. By far, the standard [ð] is the preferred realisation in word initial position, accounting for 82.3% of all instances. The stopped variant, [d] on the other hand, is comparatively less frequent, accounting for just 17.2% of the variation in this environment. This rate is considerably less than has been reported previously, particularly in comparison to Cheshire and colleagues (2008), who find rates of DH-stopping as high as 58.0% in Hackney just ten years ago[23].

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[23] It is also possible that the disparate rates of [d, v] between the current analysis and that of Cheshire et al. (2008) are due to differences in the methodological procedure. In the absence of a thorough discussion of the coding and methodology used in that paper, however, it is not possible to verify this suggestion.

Table 14 *Absolute and relative frequencies of the realisation of /ð/*

/ð/ realisation	Initial	Medial	N	%
[ð]	1910	41	1951	80.5
[d]	309	6	405	16.7
[v]	-	53	53	2.2
[Ø]/[ʔ]	12	2	14	0.6
Totals:	2321	102	2423	

In word medial position, although token counts are low, we see evidence of DH-fronting, with [v] accounting for just over half (52.5%) of all medial tokens. This finding may be somewhat surprising, given that the vast majority of accounts examining fronting tend to focus on [f] more so than [v]. This distribution – although hampered by low token counts for each speaker – seems to suggest that [v] is, at least, relatively robust. Although [v] is by far the favoured realisation, [d] is also observed in a small number of cases. However, all 6 instances are accounted for by the lexeme *other* and its derivative *another*, [ənʌdə]. Lastly, of limited importance to the current analysis, is that the 14 tokens of [Ø, ʔ] can be accounted for by the lexical items *them* [əm] and *motherfucker* [mʌʔəfʌkə] – two widespread pronunciations found in vernacular speech – and other minor idiosyncratic pronunciations (e.g., *clothes* [klɔ:z]).

4.8.1 Distribution of /ð/

Figure 7 represents the variability in /ð/ when categorised by speaker. As with /θ/, the rates of DH- stopping and fronting are considerably variable. As the figure shows, we see that, on the one hand, whilst some speakers use [d] for /ð/ just over half the time (e.g., Rochelle), others rarely use [d] (e.g., Laura). However, whilst these rates are low, there are no non-categorical users. Thus, although its distribution is somewhat more restricted than previously reported, the variable is still observed in the speech of adolescents in London. For some speakers this is truer than for others, with some speakers using comparable rates of [d] (e.g., Max) to those speakers observed by Cheshire and colleagues (2008). Here, Max's use of [d] is of potential interest to the claim that DH-stopping is primarily associated with cockney speakers. Max was the only speaker in my sample who I could truly define as 'cockney'. His family had lived in the area for at least three generations and his parents worked in manually

skilled industries. He was, by any measure, the prototypical cockney speaker. He also seldom interacted with the other members in the youth group, choosing to isolate himself in the computer room. When he did hang out with others, they were the other White working-class youngers who rarely attended the club and who did not participate in the study.
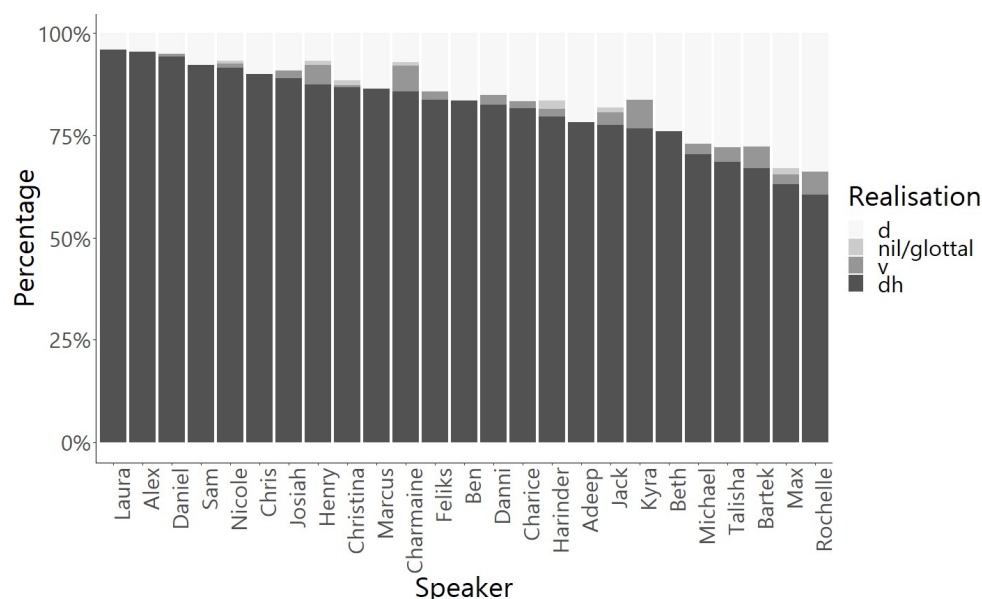
Figure 7 *Realisation of /ð/ (dh) by individual speakers*

Rochelle, on the other hand, a speaker who is of African heritage, has comparative levels of DH-stopping to Max. Thus, her use of DH-stopping is unlikely to be attributed to interactions with cockney speakers. However, like Max, her participation in the club was somewhat limited since she was the only member to travel to Lakeside from outside of the estate. Because of this, she was often prevented from fully accessing the close networks of the youth group.

Thus, it is possible the patterns identified for Max and Rochelle reflect the first-level indexicality of this feature, where DH-stopping is associated both with cockney speakers and those with African/Caribbean heritage (Cheshire et al., 2008). The same straightforward explanation, however, cannot account for some of the other speakers' patterns, who would share similar ethnic heritage to Rochelle (e.g., Daniel, Josiah). It is possible that these differences are relative to their involvement in the club, as I have alluded to above. However, based on the available data the social distribution of this feature remains unclear.

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The rate of DH-fronting and the glottal/deleted variants are also considerably variable. 16/25 speakers use [v] although they do so relatively infrequently. This relative infrequency is predicted by the fact that [v] is restricted to word medial position. Consequently, the interpretations that can be made relating to the distribution of [v] are necessarily limited by the low token count of this form in the dataset. The deleted/glottal variants are also extremely rare in this sample and in the speech of those who use them. Thus, due to the small number of medial tokens of [v] and indeed of medial tokens of /ð/ overall, as well as the limited importance of [Ø, ʔ], the discussion henceforth is focussed solely on [d] in word initial contexts. The ongoing discussion is therefore limited to variation between [d] and [ð] i.e., DH-stopping, in word initial position.

4.8.2   DH-stopping

A total of 2309 of word initial tokens of /ð/ from all 25 speakers are analysed in this section. Since this data focusses on word initial tokens which happen to all be function words, the factors 'word position' and 'grammatical category' were not entered into the model. All other factors and factor levels were assessed as described in Table 7.

Surprisingly, none of the factors can accurately capture the variation, with all factors failing to reach levels of significance. Before I attempt to examine why this might be so, it is worth examining the direction of the non-significant factors. First, the stopped variant, [d], is favoured in interactions with friends (n=349/1910, 18.3%) than non-friends (n=50/399, 12.5%). This observation follows the trend observed in TH-fronting/stopping, that the variation is constrained by the status of the interlocutor, with more vernacular forms favoured in peer interactions (e.g., Drummond, 2018 a, b). We also see that it is boys who are (marginally) more likely to use DH-stopping (n=290/1566, 18.5%) than their female peers (n=109/743, 14.7%), following the gendered dimension of this feature identified in similar accounts (e.g., Gates, 2018). There is a strong association with speaker age, such that younger speakers tend to favour [d] for /ð/ (n=97/300, 32.3%) in comparison to their older peers (n=302/2009, 15.0%). However, the strength of the effect is likely to be conditioned by intraspeaker variation, which is minimised by the addition of 'speaker' as random effect in the model. Lastly, and as expected, DH-stopping is

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more likely to occur in morphologically 'simple' words (n=345/1845, 18.7%) than in polysyllabic words (n=54/464, 11.6%). This observation coincides with analyses which have found that the rate of stopping/fronting is likely to be influenced by the morphological structure of the word (e.g., Schleef & Ramsammy, 2013).

On the other hand, there are other factors, both social and linguistic, which do not follow the expected pattern. First, the gully are less likely to use the stopped variant [d] (178/1229, 14.5%) than their non-gully peers (221/1081, 20.4%). Second, word frequency appears to influence [d] in the opposite direction than predicted, with low frequency words more likely to undergo stopping (n=43/194, 22.2%) than high frequency items (n=357/2117, 16.9%).

The picture of DH-stopping, therefore, appears relatively complex. With none of the factors accurately capturing the variation in the dataset, we are therefore left wondering what the social meaning of this feature is. Whilst the overall picture of DH-stopping remains unclear, it is worth returning to the individual speakers, Max and Rochelle, discussed in §4.8.1. What I'm suggesting here is that the feature exhibits multiple indexical potentials that are not fully examined here. On the one hand, as an ethnic marker of Cockney and on the other, a symbol of Black British identity. Indeed, Gates (2018) notes that the highest percentage of [d] is found amongst female members of the 'Black Squad' – an exclusively Black friendship group. And when ethnicity is examined in isolation, it is the Black African boys and girls and the White British boys who have the highest rates of DH-stopping. Thus, based on the available evidence, it seems possible that, for these speakers at least, the association of [d] with ethnicity still remains. This may explain why the social factors examined in this analysis fail to capture the variation evident in the community.

If we are to accept the possibility that DH-stopping may index ethnicity, perhaps the avoidance of this form by most of the group – and indeed the gully members – symbolises something more broadly about the organisation and nature of Lakeside. As I have suggested in Chapter 3, friendship groups at Lakeside were not seen to exhibit any degree of ethnic homophily. In many ways, the group were largely integrated and few, if any, references were made to individuals' ethnic backgrounds. What is possible then, is that the lack of social differentiation of DH-stopping – as an ethnic marker – at Lakeside may be related to a more general lack of any ethnic stratification amongst speakers with different racial and ethnic

backgrounds.

Whilst tentative, this argument may go some way in explaining why it is Max and Rochelle who exhibit the highest rates of DH-stopping. Unlike the others at the youth group, Rochelle and Max were often seen to be outsiders, both in their own behaviour and in descriptions by other members of the club. Rochelle, unlike her peers who lived on the estate, travelled from a neighbouring borough to attend the youth group. Max, on the other hand, was seldom seen engaging with the rest of the group. Thus, it is possible that, for these two individuals, they still maintain the use of [d] as a straightforward ethnic marker. For Rochelle, this may be related to her Black African heritage, and for Max, [d] is likely to attain its association with Cockney. As two 'outsiders', it is possible that they have been unable as of yet to acquire the 'local' meaning (or lack of) that is relevant to Lakeside.

4.9   Summary

This chapter has examined variability in the interdental fricatives, examining the distribution, form and function of TH/DH stopping and fronting at Lakeside. I have argued that the well-established feature of TH-fronting appears relatively unconstrained by social and linguistic factors, which lends itself to the interpretation of this feature as vernacular youth norm for adolescents in London (Schleef & Ramsammy, 2013). TH-stopping, on the other hand, appears heavily lexically constrained with the majority of tokens in the lexical item *thing*. Statistical analyses show this feature to be largely associated with the gully. Examining the distribution of this feature, I have suggested that [tɪŋ] has become lexicalised and in turn has developed its own interactional and pragmatic affordances, namely that of referring to discourse old information. This is a particularly useful feature for the gully who use [tɪŋ] to evoke a mutually shared value and referent system amongst the ingroup.

Lastly, I have examined a very complex picture of DH-stopping. The current analysis fails to uncover any clear pattern of social differentiation. However, I have provided a tentative explanation of the distribution of this feature that suggests that DH-stopping may index multiple social meanings which are beyond the scope of the current analysis (e.g., ethnicity; cf. Gates, 2018).

5 Man

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines grammatical variation in the use of pronominal *man* in the speech of the young people at Lakeside. I first situate the analysis within the research context of pronominal variation more generally, providing an overview of the existing socio- and linguistic literature on pronouns. I then go on to discuss research that concerns the subject of this analysis: The innovative pronoun *man,* first identified in MLE (Cheshire, 2013). From here, I turn to the data to analyse the appearance of *man* in the speech of the young people at Lakeside, exploring the semantic and referential properties of this feature. I then go onto explore the sociolinguistic distribution and interactional functions of this pronoun to isolate the social meaning of this feature. I turn first to a general overview of the pronominal system in English and in other languages.

5.2 Pronouns

The label 'pronoun' covers a number of linguistic phenomena including demonstratives, interrogatives, indefinites, relatives, personal pronouns, correlatives, and so on (Bhat, 2004). Although diverse in nature, this group of words is generally subsumed under one term, on the basis of their shared characteristic that they substitute fully specified noun-phrases[24]. Based on the shared syntactic properties of the two parts of speech, pronouns have sometimes been classified as a sub-class of nouns (Börjars & Burridge, 2010). Like nouns, pronouns can function as the head of

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[24] Although some scholars view this definition as inadequate for other types of pronouns (e.g., Wales, 1996:4; Bhat, 2004), I maintain this definition since the focus of this chapter are those which are considered 'prototypical' of this category– personal pronouns.

a noun phrase (henceforth NP) and as subject, object or complement of a clause or preposition (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:197). Crucially, however, pronouns cannot take modifiers as NPs can (Heine & Song, 2011). Further, unlike lexical categories, the pronominal system is paradigmatically restricted to a closed class of words (Bhat, 2004), and as such, acquire new members infrequently. For these reasons, scholars have tended to treat pronouns as a separate word class, with their own syntactic and pragmatic qualities. The discussion henceforth focusses on those members which are considered 'prototypical' of the category – 'personal pronouns' (Wales, 1996; Bhat, 2004)

5.2.1   Personal Pronouns

As a subtype of the pronominal system, sets of personal pronouns can be found in the majority of the worlds languages (Heine & Song, 2011). In place of full NPs, their denotation is determined by both the linguistic and non-linguistic context. The referent of the first-person singular pronoun (*I*), for instance, is determined by the interactional context, specifically the person who utters it. When the denotation is determined by the linguistic context, the referent may be ana-/cataphoric, with the NP typically the antecedent of the pronoun (e.g., *Mark said he would do it*).

For the purposes of this analysis, I follow Heine & Song (2011:588) who define pronouns as: (1) independent words with their own prosody, (2) reflecting distinctions in personal deixis, (3) having a low semantic content, (4) similar to NPs in terms of their positional possibilities, but are not able to take modifiers, and (5) forming a closed class of words.

In present-day English, personal pronouns inflect for the semantic features (henceforth Φ-features) of person, gender, case, and number. The latter two features are largely preserved from Old English (Wales, 1996:13). English has three persons: first-person (*I, we*), second-person (*you*), and third-person (*he, they*), and two numbers: singular (*I, my*), and plural (*us, we*). Gender is marked in the third-person pronouns as masculine (*he/him*), feminine (*she/her*) and neuter/non-personal (*it*). Personal pronouns also inflect for their syntactic role, with English distinguishing between the subjective case to mark subject position (*he is great*) and the oblique case which marks the object of a verb or preposition (*give it to me*) (Börjars & Burridge, 2010:50-57).

Related are the indefinite, possessive and reflexive pronouns, which, like personal pronouns, express distinctions in personal deixis. Indefinite pronouns refer to unspecified persons or things, such as the impersonal pronoun *one*, possessive pronouns express some ownership (*mine, yours, hers*), and reflexive pronouns refer to an entity that acts on itself (*herself, myself, yourself*) (Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

5.2.2   Pronominal Change

Typically, pronominal systems are usually described as a closed-class system of the grammar. Thus, innovation in pronominal systems is rare. Heine and Song (2010:117) go further to suggest that pronouns "belong to the most conservative parts of grammar" and, as a consequence, "are diachronically fairly stable".

Nevertheless, there is evidence that pronouns can be both affected by conscious social developments (change from above) and linguistic change from below. As Bodine (1975:130) notes with reference to the historic variability in the epicene pronoun, "personal pronouns are particularly susceptible to modification in response to social and ideological change". A case in point is generic *he*. Entering English via Latin in the eighteenth century, prescriptivist grammars advocated the use of *he* as an epicene pronoun, with the masculine supposedly inferring the feminine. However, in practice, social activists claimed that *he* rarely included female subjects but was rather used as means to limit women's rights (Wales, 1996:114). As a consequence of feminist campaigns against sexist language in the 1960's, generic *he* was eventually lost (Wales, 1996: Ch. 5). As such, modern grammars seldom (if at all) advocate the use of generic *he* (e.g., Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

To account for the apparent lack of an epicene pronoun in English, some scholars and grammars have suggested the use of the third-person plural pronoun *they* (Wales 1996:125-133). However, since the nineteenth century, prescriptivist grammarians have lamented the singular use of *they*, instead maintaining that *he* should be used as the epicene pronoun. Nevertheless, in spite of grammars which discourage such use, singular use of *they* is often used as a gender-neutral pronoun in speech (e.g., *"someone dropped their ticket"*; Bodine, 1975).

In recent years, a movement (largely) from within the trans community has advocated for adopting *they* as a third-person singular pronoun. Proponents of this campaign have argued that singular *they* offers a solution to the lack of a gender-

neutral third-person singular personal pronoun in English. For people who identify as gender-queer or trans, singular *they* is a particularly useful way for these individuals to self-identify whilst avoiding the hegemonic gender binary implied by linguistic prescription.

Whilst changes concerning generic *he* and *they* appear largely to be influenced by change from above, there is evidence of change in pronominal systems from below. In these cases, it is grammaticalization that is inferred to be the catalyst for change. Grammaticalization is defined as the process in which lexical items adopt new grammatical functions or where grammatical items develop new grammatical functions (Hopper & Traugott, 1993:1). This involves four diachronic processes that typify grammaticalization, including: extension (use in new contexts), desemanticization (loss of meaning), decategoricalization (loss of morphosyntactic properties), and phonetic erosion (loss of phonetic substance) (Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Heine & Song, 2011).

In the context of the pronominal system, Heine & Song (2011) note that there is a cross-linguistic tendency for pronouns to grammaticalize from nouns. A case in point is the emergence of *a gente* 'we' in Brazilian Portuguese, discussed by Zilles (2005). In her analysis, Zilles claims that the noun phrase *a gente* 'the people' is undergoing a process of grammaticalization, by which the pronoun is increasingly supplanting the standard first-person plural *nós*, meaning 'we', in speech. Tracing the process back to the 16th century, Zilles claims that the emergence of the pronoun can be considered in relation to "the decline in the use of *homem/ome* ('man') and the rise in the use of *a gente* as an indeterminate expression with generic meaning" (2005:25). This involved several intermediate stages including the process through which the noun *gente* lost the syntactic feature [+plural], crystallising as a singular NP (definite article + noun) with collective and therefore generic semantic interpretation. Concluding, Zilles suggests that the development of *a gente* cannot be attributed to change from above, but instead argues that it is a "spontaneous innovation that has emerged from within the speech community" (2005:50).

Similar claims of grammaticalization are made by Cheshire (2003) in her analysis of the innovative pronoun, *man* in MLE. I return to this point in more detail in section §5.4 before surveying the literature on pronominal variation.

5.3 Pronominal Variation

5.3.1 Status & Solidarity

Whilst there is a limited body of research documenting innovations in the pronominal system, there is considerably more research on the variability of pronoun choice. Since personal pronouns express distinctions in deixis, their use is conditioned not only by the grammatical properties of the subject but also by prevailing social norms (Wales, 1996). This is most pronounced in societies organised by hierarchies of status and class, such as those in South East Asia (e.g., Thai). In the languages spoken there, 'hierarchal' pronominal systems have been documented. These systems mark the relation between speaker and addressee according to their relative status in the society. In these societies, pronominal choice is determined by social and interactional factors, including the gender of the interlocutor, their age, their social status relative to each other, and the formality of the speech context (Cooke, 1968).

Unlike typical pronominal systems such as English, hierarchal systems are open-class and are typically grammatically underspecified for number and person. For instance, the informal and intimate pronoun in Burmese, *dó*, is used for both first person singular and plural reference (Cooke, 1968). In this respect, hierarchal systems "encode pragmatic *usage*, rather than formal categories" (Müller & Weymuth, 2017:415, emphasis original) that emerge from "distinctions of honorification" (Heine & Song, 2011:588). Often, in these contexts, first-person pronouns can often be traced back to low status roles and titles, such as 'slave' and 'servant', while second-person pronouns can be traced back to high status titles, such as 'lord', to show deference to the interlocutor (Müller & Weymuth, 2017).

Although complex hierarchal systems such as those observed in South-East Asia are largely absent in Indo-European languages, Brown and Gilman (1960) observe similar pragmatic constraints affecting the variability of singular address terms derived from the Latin pronouns *tu* and *vos* (T-V distinction). They show that this variation is conditioned by social factors, namely dimensions of power and solidarity, with speakers more likely to use use *vos* (or, in French, *vous*) in situations where there is a greater social distance between the interlocutors.

Nevertheless, whilst the T-V distinction has been lost in English, similar

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social distinctions of power and solidarity can be achieved through the polarization of exclusive vs. inclusive pronouns. For instance, the distinction between *us* and *them,* often marks a demarcation of ingroup and outgroup boundaries. As pronouns which identify the referent as either inclusive (*us*) or exclusive (*them*), they are frequently employed as a means to 'other' certain individuals or populations (Wales, 1996:58-62) according to an underlying strategy of "positive self-presentation and negative Other-presentation" (van Dijk, 2006:126). As such pronominal choice is not motivated purely by grammatical constraints, but equally can serve as a site in which social distinctions are enacted (Wales, 1996). Thus, whilst they primarily index speaker deixis, pronouns can also function as a linguistic means to include and/or exclude certain interlocutors from a certain social position or group identity, thereby indexing notions of intimacy, including power and solidarity.

5.3.2 Dialectal Variation

Although those pronouns discussed thus far are largely prescribed as standard (e.g., *he, she*), regional varieties of English exhibit a number of local pronominal forms. Some of these are remnants of historical changes. This includes the levelling of *you* across the entire second-person paradigm. Whilst most standard varieties of English maintain *you* in across both numbers in object and subject position, in parts of rural Yorkshire, speakers occasionally use *thou* (usually transcribed as <tha>) and *thee* as singular second-person pronouns (Petyt, 1985:373-379; Cave, 2001). Likewise, in several northern English dialects as well as further afield in the Englishes spoken in Dublin and Northern America, *yous(e)* is frequently used as a second-person plural pronoun (Wales, 1996:73-4), and in varieties spoken in North-East England, *me* is frequently used as a first-person singular possessive pronoun.

A sociolinguistic examination of dialectal pronoun choice is found in the work of Snell (2010), who examines the variable realisation of 'my' as [mɪ] as in 'me pencil's up me jumper' in conversations between children attending primary schools in Teesside. Although typically perceived to be a prevalent feature of several North-East dialects, surprisingly, Snell records only 33 instances of *me* in place of *my.* The vast majority of these tokens (N=30) were uttered in conversations by children attending a school in a more working-class neighbourhood. Further, she notes in formal tasks, children actively avoided using *me.* She therefore suggests that this

dialect feature is reserved to achieve certain interactional effects in particular contexts. Specifically, Snell argues that the use of *me* occurs as part of a stylised interaction, in which the speaker uses the feature to adopt a stance of negative affect or transgression. By taking this stance, she notes that the children were able to achieve certain interactional goals, such as creating social alliances and to impress their peers (2010:647).

5.4   *Man(s)*

In recent years, researchers studying multiethnolects in (majority) English speaking cities have documented the emergence of a first-person singular pronoun *man(s)* in adolescent speech and in online social media posts. In the UK, Cheshire (2013) and Hall (2017) have documented *man* in the speech of adolescents in East London and in Canada, Denis (2016) has examined *mans* in online posts made by users based in Toronto[25]. In the following discussion, to distinguish between the different senses of *man*, I henceforth refer to the noun as *man* [N], address term as *man* [A] and pronominal as *man* [P].

In many ways the emergence of the *man* [P] in London (and *mans* in Canada) may appear comparable to the now archaic pronoun with the same form (cf. Los, 2002; van Bergen, 2003). Indeed, in several Germanic languages, such as Danish, there still exists an indefinite pronoun, *mann* 'one' (Knooihuizen, 2015). This was the case in English for some time, however, historical evidence shows that *man* fell out of use around the 15th century. Prior to its demise in Old English, the indefinite pronoun 'man' was roughly synonymous with 'one', having developed from the general noun 'man' (Los, 2002; van Bergen, 2003).

However, in the contemporary ethnolects spoken in London and Toronto, *man* [P] appears to have developed with different referential values than both its archaic and Germanic counterpart. Unlike the historical pronoun, in both speech communities, *man* [P] does not only refer to indefinite subjects, as in (6), but can

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[25] Denis' analysis is intentionally limited in scope, serving as a brief 'note' on the feature. As a result, his discussion of the multiethnolect he describes is necessarily modest. Given constraints of space and in the absence of more thorough work on this research context, I do not discuss the characteristics of this ethnolect further (cf. MLE), but rather direct the reader to Denis (2016:11) for an overview of this topic.

equally refer to situations where the subject is unambiguously defined as the speaker, as in (6)(7):

(6) I don't really mind how . how my girl looks if she looks decent yeah and there's one bit of her face that just looks mashed yeah . I don't care it's her personality **man's** looking at
(Cheshire, 2013:609)

(7) before I got arrested **man** paid for my own ticket to go Jamaica you know . but I've never paid to go on no holiday before this time I paid
(Cheshire, 2013:609)

Whilst *man* [P] can theoretically occur with any number and person combination (Hall, 2017), previous accounts suggest that it is overwhelmingly used with first-person singular reference (Cheshire, 2013; Denis, 2016).

To explain its development, Cheshire (2013) draws comparisons with the now archaic pronominal use of *man* to suggest that, as in Old English, the appearance of the first-person singular *man* [P] in MLE has grammaticalized from the human denoting noun *man*[N]. This account appears uncontroversial given that, 1) the pronoun and noun share the same phonetic realisation [man] and, 2) there is a cross-linguistic tendency for nouns to develop into pronouns (e.g., Zilles, 2005; Heine & Song, 2011).

However, the use of *man* [P] in London and Toronto is especially interesting since, as Cheshire (2013) notes, it is unusual for first-person singular pronouns to develop this way. Whilst there is little known about the general development of first-person singular pronouns, largely due to lack of available data, the existing literature suggests that these pronouns emerge in situations where there are "oppositions in deictic space and social status." (Heine & Song, 2011:610). A possibility, then, is that first-person pronouns develop from the idiosyncratic use by a speaker and are adopted by other speakers within the community primarily as a rhetorical device (Heine and Song, 2011:626). The emergence of *man* [P] therefore, may reflect a feature that was once used idiosyncratically but has since been adopted by the speech community to achieve certain interactional ends. This is the hypothesis pursued by Cheshire (2013), which I discuss in further detail in §5.8.

Nevertheless, the trigger of grammaticalization of *man* [P] remains unclear. Cheshire (2013:609) proposes that the emergence of pronoun could, in part, be a consequence of the already established use of the polysemous plural noun *man* [N] (i.e., instances where it refers to more than one person), such as in (8):

(8) you **man** are all batty boys though (Cheshire, 2013:617)

Whilst other plural forms of *man* in MLE exist, including *men, mens, mans,* and *mandem* (with the English lexifier creole plural marker *-dem*), it is the bare form that is by far the most frequent form in Cheshire's data: *Man* accounts for 65.9% of all plural forms (2013:615). Thus, it is possible that *man* [P] is a result of the semantic extension of plural *man* [N].

The possibility that the pronoun may have developed from an already variable set of plural forms of *man* [N] is supported by the well-established use of *man* [A] as an address term and pragmatic marker (e.g., Palacios Martínez, 2018). The grammaticalization of *man* [A] has already completed, with this sense losing its Φ-feature [+male], such that it can be used to refer to male and female subjects. Cheshire notes that if *man* [P] were to follow this grammaticalization pathway, then we would expect it to be affected by a similar process of desemanticisation (cf. Zilles, 2005). Namely, we would expect *man* [P] to lose its Φ-feature: [+male]. However, Cheshire notes that this seems unlikely given that only two tokens of the first-person singular pronoun were uttered by a female addressing her boyfriend (2013:626).

5.4.1   Properties of *Man(s)* [P]

In Cheshire's data, *man* [P] primarily functions with first-person singular reference, accounting for 70.2% of the tokens, as in (6). Although less frequent, Cheshire observes that it can be used as a second-person (as in (9), 4.3%), third-person (as in (10), 3.2%) and indefinite/impersonal pronoun (as in (11), 8.5%):

(9) **man's** trying to take me for some kind of idiot ("female addressing her errant boyfriend")
     (Cheshire 2013: 615)

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(10) **man's** only known you for about five minutes and even he's onto you

   (Cheshire 2013: 615)

(11) **man's** got to jump up to hit him he could just go bang bang and pushing fist
   start hitting youse and that's it

   (Cheshire 2013: 633)

As with all these examples, overwhelmingly, *man* [P] is used as a grammatical subject (77.7%). In object/oblique and possessive position, *man* [P] occurs just 13.8% and 8.5% of the time respectively. In Toronto, *mans* is primarily used as a first-person singular subject pronoun (Denis, 2016).

5.4.2   Identifying the source of *Man(s)* [P]

One question that arises is whether the appearance of *man* [P] in London and *mans* in Toronto, both pronouns emerging in the ethnolectal varieties spoken there, are connected in anyway. Denis initially suggests that it "may well be possible for features of MLE to globally diffuse" (2016:8), such that *mans* in Toronto may have been borrowed from MLE. Whilst Denis does not discuss the mechanisms through which this diffusion could occur, one possible explanation I suggest could be via popular media engagement, such as social media posts originating from London. Given the prevalence of *man* [P] in culture which is often considered 'urban' (e.g., Grime music), it is possible that *man* [P] may have been initially borrowed from MLE and adapted as *mans* in the multiethnolect spoken in Toronto.

Based on the available data, however, Denis refutes a simple borrowing hypothesis, citing the lack of similarities between the distribution and form of the feature in the local dialect. He claims that a diffusion and development hypothesis from MLE to Toronto, would necessarily entail that *man* would have been pervasive in the data prior to *mans*. However, this assumption is not borne out. As Denis notes, in Toronto, "*man* is not used pronominally (or even ambiguously between a pronoun and noun); *mans* is the primary pronominal form" (2016:8). Thus, Denis maintains that *mans* appears to have developed simultaneously as opposed to directly diffused from MLE. However, it is also possible that the feature did in fact diffuse via social media/engagement with 'urban' culture and the lack of tokens

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identified by Denis is simply due to low counts overall.

Nevertheless, Denis argues that a more convincing argument is found in the similarities of the socio-political contexts of the two cities. He suggests that a more likely explanation for the appearance of the pronoun in both cities is through diffusion with creoles spoken by the local West Indian communities. Pointing to the comparative rates of Jamaican settlers in both London and Toronto, Cheshire (2013) and Denis (2016) both suggest that it is possible that the pronoun may have diffused from West Indian Englishes and/or English-lexifier creoles. They both refer to the numerous lexical borrowings from West Indian varieties, such as 'gwarning' ('what's happening') and 'batty' as in <batty bwoy> ('gay/non-normative man'), which are used in both varieties, to support this hypothesis.

Further evidence which supports a diffusion hypothesis is discussed by Cheshire (2013: 614) who points out that Jamaican Creole already has a noun *man* [N] meaning 'people'. In some contexts, this can be interpreted in much the same way as the pronoun in Old English (cf. Los, 2002 van Bergen, 2003), with indefinite referential value (12):

(12) man kyaan bai bred

   people/one can't buy bread

   (Cheshire, 2013:614)

An initial assessment of *man* [P] therefore seems to suggest that this pronoun could be evidence of borrowing and grammaticalization via Jamaican Creole.

However, there remains several issues with this hypothesis. First, whilst there is evidence for the diffusion of lexical features from Creole, it is unclear whether features of 'higher-level' systems can diffuse in the same way. Although Hewitt (1986) reports that several grammatical features found in Jamaican Creole also appear in English spoken by adolescents, it seems more likely that these are cases of stylisation of Creole by speakers who are proficient in the variety, as opposed to dialect diffusion. As Hewitt (1986:105) himself acknowledges, many adolescent speakers use creole forms "with a strong Jamaican pronunciation sporadically interjected into their normal English speech". This appears to suggest that Jamaican Creole features are used stylistically, as opposed to habitually. The diffusion of these features therefore remains unclear.

A second issue that concerns a diffusion and development hypothesis is relevance of the timeframe in which *man* [P] emerged. Specifically, it is unclear why *man* [P] would emerge within the same period of time in two geographically disparate locations. Although similarities can be drawn between the two diasporic populations of Jamaican Creole speakers, the population in London is much larger and much more established than in Toronto. Given that a large West Indian community have resided in London since the 1960's, it is unclear why this feature would not have been documented in previous accounts of similar speech communities (e.g., Hewitt, 1986).

5.4.3   The Social Meaning of *Man(s)* [P]

Given its relative infrequency in speech and the fact that the pronoun appears to be a relatively recent development, analyses of *man(s)* suffer from a lack of data. Thus far, existing accounts (Cheshire, 2013; Denis, 2016; Hall, 2017) are exploratory in nature, providing a detailed discussion of the syntactic, semantic and distributional properties of the pronoun and situating its emergence within the broader sociolinguistic context. To date, no research has sought to examine the sociolinguistic distribution of the feature in a community of speakers. This is largely because previous analyses have suffered from a lack of tokens. In Cheshire's analysis of the feature in MLE, only six speakers use *man* [P], producing just eleven tokens. To supplement the analysis, she uses data taken from a documentary, a film and an interview with Grime artist, Giggs, totalling 94 tokens. Similarly, Denis' analysis comprises of data gathered from a multitude of sources including YouTube videos and Twitter, resulting in 58 tokens. As such these accounts have been limited in their analytic scope. The social meaning of *man* [P] therefore remains underexamined and opaque.

Nevertheless, even given its relative infrequency, it is necessary to examine the social meaning of *man* [P]. The feature is pervasive in social media and is widespread in lyrics that many young people at Lakeside listened to. Thus, whilst I acknowledge that the lack of tokens remains an issue for the current analysis, I follow Kiesling who suggests that "[i]ndexical meaning can thus arise out of statistical commonality or single instances of use that are salient enough to gain meaning for speakers" (2009:117).

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Nevertheless, whilst the existing literature does not directly address the social meaning of *man* [P], it is possible to deduce potential meanings from these accounts. One possibility that Denis (2016:2-3 footnote) alludes to is based on the observation that *mans* frequently occurs in discourse contexts that centre on 'street' activities e.g., crime, urban music etc. Here, he suggests that *mans* may function to index a particular type of 'street' persona. However, without expanding on this point, it is not entirely clear what comprises the 'street' persona Denis refers to nor whether this meaning holds true for the speech community who use it.

A second possible interpretation of the social meaning of the feature can be deduced from its claimed source. With Denis (2016) and Cheshire (2013) both suggesting that the form may have diffused via creole, it is possible that the feature may exist as a way for speakers with West Indian heritage to index their identification with this community. Given the long-established Caribbean community as well as the numerous cultural events that take place in Hackney, this is certainly a possibility. However, in the current dataset, as I shall explore, speakers with and *without* Caribbean heritage use this form. Thus, an explanation which centres on heritage as the primary social meaning of this feature risks a potentially problematic interpretation of the use of man [P] by non-Caribbean speakers as attempting to sound 'Black'.

5.5   Research Agenda

As it stands, the social meaning of *man* [P] and its function in the speech community remains crucially underexamined. It is unclear whether, based on Cheshire (2013), *man* [P] is a fleeting feature of the variety, or whether has grammaticalized further. Given the lack of literature on the feature, I would suggest that it is worth examining *man* [P] further, particularly in reference to the social meaning of this feature.

For the reasons set out above, I now turn to an analysis of the feature in the dataset to examine its distribution, both in terms of its linguistic properties and relative frequency, before examining the interactional functions of *man* [P] in discourse. In doing so, I seek to isolate the social meaning of the feature in the community.

5.6   Methods

The analysis presented here is based on data collected from self-recordings and interviews of the 25 adolescents, as discussed in §3.10. I include interview data in my analyses as *man*[P] is relatively infrequent. Although not all speakers participated in interviews (N=16/25), I include this data here to enable a direct comparison with Cheshire's (2013) analysis, who uses data entirely composed of interview recordings (Cheshire et., 2011). This methodological choice also allows me to emphasise the utility of self-recordings in eliciting rare vernacular features that occur more frequently in informal peer-to-peer interaction (cf. Snell, 2010).

All tokens of <man> regardless of their function were extracted from the dataset. As is standard in circumscribing the variable context, I exclude tokens which are repeated, false-starts, and those which occur in unclear and reported speech. In total, I identified 358 tokens of 'man', excluding derivatives such as 'mandem'. The tokens were coded as either 'address term' (13), 'noun' (14) or 'pronoun' (15) based on the pragmatic function and syntactic properties of the variant. Whilst the focus of this analysis is on *man* [P], I distinguish between the three types of *man* here to demonstrate the relative frequency and variability in the realisation of *man*.

(13) ey stop shouting bro what's wrong with you **man**?   [Jack, SR]

(14) all you **man** are crazy fam   [Harinder, SR]

(15) **man** can't hear you bruv   [Daniel, SR]

The coding process highlighted some ambiguous tokens that could, arguably, be interpreted as either 'address terms' or 'nouns'. Take for instance (13), which could interpreted as be both an address term/discourse marker *'you, man'*, or a noun phrase *'you man'*, as it is in (14) where it is used as a plural noun. In these instances, the ambiguity was largely resolved by inspecting the extralinguistic context of the token. In this case, the address term is preceded by an audible pause, whereas the noun phrase 'you man' is not (cf. (14)).

Table 15 reports all the cases of 'noun' (*man*[N]), 'address' (*man* [A]), and 'pronominal' (*man* [P]) in the entire dataset. As previously mentioned, only bare

'man' (i.e., *man* and *man's*) are reported. As expected, *man* [P] is the least frequent use of *man* across both datasets. This coincides with Cheshire's (2013) findings.

Table 15 *Total number of 'man' tokens across self-recordings and interviews*

Man	Self-recording	Interview
Address	179	21
Noun	75	34
Pronoun	36	13
Totals:	290	68

The 49 tokens of *man* [P], were then coded for grammatical role (subject, object/oblique, possessive), person (first, second, third, indefinite) and number (singular, plural). The coding was largely informed by the interactional context, using preceding and following pronouns to deduce the intended referent. However, as previous analyses have noted (e.g., Denis, 2016) there are some ambiguous cases where the referent is not entirely clear. For instance, in (16) the grammatical person of *man* [P] is ambiguous in that it can either be interpreted as second-person (*you*) or third-person (*he*):

    (16) oh my days! **man** swiped me   [Harinder, SR]

In these cases, the ambiguity was largely resolved by tracing the development of the interaction. In this case, in the next turn Harinder repairs this statement, claiming that '*you swiped me*'. The use of '*you*' after '*man*' therefore suggests that *man* [P] in this example should be coded as second-person singular. The fact that he repairs his utterance with '*you*' in the next turn is an early indication that *man* [P] may be additionally constrained by the speech context in which it occurs.

5.7   Analysis

Of the 26 speakers who participated in self-recordings, just 11 used *man* [P]. Although the number of speakers who use this feature may seem modest, compare this with Cheshire's (2013) analysis in which only 6/210 speakers recorded between 2004-10 used *man* [P] (Cheshire et al., 2011). In this respect, the rate of *man* [P] in the dataset is somewhat higher than previously reported. From the 11 speakers who

used this feature, a total of 49 tokens were recorded. The majority of these come from self-recordings.

Table 16 *Absolute and relative frequencies of man [P] in the dataset*

Speaker	Self-recording			Interview		
	Pro. 'man'	Corpus size	Relative freq.	Pro. 'man'	Corpus size	Relative freq.
Chris	3	1212	2.5	0	-	-
Marcus	7	2948	2.4	7	6325	1.1
Adeep	5	3138	1.6	0	-	-
Ben	4	2669	1.5	3	1417	2.1
Daniel	8	6082	1.3	0	-	-
Jack	3	5523	0.5	0	-	-
Harinder	2	4447	0.4	0	-	-
Sam	1	2904	0.3	0	-	-
Josiah	1	3744	0.3	0	-	-
Henry	1	3511	0.3	3	2183	1.4
Nicole	1	4480	0.2	0	-	-
Totals:	36	-	-	13	-	-

Table 16 displays the relative and absolute frequencies of *man* [P] for individual speakers across both the self-recordings and the interviews. To account for the differing sizes of corpora, I calculate the normalised frequencies of *man* [P] per 1,000 words for each speaker. Shaded out cells indicate that the speaker did not participate in that task.

As Table 16 shows, the use of *man* [P] across both datasets, is relatively infrequent. However, the rate at which this feature occurs appears to be constrained by the task in which the data was collected. In interviews, *man* [P] is relatively uncommon (N=13) used by only 3/16 of the participants that were interviewed. In informal self-recordings, however, the feature is considerably more frequent (N=36), used by 11/25 speakers. Of the 8 speakers who participated in both interviews and self-recordings, only 3 (Marcus, Ben and Henry) use this pronoun in both tasks. This appears to suggest that form is heavily stylistically constrained, with those who use *man* [P] in informal speech contexts generally avoiding the use of the feature in what could be considered a stereotypically more 'formal' speech context (at least in the Labovian sense of the term). This pattern appears to hold true for all but one

speaker: Henry. In following sections, I will argue that Henry's usage is predicted by the constraints of this feature. Specifically, I will argue that this feature is conditioned *both* by the formality of the speech context and the interactional affordances of using that pronoun (cf. Snell, 2010; Moore & Snell, 2011).

Nevertheless, the broader pattern that speakers appear to avoid this feature in the more formal setting of the interview, seems to support the methodological choice of using self-recordings in eliciting vernacular features (cf. Snell, 2010). It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that Denis (2016) and Cheshire (2013) both supplement their analyses with data drawn from digital resources (e.g., YouTube, Twitter), as these contexts facilitate more informal interactions.

Whilst I attribute the higher rate of *man* [P] to the data collection procedure, it seems likely that, even given the methodological differences between this and prior analyses, *man* [P] appears to have increased somewhat in the speech of adolescents in London. Compare Cheshire's (2013) analysis of interview data drawn from a corpus of 2.8 million words (Cheshire et al., 2011: 157–8), which identified only eleven unambiguous tokens of pronominal man from six speakers. The current analysis considers 49 tokens from eleven speakers (13 of which were from interviews with 3 individuals) in a corpus that is roughly 5% the size of the MLE project.

5.7.1 Social Constraints of *Man* [P]

Whilst the frequency of the innovative pronoun appears to have somewhat increased, the social constraints of *man* [P] remain robust. As Table 16 shows, *man* [P] is almost exclusively used by male speakers. Only one female speaker uses this feature, Nicole. Yet, in the one instance she uses *man* [P], she does so to refer to a specific group of individuals, thus revealing an additional constraint on the referential properties of *man* [P]. The one instance is a situation where Nicole, having just entered a room where a group of boys were playing the PlayStation, turns to me and says:

(17) ah they've all gone to the thing they have -- none stayed here [...] **man** are all gone [Nicole, SR]

In this extract, Nicole's uses *man* [P] to refer to the group of boys – initially referred to with the third-person plural *they* – who had just left the room. Her use of *man* [P]

not only reveals an awareness of the association of the use of the feature with a particular type of identity, but also confirms that the reference of *man* [P] is necessarily [+animate] and [+male], thus confirming observations made in previous research (Cheshire, 2013; Hall, 2017). In fact, all 49 tokens in the dataset are used to refer to male persons.

Thus far, then, the distribution of *man* [P] appears to be well predicted by previous analyses which argue that, as an in-group pronoun, it is used to define a contextually-bound group of males (Cheshire, 2013; Denis, 2016). However, this explanation does not account for the fact that 5/15 males do not use this feature at all. To explain this distribution, I return to Nicole's statement in (17). In this context, her use of *man* [P] appears to reflect an awareness of the enregisterment of this feature with a particular type of user – and identity. Specifically, the boys who were playing the PlayStation were those part of the gully. It is therefore unsurprising that all speakers who use *man* [P] are gully members, and of those who use this feature most in self-recordings (Chris, Marcus, Adeep, Ben and Daniel), all but one speaker (Chris) are inner-circle members of the gully. Of those 5 male speakers who do not use *man* [P] at all, 4 are peripheral or passive members (Feliks, Bartek, Michael) and 1 is a non-member (Max). This suggests that an additional constraint on the use of *man* [P] is the individuals' relative position in the gully. In other words, the use of *man* is enregistered with a certain type of identity that is indexically associated with gully membership.

5.7.2   Syntactic Roles of *Man* [P]

Further evidence for the stability of *man* [P] is found in the syntactic roles of man, as shown in Table 17. As in the analyses of Cheshire (2013) and Denis (2016), *man* [P] overwhelmingly functions in subject position in both the interviews and self-recordings.

Table 17 *Syntactic roles of man [P] across the two datasets*

Role	Self-recording	%	Interview	%	Total
Subject	32	88.9	13	100	45
Object	2	5.6	0	0	2
Possessive	2	5.6	0	0	2
Totals:	36	100	13	100	49

Similarly, and as previously reported, whilst comparatively rare, *man* [P] can function as an object (18) or to mark possessive case (19):

(18) yeah try-- try-- get **man** on me like get their sons on me w--when they're like fourty [Josiah, INT]

(19) eh you stepped on **man's** huarache's cuz [Daniel, SR]

Lastly, in subject position, *man* [P] triggers singular verbal agreement (20), as predicted by prior analyses (Cheshire, 2013; Denis, 2016; Hall, 2017).

(20) **man's** doing that voice recording thing [Chris, SR]

5.7.3   Semantic Roles of *Man* [P]

Table 18 *Semantic properties of man [P] across the two datasets*

Role	Self-recording	%	Interview	%	Total
1 sing.	5	13.9	0	0	5
2 sing.	3	8.3	0	0	3
3 sing.	23	63.9	13	100	36
1 plu.	1	2.8	0	0	1
3 plu.	1	2.8	0	0	1
Indef.	3	8.3	0	0	3
Totals:	36	100	13	100	49

Stark differences, however, are found when the semantic roles of *man [P]* are considered. Whilst Hall (2017) observes that *man* [P] can (theoretically) occur with all numbers and all persons, in the analyses of Cheshire (2013) and Denis (2016), it is first-person singular *man* [P] that dominates, with both scholars observing the following hierarchy:

1 sing. (70.2% < 1 plu. (13.8%) < indef. (8.5% < 2 sing. (4.3%) < 3 sing. (3.2%)

However, as Table 18 shows, in this dataset, across both interviews and self-recordings, *man* [P] is overwhelmingly used as a third-person singular pronoun. The cline that I report is as follows (percentages reported for the self-recorded data):

3 sing. (63.9%) < 1 sing. (13.9%) < indef. ~ 2 sing. (8.3%) < 3 plu. ~ 1 plu. (2.8%)

In other words, the context that is reported as least favoured in previous accounts (third-person singular) now appears to be the most common environment in which *man* [P] occurs. Whilst my interpretations are necessarily limited by small token numbers, the fact that the interview data contains *only* third-person singular *man* [P] seems to suggest that this pattern may be indicative of wider trends affecting the distribution of this pronoun. When contrasted with Cheshire's (2013) findings, this observation appears even more remarkable. In the four corpora that comprise her analysis, only one (the film 'anuvahood') contains any third-person singular tokens of *man* [P], with just 3/59 tokens this type.

A possible interpretation of this shift is that *man* [P] is simply replacing the third-person singular masculine pronoun *he*. However, it is clear that *man* [P], as a third-person singular pronoun cannot be substituted for its standard counterpart in any context. For instance, Table 19 reports total counts for third-person pronouns in Ben's self-recordings and interviews. Since the form *man* [P] is only used to refer to male subjects in this dataset, where the form competes with standard *he*, I report only these totals.

Table 19 *Count of third-person singular masculine pronouns for Ben*

Pronoun	Interview	Self-recording	Total
He	24	24	48
Man	4	3	7

Theoretically, as a third-person singular pronoun, we could propose that *man* [P] can occupy the place of, and be substituted for, any instance of the masculine third-person singular pronoun *he*. But, as Table 19 shows, this is not the case. Indeed, Ben (and other speakers in this analysis) do not simply substitute *he* for *man* [P] in all possible environments. Rather, in both interviews and self-recordings, *he* is still the preferred choice in referring to singular masculine subjects in third-person.

As it stands, social and distributional analyses of *man* reveal only half the picture. We are therefore left wondering constraints motivate a speaker to use *man* [P] over the standard, *he*. Here, it is possible that speaker choice may not be solely influenced by linguistic or social factors, but rather may be additionally motivated by the "immediate interactional and relational goals" of using that form (Snell, 2010:651; see Moore & Snell, 2011; Drummond, 2018a, b for similar arguments). I therefore now turn interactional analyses to examine this possibility.

5.8   Interactional Functions of *Man* [P]

In Cheshire's analysis, she describes the development of the innovative pronoun as "a consequence of the rhetorical strategies" (2013:609) by which speakers use it. Specifically, she suggests that first-person pronoun *man* [P] primarily achieves two interrelated functions: 1) to index the speakers' social affiliation and, 2) to achieve specific interactional ends. As a membership category device, *man* [P] functions to situate the speaker as part of a "contextually defined group" (2013:622). Based on the mutual values of the group indexed by the use of *man* [P], the speaker is therefore able to achieve certain rhetorical effects. The first interactional resource that is discussed is couched within Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Specifically, Cheshire argues that by using *man* [P], the speaker is able to reduce the potential for an utterance to be interpreted as face-threatening by distancing themselves from the pragmatic force of that statement. A second explanation is related to the dramatization of storytelling, with *man* [P] used to relay "events that for them are emotionally heightened, to make their speech vivid and to involve their addresses" (2013:623).

Whilst Cheshire's (2013) discussion of the 'rhetorical strategies' of *man* [P] appear convincing based on the available data, there remain several issues with these

interpretations. First, Cheshires' interpretations are based on patterns identified in data obtained in interview situations, where speakers gave lengthy and detailed narratives. It is possible that the rhetorical strategies she identified are not specific to the use of *man* [P] but are additionally conditioned by the task at hand. Given that the data in the current analysis are mainly taken from self-recordings, the rhetorical strategies identified by Cheshire may not emerge in spontaneous interaction.

Similarly, in the previous sections, the data reveals a shift in the person reference of *man* [P] (1PS → 3PS). As consequence, is it therefore possible that the rhetorical strategies initially described for *man* [P] have, too, shifted. In other words, the change in the relative frequencies of the semantic values of the innovative pronoun may be a consequence of the changing rhetorical functions of *man* [P]. This possibility therefore necessitates further analyses of this feature to understand how this development may have affected the interactional utility of *man* [P].

5.8.1 Interactional Analyses

Claims that *man* [P] is used as a way for speakers to mark allegiances with a contextually defined group are confirmed: It appears, largely, that speakers in this analysis do use *man* [P] to index a 'gully identity'. However, in her analysis, Cheshire goes on to suggest that by using *man* [P], the speaker can appeal to the mutual interests of the recipient, thereby eliciting empathy on the basis of a shared understanding of the speaker-hearer. In the following analysis, I want to argue that, as a third-person singular pronoun, *man* [P] does not appeal to the mutual interests of the recipient, but rather it does the opposite: it excludes the interlocutor and strengthens the mutual ground occupied by those who belong to the ingroup – the gully.

First, however, in order to enable a comparison with the existing literature, and to track to development of the pronoun, I first examine cases of first-person singular *man* [P]. To briefly recap, previous accounts have suggested that first-person singular *man* [P] allows the speaker to mitigate the possibility of a face-threatening utterance and/or heighten the energy of the narrative. In the current dataset, however, there little evidence in the data to support the hypothesis that *man* [P] is used as part of a complex politeness ritual nor as a resource intended to dramatize the speakers' version of events. Considering just those tokens which occur with first-

person singular reference, of these four contexts, only one (21) appears to be a potentially face-threatening situation.

(21) ey let's go, can we run there quick, cos **man's** hungry [Jack, SR]

In (21), with the rest of the group dawdling, Jack appeals to his peers to go with him to the shop because he's hungry. If we are to follow Cheshire's arguments, then this instance of *man* [P] could be interpreted as a some appeal to the group to emphasise with his requests and recognise that he's hungry, thus avoiding the negative politeness associated with on-record requests. This is indeed a possible analysis of this excerpt, but one that I find unconvincing for several reasons. First, throughout Jack's recordings, there are various other requests made to other individuals (including to those who are his friends) and none include the use of *man* [P]. Consider (22) and (23):

(22) You got it! Give it to **me** you was lying the whole time come on (.) How the flip did you get that?

(23) ey is that one pound? Is that one pound? Get your change! Ey, can **I** get your change?
[Jack, SR]

Excerpt (22) follows a discussion between Jack and his friends in which he requests an item from Henry. Although the referent of 'it' is unclear, realising the object had been concealed by Henry, Jack excitedly proclaims 'you got it!' before commanding that he give it to him, referring to himself through the first-person pronoun, *me*. Similarly, in (23), seeing that his friend has some money (£1) to buy food with, Jack asks for the change, using the first-person pronoun, *I*. In neither case do we see the use of *man* [P]. Both (22) and (23) are situations where there is a potentially face-threatening request: A command and a request. However, in both object and subject contexts, it is the standard first-person pronouns, *I* and *me*, that Jack uses to refer to himself. It is exactly these situations – face-threatening situations between friends – that Cheshire's predicts *man* [P] to be used in.

Further evidence to suggest that a politeness framework is untenable, comes from other instances in which first-person singular *man* [P] is used, yet there appears

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little contextual evidence to suggest that the situation is read as face-threatening, such as (24):

(24) **man's** doing that voice recording thing   [Chris, SR]

In (24), Chris has just been given the recorder and is in the computer room and announces that he's participating in the project: "that voice recording thing". In this example and indeed in the two cases in which first-person singular *man* [P] is used, the individual does not appear to be engaged in any interaction that could be considered face-threatening.

We therefore may wish to interpret these instances of *man* [P] as evidence of what Cheshire (2013:623) refers to as a dramatization resource. However, the wider contexts in which these interactions take place do not seem to support such a reading. In the data the *man* [P] in generally occurs in relatively mundane contexts, rather than in narratives of an emotionally fraught event. For instance, in (24), Chris is simply stating his involvement in the research project. It is therefore unlikely that Chris' use of *man* [P] is intended to dramatize his version of events (cf. Cheshire, 2013:623).

Here, I argue that a more convincing account of the data is that first-person singular *man* [P] is being used as a way to construct a stance of solidarity with the other members of the gully and to index oneself as belonging to that specific group. In (22), this is appealing to the other members in the group – most of whom are gully – and in (24), Chris is directly speaking to another member who, like himself, is a peripheral member of the gully (Bartek).

However, possibly the most convincing evidence that the interactional affordances of *man* [P] have shifted comes from the context in which it is used most: As a third-person singular pronoun. Recall that, as a first-person pronoun, Cheshire (2013:621) argues that *man* [P] is often used to appeal to the mutual interests of the interlocutor, situating the speaker as part of a shared community. However, I will argue that third-person singular *man* [P] actually does the very opposite. Rather than appeal to a mutual understanding on part of the hearer, when used to refer to a third-person subject, it excludes that person from the shared community. Thus, the result is that *man* [P] delineates in-group and out-group boundaries, further validating and establishing the gully identity. To demonstrate how this feature is used

I draw on several examples that show that speakers use *man*[P] to deploy a stance of solidarity, which in turn distinguishes ingroup members from those who do not belong to this category.

Example (25) is taken from an interview with Harinder, Ben and Jack where I ask about gang crime in the area:

(25)	1	Harinder	people getting *tunked up in their face
	2	Ben	like they on the one two five
	3	Harinder	they're getting hit in the (( ))
	4	Christian	one two five, what the bus?
	5	Jack	{laughs} oh this guy {laughs} that's it {laughs}
	6	Ben	eh **man** said "one two five, the bus?" are you
	7		joking?
	8	Christian	that's what I wanna know, that's what I
	9		wanna know, innit
	10	Ben	it's a moped
[INT]			

In (25), Ben, Jack and Harinder are responding to questions about gang crime in the local area. In line 2, Ben states that 'they' [gangs] are on the 'two one five'. In line 4, I try to clarify this reference, misinterpreting the 'one two five' as a bus route, when in fact it relates to a 125cc engine – a synecdoche for moped (line 10). In lines 5-7, all three erupt in laughter, with my misinterpretation of the one two five as a bus highlighting my 'outsider' status. Laughing and emphasising my error, in line 5 Jack refers to me as "this guy". By using the demonstrative pronoun "this", Jack implies a physical distance between himself and me, the interviewer, thus explicitly excluding me from the ingroup – those who know what the "one two five" is.

In line 6, my outsider status is confirmed by Ben who uses the third-person singular *man*[P], "man said", to introduce a quotation of my speech. Here, it is unlikely that the use of *man*[P] to refer to me is intended to include me as one of the in-group, as Cheshire's arguments (2013:621-622) would predict, since my error clearly demarcates me as an outsider. Rather, the use of *man*[P] in this context appears to do similar work to when Jack refers to me as 'this guy' (line 5). I argue that, by using *man*[P] as a third-person pronoun, it explicitly removes me from the

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speech context, reporting my speech as if I were not there at all. This effect is also marked by the lower intensity of his speech, suggesting that it is his friends – not me – who are the intended addressee. This is contrasted with the marked change in intensity, interrogative rising intonation and the use of second-person singular pronoun 'you' in lines 6-7, where the question about whether I was being disingenuous is quite clearly aimed at me. Thus, the use of *man* [P] in line 6 intended to refer to me in third-person, allows Ben to distance himself and, by extension, the others from my misunderstanding. In doing so, it Ben constructs a stance of solidarity with his friends based on the mutual understanding of the referent of 'one two five' (gully), whilst explicitly othering me as someone who lacks this ingroup knowledge.

The possibility that choice in pronouns can exclude or include speakers as belonging to the ingroup is well documented (e.g., van Dijk, 2006), as is pronoun choice with reference to solidarity (Brown & Gilman, 1960). Thus, I would argue here that *man* [P] is being used as part of what Irvine (2002) terms the 'differentiation' of a style. That is, a style is only distinctive – i.e., a recognisable identity – in relation to what it is not, and who it is not. In this sense and in the context of this analysis, Ben's use of third-person *man* [P] explicitly defines me as occupying an identity that is differentiable from the style that he and his friends maintain. In doing so, the gully identity is implicitly strengthened through the use of an ingroup term, *man* [P], which his peers (who are also gully members) understand and evaluate. Thus, this positions the subject as distinct from the ingroup and bolsters solidarity amongst the ingroup.

In (26) we see a similar turn of events, when I walk into a room and I inadvertently step on Daniel's huaraches (a type of trainer). In line 1, he uses the possessive first-person singular *man* [P] to refer to his shoes, tagging this with the address term 'cuz' (an abbreviation of 'cousin' that, like the address term *man* has become semantically bleached). The use of first-person possessive *man* [P] here is the only token of this type in the dataset, but it does seem to be the only token that appears in the potentially face-threatening context where Daniel claims that I'd stepped on his shoes. I would argue here, however, that the main function of this token in this context is for Daniel to assert a potentially contentious stance, through his 'gully' identity.

(26) 1	Daniel	eh you stepped on **man's** huaraches cuz
2	Researcher	what's that like twenty quid?
3	Daniel	**man** said "twenty" ahh {laughs} you chatting
4		bars (0.5) **man** said "twenty quid" {laughs}
5		(2.2) nah not these ones, these ones are
6		limited edition
[SR]		

In line 2, I make an ironic jibe about the price of the shoes – which both of us know can be interpreted as a joke based on the knowledge that huaraches are a high-end price fashion item. In the following lines (3-6) Daniel launches into a light-hearted defence of his shoes, reporting my speech with the third-person singular *man*[P]. Although, as his primary interlocutor, he uses the third-person pronoun to address the other individuals in the room, to report my speech emphasising how incredulous it was that I asked if they were 'twenty quid'. This is marked by a perceptible increase in intensity in line 3 and laughter from the other individuals in the room. Daniel then uses the second-person singular pronoun 'you', addressing me by stating that I'm "chatting bars" (talking rubbish). He then repeats the quotation of my speech, again using *man*[P] to distance himself from my comments. Daniel then goes on to continue his defence by offering a statement of justification – that they're limited edition (line 6) – and therefore are more expensive than standard huaraches (which are not twenty pounds, in any case).

As with the use of third-person singular *man*[P] in (25), Daniel's use of this pronoun appears to heighten his disbelief that I asked whether his shoes were twenty pounds. In using *man*[P], he reports my speech as if I weren't in the room, thus essentially excluding me from the interactional context. He therefore appeals to the other members of the group (the ingroup) to acknowledge his protest and (with the shared knowledge of the true value of the trainers) reject my preposterous statement. Thus, like (25), Daniel's use of *man* [P] references in an ingroup term used to explicitly other an outgroup member. As a consequence, this has the effect of 'us' vs. 'them', where the result is the preferred strategy of negative other presentation (cf. van Dijk, 2006).

Although these examples are arguably a very specific context –

interactions with the researcher – the othering identified in referring to individuals' incoherent statements through the use of *man*[P] frequently functions between peers, where members of the ingroup emphasise behaviour as incomprehensible or not in line with the values of the ingroup. For instance, in (27) Adeep has just observed Elias in the gym playing football in trainers reported to be Giuseppe Zanottis – a high end fashion label:

(27)	1	Adeep	someone els-- how you playing in Guiseppes
	2		man?! [kisses teeth]
	3	Elias	what?
[...]			
	4	Adeep	yo you know **man's** wearing Guiseppes
[SR]			

In line 1, Adeep calls out Elias for playing in his expensive shoes before leaving the gym. Minutes later, he turns to another young person in the club, announcing what he's just seen, using *man*[P] as a third-person singular pronoun to refer to Elias. Here, Adeep clearly can't believe that he's witnessed him playing football in trainers that are worth hundreds of pounds. This is signalled by a marked emphatic high rising intonation and by him kissing his teeth in disproval. In line 4, having just left the gym, Adeep uses *man*[P] to refer to Elias. In doing so, he appeals to the other young person to appreciate his point of view, thus adopting a stance of solidarity. This indirectly asserts that there is a typical and accepted code of behaviour associated with the ingroup. Thus, by using third-person singular *man* [P], he distances himself from this act, characterising this incident as unacceptable ingroup behaviour and, as a consequence, others Elias.

5.9   Summary

In this analysis, I have argued that *man*[P] primarily functions as third-person singular pronoun to refer to male subjects, used by boys who belong to the gully. The distribution of this form is not incidental: It is primarily used by these individuals as a way to index themselves as gully members. However, importantly, it serves an important interactional function in the discourse. It is used frequently to deploy a stance of solidarity amongst members, and to other speakers as the

outgroup, thus serving to delineate ingroup and ingroup boundaries.

I would therefore argue that *man* [P] cannot be analysed straightforwardly in terms of its dialectal distribution (cf. Cheshire, 2013; Denis, 2016), but rather should be examined in terms of its stylistic potential, strategically deployed in specific communicative contexts (cf. Snell, 2010; Moore & Snell, 2011) to communicate certain non-linguistic social bonds.

6 Ey

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Discourse-Pragmatic (DP) variation in the system of 'attention signals' in the speech of the young people at Lakeside. I first provide an overview of the existing literature on DP features before focussing more specifically on how these features have been analysed within the variationist paradigm. I then go onto situate this discussion in relation to the subset of DP features that this analysis focusses on – the 'attention signals'. From here, I turn to an analysis of these features in the dataset, focussing specifically on the attention signal *ey*. I use distributional and interactional analyses to examine this feature in relation to the social context of Lakeside. I first turn to an overview of DP variation more generally.

6.2 Discourse-Pragmatic Variation

The category of 'Discourse-pragmatic (DP) features' refers to those syntactically optional elements of speech which typically do not contribute to the propositional content or truth-conditional meaning of an utterance but are generally considered to have important discourse-organising functions (Fox Tree, 2010). DPs are inherently multifunctional and often fulfil several interrelated functions in different contexts where their meaning is derived from the "linguistic co-text as well as the sequential, situational and cognitive context" (Pichler, 2013:4). Examples of DPs include the invariant tag *innit* (Palacios Martínez, 2015; Pichler, 2016b), adverbs *like* and *actually* (Corrigan, 2015; D'Arcy, 2017; Waters, 2016; Drager, 2016), and quotatives *he was*

like and *this is me*[26] (Drummond, 2018a; Cheshire et al., 2011).

Although there has long been a call to integrate the study of DP features within quantitative (variationist) sociolinguistics (Macaulay, 2002), it is only recently that a unified research tradition examining such forms has emerged (Pichler, 2016a:2; see also Pichler & Levey, 2010). This shortcoming can be explained, in part, as a consequence of a number of terminological and methodological issues associated with analysing DPs within the variationist paradigm.

The first issue concerns a lack of agreement in establishing a unified definition of DP features. What I refer to here as DP features have been, over the years, variably referred to as *discourse connectives* (Blakemore, 1992), *discourse operators* (Redeker, 1990), *discourse particles* (Schorup, 1985), *discourse signalling devices* (Polanyi and Scha, 1983) and *phatic connectives* (Bazanella, 1990)[27]. With no clear consensus on how to define these features, scholars have often delimited the scope of what constitutes a DP feature in slightly different ways. Fraser, for instance, in an article entitled 'What are discourse markers?", defines these features as elements of discourse which "signal a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1" (1999:931). Whereas Andersen (2001:39), in an analysis of what he terms 'pragmatic markers' applies a much broader definition of this set of items, considering this group of features to be "a class of short, recurrent linguistic items that generally have little lexical import but serve significant pragmatic functions in conversation".

For the purposes of this chapter, and to avoid any ambiguity, I follow Pichler (2016a:3) in defining the macro-level category of DPs as a heterogenous category of features which "perform a range of interpersonal and/or textual functions in discourse [which are] motivated first and foremost by their functionality". When defined in these terms, the formal category of DP features can be defined as those elements which fulfil one or more of the following functions: To express speaker stance, to structure discourse elements, and to aid utterance interpretation (Pichler, 2013:4). Thus, like Pichler (2016a:3), I consider this macro-category to include

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[26] It is worth noting that the quotative 'this is me' first observed by Cheshire at al., (2011) in MLE appears to have been a fleeting feature of London adolescent speech. Neither Gates (2018) nor I observe this in our own data. Drummond (p.c.) also reports an absence of this feature in Manchester adolescent speech.

[27] See Fraser (1996) and Pichler (2013:4-5) for an overview of these terms.

micro-level phenomena such as quotatives (e.g. Drummond, 2018a), discourse *like* (e.g., Drager, 2016; D'Arcy, 2017), tag questions (e.g., Moore & Podesva, 2009) and response cries (e.g., Goffman, 1978). Whilst all of these micro-level labels refer to distinct and separate discourse features, they are subsumed under the macro-category of DP features on the basis that they meet the definitional criteria of this category in that they are all i) optional elements, ii) multifunctional, iii) do not contribute to the truth-condition of the utterance, and lastly, iii) have important pragmatic/ procedural functions in discourse.

A second issue that has impeded variationist perspectives on the topic, is the extent to which DP features can truly be analysed as a sociolinguistic variable. Typically, variationist analyses have delimited the 'variant' on the basis of the features' semantic – or truth-conditional – equivalence. The sociolinguistic variable has typically been defined as a linguistic element that co-varies with other linguistic elements (i.e., two ways of saying the same thing; Labov, 1972:271), identifying a closed set of variants that constitute the variable system. Whilst this approach has been relatively unproblematic for those studies of (morpho)phonological variables, when this principle is applied to those DP features, issues arise in relation to the degree to which these multifunctional features can be considered semantically equivalent.

To account for the methodological issues associated with DP features, some scholars have suggested 'relaxing' the variable envelope, to take into account the functional equivalence of variants (*inter alia*, Lavandera, 1978; Dines, 1980; Sankoff & Thibault 1981; Cheshire, 1987; Terkourafi, 2011). These scholars have suggested that variables need not be defined in terms of the equivalence of their truth condition, but rather "may be postulated on the basis of COMMON FUNCTION IN DISCOURSE" (Dines, 1980:15–16, emphasis original). Whilst this approach mitigates the limitations of ensuring the semantic equivalence of variants (see Terkourafi, 2011 for an overview), issues remain when this approach is applied to the study of DP features. As Waters (2016) notes, since this group of features constitute an open-class set of words that are constrained by semantic-pragmatic and interactional-situational factors, satisfying the requirement of semantic or even functional equivalence remains equally problematic in defining the variable envelope.

The methodological inability to isolate the possible variable forms is further

complicated by difficulties in operationalising the Principle of Accountability (Labov, 1972). As a theoretical undergird of variationist sociolinguistics, this principle requires the researcher to isolate all possible variable contexts, identifying those contexts in which the variable did and did not occur. However, by virtue of their optionality and functional reliance on the discourse context, DP features cannot be straightforwardly subject to this principle due to the impossibility of isolating all possible variable contexts (Waters, 2016:43).

Due to the difficulties of analysing these features from a variationist perspective, some have questioned the practicality of treating DP features as sociolinguistic variables (See Pichler, 2016a for an overview). Indeed, the vast majority of research on DP features has focussed not on the quantitative patterns of the sociolinguistic distribution of a feature, but rather on the qualitative aspects of the pragmatic, discursive and interactional functions of these elements (see, *inter alia,* Holmes, 1982; Dubois, 1989; Andersen, 2001; Norrick, 2009).

Within recent decades, however, a growing body of research has demonstrated that variationist analyses of DP features are both feasible and productive. To account for the challenges of analysing DP features as sociolinguistic variables, scholars have developed novel approaches to mitigate the potential methodological associated with the operationalisation of accountability. A case in point is Pichler's (2013) analysis of DP variation in Berwick-upon-Tweed, where she proposes that DP features should be accounted for in terms of their derivational equivalence. Justification for this proposal is found in an analysis of what Pichler (2013; 2016b) terms 'NEG-tags', where she considers *innit* as a variant form of *isn't it*, which leads her to consider the entire canon of negative polarity question tags as the variable envelope. A similar approach is advocated by Waters (2016:41), in her overview of the issues facing the variable analysis of DP features, where she proposes that analysts devise a "bespoke" methodological approach which is informed by the "function, form or position" of the specific feature under study.

A similar approach is operationalised in Denis and Tagliamonte's (2016) study of right periphery tags. Taking what they refer to as a "hybrid approach" (2016:90), the authors take into account the functional equivalence of Right Periphery (henceforth RP) tags in circumscribing the variable context. This leads Tagliamonte and Denis to consider all those markers which are found in utterance

final position that fulfil some function of communicating shared knowledge as possible variants of the macro-category of 'RP tags'.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that, whilst the integration of DP features within the variationist paradigm may not be as straightforward as (morpho)phonological variables, by taking a principled and bespoke methodological approach, variationist analyses of DP features are both possible and fruitful. As such, there seems no theoretical or practical reason for excluding DP features from variationist sociolinguistics (Pichler, 2013:9). With this point in mind, I now turn to a discussion of analyses which have sought to examine the social meaning of DP features.

6.3   DPs & Social Meaning

Since DP features are both optional and multifunctional in discourse, some scholars have considered these features to be of peripheral concern in the linguistic system (e.g., Eckardt, 2012). One possible implication of this perspective is that DP features are unlikely to exhibit social and linguistic conditioning in ways comparable to other sociolinguistic variables. Although the variationist literature is somewhat more limited in comparison to other linguistic phenomena (i.e., (morpho)phonological variables), existing accounts show that DP features may accrue social indexical meaning in much the same way as other sociolinguistic variables. Indeed, scholars examining a diverse range of DP features in a number of disparate speech communities have found structured heterogeneity in the variable patterning of these elements (see *inter alia* Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Moore & Podesva, 2009; Moore & Snell, 2011; Pichler, 2013; Buchstaller, 2014; Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016).

A case in point is Mendoza-Denton's (2008) ethnographic study of Latino 'homegirls', where she analyses the core gang members' usage of the innovative discourse marking 'Th-Pro' forms, consisting of *anything, something, nothing* and *thing*, as in "because one person will look at you and <u>everything</u>" (2008:273). Her analysis shows that the core gang members' (of both Norteña's and Sureña's) use these features significantly more than their peers, attributing this trend to the covert prestige that these forms acquire within the gang. Speakers from other social groups (i.e., the Norteña Wannabe's, Disco Girls, Jocks, Sureña Wannabe's) however, show much lower rates of discourse-marking TH-pro forms.

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The current analysis focusses on the social meaning of one macro-level DP category that I refer to as the 'attention signals'. Given the absence of any variationist literature on these features, it is not possible to ascertain whether these forms are sensitive to social indexical meaning. When these forms are discussed, the existing literature has tended to mention attention signals only in passing (e.g., Norrick, 2009). Whilst there are related discourse-based accounts of the variability in comparative phenomena (e.g, response cries; Goffman, 1978), these accounts do not discuss the social meaning of the variable forms.

For this reason, in the following discussion, I focus on one particular DP feature – the invariant tag *innit* – that has been studied extensively in the research context of London and been shown to exhibit fine-grained patterns of social meaning. Whilst I acknowledge that two DP features constitute different 'micro' levels (i.e., attention signals vs. tag questions), in the absence of any current relevant literature on the variation, form and meaning of the attention signals, I draw on literature that pertains to 'macro' level category of 'DP features' to exemplify the ways in which these features can acquire social indexical meaning. My discussion here focusses on *innit* because, along with other question tags, it happens to be one of the most extensively researched DP features in the context of the present study.

Although analysed in diverse number of speech communities, both within and outside of the UK (London: Andersen, 2001; Palacios Martínez, 2015; Pichler, 2016b; Northumberland: Pichler, 2016; Hinglish spoken in the UK and Indian sub-continent: Coughlan, 2006), *innit* has perhaps not been studied more than in the speech of London adolescents, where it is claimed to have emerged within the last 50-60 years. In the city, *innit* has been documented in a number of London varieties, including Jamaican Creole spoken in the city (Hewitt, 1986), Estuary English (Andersen, 2001) and, more recently, MLE (Cheshire, 2013; Palacios Martínez, 2015; Pichler, 2016). As early as the 80's, Hewitt documents the tag in the speech of London-based adolescents, claiming that it had entered the local vernacular via creole spoken by Black speakers from the Caribbean (1986:132).

Although documented in a number of varieties beyond London (see, *inter alia,* Berwick upon Tweed: Pichler, 2013; Manchester: Drummond, 2018a), over the past twenty years, *innit* appears to be relatively robust in the speech of London-based adolescents (Andersen, 2001; Palacios Martínez, 2015; Pichler 2016:60). Rates of

usage, however, are less clear. Torgersen Gabrielatos, Hoffman & Fox (2011) claim that *innit* has stabilised in the speech of London adolescents, whilst Palacios Martínez (2015) suggests that the form may have increased in the speech of adolescents.[28]

Regardless of the frequency of *innit* in London as a whole, research in a number of geographic localities has generally converged on the finding that this form is particularly frequent in multi-ethnic and male speech communities. For instance, in her study of Berwick upon Tweed, Pichler (2013) observes that it is the men who are the primary users of *innit*. She assumes this correlation to be indicative of "men's preference for an assertive, speaker-oriented interactional style" (2013:220). Similarly, in his analysis of pragmatic markers in London adolescent speech, Andersen relates the development and use of the invariant tag to "the influence of ethnic minority speakers in [the] area" (Andersen 2001:100). Specifically, Andersen claims that *innit* has emerged through language contact with ethnically diverse populations, such as those who spoke creole. This argument seems to add support to Hewitt's (1986:132) earlier speculation that *innit* is derived from creole via language contact between Black and White adolescents.

Interestingly, however, Pichler (2013) notices stark gendered differences in the ways in which males and females use *innit* in Berwick Upon Tweed. In her analysis, she finds that the use of non-localised canonical tags correlates with female speakers who use these features primarily to achieve what she terms 'conducive functions' – to mark epistemicity and induce involvement. Whereas the use of *innit* is chiefly associated with male speakers who use this feature for 'non-condusive functions' – to signal alignment or attitudinal stance (Pichler, 2013:201-206).

More recently, a growing body of third-wave research has sought to examine the use of DP features in relation to the negotiation of group-specific styles (e.g., Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Moore & Podesva, 2009; Drager, 2016). In this line of inquiry, researchers have demonstrated that the variability in a particular DP feature

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[28] It should be acknowledged, however, that Palacios Martínez' conclusions are based on a comparative analysis of data from two corpora – Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT) and Linguistic Innovators (LI) which do not seem to be comparable. The LI corpus comprises speech of working-class adolescents, living in inner-city multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in East London (LI) whilst COLT consists of data from London-wide teenagers from diverse backgrounds.

can be understood in relation to the individuals' membership of a particular local community. These analyses have tended to show that DP features exhibit similar patterns to more 'prototypical' sociolinguistic variables, such as (morpho)phonological features, demonstrating that they too can acquire social-indexical meaning. Exploring how these features are used in discourse, researchers have demonstrated that speakers often use specific variants of a particular 'micro-level' DP category (e.g., tag questions, quotatives, and so on) to do fine-grained interactional work.

A case in point is Moore & Podesva's (2009) analysis of tag questions at Midlan High School in Bolton. By examining the different friendship groups of the teenage girls in the study, the authors show that whilst the speakers use tag questions in discursively similar ways, the ways in which the tag is responded to and designed is conditioned by the speakers' membership of a specific CofP. For instance, they show that members of the Eden Village CofP – a group defined by their trendy 'teen' style – exhibit more agreement as interlocutors in turn medial position when responding to the question tag. The authors interpret this pattern to be indicative of a group interactional style, in which the speaker establishes mutual ground amongst members of the group. Relating this interactional performance back to ingroup norms, Moore and Podesva argue that the Eden Village specific patterns of tag questions may form part of a more general 'feminine style' which is enacted by members to build the 'girly girl' image that their group identity is contingent on (2009:478).

Taken together, the literature seems to suggest that whilst DP features may not strictly adhere to the definition of a 'sociolinguistic variable', in many ways these features are subject to the same social and linguistic conditioning as other 'prototypical' (i.e., (morpho)phonological) variables. For this reason, I now turn to a discussion of 'attention signals', the broad macro-category of DP features studied in this chapter, before investigating one such feature – *ey* – in the dataset.

6.4   Attention Signals

The DP features which this analysis focusses on are those which I refer to here as 'attention signals'. This group of words or short phrases are subsumed under the broader macro-category of 'interjections', referring to a set of features which can occur as an utterance on its own which signal the speakers' thoughts/feelings

(Norrick, 2009), including expletives/taboo words as well as response cries (Goffman, 1979).

Following Ameka (1992), I distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* interjections. The first category of interjections refers to those words or non-words which exclusively fulfil the function of an interjection e.g., *ouch!*, whereas secondary interjections are words which otherwise fulfil some other semantic function, e.g., *hey!*. As Norrick (2009) notes, interjections are typically considered alongside exclamations as both signal surprise or some emotional involvement in the context of the speech act. I provide a taxonomy of *primary/secondary* interjections in Figure 8.

The group of words and non-words that I refer to here as 'attention signals', are defined as those discourse markers such as *hey* and *oi* which are typically appended to the left periphery (LP) in turn initial position (Schourup, 1985; Norrick, 2009), which seek to "attract the attention of someone not in immediate contact with the speaker" (Dubois, 1989:351). Although they can occur on their own, attention signals frequently precede vocatives and often co-occur with requests, "hey! Mike hand me the spanner". However, they can also occur in utterances where no intention is implied, such as the rhetorical sentence such as "oi! What do you think you're doing?!"
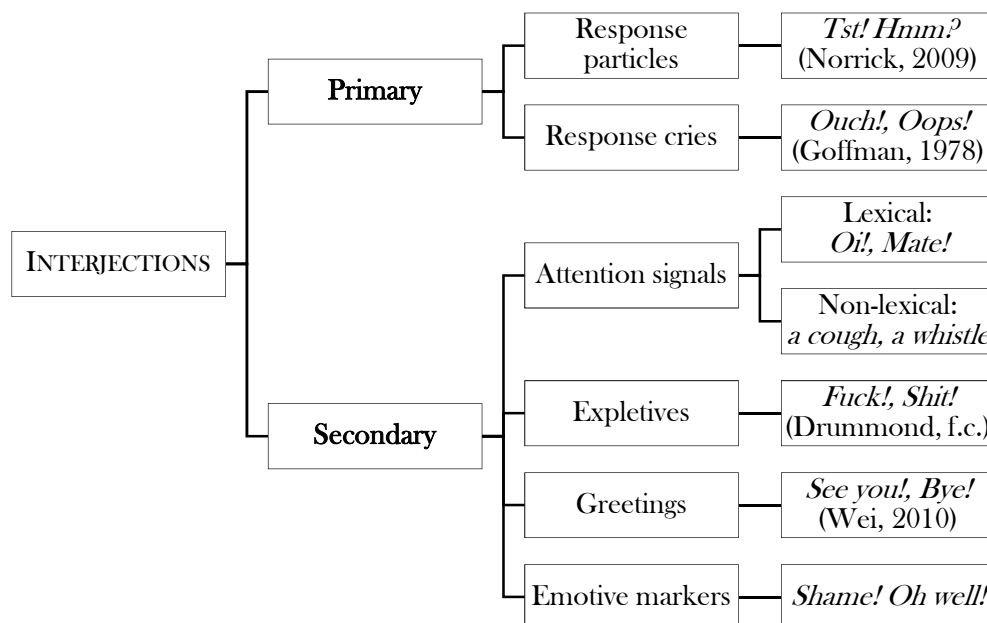

Figure 8 A non-exhaustive taxonomy of interjections (based on Ameka, 1992; Norrick, 2009)

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Although the definition of attention signals I have provided here centres on fully-lexicalised segments *(hey!, Oi!),* it should be acknowledged that other non-lexical parts of speech may also fulfil a similar function. Non-verbal attention signals include whistling, coughing and grunts where the explicit function of that verbal element fulfils the definitional criteria of a feature that 'attracts another individuals' attention'.

(28)

	1	Cooper	can I have a bite of that cookie?
	2	Sara	hey they're low calorie
	3		you can have the whole cookie
	4	Cooper	thank you

(Norrick, 2009:881)

It is also important to note that like other DP features, markers defined here as 'attention signals' are often multifunctional in that they may fulfil distinct pragmatic functions in other discourse contexts. Thus, a feature which is considered fulfilling some attentional function in one instance, may accomplish some other purpose in another. A case in point is (28), where '*hey*' is not used to attract or summon the attention of the interlocutor but rather as means to switch and refocus the conversation. In this extract, *hey* serves to refocus the exchange from an offer of a bite of the cookie to a full one, by stating that they're low calorie (Norrick, 2009:881).

Here, as with other DPs, the process of distinguishing between the multiple functions of *hey* is based on an assessment of the discourse context in which it occurs, particularly in relation to the preceding interaction and the intonation of the utterance (Fraser, 1996). This is the approach taken by Denis & Tagliamonte (2016:93) who, in their analysis of utterance final tags in Canadian English, assume that the "intonational phrasing of an utterance correlates with its underlying structure", such that the differentiation between utterance final and medial tokens can be made based on the presence or absence of "short periods of speaker silence". In this respect, identifying the discursive function of *hey* – and indeed other attention signals – is based both on the extralinguistic context in which it is observed, and a consideration of how the utterance was produced (see Pichler, 2016:82 for a critique of Palacios Martínez, 2015 on this matter).

Although other interjections including *oh, well, mhm* and *ouch* are well studied (e.g., *inter alia* Goffman, 1989; Ameka, 1992; Norrick, 2009), there is a virtual absence of literature on attention signals. The paucity of research on these features is presumably due to the relative infrequency of these tokens. The BNC (2018), for instance, lists the frequency of the attention signal *oi* at 27.95 instances per million words. Whilst this may seem surprising given the relative frequency of these forms in casual speech, the low rates are no doubt influenced by methods of data collection. In particular, it seems unlikely that the sociolinguistic interview is a favourable context for eliciting attention signals given that the semi-structured interviewee-interview question format implies a certain degree of formal turn-taking. This issue is acknowledged by Dubois in her discussion of *hey* as an introduction of pseudo-quotation as in 'He seems to have the ability to say, "**Hey**, we're coming back, we're coming back."', where she notes that such forms are only likely to be observed in data consisting of "authentic conversation" (1989:345). Thus, whilst these forms have been understudied largely due to the types of data collected, the self-recordings which comprise the data considered in this chapter therefore appear to be prime contexts to examine the variability in attention signals.

6.4.1   The Social Meaning of Attention Signals

Given the lack of research on attention signals, there remains an absence of any in-depth analysis of the social meaning of these markers. Nevertheless, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that attention signals, like other DP features, can acquire social indexical meaning. A case in point is that of *oi* where, in London, it is often associated with working-class and Cockney speakers[29]. Etymologically, this association is likely to have derived from the typical Cockney pronunciation of h-dropping, specifically the loss of word initial /h/ in 'hoy' – an attention signal typically used by mariners (OED, 2019). So strong is this association with cockney speakers that, in a survey of the variety in the 1950's, Franklyn notes that 'oi' is "intensely cockney" (1953:259), whilst Robb (2012:469) notes that the interjection became a

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[29] It should be noted that some Jewish speakers in London are likely to use a phrase derived from Yiddish – *oy vey* – that shares the same pronunciation as *oi*, with both realised as [ɔɪ]. However, *oy vey* is not used as an attention signal, but rather as a phrase meaning 'oh woe'. It therefore seems improbable that the use of *oi* is linked to *oy vey* (OED, 2019).

stereotypical 'catchphrase' of cockney music hall entertainers as early as the 1930's.

More recently, due to its association with cockney and working-class speakers, *oi* has evolved more generally as a marker of resistance and solidarity. In 1980, the East London band, the 'Cockney Rejects' released the song 'Oi! Oi! Oi!' which subsequently inspired the growth of a new a subgenre of punk rock, stylised as 'Oi!'. Emerging as an aggressive style of rock music, Oi! was a fiercely political genre representing a movement of working-class youth rebellion, bringing together punks and skin-heads alike. Songs and lyrics produced in the genre reflected the hardships faced by the community, including issues such as unemployment, workers' rights and the monarchy (Robb, 2012). More recently, the association of this attention signal with rebellion and revolt was evoked in 2002, when the London-based Grime crew, More Fire, released the track 'Oi!' – a genre of music that often depicts themes of working-class youth culture and promotes solidarity and resistance amongst marginalised communities (Boakye, 2017).

In spite of the lack of research directly on the social meaning of attention signals, it is a reasonable assumption to make that these features are likely to accrue social indexical meaning in much the same way as other DP features (e.g., Mendoza-Denton, 2009; Moore & Podesva, 2008; Moore & Snell, 2011). In many ways, attention signals achieve similar functions in discourse to those that have been studied more extensively. And like these features, attention signals fulfil some interpersonal function. Thus, as syntactically optional elements of the discourse, the presence or absence of a particular feature may be, in itself, meaningful (e.g., Moore & Podesva, 2008). It is therefore possible that the social indexical meaning of attention signals is likely to be derived from two sources: At the 'class'-level (i.e., the presence of an attention signal) and at the 'form'-level (i.e., the choice of a particular attention signal).

For the reasons outlined above, particularly given the lack of research on the distribution, function and social meaning of attention signals, I now turn to a discussion of the focus of the analysis, the innovative attention signal, *ey*.

6.4.2 *Ey*

 This section focusses on the attention signal /ʌɪ/ ~ /eɪ/ which I represent here orthographically as ⟨ey⟩[30]. To my knowledge, at present there is no variationist research on this attention signal. However, during my time at Lakeside, I had become incredibly aware of *ey* and it featured prominently in my fieldnotes where I noted the interjection in my first few weeks. Preliminary observations of this form seemed to suggest that it was used primarily in utterance initial position and appeared to fulfil the function of eliciting another speakers' attention, as is the case in the examples listed in (29)-(32):

(29) **ey**, can we do our training today?   [Feliks, SR]

(30) **ey!** Christian let me get water as well please   [Chris, SR]

(31) **ey,** Jack you know Theo that goes Hartington, you know

  he's gonna get excluded   [Alex, SR]

(32) **ey** you stepped on man's huarache's cus   [Daniel, SR]

In all four examples, *ey* appears to be used much like *hey* or *oi,* in that it functions as an attempt to attract or signal another speakers' attention, thus fulfilling the definitional criteria of the 'attention marker' set out in preceding sections. Whilst the discourse contexts in which *ey* is found appear to be diverse – a question in (29) & (31), a request in (30) and a statement in (32) – the primary function of *ey* as an attention signal, much like *hey* or *oi,* appears to be confirmed in all contexts.

 Lay definitions of this feature on urbandictionary.com also seem to substantiate my claims that *ey* fulfils a similar function to the other attention signals. One user defines this feature as "a loud yell in order to gain the attention of other people" whilst the 'top definition' describes it as "a term used to catch someone [sic] attention when you don't know their name" (Urbandictionary.com, 2003; 2005).

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[30] This feature is also frequently represented as ⟨ay⟩ and ⟨aye⟩ in several grime lyrics, for example: Nines - I See You Shining – albeit this appears to be the non-attention seeking *ey* that I discuss in later sections. I represent the feature as *ey* to avoid the association with the archaic affirmatory exclamation ⟨aye⟩ which I do not believe to be related to the feature I discuss here.

One possible theory is that *ey* is simply a development of *eh*. But although *ey*, like *eh*, is sometimes realised as /eɪ/, the DP discussed here is distinct from this tag in a number of ways. Grammars typically treat *eh?* as an invariant question tag which is "appended to statements and exclamations" and invites "the listener's response", usually to elicit some repetition of a preceding utterance (Quirk et al., 1985: 814, 835). For instance, in (33) the invariant tag *eh* is intended to seek a support for the assertion that it is 'good for the cattle'.

(33) And it is good for the cattle, **eh**?

(Rosen, 2014:76)

Following previous definitions of this feature as a question tag, *eh* is generally considered to be interchangeable with other right periphery (**RP**) tags including *right?* and *You know?* (Denis, 2013; Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016).

One possible interpretation is that *ey* has simply developed from *eh*. This is possible since, in several varieties of English including those spoken in New Zealand and Jersey (e.g., Rosen, 2014) and most notably, Canada, where it is a "quintessential stereotype" of the variety, (Denis, 2013:1; see also Avis, 1972; Gold and Tremblay, 2006; Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016), *eh* has been shown to exhibit a number of diverse discourse functions. However, even in these varieties, *eh* is still typically observed at the RP and generally functions as a question particle, where it functions as the first element of an adjacency pair (Avis, 1972; Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016). Rosen (2014:76) identifies 13 separate pragmatic functions of *eh?* in Jersey English, including those which are emphatic, response-seeking, repetition seeking and phatic. In all four contexts, however, *eh* is united by the singular function that it seeks verification of the utterance statement. In none of the examples can *ey* be interpreted as a way for speakers to elicit support for the assertions made either prior or following the marker.

Further differences between *ey* and *eh* are found not only in terms of the function of the marker (attention signal vs. tag question), but also in terms of its scope. As demonstrated in examples (29)-(32), *ey* typically occurs at the LP, such that its scope extends rightward over the following utterance. As a question tag, *eh* typically occurs at the RP, with these markers taking leftward scope over the preceding utterance, e.g.,(33). Thus, unlike *eh*, *ey* does not appear to exhibit the

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positional characteristics of a question tag nor appear to function as a response elicitor or to clarify a preceding utterance (cf. Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016). Rather, *ey* appears to achieve a similar function to the signals *hey!* and *oi!* in that they attempt to attract the attention of an interlocutor (consider extracts (34) & (35)).

(34) **ey**, I don't like your attitude [Sam, SR]

(35) **ey**, can I get your change? [Jack, SR]

Indeed, by virtue of its function to attract the attention of an interlocutor, *ey* is typically observed at the LP in sentence initial position as demonstrated in the prior examples. Less frequently, however, *ey* can be observed in utterance medial and final positions. Yet even in these non-canonical positions, the attention seeking function is apparently still maintained.

(36) man said I'm a bang out lol, both of you verse me

look this is my--, **ey** this is my goal that's you two --

that's your goal [Ben, SR]

(37) look ((at)) this one, **ey** [Feliks, SR]

In (36), *ey* is found in turn-medial, clause initial position, but the scope of this still extends rightward – 'this is my goal'. The 'attentional' function here is clear. In (37), *ey* occupies utterance final position where its scope is assumed to be leftward. Although this position is typically associated with the question tag *eh*, it is more likely that Feliks is attempting to elicit his interactants' attention to 'look at this one' than to elicit confirmation of what he had just said (cf. Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016). Thus, whilst *ey* can exhibit the positional and scopal properties of other DP features, it is clear that even when it occupies contexts associated with *eh*, it does not function as a question tag.

One other possibility regarding the development of *ey* is that this feature has been derived through phonetic attrition, namely the loss of /h/ via H-dropping, *hey* [heɪ] → [eɪ] → [ʌɪ], a feature that is considered typical of working-class speech in London (e.g., Wells, 1982a). This line of argumentation seems plausible given that *hey* is already an established attention signal (e.g., Dubois, 1989; Norrick, 2009). Thus, the development of *hey* to *ey* would be evidence of a reductive phonological

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process. However, this hypothesis is complicated by the fact that recent analyses of adolescent speech in London (e.g., Cheshire et al., 2008) have noted a reversal of H-dropping. Although /h/ is not explored in any detail in this analysis, preliminary observations support this observation. In word initial position, /h/ is generally maintained, even by those who produce *ey*.

Nevertheless, even with apparent reversal of the reductive process of h-dropping in London adolescent speech, it is still possible that *ey* could have been derived through phonetic attrition of /h/. As I have shown in my analyses of TH-stopping, processes of lexicalisation appear to be heavily influencing the rate of variation. It is therefore possible that social indexical meaning can be attached to specific lexical items, rather than effecting the entire set of similar phonetic environments (see also Drummond, 2018b).

Evidence for this line of reasoning comes from Denis (2013), where he notes that in Vancouver, *hey* is often heard as a variant of *eh?*, suggesting that the two forms are linked by derivation. Thus, in the context of the current analysis, it is possible that h-dropping is lexically constrained to this segment to fulfil some specific interactional purpose.

One such observation which may support the hypothesis that *ey* has been derived through *hey* is the use of this feature in music lyrics. Several online references point to the stereotype of *hey* in Hip-Hop and pop music. For instance, Robinson (2017) describes the interjection *hey* as a "euphoric yell [that] took over pop music", whilst users of internet forum site decry the trend of "Dudes yelling "HEY!" on hip-hop tracks" (Reddit, 2014). Similarly, the grime song I See You Shining by London-based Grime artist, Nines, features *ey* in several of the lyrics (e.g., I see you shining, <ay/ey>). It is possible that *ey* has been borrowed into music subcultures (such as Grime) for its utility – that of catching the listeners' attention – but has subsequently lost word initial /h/ to maintain some distance between this signal and *hey* which is associated with more mainstream genres, such as pop.

Further evidence to suggest that *ey* may have been derived through *hey* is the fact that *ey* does not always adhere to the function of an attention signal. As several scholars have noted (Fraser, 1996; Fox Tree, 2010; Pichler, 2013; 2016), DP features are multifunctional and fulfil distinct pragmatic functions in different contexts. Denis & Tagliamonte (2016) suggest that exploring the multifunctionality of

DPs may point to the origins and development of this feature. *Ey* is no different. In fact, 84 tokens of *ey* are excluded from the foregoing analysis as they did not appear adhere to the definition of an 'attention signal'. Rather, the majority of these tokens seem to represent the speakers' excitement and in most of cases, occur in situations where the speaker in engaged in listening to a song or is admiring some skill or prowess, such as a particularly good goal.

(38) ey! ey! ((that's a skank, you know)) {NS}   [Daniel, SR]

For instance, in extract (38), whilst listening to a grime song on the computer, Daniel uses *ey* twice and proclaims how great the song is ("a skank"). Whilst the discourse context appears similar to the attention signal *ey*, it does not seem (at least according to the intonation and discourse context) that *ey* is being used to attract or elicit someone's attention. First, it is phonetically different than 'attention seeking *ey*', in that these tokens marked by an exaggerated lengthening of the diphthong offglide, [ɪː], and falling intonation of the utterance. Second, unlike attention seeking *ey*, the extralinguistic context in which these tokens occur are not attached to discourse information that fulfils any type of attention seeking function. Rather, it appears that the use of *ey* here is to heighten the excitement or the involvement of the group in listening to the song, more akin to a type of 'chant'.

In fact, all 84 tokens which were coded as non-attention signalling *ey*, appear to have similar phonetic and discourse characteristics. Thus, whilst it is possible that the attention signal *ey* and this non-attention signalling function are related by form, the feature I focus on here appears to be solely used to attract or elicit another interlocutors' attention. By distinguishing between the separate functions of *ey*, I follow Waters' (2016) advice in developing a bespoke analysis that takes into account the form and function of the attention signals to isolate possible variants (see also Tagliamonte & Denis, 2016). As discussed in §6.4, this leads me to consider *ey* within the variable envelope of the attention signals, contrasting this feature with more 'prototypical' forms such as *oi* and *hey*.

6.5   Research Agenda

The survey of the background literature in previous sections therefore raises some important empirical and theoretical questions, both in regard to the current analysis

and beyond the scope of this thesis. The first question concerns the distribution of those forms classified as 'attention signals' at Lakeside. Given that there appears to be a potentially new attention signal – *ey* – it is worth considering the ways in which this form is used and whether those uses have become indexical of a particular group and/or identity (cf. Moore & Podesva, 2009). Furthermore, given that *ey* appears to be an innovative DP feature, then it is worth exploring whether this particular attention signal fulfils some specific purpose that others cannot.

A second but interrelated question concerns the class of 'attention signals' and the macro-level of DP features more generally. As noted, in comparison to other DP features, there is an absence of research on the variable system of attention signals. Thus, whilst the main research questions pertain to examining the distribution and social meaning of the feature at Lakeside, a second more general goal of this analysis is to fill an empirical gap in the literature on attention signals, as well as add to a growing body of work which uses variationist methods to examine DP features (e.g., Pichler, 2013). Before introducing the analysis, I first provide a discussion of the methods used in examining these features.

6.6   Methods

The analysis presented here is based on data collected from self-recordings of the 25 adolescents, as discussed in §3.10. Due to the lack of comparative analyses of attention markers more generally, it is not possible to follow an established methodological framework to analyse the variable system of these DP features. These issues are complicated by the fact that, as numerous scholars have noted (*inter alia* Andersen, 2001; Pichler, 2013; 2016; Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016; Waters, 2016; Levon, 2016; D'Arcy, 2017), and as discussed in previous sections, DP features do not strictly adhere to the definition of a sociolinguistic variable. To account for these issues, I develop a 'bespoke' analysis as proposed by Waters (2016). Following, Tagliamonte & Denis (2016), I consider both the functional equivalence of these features and their phonetic shape. Thus, acknowledging these issues, like Levon (2016:142) in his analysis of the discourse functions of High Rising Terminals, I "take advantage of the heuristic value of variationist tools" to uncover the distribution and function of the different forms of these DP features.

Following the justifications outlined above, I include in the variable context

any word which fulfils the functional criteria of an 'attention signal', based on the definition of this group of terms outlined in earlier sections. This includes forms such as *hey, oi, yo* and the focus of this chapter, *ey*. As Pichler (2016) notes in regard to the general functionality of DP features, many of these forms are multifunctional. For instance, *hey* serves as a greeting in the phrase "hey, how are you?" and certain nouns (e.g., proper nouns), which often function as attention signals, can also function deictically, with their only purpose to reference the intended recipient of a message, e.g., *"Lisa! Come here!"* (attention signal) *vs.* *"Lisa, how are you?"* (deictic reference). Whilst these functions may constitute some attentional response, for instance a response to "how are you?", the canon of 'attention signals' that I define here function *only* to elicit the intended recipients' attention in regard to some statement/request/question. Tokens that reference speaker deixis – (i.e., *"Lisa, how are you?"*) are therefore not included in the variable envelope.

As noted earlier in this chapter and in Figure 8, attention signals are not always fully lexicalised. Many non-lexicalised parts of speech, such as whistling or coughing, and intentional sounds, e.g., banging a table, can fulfil similar functions to the fully lexicalised attention signals discussed here. Whilst these forms are potentially meaningful in their own right, non-lexicalised attention signals were excluded from the current analysis. This methodological decision is in part because of the relative infrequency of these sounds, but also because of the difficulty in isolating these signals from more general noises based on audio recordings alone. Without audio-visual data, it would be potentially problematic to discern whether a sound – such as a table being banged – was part of the recording context or whether this action was being used to attract a speakers' attention.

The distinction between attention signals and other discourse functions of these tokens was made based on a careful examination of the utterance context. As others have noted (Fraser, 1996; Pichler, 2013; Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016), the distinct functions of a DP feature can often be isolated by examining both the interactional context of the segment as well as the suprasegmental qualities of the feature in a given utterance. In the case of attention signals, those tokens which fulfil this function are typically characterised by a greater intensity and are usually followed by a short pause. Likewise, attention signals typically occur at the left periphery taking leftward scope, where they primarily function to attract or elicit another

individuals' attention (Norrick, 2009). Following this process, and as mentioned in §6.4.2, 84 tokens were excluded from the analysis because the functional criteria of the 'attention signal' was not met or was ambiguous.

Unlike analyses of other variable forms, I do not exclude repeated tokens (cf. Chapters 4 & 5). Whilst this may seem an unusual decision, I maintain that this methodological choice is motivated by the arguments made by Waters (2016) – that variationist analyses of DP features must be tailored to the specific function and distribution of the phenomena under study. Since attention signals are commonly found in repeated sets by virtue of their function to attract the hearers' attention, I treat each instance as a single token, regardless of whether it has been repeated[31]. Tokens which part of false-starts and quotatives were excluded from this analysis. Only the self-recorded dataset is considered in this analysis since this method is the most conducive to the elicitation of these features (Dubois, 1989).

After extracting these signals, the tokens were coded for a variety of linguistic and social factors. Linguistic factors included 'position of token' and 'discourse context'. In terms of the position, the attention signal was coded for whether it occurred at the 'initial', 'medial', or 'final' periphery of the utterance to test the assumption that attention signals typically occur at the LP (e.g., Norrick, 2009). The surrounding discourse context of the attention signal was coded for either 'command', 'statement', 'exclamation', 'question', or 'insult'. The coding schema used here is adapted from Gold and Tremblay's (2006) analysis of Canadian *eh*. Whilst I do not consider *ey* and *eh* to be related in any way (other than sharing a similar phonetic form), this coding schema has been adopted in similar analyses (e.g., Denis & Tagliamonte, 2016 on RP tags) to ascertain the pragmatic function of other DP features. For this reason, I therefore coded all tokens of *ey* as either 'insult', 'statement', 'command', 'question' or 'exclamation' in relation to the wider discourse context in which they appear. Although it could be argued that all attention

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[31] To ensure that this did not unfairly skew the results, a separate dataset of consisting of 671 unique tokens of was created which excluded repeated tokens. For instance, in Bartek's utterance: "ey ey ey Josiah! Josiah! Josiah! stop stop stop", only the first instances of "ey" and "Josiah" were counted. The same models described in §6.8.1 were applied to this dataset. This largely confirms the results of the model which includes repeated tokens. Only interlocutor (non-gully) and context (question) are affected by the changes, with these two factors dropping by one level of significance (Non-gully interlocutor: -0.48261, <0.05; Context question: -0.68727, N.S.).

signals are 'exclamations' by virtue of their function, I consider the wider discourse context in which the element occurs along with the intonation of the utterance in coding these features (for a similar argument related to HRT, see Levon 2016). To demonstrate how this schema was operationalised, the different discourse contexts are presented in (39)-(43) with examples from the dataset.

(39) Insult: **ey** you're gay   [Jack, SR]

(40) Statement: **ey** I'm down here   [Bartek, SR]

(41) Command: **ey** pass me the salt man   [Daniel, SR]

(42) Question: **ey** why'd yo-- why'd you sell your pouch to him?
                                                                           [Ben, SR]

(43) Exclamation: **ey! ey! ey!**   [Julia, SR]

In addition to the linguistic factors, and as discussed in previous chapters, I include several social factors to examine the sociolinguistic distribution of these features. These include gully membership of interlocutor: gully vs. non-gully; gully membership of speaker: gully vs. non-gully; age: younger vs. older; and sex: male vs. female.

It is worth mentioning here that speaker 'response' is not coded for (cf. Moore & Podesva, 2009). Given that I have argued that these DPs fulfil some interpersonal function, it would have been perhaps useful to examine the ways in which the different types of attention signals are responded to. Regrettably, however, since the data is taken from audio recordings without visual input, it is difficult (if not impossible) to discern whether a particular attention signal was responded to or not. In many cases, the types of prepositional content which they are attached to do not necessarily require a verbal response, e.g., 'ey, pass me the ball'. Whilst it may be possible to recover the degree to which the signal was responded to from the ensuing discourse context, in most cases the success of the attention signal was difficult to isolate. A clear case in point are those non-verbal responses (e.g., head-shaking, hand symbols). For this reason, I do not code 'response' to attention signal (cf. Moore & Podesva, 2009) or analyse the effectiveness of these signals. Nevertheless, this is

likely to be a fruitful area of further research.

Following Denis & Tagliamonte (2016), a series of binomial mixed-effects regression models were built in R, using the lme4 package (Bates et al. 2015; R Core Team 2016) to assess the significance of each of the linguistic and social factors. In each model, 'speaker' is included as a random effect to account for the relative strength of the individuals' variable system. Models were manually stepped down using log-likelihood tests from 'maximal' models containing all factors, to those which contained only significant factors. In the following sections, the analyses and my interpretations made are those based on 'best fit' models. Due to the somewhat small sample size, it was not possible to check for interactions. I concede that a more sizeable dataset would have been preferable in order to examine possible interactions between discourse context and gully membership, however I maintain that the dataset is robust enough to make principled interpretations of the patterns.

6.7   Analysis

A total of 822 attention signal tokens were extracted from the dataset. Table 20 provides the overall rates of the attention signals included in the analysis and their distribution across different word positions.

Table 20 *Distribution of attention signals across utterance position*

Attention Signal	Initial	Medial	Final	N	%
Ey	466	36	4	505	61.6%
NP	215	12	17	244	29.7%
Ah	29	1	0	30	3.6%
Oi	12	3	2	17	2.1%
Hey	8	0	0	8	1.0%
Yo	6	0	0	6	0.7%
Oh	4	0	0	4	0.5%
VP	4	0	0	4	0.5%
Hello	3	0	0	3	0.4%
Totals:	747	52	23	822	100

As one can see, the innovative marker and the subject of this analysis – *ey* – is by far the most preferred attention signal, constituting over half (61.6%, n=506) of the variation. After *ey*, noun phrases (NPs) are the most frequent attention signal (29.7%, n=244). What we may perceive to be the somewhat more standard or typical *hey* and *oi* are actually highly infrequent, accounting for just 1% (n=8) and 2.1% (n=17) of the

data overall. Thus, although *oi* may have once been considered typical of working-class East London speech, it seems that this form has now been supplanted by the innovative form, *ey* – at least for some speakers.

Whilst the variable system of attention signals appears to be in flux, the positional constraints on these features appears to be relatively robust. Indeed, the vast majority of the attention signals (90.9%, n=747) are found in sentence initial position, at the LP. This observation is in line with other descriptions of similar DP features such as interjections (e.g., Norrick, 2009) which typically occupy sentence initial position. Whilst some of the more frequent attention signals exhibit more variation in their position, non-initial tokens are still particularly rare, accounting for just 9.1% (n=75) of the variation.

6.8   Distributional Analyses of *Ey*
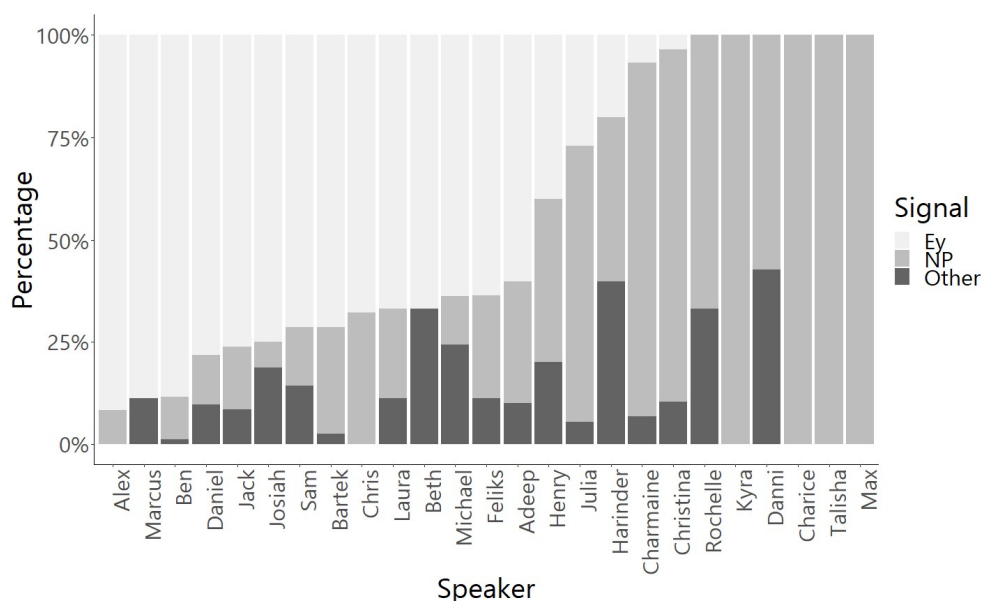
Figure 9 *Distribution of attention signals by speaker*

Figure 9 shows the distribution of attention signals by individual speaker. Since *ey* and NPs far exceed the rate of other attention signals, these are represented as separate identities whilst those 'minor' variables are subsumed into the 'other' category since the frequency of these tokens is both low and variable across individual speakers to be represented individually.

Focussing specifically on the main variants here, as Figure 9 shows, rates of

ey are incredibly variable across individual speakers. Although there are no categorical users, for the majority of the male speakers, *ey* appears to be the primary attention signal that these speakers use. Only one male, Max, avoids the use of *ey* entirely. The girls seem much more variable in their usage of *ey*. Whilst there are some speakers who use multiple strategies of attention signalling (e.g., Laura), there are several others who avoid using *ey* altogether (Rochelle, Danni, Charice, Kyra, Talisha).

Table 21 *Normalised frequency of 'ey' per 1000 words*

Speaker	'ey'	Corpus size	Relative freq.
Daniel	90	6082	14.8
Bartek	85	3060	27.7
Ben	84	2669	31.5
Jack	45	5523	8.1
Feliks	40	2717	14.7
Adeep	36	3138	11.5
Sam	25	2904	11.9
Michael	21	1801	11.7
Chris	19	1212	15.7
Josiah	12	3744	3.2
Alex	11	676	16.3
Nicole	10	4480	2.2
Marcus	8	2948	3.1
Beth	6	1389	4.3
Laura	6	680	8.2
Henry	4	3511	1.1
Harinder	2	4447	0.4
Charmaine	1	3400	0.3
Christina	1	5713	0.2
Totals:	506	-	-

To account for the relative difference in size of the data collected for each speaker, the normalised frequencies of this attention signal per 1,000 words were calculated

for each speaker. The relative frequencies of *ey* are displayed in Table 21, which largely confirms the distribution identified in Figure 9. The highest users of *ey* are the boys, with the gully exhibiting higher rates of this feature than their peers. Indeed, those displaying the highest relative frequencies of *ey* are those who are 'core' members of the gully (Ben, Bartek, Alex, Chris, Daniel). Females tend to avoid using *ey* altogether, but those who do use this feature tend to do so at a much lower rate (Christina, Charmaine). Only Laura seems to dramatically differ from her female peers, however this is likely to be influenced by size of the corpus from which these tokens were extracted.
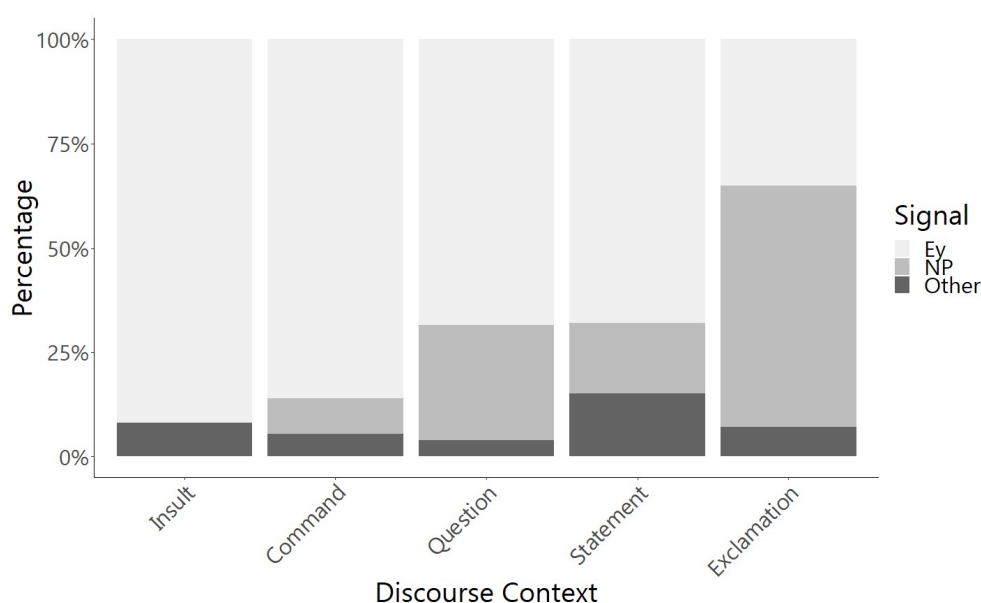

Figure 10 Distribution of attention signals and discourse context

Turning to the effect of discourse context on the variable realisation of the attention signals, Figure 10 shows that the rate of *ey* is influenced by the five different contexts in different ways. Specifically, the occurrence of *ey* appears to be conditioned by a hierarchy, occurring least in the discourse contexts of exclamations and most in insults (exclamations > statements > questions > commands > insults). Whilst *ey* is relatively infrequent in the context of exclamations (35.0%, N=98/280), in insults and commands, it is considerably more frequent – accounting for 94.6% (n=35/37) and 86.1% (n=142/165) of all attention signals used in these discourse contexts. In the two remaining contexts, *ey* appears to be relatively frequent in both, with this attention signal used 68.6% (n=70/102) of the time in questions and 68.0% (n=162/238) of the time in statements. I explore the possible reasons as to why *ey*

may be conditioned by the discourse context in later sections.

I now turn to statistical analyses of the entire canon of attention signals to examine the relative strength of the social and linguistic factors on the realisation of *ey*.

6.8.1 Statistical Analyses of *Ey*

Data from 19 speakers (those who produced *ey*) totalling 763 tokens were entered into a binominal logistic regression model. For the reasons mentioned earlier, 'speaker' was selected as a random effect to account for the relative strength of individual speakers' variable systems. Since all speakers who produced *ey* are 'olders', age is not entered into the model. Similarly, due to the correlation of sex and gully membership, I do not assess sex in this model. Lastly, *ey* was selected as the predictor value, with all other attention signals (i.e., NPs, *oi, hey*, and so on) conflated as one 'other' category.

The model of 'best fit' is presented in Table 22, where 'ey' is selected as the predictor variable versus other attention signals. Only 'position' is not selected as significant. Given the similar distribution of the position of attention signals across initial, medial and final contexts (see Table 20), this finding is to be expected. The model presented in Table 22 shows that there is a significant effect of context, interlocutor identity and group membership.

Table 22 *Best-fit binomial mixed-effects regression model for attention signals*

Fixed effect	Estimate	t	z value	p
(Intercept)	2.293	0.347	6.605	<0.001
Context (Exclamation)	-2.230	0.297	-7.505	<0.001
Context (Insult)	0.178	0.668	0.267	0.8
Context (Question)	-0.765	0.370	-2.069	<0.05
Context (Statement)	-1.135	0.297	-3.824	<0.001
Gully (Non-gully)	-1.353	0.509	-2.659	<0.01
Interlocutor (Non-gully)	-0.690	0.215	-3.213	<0.01

Number of observations: 763, groups: Speaker (19, SD= .8)

Specifically, *ey* is significantly more likely to be used in interactions with gully members (p<0.01) and is significantly more likely to be used by gully members than non-gully members (p<0.01). Thus, the social factors that reach significance levels here appear to confirm the earlier distributional observations noted in earlier sections. Specifically, *ey* is both directly (used primarily by gully members) and

indirectly (used in interactions with other gully members) associated with the gully.

The relationship between discourse context and *ey,* however, is somewhat more complex. Pairwise comparisons (see Table 23) demonstrate that the effect of context on *ey* is not conditioned by a significant stepwise hierarchy. There is no significant difference between insults and commands, but there is a significant difference between commands and questions ($p < 0.05$). However, there is no significant effect between questions and statements. In other words, it seems that *ey* is strongly favoured in the discourse contexts of commands and insults in comparison to question and statements. But, perhaps the most important finding here is that *ey* is significantly dispreferred in exclamations than in comparison to all four other discourse contexts. This effect is perhaps surprising given that the primary function of the attention signals is generally assumed to be that of an interjection or exclamation (Ameka, 1992).

Table 23 *Pairwise comparisons of discourse context factor levels.* [32]

	Reference value									
	Insult		Command		Question		Statement		Exclamation	
	Est.	*p*-value	*Est.*	*p*-value	*Est.*	*p*-value	*Est.*	*p*-value	*Est.*	*p*-value
Insult			0.1782	0.79	-0.9434	0.17	-1.3129	<0.05	-2.4080	<0.001
Command					-0.7650	<0.05	-1.1348	<0.001	-2.2299	<0.001
Question							-0.3697	0.23	-1.4648	<0.001
Statement									-1.0951	<0.001
Exclamation										

It therefore seems that *ey* is significantly dispreferred in a context which can be considered the prototypical discourse context of its category. This observation suggests that there is a possibility that *ey* may have developed its own pragmatic functions that distinguish this from the rest of the attention signals – a possibility that warrants interactional analyses of this feature, which I return to in later sections.

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[32] Non-significant levels are represented by the light grey shading.

The significance of these effects is evaluated in Figure 11, a plot which details the results of a post-hoc tukey HSD test. The test was executed using the *glht* function in R from the multcomp package (Hothorn, 2019), applied to the model of best fit (Table 22), taking into account the random effect of speaker. The purpose of this test is to determine whether there exist significant differences between group means, whilst accounting for the possibility of a type 1 error (i.e., a false positive) that may have arisen during manual pairwise comparisons. As such, the Tukey test is a much more conservative estimate of the significance of the effects.

The graph in Figure 11 shows the significant clustering (to the left of 0) of the factor level 'exclamation' versus the other discourse contexts, thus largely confirming the significant effect of shown in Table 22. In comparison to the pairwise tests reported in Table 23, the difference is that the relationship between statement-insult is no longer observed (as represented by the crossing of the dotted line in Figure 11).
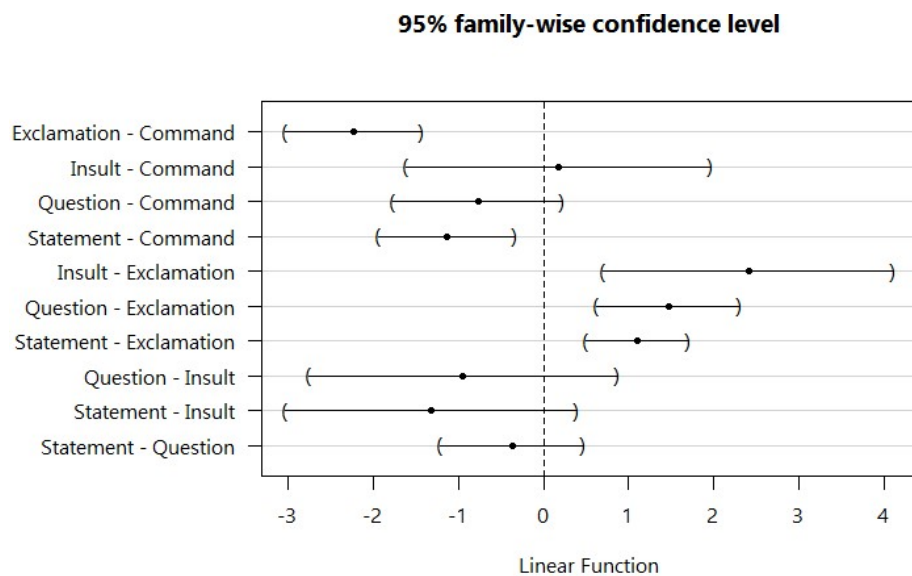
Figure 11 Tukey HSD Test & significance of 'context'

Summarising these findings, Figure 11 shows that in addition to the significant differences between statement and commands, the main pattern is that *ey* is significantly dispreferred in exclamatory discourse contexts (i.e., the prototypical context for attention signals to occur in). Taken together, this seems to suggest that *ey* is being used in discursively different ways to other attention signals, thus warranting interactional analyses of this feature. In what follows, I focus on the main

two types of discourse context 'insults' and 'commands' given the differences identified here.

6.8.2   Interactional Analyses

Distributional and statistical analyses of the attention signals therefore seem to suggest that *ey* is primarily associated with the gully, both in terms of its social distribution but also in that it is used more frequently in interactions with ingroup members. By examining the discursive contexts in which the feature occurs, it appears further that in comparison to what may be considered the more 'standard' attention signals (e.g., *hey, oi* and noun phrases), *ey* is significantly associated with the discourse contexts of insults and commands. Whilst distributional analyses can isolate the social patterns of the feature and point to its discursive function, it is still unclear as to why this community of speakers would use *ey* more frequently than their peers and the relevance of the discourse contexts of insults and commands on the use of this feature. In other words, we are still left wondering, what function does *ey* fulfil in the context of insults and commands that other attention signals do not? And, why do the gully use *ey* more than their peers?

In order to answer these questions, I suggest that, following variationist analyses which integrate interactional perspectives in examining variable contexts (e.g., *inter alia* Kiesling, 1998; Moore, 2003; Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Snell, 2010; Moore & Snell, 2011; Lawson, 2011; Kirkham, 2013; Levon, 2016; Drummond, 2018a, b), exploring the discursive contexts in which a feature occurs can reveal the ways in which those variables can fulfil specific interactional functions. From this perspective, I turn now to an analysis of the contexts in which *ey* occurs to understand the stances and related interactional affordances that are associated with this attention signal. In what follows, I argue that *ey* is most frequently used to deploy a 'dominant' stance, through which the speaker is able to exert authority over or solidarity with an individual to achieve certain (largely positive) interactional ends. Interpreting these patterns alongside the correlational and statistical analyses presented earlier, I argue that *ey* has become associated with the gully through a process of 'stance accretion' (Du Bois, 2002), with this feature occurring as part of a broader performance of their masculine identities.

In order to better understand the discursive function of *ey*, I first turn to a

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consideration of the two main discourse contexts in which this feature is found: commands and insults. Although there are clear linguistic differences between commands which are typically imperatives and insults which are usually statements, both discourse types are interrelated in that they are both highly face-threatening contexts (Brown & Levinson, 1978). As a type of imperatives, commands compel the addressee to complete some action, thus threatening the negative face needs of the recipient, imposing upon their right to freedom. In this sense, they threaten the individuals' negative face. Insults, on the other hand, are typically positive face-threatening acts since they are intended to abuse or scorn the addressee – a speech act which violates the speakers' desire to be favourably liked. Whilst the face-threatening effects of insults and commands can be minimised through hedging, e.g., "would you mind if you could open the door?", as direct speech acts, they are generally perceived to be "bald on record' (Brown & Levinson, 1978:99) that is, the speaker does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face.

Given that *ey* seems to be significantly influenced by the discourse context in which it is used, why would it be that it is primarily associated with some of the most contentious discourse contexts? I suggest that one possibility is that it is precisely these face-threatening contexts that the interactional function of *ey* becomes relevant. In other words, if as I argue, *ey* is used to deploy a dominant stance, it seems likely that this attention signal be associated with commands and insults since, by definition, these discourse contexts require the speakers to assert some type of dominance over another individual. In commands, it is compelling the individual to do something on behalf of the speaker, and in insults, it is the speaker asserting themselves by using an inflammatory word or phrase to belittle/offend the addressee.

To demonstrate how *ey* and its related stances are utilised in interaction, I turn first to those tokens which appear as part of a command. By definition, commands imply a dominant, authoritative or peremptory order, involving the submission of an individual to another. It is perhaps, therefore, unsurprising that the dominant stance evoked through the use of *ey* is used frequently in these contexts, such as those in (44)-(46):

(44)

1	Adeep	**ey** chill, chill, chill, **ey** Christian tell
2		him to pass my jacket! (0.3) pass my jacket!

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3		**ey** pass my jacket pass my jacket pass my
4		jacket

(45)

1	Sam	I'm not getting pushed, Talisha's pushing
2		me {NS}
3	Daniel	what you doing?
4	Sam	**ey**, chill man! **ey** chill man!

(46)

1	Daniel	**EY,** HURRY UP AND PASS ME THE
2		BLUE! (( )) sorry sorry so-- **ey** no hurry up
3		man pass the thing pass the thing oh oh

In these extracts, we see how *ey* prefaces bald, on-record positive face-threatening requests where the attention signal is introduced to elicit the attention of the individual before the issue of a command which instructs the individual to commit to some action or task (e.g., chill, i.e., calm down). In all three extracts, *ey* does not appear to solely be used just to seek the attention of the individual, but rather, it also seems to be used as a way for the speaker to index some dominant stance.

In (44), with an individual playfully taking his jacket, Adeep first appeals to the individual to chill (line 1), using *ey* to command him to calm down. Then, realising that his attempts to get his jacket are futile, he appeals to me, as an adult with more authority, to 'tell him to pass [his] jacket' (line 1-2), again using *ey* to encourage me to offer my support. In line 3, he then goes on to address the individual directly, prefacing his command with *ey* before repeating his request.

In (45), there is some altercation in the IT suite which involves some individuals pushing one another (line 1-2). Daniel's question of "what you doing?" (line 3) appears to be aimed at the individual involved in the altercation, leading Sam to command that individual to "chill" (line 4), fronting this with *ey*. He repeats his assertion again including the attention signal *ey*, thus exerting a level of dominance in controlling the situation by appealing to the ingroup to calm down.

In (46), with the group involved in arts and crafts, Daniel commands some individual to pass him the blue paint (line 1), using *ey* to preface this request. In line

2, he again reasserts his command "**ey** no hurry up". Here, like in the other examples, *ey* is used as a prefix to deploy a stance that is both confrontational – as a request to pass the blue paint – and dominant – that it be passed quickly.

However, whilst these examples demonstrate the utility of *ey* when used by gully members, it is unclear if this attention signal is used in discursively different ways by the ingroup and outgroup speakers. Indeed, whilst I have shown this attention signal to be significantly favoured by this group, it is also true that outgroup members use this feature, albeit at comparatively lower rates. One possibility then, is that the dominant stance evoked through the use of *ey* is unique to the gully (cf. Moore & Podesva, 2009). However, this hypothesis is not borne out by the data. Rather, it seems that non-members use *ey* in comparatively similar ways to the gully, to evoke a dominant stance and assert their authority in commanding an individual to an action. Indeed, when *ey* is used by outgroup members, more often than not it is used in situations in which the speaker is vying for control over another individual, such as extract (21) and (22).

(47)

1	Julia	why's it not working? (9.0)
2		there now it works! (1.1) okay, what --
3		youse want comp or battle? (0.2)
4		**EY**, DON'T COME BACK IN THE
5		SCREEN!

In (47), some of the younger individuals are playing a PlayStation game which Julia has been tasked with overseeing. The game involves the use of a Virtual Reality (VR) camera that traces the outline of the player, with the movements of the player translated to the character on the screen. In the moments before this interaction, Julia appears to be struggling to get the camera to focus on the individual player (line 1), with the camera focusing on other individuals in the room. After managing to fix the issue, Julia announces that the game is ready to play (line 2). But her efforts are short-lived, as another member of the group who, although is not involved in the game, continually moves into the game area, causing the VR camera to lose focus of the player. In line 4, with the individual once again moving into the gaze of the camera, Julia commands him to "DON'T COME BACK IN THE SCREEN!" (line

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4-5), using *ey* to prefix this command. Here, it appears that her use of *ey* is directly related to my earlier arguments. Specifically, by utilising the indexical quality of this attention signal, Julia deploys a dominant stance commanding the individual to stay out of the screen, thus asserting her bestowed authority as a supervisor of the game.

(48)

1	Talisha	no you don't want that
2	Marcus	no you don't want that
3	Talisha	plug that back in right now
4	Daniel	plug it back in now, bruv
5	Laura	**ey** pull u-- plug it back in! plug it back in!
6	Daniel	she said plug it back in!
7	Marcus	you plug it back in!

In (48), we see a similar pattern of events unfold. The extract is taken from a longer incident in which Marcus teases Talisha by taking her packet of crisps, leading Talisha to claim, "you don't want that" (line 1). Mimicking her, Marcus repeats Talisha's statement and facetiously disconnects her phone from a charging point, leading her to command him to: "plug that back in right now" (line 3). With Marcus continuing to fool around, Daniel repeats Talisha's command, adding the intimate address term 'bruv' to 'soften' the effect of the command, possibly to appeal to their shared ingroup status (cf. Adams, 2018). With Marcus continuing to resist their requests for him to connect the charger, Laura attempts to elicit Marcus' attention with the attention signal *ey,* before commanding him to 'plug it [the phone] back in!'. The interaction continues with Daniel then repeating the request, by reporting Talisha's speech ("she said to 'plug it back in'"), suggesting that that Laura's initial attempt to command Marcus to reconnect the charger had failed.

Considered together, the extracts in (47) and (48) suggest that, even when used by non-gully speakers, the discursive function of *ey* is still maintained. For both ingroup and outgroup members, it appears that *ey* is used to deploy a dominant stance to assert a level of power over the individual by seeking the complicity of the addressee. In (47) this is that the game would be played without interruption and in (48) it is that the phone would be left to charge.

Of course, one alternative explanation could be that *ey* is not indexing a

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dominant stance per se, but rather used to mitigate the negative politeness associated with the contexts of insults and commands. Whilst this is certainly a possible interpretation of the patterns, this explanation does not seem to fully account for the range of interactional contexts in which *ey* is used. First, in (47) the heightened intensity of Julia's command as well as her continuous appeal to the errant individual suggests that she has no reason to hedge the confrontation of her command. Second, in (48) we see *ey* appearing only after the other individuals in the room have commanded Marcus to plug back in the charger using the on-record commands in lines 3 and 4. If *ey* was used to avoid negative face issues, then it is unlikely that we would see this feature occurring after the on-record commands in these excerpts.

Whilst my arguments can go some way in explaining the relationship between *ey* and the discourse context of commands, it is unclear if the same explanation holds for the interaction between this attention signal and the other significant discourse context of insults. In order to examine these questions, I now turn to (49) which is taken from a longer disagreement between non-gully member, Charmaine, and gully member, Bartek.

(49) 1	Bartek	{dog barking}
2	Charmaine	what's up with you and these dog noises, man?
3	Bartek	cos you're a dog
4	Other	oooh!
5	Charmaine	shutup!
6	Bartek	{laughs} **ey** she got bare gassed when she saw
7		me on the bus **ey** YOU'RE A SIDE CHICK, **EY**
8		YOU'RE – NO YOU'RE -- SHE'S -- SHE'S A
9	Charmaine	[SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP]
10	Bartek	SIDE CHICK, YOU'RE A SIDE CHICK, I
11	Charmaine	[SHUT UP, SHUT UP]
10	Bartek	DON'T CARE!

The exchange in (49) opens with Bartek's persistent mimicking of a dog barking before Charmaine addresses the barking directly (line 2), questioning his motives. This leads Bartek to insult Charmaine referring to her as a 'dog' (line 3), before retelling a narrative of a situation in which he'd seen Charmaine on the bus and that

she was 'bare gassed' (i.e., excited) to see him. Recalling the story, Bartek depicts the situation as somewhat embarrassing for him, citing her over-excitable behaviour as unnecessary. At this point, his narrative is not directly aimed at Charmaine. Rather, he reports the incident to the rest of the group, indicated by the use of the third-person pronoun 'she' (line 6). Later, in lines 7-10, the person-reference shifts, with Bartek directly addressing Charmaine and launching into a fiercely confrontational assessment of her, referring to her a 'side chick' (i.e., a 'mistress').

Although from the immediate context it is unclear why Bartek confronts Charmaine in such a way, in conversations with other group members that were recorded after these events, it becomes clear that Bartek's disproval of Charmaine centres his assessment of her as a younger, as judged by the fact that she, unlike the rest of the group, was still attending primary school. As such, Bartek had deemed her not 'cool' enough to be part of his group and disproved of her hanging around with the group of olders.[33] Thus, based on both the content of the extract and the increased intensity of the confrontation, the exchange in (49) should be read as a bald on-record insult (Brown & Levinson, 1978), directly intended to cause offense to Charmaine. Together with the wider conversational context, it seems likely that Bartek's main intension in this disagreement is to explicitly distance Charmaine from the rest of the olders. In other words, he appears to be exerting his in-group status (i.e., dominance) to explicitly delineate Charmaine as an outsider. In line 6, we see clear evidence of this 'distancing effect', indicated by the use of the third-person singular pronoun *she*, through which Bartek is both able to report the story to the other 'in-group' members in the room whilst explicitly isolating her from this narrative altogether.

In the lines following (7-8 and 10), however, when the person-reference shifts from 'she' to 'you', and where the narrative becomes directed at Charmaine, we see that his insults are littered with false starts and he continually repeats his assessment of the situation. This suggests that his attempts to control the conversational floor and elicit agreement from other in-group members is flailing. Such efforts are ultimately hampered by Charmaine who, upset with Bartek's narrative, repeatedly shouts 'shut up' (lines 9 and 11) in an attempt to drown out his

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[33] Only Bartek seemed to have this opinion of Charmaine. Many of the olders quite clearly accepted her into the group and she would largely orient towards the older individuals.

assessment. The multiple tokens of *ey* in this context therefore seems to coincide with his difficulties of acquiring the conversational floor. Along with the repetition of this attention signal as well as the increased intensity, his use of *ey* appears as part of a much larger confrontation with Charmaine, in which he simultaneously appeals to the ingroup to accept his evaluation whilst continually directing this at Charmaine. Here, then, it seems that this attention signal is directly implicated in this struggle, with Bartek attempting to use the signal to both assert his dominance and to find mutual ground (solidarity) amongst the ingroup by convincing them of Charmaine's incompatibility with the ingroup.

The exchange in (49) therefore can be interpreted as a direct insult, intended to explicitly isolate – and therefore differentiate – Charmaine from the gully, in which *ey* appears as part of this struggle. However, if *ey* is used as a way to distance individuals as in the case above, then how then do we account for the fact that *ey* is significantly associated with interactions between ingroup members of the gully?

One possible answer is that there is a difference between the *types* of insults directed at outgroup and ingroup members. Indeed, close analysis of the surrounding discourse context of the insults made by those who identify gully to other ingroup members shows that the types of insults that *ey* features in appear not to be 'true insults' in the sense that they are not intended to cause direct offense, upset or distress. But rather, by and large, the insults used by these members are part of a display of 'banter', in that they are an exchange of playful remarks. For instance, in (50) whilst taking a break from a game of football, James, Ben and Theo are discussing two members of the club, one of which is Harinder. In that extract, they label these boys 'beefy one' and 'beefy two' in reference to their broad-build, which James summarises as 'fat' in line 1. In these contexts, the label 'beefy' and the corresponding assessment 'fat' could both clearly be interpreted as bald on-record insults, much like the 'side chick' label applied to Charmaine in (49). But, unlike the insult directed at Charmaine, when the label is applied directly to Harinder in line 4, indicated by the shift from third-person 'they' to second-person 'you', Harinder does little to resist being labelled 'beefy'.

(50) 1   James   them two would have (( )) they're so fat
      2   Ben   alie, they're beefy fam, beefy one beefy two

3	{laughs} **ey** Theo they're both Beefy's
4	**ey** you're beefy number two yeah, you're
5	beefy number two **ey** he's beefy number

Throughout this passage *ey* is used in discursively similar ways to those functions identified in (49). In line 3, we see that the use of *ey*, directly follows an evaluation which goes unnoticed by the rest of the group "they're beefy fam, beefy one beefy two". Thus, in line 3, Ben repeats this evaluation, using *ey* to elicit support for his evaluation from the rest of the group. When the person reference shifts from 'they' to 'you', *ey* again appears as part of an 'insult' ("ey you're beefy number two"), with the repeated use of this attention signal (lines 4 and 5) intended to draw attention to his evaluation of Harinder as 'beefy one'. But unlike in (49), the lack of contestation and/or insult on Harinder's part seems to suggest that it is not directly interpreted as an 'insult'. Indeed, when used to address Harinder, the use of *ey* is not directly confrontational nor is the insult it is attached to a 'true' insult, but rather, it seems that this interaction is a display of 'banter'.

What I would argue here then, is that when *ey* functions as part of this type of exchange amongst gully members, it has an intrinsic interpersonal function, with the banter serving to strengthen, not weaken, social bonds (cf. (49); Decapua & Boxer, 1999; Nichols, 2017). The interactional function of *ey* in indexing a dominant stance, however, is preserved since banter here appears to operate as a way in which speakers of the gully establish ingroup hierarchies. My line of reasoning follows previous research that has documented the simultaneous inclusionary effects of banter in the ingroup as well as the exclusion of the outgroup. For instance, in their analysis of male banter in a brokerage house, Decapua & Boxer (1999) demonstrate that banter has an important interpersonal function, where it is used amongst the men not only to increase social cohesion amongst ingroup members but also as a mechanism to alienate others who are not permitted participate in this exchange. Here, then, I would argue that *ey* functions as part of this mechanism when used amongst the gully, to enable the speaker to assert their dominance to manage ingroup hierarchies.

The explanation offered here not only goes someway to explaining the influence of the discourse context on the variable realisation of the attention signal,

but it also accounts for the relationship between this form and the gully. As the only perceptible CofP at Lakeside, it follows that this group would use features that help members manage ingroup and outgroup boundaries (cf. Eckert, 1989; 2000; Moore, 2003; Moore & Podesva, 2009; Lawson, 2013). Here, then I would suggest that this form has become indexical of the gully because of its continued and repeated use amongst this CofP. As Snell (2010), and others have shown, the continued use of a particular form to achieve certain interactional ends, leads to culminative effect in which that feature becomes indexical of a particular identity – what Du Bois (2002) refers to as 'stance accretion' (Du Bois, 2002). Thus, it is possible that *ey* is significantly associated with the gully because it is this group who value the indexical potential of this attention signal in deploying a dominant stance.

For the gully, then, this signal may be particularly useful for this group to manage one aspect that is central to the ingroup identity: The performance of hegemonic masculinity. In making these arguments, I draw heavily on variationist analyses which have studied the use of vernacular features in relation to the performance of a masculine identity. A case in point is Kiesling's (1998) analysis of (ING) in an all-male fraternity. Examining the distribution of this feature, Kiesling argues that higher rates of the apical nasal variant [n] in the speech of some of the men can be related to the indexical potential or, as Kiesling terms it, "vernacular power" (1998:84) of this feature in indexing "working-class cultural models and confrontational stances" (1998:69). Kiesling links these stances to the performance of hegemonic masculinity, suggesting that the use of [n] can be seen as part of display of physical power, characterised by dominance and solidarity.

Similar themes are examined in Lawson's (2011; 2014) sociolinguistic ethnography of variation in male peer groups at a secondary school – Banister Academy – in a working-class neighbourhood in Glasgow. In that research, Lawson relates the use of several non-standard features to the speakers' membership of specific CofP's as part of a more general orientation towards different types of hegemonic masculinity. For instance, in a study of TH-fronting, Lawson (2014) shows that higher frequencies of the non-local variant [f] amongst members of the Ned CofP can be read as part of a performance a 'tough' masculinity that is dependent on an anti-establishment stance.

As in these accounts, I would suggest that *ey* can be seen as part of this more

general performance of masculinity when used amongst the gully. In other words, the gully use *ey* most frequently because of its indexical association with dominance – a component of the hegemonic masculinity that the gully identity is reliant upon.

Returning now to the exchanges of banter between the gully in which *ey* occurs, we can now link the 'inclusionary/exclusionary mechanism' of this speech act to the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. As Nichols (2017:123) notes in her work on banter in an all-male rugby club, when used amongst the ingroup, such exchanges not only seek to delimit group boundaries, but also functions as a "marker of being able to 'make it' as one of the lads" (2017:169). I argue here that when *ey* is used in banter amongst the gully, it fulfils a very similar function to that identified by Nichols (2017). Specifically, in the case of exchanges of banter between gully members, I would argue that *ey* functions as part of a display of ingroup bonding, what Kiesling (2005:712; 1998) has referred to as "camaraderie" – or "homosociality by alliance". In the case of (50), this bonding is the term of endearment 'beefy' which Harinder successfully interprets as ingroup banter, which increases (as opposed to decrease cf. (49)) bonds between speakers.

But perhaps the relationship between the banter and masculinity is most obvious in those exchanges which subvert deviant identities and behaviours as irreconcilable with the value system of the ingroup. One way this is achieved is by presenting identities deemed incompatible with this ideology as negative traits, so as to strengthen the dominant ingroup identity. Such exchanges are typical of 'banter' where male speakers emphasise sexual prowess and physical traits of strength, thus maintaining hegemonic masculinity (Nichols, 2017). It is therefore unsurprising that gully members often assume a confrontational stance through the use of *ey* in contexts where certain behaviours/identities are deemed deviant or incompatible with the gully identity:

(51) 1 Bartek   what the fuck?! **ey,** you're gay! ({laughs})

(52) 1 Marcus   let me shake it! Let me shake it!
    2 Daniel   **ey,** that's gay bruv, ((lie)) don't talk like that

In excerpts (51) and (52), the 'deviant' behaviour is classified as non-normative and consequently labelled as 'gay' (see also Drummond, 2018a). In (51), this is in

response to Bartek being shown some video on a phone. In (52), Daniel refers to Marcus's behaviour as 'gay' after Marcus becomes excitable at the prospect of shaking a jar which contained a glittery liquid that the group had made during an arts and craft session. In both instances, there is little evidence to suggest that 'gay' is being used to directly refer to the individuals' sexual orientation. Rather, it appears that the term 'gay' is applied to individuals and behaviour which is perceived to be wrong or inappropriate and thus is deemed incompatible with the shared value system of the ingroup.

In both extracts, we see that the insult directed at the recipient is prefaced by *ey*. It seems likely that, in both situations, the attention signal *ey* is being used as part of this performance of masculinity – as a way to assume a dominant stance that simultaneously asserts the speakers' evaluation of the events as well as distancing the speaker from behaviour deemed 'problematic' (i.e., gay). In taking this stance, the speaker is therefore able to exert their dominance within the hierarchal structure of the gully, establishing themselves as adhering to the 'ingroup code', whilst subverting a particular behaviour as deviant, thus classifying behaviour as atypical of the group. For instance, in (52) Marcus' excitable reaction to the jar of glittery liquid is perceived by Daniel to be behaviour deemed incompatible with the dominant masculine mode of self conduct promoted by the ingroup. Thus, by emphasising that behaviour as incompatible with group norms, the speaker strengthens the dominant and normative ingroup value system, thus increasing solidarity amongst the ingroup who share this worldview (see also Lawson, 2011).

6.9   Summary

This chapter has examined variation in the system of attention signals in the speech of the young people at Lakeside. By focussing on one attention signal – *ey* – I have shown this feature to be significantly associated with the gully, both in terms of its distribution and also its use amongst interactions between the ingroup. Examining the interactional contexts in which *ey* occurs, I have suggested that this feature is primarily used in contexts where the speaker assumes a dominant stance. By deploying this stance, speakers are able to assert their authority and subjugate other individuals in order to achieve certain interactional and physical ends. Further, I have suggested that when used in these contexts, *ey* features as part of a management

of identities that serves to build ingroup and outgroup ties, such as in the case of the playful banter exchanged between members of the gully. Lastly, I have argued that the higher frequency of *ey* amongst the gully can be attributed to the process of 'stance accretion' (Du Bois, 2002), wherein the indexical value of *ey* in deploying a dominant stance, is regularly valued by members of the gully to preserve the hegemonic masculinity that this identity is reliant upon.

7 The Online:

An Ethnography of Lakeside

7.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the 'online' component of the blended ethnography that informs this thesis. I first give an exposition of my reasoning for integrating social media data into the analysis, arguing for the relevance of exploring online data in relation to the offline spoken analyses. From here, I discuss the potential issues that occur when combining offline and online analyses. I then turn to an examination of the prevalent discourses of social media at Lakeside, using these interviews to ground my approach in examining the digital practices of the young people. Finally, I discuss the methods used to obtain the data samples and ethnographic insights that form the basis of the analysis in Chapter 8.

7.2 A 'Blended Ethnography' of Lakeside

In Chapters 4, 5,and 6, I have provided analyses of three linguistic features (variation in the interdental fricatives, pronominal *man*, and the attention signal *ey*) at three levels of the linguistic system (phonological, grammatical, and discourse-pragmatic variation). I have shown that the variable patterns identified in the dataset can largely be accounted for by the speakers' orientation towards a type of 'urban' subculture, locally defined as the 'gully'. By examining the discourse in which those features occur, I have also identified the intricate ways in which speakers utilise the rhetorical affordances of these features to achieve certain interactional ends. In doing so, the analysis has been largely able to account for the distribution of the linguistic variation

at Lakeside. However, whilst these analyses largely reveal the ways in which these features have acquired social patterns of differentiation, the relevance of the gully persona is less clear. In other words, what does it *mean* to be 'gully'? And what can the gully tell us about broader patterns of language variation in East London?

So far, the account that I have offered has focussed solely on the individuals' participation in offline networks, activities and social groups. But, as I have argued in Chapter 1, in an era of digital culture, social identities and relationships are developed not just in the offline, but also through those mediated interactions and engagements with digital and social media. As such, to explore the meaning of the gully, I suggest that it is worthwhile to look beyond the 'physical' field site of Lakeside to examine how the social realities of these individuals become reified and reinterpreted in digital space.

As I argue in earlier chapters, given the methodological imperatives stressed in third-wave research, the approach argued for here is compatible with the third-wave agenda that seeks to examine the social meaning of variation. In particular, I suggest that by examining the networked engagements of the young people at Lakeside, it is possible to explore how those local identities relate to more general patterns of social differentiation. In particular, I suggest that social media presents an opportunity to explore those 'metapragmatic typifications' (Agha 2007: 154) of styles, varieties and subcultural orientations (e.g., memes), that permit the analyst contextualise the local patterns of variation and their stylistic correlates within the broader sociolinguistic context – in this thesis, East London.

In what follows, I turn to a discussion of the online component of the blended ethnography, exploring the ways in which Lakeside becomes networked in digital space. First, however, it is necessary to acknowledge that whilst there are many of benefits of the blended ethnographic approach, there are also several unique challenges that are associated with research which seeks to examine individuals' practices beyond the offline. I turn to a discussion of the ethical, practical and theoretical challenges of integrating this approach in following sections.

7.2.1 Ethics & Blended Ethnographies

An examination of social media would perhaps not be complete without a discussion of the ethical concerns of using online data. The topic has been discussed at length

in a number of volumes and articles, both in media and communication sciences (e.g., Lipschultz, 2018), but also within (socio-)linguistics more specifically (e.g., D'Arcy & Young, 2012). Generally, 'variationist analyses of online patterns of language use examine data from open-source sites, such as Twitter, where accounts are set to public by default (e.g., Eisenstein, 2015). These scholars have generally mitigated the ethical considerations of using digital data, by comparing the availability of this data to other open-access and publicly available media sources (e.g., BBC news).

Nevertheless, such approaches have not been without criticism and many have pointed to the ambiguous privacy policies of social network sites, the assumptions that users make when using those sites and the lack of ethical guidance on using such data in academic research (e.g., boyd & Crawford, 2012). For instance, in their analysis of lay perceptions of the uses of Twitter data, Fiesler & Proferes (2018) found that 64.9% of their participants objected to their tweets being harvested and analysed for academic purposes.

These ethical issues are magnified in analyses which incorporate digital and offline data. Indeed, whist there are obvious ethical considerations associated with other types of ethnographic research, blended ethnographic approaches bring their own unique challenges. These issues are addressed by Tagg and colleagues' (2017) discussion of the ethical challenges encountered during the course of the TLANG project. The authors suggest that since blended ethnographic research involves a greater intimacy between the researcher and the participant, users may feel compelled to provide intimate access to their social media accounts. This is potentially problematic since online spaces are often conceptualised differently from those in the offline, such that sensitive information may be disclosed to the researcher unwillingly. To account for the complexities of managing such a project, the authors suggest a "need for flexible [ethical] mechanisms which can respond dynamically to change" (2017:288), with the researcher maintaining a self-reflexive approach to the ethical use of online and offline data. Indeed, this was the approach taken in this thesis and, as I discuss in more detail in §7.5, I decided to avoid sampling certain types of posts after careful consideration of the issues involved in representing that data.

Whilst these issues are no doubt relevant to the discussion of the offline, and indeed have been discussed at length in Chapter 3, the incorporation of digital data highlighted some other ethical considerations that needed to be accounted for in this project. I now turn to a discussion of the two main issues encountered in the fieldwork – social media as 'risk' and online privacy – to account for the ways in which these issues were managed.

7.2.2   Social Media as 'Risk'

A considerable amount of research examining child and adolescent speech has been undertaken in institutions such as schools and youth groups. With stringent safe-guarding procedures, conducting interviews and self-recordings with young people requires the researcher to adhere to the institutions' child-protection policies. This includes obtaining a DBS check and obtaining the assent of the young person and consent of their caregiver or guardian. Whilst numerous scholars have managed to gain access to schools and youth groups with little issue (e.g., Eckert, 1989; Moore, 2003; Fox, 2007; Snell, 2010), increasing concerns over child-protection and safe-guarding has meant that, in many cases, schools and youth groups are not willing to take the 'risk' of allowing external researchers access to potentially vulnerable populations (Drummond, p.c.; also 2018a).

In the present study, for the most part, many of the schools I contacted were willing to discuss the possibility of collaborating on this project. However, as soon as I indicated that the young people would not only be recorded but also would be asked to provide social media data, many felt that they were unable to participate in the project. In fact, several schools explicitly stated that whilst they were willing to participate in a study of the students' language, they felt the inclusion of social media presented its own unique risks. Many cited instructional policies that restricted the use of mobile phones and social media in the school, whilst others cited the potential safe-guarding issues that come with the inclusion of social media in the project. Whilst these issues are likely to be specific to individual school, the tendency of gatekeepers to refer to the potential safe-guarding issues associated with social media, appears to be linked to a wider narrative in which the internet is framed as a 'risk' (e.g., BBC, 2018). These issues are magnified for young people.

Indeed, in the UK, young people are increasingly bombarded with

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information about privacy, safeguarding and anonymity online. Responding to the apparent 'risks' that the current network society afford, many schools now provide online safety classes and internet access at most schools is heavily restricted via an intranet service. At Lakeside, before an individual could access the computer suite, they were required to undergo an online safety course and obtain a certificate of passing. Whilst acknowledging the potential risks of the internet is a necessary and positive move, it is also possible that, these discourses have led to a climate of 'fear' regarding the internet and social media. These narratives are perhaps no more relevant than in regards to young people, where media continue to warn of the damaging effects of social media and the internet on teenagers' social wellbeing (see Bell, Bishop & Przybylski, 2015, for example).

These discourses are likely to have effect on the ways in which parents and guardians enforce measures to restrict their childs' access to social media and the internet. Indeed, in their multinational research project, EU Kids Online, Livingston and colleagues (2011) observe that young people in the UK experience some of the most restrictive measures on their internet access when compared with other EU states. In particular, they observe that UK parents mediate their children's online behaviour more so than parents in other EU states, with 54% of UK-based parents claiming to use a filtering service to restrict their child's internet access.

Such narratives also may go some way in explaining the difficulties that I experienced in collaborating with schools and youth groups. If, as has been suggested (e.g., Bell, Bishop & Przybylski, 2015), there is a pervasive and heightened awareness of the apparent risks of social media on young people's health and wellbeing, it is possible that many of the schools and youth groups that I discussed the project with were simply unwilling to commit themselves to a project that involves what is perceived to be potentially 'risky' practices (cf. BBC, 2018).

Of course, these issues are likely to be magnified in the case of social media, where much of the 'risk' associated with the internet is discussed directly in relation to privacy, anonymity and social media platforms. It is with this mind that I discuss this issue in the next section.

7.2.3   Privacy & Social Media

A further possible explanation as to why social media is framed differently by gatekeepers is the degree to which the internet and social media are conceptualised as 'private spaces'. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram invite us to document and share some of the most intimate moments of our lives with other users. Many users view these platforms as a semi-private space (boyd, 2014), uploading photos and messages to server where they are archived as personal histographies of the past. Whilst the security and privacy of social media data has been called into question more recently in regard to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, many users continue to use social media to document intimate moments of their life. Indeed, the security and privacy affordances that many platforms offer, gives the user a sense (whether real or false) that social media is a private space, more so than interactions which take place in public. As Tagg and colleagues observe, digital communication is often akin to communication which is "conducted in the familiar corners of one's room" (2016:286).

Whilst issues of privacy are obviously relevant to most types of ethnographic research, these concerns are potentially of greater significance in regard to digital research since the data collection is much more inconspicuous. Although explicit formal consent is obtained directly from the participant to enable data collection, it is unclear to what extent the participant is aware of the types and amount of data extracted from them. Online participant observation or 'lurking' as it is often referred to (Abidin, 2013; Georgakopoulou, 2016), for instance, requires an extensive observation of the users' digital habits over a period of time. However, with no clear way for the user to establish what types of content and/or interactions are being observed or harvested by the researcher, it is possible that the participant unwillingly reveals more details than they had intended to. This issue is particularly pressing given that digital data 'persists' (boyd, 2014), such that the user retrospectively grants the researcher access to their data. It is therefore possible that interactions which took place before the commencement of the study may be intended for an altogether different 'imagined audience' than the researcher (Marwick & boyd, 2011; Fiesler & Proferes, 2018).

Although media often suggest that young people are unaware of the security

and privacy issues surrounding social media and the internet (BBC, 2018), research has found these assumptions to be largely unfounded (Marwick, Fontaine & boyd, 2017; Livingstone et al., 2011). Indeed, boyd (2014) documents that adolescents display an active awareness of the privacy affordances of different platforms, whilst Marwick and colleagues (2017) observe that many adolescents change their privacy settings depending on the intended audience of the post.

In my own research at Lakeside, I find these empirical accounts to be largely supported. On the whole, the young people demonstrated a conscious and active awareness of privacy issues surrounding social media use. Unlike the spoken language section of this thesis where I found individuals to be largely willing to participate, many were less interested in participating in the social media aspect of this thesis. Indeed, whilst I was able to obtain spoken language recordings from 25 individuals, only 11 of these individuals were willing to participate in the social media component of the analysis. It is possible here that their lack of uptake in participating in the online aspect of this thesis is related the narratives of the possible risks and privacy issues associated with social media data. This was evident in the responses of the young people. When I approached several individuals about contributing to this section of the project, several became uneasy about providing this data, citing the personal and intimate aspects of social media communication.

The framing of social media data as 'intimate' and 'personal' appears to be related to an awareness that social media content 'persists' (boyd, 2014). As I will discuss, in Chapter 8, a proportion of the social media content features criminal or illegal activities. Whilst drug use, gang crime and criminality are pervasive in offline contexts, participation in or engagement with illegal or contentious activities is generally covert. On social media, however, such behaviours are openly and routinely discussed, whilst videos and images of these activities are uploaded to publicly accessible accounts, persisting beyond the temporal-spatial context of the event (see, for example, boyd, 2014:29). Whilst I cannot be sure of whether any of the individuals at Lakeside participated in such illegal activities themselves, it is possible that several of the young were concerned about the implications of engaging or distributing with this content.

Whilst these issues were addressed by promising the anonymity of users, there remained issues in obtaining parental consent in obtaining this data. Of those

who were willing to participate, after getting assent from the young person and once the consent form had been returned, I often found that whilst most parents/guardians were happy for their child to participate in spoken language recordings, they had explicitly stated that they did not want them to participate in the social media aspect of this project. It is highly likely that these concerns are related to my earlier discussion of social media as 'risk', as well as an awareness of the private and intimate content that is often posted by users.

7.3   Discourses of Social Media

7.3.1   Social Media and Teenagers

In media and popular culture, adolescents are often depicted as heavy consumers of social media and digital culture. Media reports often refer to this group of individuals as 'tech-obsessed', whilst others suggest that adolescents have become 'addicted to their smartphones and tablets' (Telford, 2015). This depiction has given rise to labels such as '*Google Generation', 'net generation', 'digital generation',* and the highly influential concept of the *'digital native'.*

The term 'digital native', popularised by Prensky in 2001, refers to individuals who were born during the 'digital age'. Immersed in digital culture from birth, Prenksy argued that this generation would acquire a unique and specialist knowledge of digital culture. Older generations, on the other hand, who he refers to as 'digital immigrants', would have much more difficulty acquiring this knowledge, adapting to existing technologies as adults. Prensky predicted that the disparity in digital skills would lead to fundamental differences in the ways in which digital 'natives' and 'immigrants' would think and process information. He suggested that, like computers, digital natives prefer "to parallel process and multi-task" and would "function best when networked" (2001:2).

Whilst the label of the 'digital native' has been incredibly influential in media reports, academic research on the topic, however, has shown these assumptions to be largely unfounded. Instead the deterministic association between birth year and digital skillset has been highly problematised in empirical research. Indeed, an outpouring of empirical research has documented the diverse range of digital skillsets amongst so-called 'digital native' populations. Often, this research has

tended to show that other social factors, such as the individuals' socio-economic status, are much greater predictors of digital literacy skills than age (see *inter alia*, North, Snyder & Bulfin, 2008; Livingstone et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, 'digital native' narratives persist in media. In these accounts, social media is often claimed to be damaging teenagers' health and negatively influencing their communication skills. Media reports frequently predict a future in which young people experience higher rates of mental health issues seemingly caused by their inability to interact with the offline world, whilst others decry the 'dangerous levels' of mobile phone use amongst young people (Ungar, 2018).

Whilst I now can appreciate the over-simplified narratives that these accounts offer, in the initial stages of my fieldwork I acknowledge that my own perception of teenagers' use of social media was largely influenced by media narratives. Upon entering the field, I assumed that I would find individuals everywhere transfixed with their phones, occupying their own 'mobile private spaces' (Williams, 1974). Before collecting self-recordings and interviews, I had assumed that these recordings would include a great deal of interactions which concerned aspects of digital culture, such as the latest iPhone or who they were (and weren't) following on social media.

However, this was far from the case. In my time at Lakeside, I was surprised to see that social media and digital technology occupied a more peripheral role in the individuals' lives than I had anticipated. In fact, the self-recorded conversations were mainly about the individual's 'offline' engagements, networks and friendships, such as those at the youth group or at school. Whilst digital culture and social media did feature in their discussions, these topics were not as pervasive as I had initially anticipated.

The differences between my perception and reality meant that I had to adapt aspects of my methodological approach (see also Tagg et al., 2017). I had initially devised an interview schedule that focussed mainly on their use of social media and digital technology. These questions focussed heavily on their engagement with digital culture, including topics such as Kim Kardashian's latest Instagram post or the latest filters on Snapchat. I assumed that such questions would generate endless conservations and debates, given their presumed use of social media. However, when these questions were introduced in the interviews, they were

responded to with little interest. When participants did engage in conversations about social media, they tended to focus on extreme and isolated incidents that violate norms. For instance, several individuals that I interviewed had an extensive knowledge of gangs in the local community because they followed Snapchat accounts maintained by gang members, whilst others would give graphic descriptions of a London-based prostitute who scouted for business via Snapchat. Questions about the 'offline' context of Lakeside, on the other hand, were responded to with much more interest.

The apathy of respondents in discussing elements of digital culture, however, should be considered in relation to the social context of Lakeside. As Miller (2016) observes, since social media is integrated into communities in different ways, the alignments and orientations that individuals make towards embracing aspects of digital culture is likely to be influenced by a number of social and cultural factors. One particularly relevant issue in relation to the specific context of Lakeside is the influence of social-economic factors on the individuals' engagement with digital culture. North and colleagues (2008) observe that the digital divide between members of different socio-economic classes concerns not only their access to digital technology, but also the types of content they engage with. Thus, it is possible that the apparent apathy of respondents in discussing elements of digital culture, signals a more general avoidance to engage with culture that is perceived to be a middle-class concern (for instance, see boyd, 2014:3).

At the same time, it is possible that, for many young people, these topics are unlikely to generate interest because social media and digital technology is perceived to be a relatively mundane aspect of their everyday lives. Whereas the internet was once perceived to be spectacular or novel (e.g., Turkle, 1984), the apparent 'domestication' of social media (e.g., Sujon, Viney & Toker-Turnalar, 2018) suggests that, for many young people, digital culture has simply become a unremarkable fact of life (Miller, 2016).

Although these conclusions are refreshing given prevalent media narratives of technological determinism, I acknowledge that they also may be interpreted as contradicting my arguments regarding the importance of integrating digital data in sociolinguistic analyses of language variation and change. Whilst I acknowledge this possible interpretation, I would argue that this conclusion misconstrues the argument

that I am advancing here. By critically examining my own preconceptions, I have attempted to add nuance to a debate regarding young people and social media. In doing so, I have sought to ground my own interpretations and arguments in relation to my empirical observations to dispel a narrative that depicts young people's social media practices as 'obsessive'.

In making these arguments, however, I do not mean to downplay the significance of digital culture in teenagers' networked lives. Whilst the individuals at Lakeside may have not exhibited the strong orientation towards digital culture as I had originally anticipated, it is clear that, for this generation, digital technology and online communication is deeply embedded in these individuals' lives. A great deal of communication, both inside and outside of the youth group itself, took place on social media platforms, whilst debates about a particular individuals' Snapchat Story or their latest Instagram post – known as 'recents' – featured prominently in discussions amongst the group. Similarly, with many of the individuals refusing to participate in the schedule of activities run by the club, most of this group would congregate in the IT room where they'd spend a great deal of time engaging with social media content, listening to music through streaming services or watching YouTube videos. Indeed, these observations seem to support the findings of large-scale surveys that suggest that adolescents are some of the heaviest consumers of digital and social media. It is therefore necessary to take stock of these trends so as to contextualise the role of digital culture in adolescents' lives.

7.3.2 Platforms and Content

One principle of the blended ethnographic approach is that the platforms analysed, the content gathered and the types of interactions observed are not predetermined, but are rather made on the basis of the researchers' observations (e.g., boyd, 2014). In the context of the current analysis, I combined offline and online ethnographic practices to document the digital content, platforms and practices that individuals engaged with. In interviews, I sought to directly elicit this information through targeted questions, whilst ethnographic observations – both on- and off-line – and self-recordings allowed me to document individuals' digital practices indirectly. When references to popular culture and/or social platforms were made, I recorded these observations as part of my ethnographic fieldnotes (cf. Kozinets, 2010; Abidin,

2013)[34]. After attending Lakeside, I would spend some time researching these references and would engage with content that I'd observed those at Lakeside interacting with. I followed several Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram accounts that they interacted with, watched YouTube videos of the music they listened to, and researched memes and other elements of digital culture that I observed them engaging with.

By keeping a record of these observations, I was able to contextualise references to videos, music channels and social media channels that were made by individuals in the offline context of Lakeside. For instance, in the first couple of months joining the youth group, I noticed that several of the boys would shout "THEY CALL ME DUCT TAPE!" in a faux Southern American accent, with the others responding by repeating this catchphrase. Initially, it wasn't clear what this performance referred to. But, by recording this event and identifying the source online, I found that this phrase was part of what Sierra (f.c.) refers to as an 'intertextual media reference'. The phrase was taken from a YouTube video of a prison inmate known as 'Duct Tape' taken from 'Beyond Scared Straight' – a series of documentaries that profiled juvenile crime prevention programs in prisons across the U.S. Thus, by extending my remit of analysis beyond the offline, it was possible to contextualise references made to media sources in relation to the original source in order to establish the motivations for using these references in everyday conversation. In this case, the phrase seemingly became part of an in-group code, used as a part of an exchange of banter with other members of the group who had seen the video.

However, perhaps the most useful element of the digital ethnography is that the choice of online platforms and content that I examine is based directly on my observations of the *actual* digital practices of the young people. As such, I aim to provide an account that captures the true social reality of the adolescents at Lakeside as opposed to opting for some convenience sample, as is often the case in analyses of Twitter. Whilst platforms such as Twitter are appealing given that the platform

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[34] Following Kozinets (2010) I maintain the use of the term 'field' to refer to the digital contexts in which I conducted research. Whilst I understand this to be a contentious term given the obvious lack of any physical 'field' in digital environments, I use this term to describe the mediated contexts that facilitated the young people's interactions.

permits researchers to extract large datasets through its publicly available API (Eisenstein, 2017), I argue that such platforms are only really useful in studying the digital practices, norms and styles of a particular community, if members of that community are *actually* using that platform. Before I turn a discussion of the 'changing trends' of social media usage amongst this demographic and community, I first introduce the four main social media networks discussed in this thesis: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram.

7.3.2.1.   Facebook

Facebook is the largest and, arguably, the most recognisable social media network at present. The network is often referred to as one of the 'Big Four', along with tech giants Google, Amazon and Apple. Developed in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg whilst studying at Harvard, the platform boasts 2.23 billion monthly active users with a net worth of $71 billion. Facebook can be accessed via a dedicated application available on all major operating systems, but it also maintains a web interface.

The platform enables users to create profiles where users upload photos, videos, statuses and messages which are organised on the users' personal 'timeline' – i.e., homepage. Users connect with others by adding someone as a 'friend', allowing that individual to view their profile. Updates from friends are organised into an aggregated stream of information – termed the 'newsfeed' – which algorithmically organises posts into a chronological stream of the 'most relevant' content. Users can respond to messages by utilising the multimodal functionality of the platform, by posting images, texts, videos, or they can acknowledge a post through the 'like' button. Stylised as a thumbs up, the like button has become synonymous with Facebook. More recently, the platform has integrated 'reactions', extending the 'like' button to include five additional pre-defined emotions, including "Love", "Haha", "Wow", "Sad", or "Angry".

Since its inception, Facebook has developed from a single social media platform to a social networking company, acquiring the rival multimedia platform, Instagram, in 2012 for $1 billion and the messaging service, WhatsApp for $22 billion in 2014. In addition to these acquisitions, Facebook also maintains the standalone IM 'Messenger' app that connects to the users' Facebook friend list.

Today, Facebook continues to dominate the social media marketplace. At current, the network is listed as one of the world's most valuable companies. However, in recent years, the company has experienced a number of security and data handling issues. In 2018, media reports detailing the 'Cambridge Analytica data scandal', exposed multiple data and privacy flaws in the architecture of the platform. These accounts detailed Facebook's unethical handling of sensitive and personal information, claiming that the platform had permitted the political research consulting firm, Cambridge Analytica (CA), third-party access to approximately 87 million individuals' personal information. Investigations on the matter concluded that sensitive personal data was harvested by CA to establish sophisticated models of user's personalities and ultimately influence political campaigns, including the British referendum on membership of the European Union (i.e., Brexit).

7.3.2.2.   Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging social media site founded Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone in March 2006. At current, the company is worth between 4 and 5 billion dollars. The platform can be accessed via the dedicated application, through SMS or via a web interface. At the time of writing, approximately 500 million tweets were sent each day by over 126 million users.

The primary function of Twitter is the creation and sharing of short messages composed of up to 280 characters known as 'tweets'. Users can also attach a number of metadata tags to their tweets to facilitate a number of other affordances of the platform. These include the 'mentioning' tool, <@>,, which along with the users' handle specifies that message as 'directed', as well as the ubiquitous <#> (i.e., the hashtag) which directs the attached tweet into a hypertext of tweets containing the same hashtag.

Users can elect to 'follow' others. By accessing the home timeline, users are displayed a stream of Tweets from accounts that they have chosen to follow. These are algorithmically organised into a feed dependent on users' interests and recent engagements. There, the user can reply, 'like' or retweet a particular message. If the user decides to 'retweet' a message, that tweet becomes re-posted on the individuals' profile, allowing that user to share the content of that message beyond the original context in which it was posted.

Owing to its core affordances of the 'retweet' and 'hashtag' which enable the 'searchability' and 'spreadability' of information (boyd, 2014), Twitter has facilitated the dissemination of news and political campaigns in a way that other social media sites have not. News networks frequently obtain primary source information from Twitter and, during the day of the U.S. Presidential election, over 40 million election-related tweets were sent by 10pm, such that the platform became the largest source of breaking news.

7.3.2.3.   Snapchat

Snapchat is a social media application owned by Snap Inc., launched to market in September 2011. Without a web interface, Snapchat exists solely as a mobile application available on Android and IOS devices. Its core functionality is the creation of multimedia messages termed 'snaps'. These snaps can be edited, with the possibility to include filters, emojis and other multimodal features. Initially conceived as images, Snapchat has since grown to include videos, video-calling and a text-based messaging service. Setting out his vision for Snapchat in 2012, CEO Evan Spiegel (2012) stated that "Snapchat isn't about capturing the traditional Kodak moment. It's about communicating with the full range of human emotion — not just what appears to be pretty or perfect".

Unlike other social media platforms, Snapchat is unique in that the data does not persist (cf. boyd, 2014). Rather images, messages and videos disappear after they have been viewed or after a certain period of time (below 10 seconds) specified by the sender.

In 2013, Snapchat introduced the 'stories' feature which allows users to update images and videos to a story feed which is accessible to friends and those with the users' snapcode (i.e., username). These stories can be viewed for up to 24 hours, after which they disappear. More recently, Snapchat has monetised the platform by offering advertising and marketing space in the form of stories to brands, newspapers and celebrities. By June of 2014, the story function had exceeded the number of private snaps sent on the platform, with over one billion stories viewed daily.

Today, Snapchat continues to focus on appealing to millennials and has been an important venue for influencer marketing. In February 2018, responding to Snapchat's major redesign, reality TV-star and influencer, Kylie Jenner, posted a

single tweet – 'sooo does anyone else not open Snapchat anymore? Or is it just me… ugh this is so sad' – causing Snap Inc. to lose more than $1.3 billion dollars in market value. Nevertheless, the youngest generation of users, Snapchat continues to dominate the social media market. It is the most frequently used social media platform amongst individuals under 26 both the US and the UK. Approximately 3.5 billion snaps are sent each day by 187 million users and, at current, Snapchat has a net worth of $4 billion.

7.3.2.4. Instagram

Instagram is a multimodal photo and video sharing social network service first introduced in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. Instagram is accessible via a dedicated app that is available for iOS and Android devices but, unlike Snapchat, also maintains a web interface. Instagram's core functionality is its integrated photo editing and filter suite, that allows users to modify images and videos and upload them to their profiles through a series of predefined 'filters' that can be used to add photographic effects to a photo or video. In addition, users can add geotagged information to identify the location in which the photo was taken and can add hashtags to the photo to direct that image into a hypertext stream of relevant content.

Like Snapchat, users can receive updates of others' accounts by 'following' them. Content is organised in the users' feed where they can interact with new uploads. Whilst content is organised chronologically on the users' specific profile, in newsfeeds, Instagram arranges content algorithmically based on users' past engagements with other accounts.

In 2012, the company was purchased by Facebook for $1 billion, leading to a number of architectural and procedural changes to the platform. Most notably, following Snapchat, Instagram introduced the 'Stories' function which allows users to upload photo or video content for up to 24 hours, with those who follow the account able to access the content of that story.

Following the acquisition of the platform by Facebook, the company has increasingly sought to monetize the platform through sponsored posts and advertising. Consequently, the app has become hugely popular with commercial enterprises such as entertainment channels, online shopping venues, commercial bloggers and so-called 'influencers' (Abidin, 2013). Today, Instagram continues to be

one of the most popular social media platforms amongst the youngest demographic of users, with over 90 million videos and images shared on the platform every day. As of 14 January 2019, the most popular photo on Instagram is a picture of an egg, posted by the account @world_record_egg, which has been liked over 50 million times. The sole purpose of this upload was to surpass the previous record of 18 million likes on post uploaded by reality TV star, Kylie Jenner. To date, Instagram is estimated to be worth upwards of $100 billion
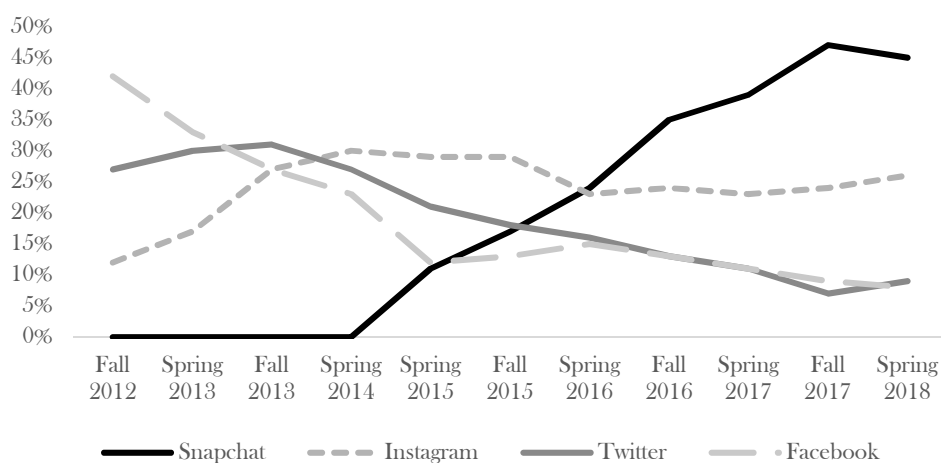
7.4   Changing Trends

Figure 12 *Most popular social networks of teenagers in the United States from fall 2012 to fall 2018*[35]

As discussed previously, sociolinguistic analyses of social media overwhelmingly examine data from Twitter and Facebook (see, inter alia, Page, 2012; Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015). This includes those analyses which explore digital 'youth styles' (e.g., Palacios Martínez, 2018). However, large-scale surveys of social media trends show that, adolescent membership of Facebook and Twitter is in decline, whilst newer, image-based apps, such as Instagram and Snapchat have experienced a surge in membership levels amongst this demographic (see Figure 12). This trend suggests that whilst it may be fruitful to explore Facebook and Twitter content for

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[35] Data for US teenagers is provided here because of a lack of data for UK teenagers. Whilst there are likely to be differences in the rates of usage between the two countries, research in the UK has identified similar trends to those represented here (e.g., Sujon, Viney & Toker-Turnalar, 2018). Data is based on survey data of teenagers (average age of 15.9 years; Statista, 2019).

other groups of users, for adolescents, at least, exploring these platforms is unlikely to provide much insight into the digital practices of these users.

Whilst the reasons for the decline in Facebook and Twitter membership amongst adolescents are numerous, one of the major contributing factors is the change in how individuals conceptualise the function of these platforms. In their longitudinal analysis of Facebook usage among young adults, for instance, Sujon and colleagues (2018) observe a shift in how participants use the platform, away from what they describe as a 'compulsive connection' to a 'personal service platform'. They argue that the apparent 'domestication' of the platform means that Facebook is used less for social interactions, but instead is reserved for mundane social tasks, such as keeping up to date with friends' birthdays.

Here, it is possible the shift in how young people use Facebook is influenced by the increasing popularity of the platform amongst users of older generations. In his ethnographic study of digital practices in a rural English village, Miller (2016) cites the recent surge in Facebook memberships amongst Generation X (i.e., those born between 1960-1980's) as direct factor in the decline of younger Facebook users. For these users, Facebook could therefore no longer be considered a 'private' space where they could socialise with friends (cf. boyd, 2014), but rather a place where their parents or family members were likely to pry on their activities and interactions. It is therefore possible that younger generations of users may avoid Facebook entirely to mitigate the potential context collapse (Marwick & boyd, 2011) of familial and friendship networks.

This trend is also likely to be influenced by widespread use of digital and mobile technologies. The rise in newer platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram signal a more general move towards social media apps that utilise the multimodal capabilities of contemporary smartphones (e.g., Page, 2018). Unlike Twitter and Facebook which have established themselves via a web interface, Snapchat and Instagram are primarily accessed through a smartphone application. In the move towards mobile data and roaming, it is perhaps unsurprising that these social media platforms have become popular amongst a generation who happen to be some of the most prolific users of smart phones technologies (Statista, 2018; Ofcom, 2019). At the same time, the shift towards platforms which emphasise capturing the transient experiences of the 'moment', such as Snapchat and Instagram Stories, may reflect a

more general shift away from platforms that enable the 'persistence' of data (cf. Facebook and Twitter), towards those that facilitate ephemeral types of communication that are more comparable to those in the offline (e.g., boyd, 2014:9).

Whilst these macro-level patterns can explain more general trends in social media use, it is unclear to what extent these population statistics can account for the specific digital practices observed at Lakeside. Thus, to examine the community specific trends of social media engagement, I now turn to a discussion of the discourses that emerge in relation to Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram in the interviews with the young people at Lakeside.

7.4.1   Facebook and Twitter

As discussed in earlier sections, Facebook membership amongst adolescents appears to be in sharp decline. In interviews, participants showed an awareness of this trend, with many claiming Facebook to be an outdated social media platform. Indeed, few admitted that they were active users of the site. For instance consider (53), an excerpt taken from a broader discussion on the topic of: 'what social media do you use?':

(53)

1	Christian	you don't use Facebook?
2	Josiah	I do (.) but I don't use it. It's kinda dead.
3		The only thing I'll use it for is to watch
4		videos
5	Marcus	Facebook is so late (.) Facebook was in
6		year seven. No-one -- no one goes on
7		Facebook

In this excerpt, having just listed the social networks that he uses (Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp), I explicitly ask Josiah whether he uses Facebook (line 1). Although he acknowledges that he has an account, he does not cite Facebook as one of the platforms that he uses. Rather, he notes that he 'doesn't use it' (line 2). He then goes on to concede that he only passively uses the platform 'to watch videos' (lines 3-4).

It is important here to note that Josiah does not equate 'watching videos' with 'using Facebook'. One possible interpretation of this is that he recognises that

his self-reported behaviour is far removed from the multifunctionality that Facebook offers. Whilst Facebook permits users to send messages, upload photos and statuses, connect with friends and fulfil a plethora of other *social* activities, the only function that Josiah attributes to the platform is the *passive* function of watching videos. In this sense, his use of Facebook appears to be comparable to video-sharing sites, such as YouTube, which are rarely (if ever) included in definitions of *social* media (e.g., boyd, 2014; Carr & Hayes, 2015; Miller, 2016).

Whilst Josiah's comments may appear somewhat contradictory, the use of Facebook as a *passive* media source was cited by the majority of adolescents that I interviewed. Although some of the adolescents reported owing a Facebook profile, none of them claim to actively upload photos, statuses and make other updates to their profile. Rather, individuals who do use the platform, report using Facebook in similar ways to Josiah: To watch videos, tag friends in memes and keep up to date with entertainment channels. Thus, whilst some of the participants have created accounts, they do not appear be using their accounts actively as a form of *social* media.

An explanation for this practice can be found in line 5, where Marcus refers to the platform as 'late' – a synonym of 'lame'. Expanding on this assessment, Marcus acknowledges that whilst Facebook was popular in year seven (age=11/12) at the time of the interview (age=15), it had become outdated (lines 5-7). In what follows, Marcus goes on to justify his position, stating that 'no-one' uses Facebook anymore. Of course, his comments that 'no one goes on Facebook' is not literally true: Facebook is still the most popular social media platform in terms of total monthly active users (Ofcom, 2019). However, the 'no-one' to which Marcus refers, is intended to reference 'anyone who is anyone', or anyone who is on trend (cf. Miller, 2016).

Twitter fares slightly differently. Unlike Facebook, Twitter has never really been popular amongst adolescent users. At Lakeside, whilst most participants conceded that they had used Facebook at some point, only one individual reported having a Twitter account. Her experience with the platform was brief, admitting that she 'didn't know how to use it', leading her to subsequently delete her account after a week. With no experience of using the platform, the discourses of Twitter that the

individuals engaged in tended to influenced by stereotypical notions of the imagined user, as in (54):

(54)

1	Christian	what about like Twitter?
2	Marcus	no-- no-- no-- no-- no-- no-- no-- no-- that's
3		even worse-- that's even worse
4	Christian	why don't you use Twitter?
5	Josiah	cos Twitter is dead
6	Marcus	absolutely disgraceful to any social media
7	Josiah	no one uses it (.) sa--I say it's the worst
8		social media that's ever been invented
9	Marcus	I'm not even tryna violate but it's like it's
10		like for like very posh, posh, posh, posh,
11		posh people
12	Josiah	David Cameron

In line 2, Marcus' emphatic and repeated 'no' in response to the question 'what about Twitter?' summarises most of the young people's perceptions of Twitter. Whilst Facebook was evaluated in negative terms, Marcus describes Twitter as 'even worse' than Facebook. Expanding on his perspective, Marcus' applies a value judgment of the platform, labelling it as a 'disgrace' (line 6), concluding that it is 'the worst social media that's ever been invented' (lines 7-8).

As in the description of Facebook in (53), the relevance of content discussed on Twitter is made clear by Josiah's comment that the platform is 'dead' (line 5), suggesting that 'no-one' uses Twitter (line 7). As before, the description that 'no one is using Twitter' is not intended to be taken on face value, but rather symbolises the irrelevance of this platform to this group based on the types of content that they believe are discussed. In lines 7 and 8, both Josiah and Marcus emphatically dismiss the relevance of Twitter, stating that it is a platform for 'very posh' people, referencing an archetypal 'posh person' – former British Prime Minister, David Cameron. By associating Twitter with a specific type of persona (i.e., adult, middle to upper class), they not only emphasise their lack of interest in the content posted to the platform, but they also indirectly claim an antithetical identity of that they believe

to be the archetypal Twitter user. In other words, here Josiah links Twitter to a particular type of enregistered social personae (Agha, 2003), where the use or non-use of the platform is determined as a type of 'social distinction' (Bourdieu, 1979) based on class.

Whilst I have focussed on only a handful of extracts here, it is important to acknowledge that the discourses and perceptions of Twitter and Facebook discussed by Marcus and Josiah are replicated throughout the interviews. In interviews, participants frequently use descriptors such as 'stupid', 'deep' ('an insult'), 'old' and 'dead' to refer to both Twitter and Facebook. And, in my ethnographic observations, I rarely documented the use of Facebook other those who used the platform occasionally to view and access memes, whilst I did not observe any individual accessing Twitter.

7.4.2   Snapchat & Instagram

Given the rise in newer multimodal social media apps, such as Snapchat and Instagram, it is perhaps unsurprising that, unlike Facebook and Twitter, these platforms are evaluated by the group in much more positive terms. Whereas few (if any) of the individuals actively used Facebook and/or Twitter as a *social* media platform, all of the individuals in the present study either reported using Snapchat and Instagram or were directly observed using these platforms to interact with others and upload Stories and posts.

With these platforms heavily integrated into the individuals' digital repertoires, discussions of Snapchat and Instagram were responded to with less enthusiasm than I had initially assumed. Unlike discussions regarding Facebook and Twitter which elicited some dramatic responses (e.g., extracts (53) and (54)), participants did not show as much vigour in discussing Snapchat or Instagram. Rather, when these platforms were discussed, they were generally described in terms of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) of networked users that they afford and for facilitating an extension of the offline social networks, practices and interactions that individuals participated in. For most of the young people, the semi-public feeds of these platforms enabled users to keep up to date with events and issues in the local area and connect with likeminded individuals who engaged with similar subcultures. For instance, Christina reported that you 'see a lot on Snapchat'

and that you 'can see a lot of beef [fights]', whilst Harinder claimed that he followed several gang accounts who operated in the area in order to participate in discussions about these uploads at school. Other individuals at Lakeside knew of other young people in the area who perhaps attended their school but did not come to the youth club so would collectively watch their stories or view their uploads and discuss those in the 'offline'. In this sense, Snapchat and Instagram facilitated an extension of the offline networks, practices and interactions of those at Lakeside creating a hyper-connected local network.

Of course, the success of these platforms is largely attributed to their multimodal functionality. The option to upload, edit, share and distribute images was regularly cited as the main reason why individuals favoured Instagram and Snapchat over other platforms. In many ways, the participants framed these platforms as affording a degree of 'authenticity' in a way that textual based forms could not. A very clear example of this narrative is evident in (55), where Michael distinguishes the multimodal affordances of Snapchat from the text-based format of Facebook in being able to verify the users' identity beyond text:

(55)

1	Interviewer	What do you use?
2	Michael	Snapchat and that's it, I don't use Facebook
3		anymore cos that's just stupid. Like people can ask
4		to meet up with you yeah and then that's actually
5		not the real person and then you end up getting
6		shanked or something like that

In this discussion, indirectly citing Danet's (1998) concept of 'text as a mask', Michael explicitly suggests that he does not use Facebook because of the potential for people to assume alternate (and bogus) identities. In lines 5-6, Michael conceptualises the textual affordance of Facebook as a potential danger, suggesting this may result in 'getting shanked [stabbed]'. Not only is this account incredibly telling of the social context of Lakeside, referencing the areas' high levels of crime and struggles with gang crime, but his account attributes the photograph as an authentic representation of reality, suggesting that his use of multimodal platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram is motivated by an ability to verify the individuals'

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true identity. Later, in the interview, James goes on to support this interpretation by suggesting that Snapchat allows the user to instantly verify the authenticity of an account by requesting the individual to send a video or live photograph of themselves.

Whilst this account is unlikely to explain more general patterns in the uptake of Snapchat, it does reveal several a number of patterns which are prevalent in the interviews of the other participants. First, the fact that Snapchat presents a more authentic world view coincides with the use of the platform to foster the imagined community discussed earlier. These narratives appear to be part of a more general move towards platforms that appear to reflect a more authentic experience of the world.

7.5   Methods

7.5.1   Snapchat Data

Snapchat data was collected from April 2017 to October 2017 to coincide with self-recordings and interviews. Individuals who I had built a good rapport with were approached and informed of the details of this section of the project. Parental assent had already been obtained via documentation that was sent out to parents prior to self-recordings.

Eventually, 11 participants participated in this section of the study. These individuals were asked to add a dedicated Snapchat account that I had created specifically for the purposes outlined here. Once the individual had followed the research account to confirm their participation in the study, I then spent the next six months observing and documenting the Snapchat stories of the individuals. All participants' Stories were set to 'public' by default. The account that I accessed the users' Stories through was not an active account other than for the purposes of the research project. The sole purpose of the account was to observe the participants' Snapchat stories and take samples of the content posted.

Given that Snapchat does not allow access to their API, the samples of the Snapchat Stories were captured in a rudimentary fashion, using screenshots. Whilst this method is by no means ideal, it permits an extra layer of ethical consideration, since the platform alerts the user every time a screenshot has been taken, thus

allowing the individual the opportunity to request that a photo be removed from the dataset. Whilst on one hand the notification of screenshot is a benefit in increasing the participants' control over the study, this may have the detrimental effect of the Observers Paradox (Labov, 1972). With the author aware of the data collection procedure, it was possible that they could have adapted the types/content of posts in ways that did not reflect their true use of the platform. To account for this, I intentionally did not systematically capture their Snapchat stories. Rather, I would screenshot random selections of their stories over the six-month period by varying the length of time between each screenshot to between one or three days and ensuring that the data collection would take place at different times of the day. In this sense, the corpus of 350 Snapchats is a random sample of a much longer trajectory of Snapchat stories. Judging by the content of the stories, this principle seemed to work. In fact, several of the individuals remarked on the fact that they received notifications that I had screenshot their story but seemed unfazed by this as this practice appears to be widespread amongst Snapchat users.

In addition to samples of the Snapchats, I took detailed fieldnotes (Kozinets, 2010; Abidin, 2013) regarding the types of content, posts and styles that the individuals used. I also engaged with Snapchat channels that I heard the members at Lakeside discussing and would keep up to date with the filters, functions and changes that Snapchat added or made.

7.5.2   Instagram Data

The Instagram data considered in this thesis are taken from the accounts of two public entertainment channels, 'Link Up TV' and 'the Street Blogs'. These accounts were chosen based on my ethnographic observations, as two accounts which individuals regularly engaged with at the club and discussed in interviews. From April 2017 until October 2017, I conducted a digital ethnography of these accounts and took detailed fieldnotes[36].

In addition to my ethnographic observation of these accounts, a sample of the content posted by these accounts was extracted to be able to exemplify my claims

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[36] I continued to follow these accounts until the point of writing this thesis (July 2019) to contextualise my observations within the development of these two accounts.

in the following analysis. In total, 500 posts were sampled, with 306 from Link Up TV and 194 from the Street Blogs. Content extracted from these pages was manually extracted because of the well-documented constraints of Instagram's API (e.g., Zhao & Zappavigna, 2017), enforced after the CA scandal.

Although it would been both possible and preferable to use automated tools to extract content from these pages, the use of web-crawling and scraping technologies is explicitly forbidden in Instagram's privacy policy and violates the terms of service of the platform. For these reasons, I resorted to manually archiving the links to relevant posts and taking screenshots of posts. Of course, the manual extraction of content raises some of its own issues. Changes to permalinks, link-rot and the content removal is likely to affect the time that this this content is available. To account for this, posts were manually downloaded and stored in image format, including comments, captions and other metadata.

As with the Snapchat posts, the Instagram content represents a random sample of the types of content that were observed during the period of digital ethnography. Although it would have been possible, albeit time consuming, to download all content from both accounts, my intention here is not to provide an exhaustive description of these specific accounts, but rather use these samples to contextualise my ethnographic observations of both the wider digital practices of the users as well as their engagement with offline cultures and communities.

7.6   Summary

This chapter has outlined the digital ethnographic approach used to explore the digital practices of the individuals at Lakeside. In exploring the ways in which the young people actually use digital social media, I have examined the metapragmatic discourses of social media platforms that emerge in their interviews to justify my selection of the platforms and data analysed herein. Lastly, I have presented the methodologies used to obtain the social media data from Snapchat and Instagram. In the following chapter, I examine this data in relation to the sociolinguistic patterns observed in the speech of the young people at Lakeside.

8 Social Media and the Social Meaning of Variation

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the foregoing analyses of the spoken language data by exploring social media posts in order to shed light on the social meaning of the variable patterns at Lakeside. First, I theorise the approach I take in examining social media in relation to offline spoken language patterns. I then go on to apply this approach to posts extracted from the social media platforms, Snapchat and Instagram. Here, I examine the ways in which individuals at Lakeside orient towards three prevalent thematic dimensions that emerge in the social media posts: ethnicity, the city and 'urban' music genres. From this, I discern a more general orientation towards a particular type of enregistered culture, often referred to as 'Road' culture. Finally, I discuss this data in relation to the local persona of the gully, arguing that this identity is dependent on a broader macro-level identity that is characterised by an explicit alignment with a particular type of working-class masculinity rooted in an appreciation of 'Road' culture – the 'Roadman'.

8.2 Conceptualising Social Media in Sociolinguistics

Before examining the online component of this analysis, I first provide an exposition of the approach I take in conceptualising social media posts in relation to the foregoing analyses. In what follows, I examine the digital practices of the individuals to reveal how the social dimensions at Lakeside become networked in digital space.

As I will show, for many of the young people at Lakeside, social media facilitates an extension of the individuals' offline social networks, interests and activities. Consequently, I suggest that social media presents a particularly appealing opportunity for the analyst to examine not only the ways the individual users construct personae and orient towards particular group identities, but also the ways in which these practices relate to community-level affiliations. At the user-level, I will argue that Snapchat posts are particularly valuable resources in exploring the ways in which users 'write themselves into being' (boyd, 2014) by articulating aspects of their perspective (Zhao & Zappavigna, 2017; Page, 2018). Whilst, at the community-level, I will demonstrate that Instagram posts are potentially valuable resources in exploring the ways in which individuals respond and orient towards a collective of users who share similar interests (Anderson, 1983).

8.2.1   Snapchat Stories

As discussed in Chapter 7, the Snapchat data considered in this thesis are those images and videos extracted from the Stories of a subset of individuals at Lakeside. As a semi-public feed that is accessible by 'friends' – i.e., those who have added the account by entering that users' username or 'Snapcode', Stories are viewable for a period of 24 hours. When a user is added as a friend, the individual is permitted access to that users' Story and can view that image or video for the remainder of the 24-hour period. Stories can be viewed via the 'discover' channel where they are organised into an aggregated stream of feeds. Here, users can access not only the content posted by those they follow but can also view other 'public' Stories. This includes those maintained by news outlets, such as the Daily Mail and Vice Magazine, as well as those uploaded to the 'Our Story' channel – a publicly accessible stream that collates stories relating to a particular event or location (see, for example, Page, 2018).

In addition to the Story function of the app, Snapchat also permits users to send private Snaps via its chat function. Like Stories, they can only be viewed for a limited amount of time after the message has been opened by the recipient – usually 10 seconds – before they are (in theory) deleted from the Snapchat servers. Chats differ from Stories in that they are usually directed at a closed group of individuals,

such that the message content can be viewed only by the addressee(s). When an individual uploads an image/video to their Story, however, this Snap is potentially viewable by a much larger audience. This may include not just the users' friends, but also those who have access to their Snapcode. Thus, whilst users can tailor chats to a specified group of addressees, when the user uploads a Story, they broadcast that image or video to a much larger audience of networked users.
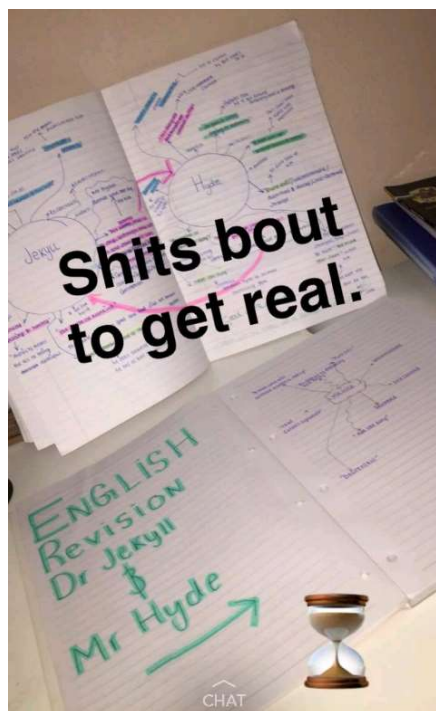

Figure 13 *'Revision session'* (Danni, Snapchat)

Figure 14 *'Hospital visit'* (Julia, Snapchat)

Marketed to users as a way of "sharing the everyday moments of life" (Snapchat, N.D.), Snapchat Stories encourage users to exploit the multimodal functionality of contemporary smartphones. With its integrated camera application, users can upload images, videos and other image-based content, which become organised into a coherent 'narrative' of the everyday (Page, 2018). Whilst Stories are sometimes used to capture those events which are considered to be 'spectacular' – as in the case of micro-celebrities and influencers (cf. Abidin, 2013) – most often they are used to record the often banal and mundane aspects of everyday life (e.g., Page, 2018). For instance, in the data samples taken from the participants' Snapchat accounts at Lakeside, whilst many posts could be categorised as 'spectacular' in some respect, the vast majority of uploads would depict unremarkable events, such as Danni's

homework/revision session (as in Figure 13) or Julia's visit to the hospital (as in Figure 14).

As an 'image-first' platform, Snapchat Stories have increasingly become associated with the networked practice of the 'selfie' (Page, 2018). To facilitate this growing trend, Snapchat has developed an array of filters or 'lenses' which can be overlaid on the image or video to add particular artistic effects to the image. Preinstalled filters include those which add contextual information to the image including the users' geo-tagged location, time and date at which the image was taken, whilst other lenses manipulate certain photographic properties of the image, including the now infamous 'dog face' filter which adds dog ears and an animated tongue to the users' portrait.

Although popular definitions of the selfie tend to focus on this particular type of image as a type of self-portrait (Walker Rettberg, 2014), others have tended to conceptualise the selfie more broadly as a type of self-representational, networked photograph (e.g., Tiidenberg & Gómez-Cruz, 2015; Tiidenberg, 2018). When defined in these terms, the label 'selfie' includes not only those self-portrait style images, but also those images which are intended to depict the perspective or experience of the author, such as Figure 13 and Figure 14.

It is this definition that Zhao and Zappavigna (2017) assume in proposing a discourse analytic typology of selfies, where they define these images as those which "introduce the photographer's personal perspective, or point of view ('voice') into the visual text" (2017:1735). This leads the authors to define selfies as not only those self-portrait style images which they argue "fulfils an *ideational* function of representing the self" (2017:240; emphasis original), but also those images of objects, contexts and places which 'imply' or 'infer' representations of the photographers' perspective. Here, they distinguish between 'presented'/'mirrored' images, and those which are 'inferred' and 'implied'. According to their typology, 'inferred' selfies are those which depict some body part, such as an image of the photographers' feet at the beach, which explicitly *infer* the existence of the authors' perspective. 'Implied' selfies, on the other hand, refer to those images in which there is a total absence of the author, but which appear to represent their worldview – or perspective – and thus *imply* the existence of the self.

Applying Zhao and Zappavigna's typology to the examples in Figure 13 and

Figure 14, it is possible to suggest that these two images are *implied* selfies since, whilst there is no obvious physical trace of the author, both images represent the authors' perspective in the space and time in which that event occurred. In Figure 13, this is Danni's revision session; whilst in Figure 14, Julia documents her visit to a London hospital. In some instances, the addition of text, geo-location or other semiotic resources to the image adds further explicit references that clarify the users' perspective. This is the case in Figure 14, where the positive evaluation of the hospital as 'fancy' and the deictic: 'I've ever seen', clarify Julia's perspective.

As images which seek to articulate aspects of the users' perspective, selfies – and by extension Snapchat Stories – have often been conceptualised as types of narrative. Tiidenberg (2018), for instance, views selfies as a social practice in which the user depicts a personal quotidian narrative (Tiidenberg, 2018; Senft & Baym, 2015), whilst Georgakopoulou (2016) conceptualises selfies as 'small-stories' that portray a "personal historiography of the present" (2016:352).

Here, it possible to draw similarities between selfies and earlier photographic genres. Indeed, similar types of self-representational images can be seen in the earliest types of self-portraiture (Walker-Rettberg, 2013). However, whilst there are similarities between the two genres, a number of scholars have argued for a an altogether different conceptualisation of this practice. For Georgakopoulou, the difference between the two genres is in the transiency of the image. She argues that whilst self-portraiture is intended to capture the "essence of the person", selfies are about capturing the transient moments of life – "the nature of a moment" (2016:302). For Zhao and Zappavigna it is a difference of composition, noting that in selfies, there is a more general "foregrounding of the photographer's perspective" (2017:242).

However, perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the selfie is its networked capacity. As images that are uploaded to "infrastructure of the digital *superpublic*" (Senft & Baym, 2015:1589; emphasis original), the meaning of the image is interpersonally negotiated by the poster and the audience. Georgakopoulou goes further to suggest that the selfie is "co-constructed" through the audiences' engagement with the image who display "specific alignment responses, by bringing in and displaying knowledge from offline, pre-posting activities or any other knowledge specific to the post or poster" (2016:301). Thus, in taking and uploading a selfie, the

audience is positioned not as a passive viewer of the image, as in traditional portraiture, but rather is positioned as an active participant "in the space of the photograph" (Walker-Rettberg, 2013:9).

The possibility for selfies to be 'co-constructed' is what Page has referred to as a type of 'collective sociality'. Applying this concept to those Snapchat Stories uploaded to the public channel, Page argues that, by inviting the viewer into the narrative or event, the selfie positions the audience member "as if they were part of a larger group, sharing the same experience and perspective as the person creating the [Story]" (2018:79). In this respect, Selfies and Snapchat Stories invite the 'participation' of the user and the (imagined) audience to engage and interact with that content (Mortensen, f.c.).

8.2.2   Instagram

Unlike the individuals' Snapchat Stories which are cast to only a limited number of users – usually their friendship networks – the Instagram data considered in this thesis are those posts extracted from the public timelines of two 'entertainment' channels. These specific accounts were selected on the basis of my offline and online ethnographic observations. In my time at Lakeside, I had observed a number of the individuals accessing these feeds via their own mobile devices and in the IT suite. The online ethnography also confirmed the individuals' engagement with these channels, as several of the individuals who provided access to their Snapchat accounts often remediated content from these channels via their own Stories.

The first channel that I examine here is Link Up TV, established in London in 2008. The channel focusses mainly on promoting urban music genres. On their website, the channel describes itself as an "online talent and entertainment channel showcasing unsigned and emerging talent" (Link Up TV, 2019), whilst on Instagram, the company promotes itself as an entertainment channel as keeping the audience updated with "everything urban". Content posted to the account is a mix of music videos, adverts for UK (often London) based events and festivals as well as viral internet memes. Overwhelmingly, however, the channel mainly focusses on the music promotion and marketing of what it refers to as the 'urban' music scene. This includes posts which announce new album releases or music videos, festival and gig

advertisements, as well as the latest urban music news. The channel largely promotes artists who produce bashment, dancehall afrobeat, grime, Hip-Hop and to a lesser degree, drill music.

Figure 15 *Screenshot of a tweet posted by the comedian, Michael Dapaah, a.k.a. Big Shaq (Link Up TV, Instagram)*

The channel's focus on urban music styles can largely be attributed to its origins in music promotion. Link Up TV, like many of their competitors such as the now defunct 'Channel U', was originally established as a grassroots movement to promote unsigned and emerging talent (McInnes, 2010). At a time when urban music was underrepresented in mainstream media, entertainment channels such as Link Up TV were instrumental in increasing the visibility of these artists and the urban music scene. For many, these digital forms provided a platform for artists to connect with their fanbase and to promote new material. In recent years, entertainment channels such as Link Up TV have often been credited for their role in the mainstream recognition of urban music artists and genres (Quirk, 2004; McInnes, 2010).

With Instagram just one facet of the polymedia (Madianou & Miller, 2012) presence of the company, Link Up TV maintains a social media profile that spans multiple platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. On YouTube, where the entertainment channel was first launched, Link Up TV has garnered a following of 1.5 million subscribers. The channel has uploaded over 10,000 videos and its videos have clocked over 1.5 billion views (Social Blade, 2019). On Instagram, the channel has attracted over 700,000 followers and, to date, has 24,065

posts.

Across channels, much of the content that Link Up TV posts is remediated (Deuze, 2006) from other social media platforms and video sharing sites that it maintains. Music videos uploaded to their YouTube account are often edited and adapted as Instagram posts to increase user engagement. The channel also frequently uploads screenshots of tweets, Snapchat posts and content from other social media accounts that are relevant to its followers. For instance, Figure 15 is an Instagram post that includes a screenshot of a tweet and embedded YouTube video, originally posted by the comedian, Michael Dapaah (a.k.a., Big Shaq). The artist is well known for his parodic grime song 'Man's Not Hot' which subsequently became a smash hit. With over 300 million views on YouTube to date, the song is regularly cited as an indication of the mainstream success of grime.

The second Instagram account that is analysed in this chapter is the 'Street Blogs'. Founded in 2015, the channel was originally established as a music promotional channel in a similar respect to Link Up TV, describing itself as a platform that enables "the entertainment industry to showcase their talents" (Facebook). More recently, however, this focus has become more marginal and, as described on their now redundant YouTube profile, instead promotes itself as a channel that "upload[s] drama in the UK" (YouTube).

Whilst the channel has a polymedia presence across a number of different social media platforms including YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, in reality, engagement is heavily concentrated on Instagram and Snapchat. The channel also maintains the 'Street List' playlist on the music streaming service, Spotify. The playlist, which is updated weekly, features tracks from UK grime artists – many of whom also feature in the posts uploaded by Link Up TV. At the time of writing, the YouTube, Twitter and Facebook accounts of the channel had not been updated within the last year, and individuals at Lakeside were seldom seen engaging with this channel outside Instagram, Snapchat and Spotify.

On Instagram, where the channel appears to be its most active, the account is followed by just over 630,000 users and has uploaded in excess of 2,000 posts. Content posted to the Instagram account includes videos of music genres similar to those promoted by Link Up TV, announcements of related events, as well as more general viral internet memes. Overwhelmingly, however, the channel uploads a great

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deal of content that relates to the 'drama' label that it is referenced in their YouTube bio. A great deal of uploaded content features videos and images which concern criminal activities, violence, and disputes with the police. The majority of these posts centre on issues and events in the UK. As stated on their Instagram account, the Street Blogs defines itself as a type of 'British media'. Most often, videos and images reference events in London and other urban centres, such as Birmingham and Manchester, with content mostly user-generated and crowd sourced. In fact, the account explicitly invites users to submit content via the direct messaging function on Instagram. Usually these posts are remediated from individuals' Snapchat Stories, with the channel adding their own branding and captions to the post.

Although there are clear differences between the types, authors, and purpose of the content uploaded by the two entertainment channels, these two accounts are comparable in the extent to which uploaded content relates to aspects of 'urban' culture. For Link Up TV, this 'urban orientation' is primarily realised in posts that announce the latest music videos or new album releases of artists who produce grime, bashment, dancehall and other genres that it refers to as 'urban'. For the Street Blogs, this alignment is evident in those posts which by depict aspects of the 'urban lived experience', such as those videos which document criminal activities and violence.

When analysed in relation to one another, Link Up TV and Street blogs contribute towards the 'enregisterment' (Agha, 2003) of a particular type of 'urban' culture. By uploading content to their public profiles, these channels 'create' new indexical links between types of content as being relevant to (or even part of) the 'urban' orientation that they promote. In this sense, Link Up TV and Street Blogs function as 'authorities' for structuring what Gal & Woolard (1995) refer to as "publics" – that is the ways in which certain social practices, including linguistic behaviours, become structured as some coherent entity and are subsequently recognised in the 'public' sphere.

With these publics constructed and experienced in digital space, they become a type of 'networked public'. Here, this networked space facilitates an "imagined collective that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice" (boyd, 2010:39). As such, on these channels, individual users who elect to follow these accounts are structured as a collective of users who

orient towards the enregistered 'urban' culture in similar ways. In this sense, by following the account, the individual not only expresses an alignment with that urban orientation but they also are positioned as part of a much larger collective of users who share similar interests – an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983).

It is this 'imagined community' that guides the content and type of posts uploaded to Link Up TV and the Street Blogs. As commercial entities, the 'urban' orientation that informs the types of posts uploaded by the two entertainment channels can largely be examined in terms of the channels' 'followers' (i.e., subscribers). The commercial viability of a post judged is based on the potential for that post to be both relevant and judged favourably by an engaged community of users. Content posted by these accounts is therefore designed in relation to the 'imagined audience' (Marwick & boyd, 2011) of acculturated users who are presumed to be able to recognise and appreciate the semiotic value or reference of a given post.

The notion of a collective imagined community is perhaps most obvious in those videos, GIFs and images which are intended to be circulated as internet memes. Here, I adopt a much broader definition of an 'internet meme' than is sometimes discussed in popular culture. I follow Shifman (2014:4) in defining memes as ideas or concepts that are spread across digital channels, which have become "highly valued pillars of a so-called participatory culture". When approached in these terms, this definition includes not only those still images which are emblazoned with text (as in 'LolCat' or 'Doge') but also those videos, GIFs and images which are circulated in digital contexts (see Gal, Shifman & Kampf, 2015), including much of the content posted to the Street Blogs and Link Up TV. This would include Figure 15: the screenshot of Michael Dapaah's video for 'Man's Not Hot', as a type of "memetic response" (Gal, Shifman, & Kampf, 2015:1698).

As ubiquitous elements of digital culture, memes are important in establishing a system of shared norms amongst those who participate in the dissemination of the image or video. As Shifman (2014) notes, memes do not only reflect existing social values but also have the potential to restructure these norms and practices. As forms of social commentary, sharing a particular meme (i.e., the signifier) relies on an appreciation of the social meaning of that meme (i.e., the signified) amongst members of an acculturated audience. Thus, the creation and

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distribution of a particular meme and its indexical meaning, helps to structure the collective identity of the community (Gal, Shifman, & Kampf, 2015). Whilst the cultural reference of a meme may be constituted on the digital platform itself (e.g., LolCat), the referential value of memes is often dependent on some 'cultural key' (Shifman, 2014) that can be located in the individuals' participation or engagement with offline communities and cultures (e.g., Gal, Shifman & Kampf, 2015; Sierra, f.c.).

8.2.3   Between the Offline and the Online

By bringing the 'offline' and 'online' datasets together, I seek to examine the ways in which social distinctions, affiliations and identities manifest in digital space. In taking this approach, I am intentionally aligning with a 'augmented reality' perspective in approaching the offline-online nexus (Jurgenson, 2012) discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 1.

In taking this approach, however, it is worth clarifying the extent to which the online could truly be seen to reflect aspects of the individuals' offline lives. Whilst I acknowledge there is a possibility that some individuals may engage with communities and audiences that are dramatically different from those that they participate in the offline (e.g., Turkle, 1995), as in the case of World of Warcraft or other gaming networks, in the context of Lakeside, I did not observe individuals engaging with disparate online communities. Rather, individuals largely participated in similar activities to those that they were involved with in the offline and many of their posts referenced their habitual (offline) social networks, practices, and interests (e.g., Figure 13 and Figure 14). In fact, a great deal of the young peoples' posts documented school interactions, their visits to local areas, and events within the bounds of the (physical) field site of Lakeside. In this respect, rather than representing their engagement with some alternate reality, at Lakeside, social media largely facilitated an extension of the offline.

One possible presupposition of this argument is that, if users' are simply using social media as an extension of their offline networks and engagement with subcultures, then we should expect not only these social factors to be represented in social media posts, but also the language and styles used by speakers in offline

contexts. If, as I suppose, users and entertainment accounts are largely *designing* content for an 'imagined audience' (Marwick & boyd, 2012) of neighbourhood peers and users who share similar real-world interests, then it is reasonable to assume that the linguistic patterns identified in those communities would be represented in online posts. Based on this potential, in the next section, I examine the ways in which the linguistic features analysed in prior chapters are orthographically represented in social media posts.

8.3   Orthographic Variation

As noted in Chapter 1, a large body of research has focussed on the representation of dialect and spoken language features in orthographic variation in social media (see *inter alia* Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015). These analyses have tended to show that writing patterns in systematically similar ways to spoken language and that orthographic variation can (largely) be used as a proxy for speech. This presupposes that individuals use non-standard orthographic features on social media to reproduce aspects of their *own* linguistic repertoires. If this assumption is to be borne out in the data, then we should expect that individuals at Lakeside use variable spellings to represent the three features identified in the spoken language analyses (substitution of the interdental fricatives, the *man* pronoun, and the attention signal *ey*).

Whilst a quantitative analysis of the orthographic variation in the Snapchats and Instagram posts is outside of the scope of the current analysis, I examine the qualitative trends of orthographic variation here to examine how (or even if) the spoken language features analysed in previous sections are represented in the social media posts. The impetus for this analysis is based on my earlier arguments. If we are to assume that these individuals and Instagram accounts are posting for the 'imagined' acculturated audience of users who largely reflect the individuals' offline networks and interests, then it is expected that the linguistic features used in speech should also be represented in those social media posts analysed here (see also Iorio, 2010 for a similar argument). On Snapchat, this would be the representation of the users' own vernacular, whilst on Instagram, it is likely that these channels represent aspects of the style associated with the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983).

Before turning to a discussion of the orthographic representation of the three features analysed in this thesis, it should be noted that there is a virtual absence of 'txtspeak' features in the dataset (cf. Tagg et al., 2016). And, more generally, there is less orthographic variation than we may expect for this medium of communication. As I will discuss in later sections, when non-standard spellings do occur, they generally are those spellings which resemble features of other spoken language varieties such as Jamaican English and MLE. Even then, these features occur at relatively low rates, particularly in comparison to other analyses of digital communication (e.g., Moll, 2015). Whilst a full exposition of these matters is beyond the scope of the current analysis, it is worth bearing in the mind that such patterns are largely to be influenced by the widespread use of predictive text messaging systems. With this in mind, I now turn to a brief discussion of the orthographic representation of the three features analysed here.

8.3.1   Interdental Fricatives

8.3.1.1.   TH-fronting

As somewhat of a stereotype of Computer Mediated Communication (e.g., Tagg et al., 2016), TH-fronting, i.e., the substitution of /θ/ for [f], orthographically represented as <f> for <th> as in <fing> for <thing>, has been documented as a relatively pervasive feature in other accounts of digital communication (e.g., Collot * Belmore, 1996). However, perhaps surprisingly, the feature is absent from both the Instagram and Snapchat posts. Whilst there are numerous contexts for this feature to occur, across the corpus of 850 posts, I did not record any instances of the orthographic representation of TH-fronting either in the individuals' Stories or in the posts uploaded by the entertainment channels. Given that the feature is often orthographically transcribed in other contexts (e.g., tourist merchandise sold in London) and is generally described as a stereotypical feature of digital communication, the absence of this feature in my corpus may, at first, seem surprising.

However, if we consider my arguments made in §4.7.2 in relation to the distribution of the spoken feature, it is possible to discern a potential explanation for

the absence of this feature. If, as I suggest, TH-fronting is unlikely to attain social differentiation because of its relatively stable status in London adolescent speech, then one possible interpretation of the absence of the orthographic representation of this feature is that it is simply not 'salient' enough to be represented in written variation. My line of reasoning here follows Honeybone and Watson's (2013) analysis of Scouse dialect literature, where they find that it is the most perceptually salient features of the dialect that are most often represented in non-standard orthography. Recall that there is some experimental evidence to suggest that Southern, specifically London-based, speakers are not able to 'monitor' (i.e., perceive) TH-fronting (Levon & Fox, 2014). It follows, then, that TH-fronting would not be represented in the social media posts simply because it is not 'salient' enough to be orthographically represented. Of course, these suggestions remain tentative based on the lack of any quantitative analysis, but I would argue that the issues raised here warrant further examination.

These matters aside, an additional consideration that must be taken into account in regard to the orthographic representation of TH-fronting is the emergence of non-standard spellings that reflect TH-stopping, as in <ting> for <thing>. Since it is possible to substitute <th> for either <f> or <t> as in as in *thing* <fing>, <ting>, the representation of TH-fronting is likely to be influenced heavily by the use of <t>. This observation largely coincides with my earlier comments relating to the distribution of these spoken language features, where the emergence of TH-stopping effects the rate of TH-fronting (see §4.7). As I will go on to show, the substitution of <th> for <t> appears to be comparatively more prevalent in the social media posts than the use of <f> for <th>. With this in mind, I now turn to the representation of TH-stopping in the corpus.

8.3.1.2.   TH-stopping

Unlike TH-fronting, the spoken feature of TH-stopping, i.e., the use of [t] for /θ/, is frequently represented in the orthography. Across both Snapchat and Instagram, TH-stopping is represented in the substitution of <th> for <t>, as in the spellings <ting> and <yute>, which are common variants for <thing> and <youth>. Similar to speech, the orthographic variants that represent TH-fronting and TH-stopping may

be used across the same word.

However, as in the spoken language analyses, the distribution of orthographic representations of TH-stopping appear to be largely constrained to a small number of lexemes. Such an observation may add further support to my earlier arguments that this feature has become lexicalised. As in speech, the social media data show the orthographic representation of this feature to be restricted to a small subset of word initial and word final <th> words – namely, <yute> (*youth*), <tief> (*thief*), and overwhelmingly, <ting> (*thing*). These words happen to also be the same lexical items that TH-stopping was constrained to in the speech of the individuals at Lakeside. Thus, it seems that, at least for this feature, the patterns of orthographic variation largely reflect those identified in the spoken language dataset (e.g., Eisenstein, 2015).

Figure 16 *Orthographic representation of TH-stopping (Beth, Snapchat)*

To some degree then, these observations add credence to my earlier arguments that [tɪŋ] has become lexicalised. Indeed, further evidence to suggest that [tɪŋ] has become lexicalised is the fact that this spelling has commodified as a Snapchat 'sticker' – i.e., a graphic that can be added to the users' image. Consider Figure 16,

for example. This appears to be the only word that has become commodified in this way.

The feature is also heavily represented across the two Instagram channels. Again, however, TH-stopping appears to be heavily lexicalised. Again, this feature is represented only in the three words discussed above *(thing, youth, and thief).* Such restrictions mirror those identified in the Snapchat data and also in the spoken language corpora (cf. §8.3.1.2). For instance, this feature is represented in Figure 17, which is a Link Up TV post that promotes the track – 'Peng Ting Hello' by grime artists 86 (Scrams & Gunna Grimes).
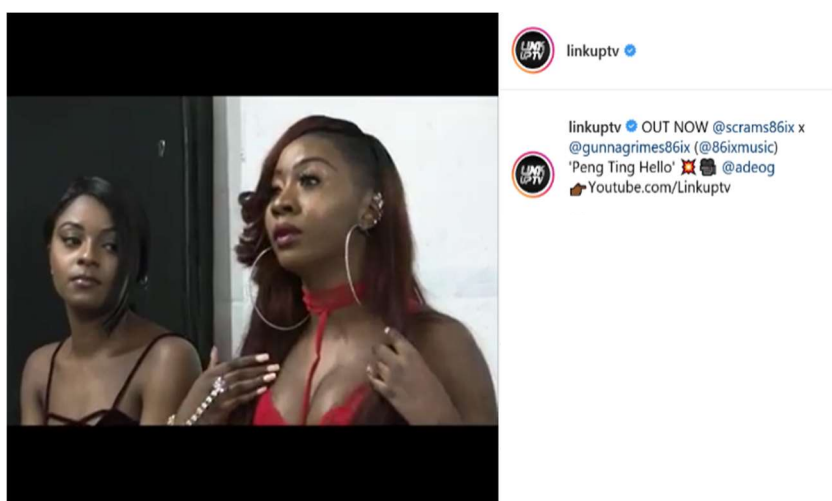
Figure 17 *Video for the grime track 'Peng Ting Hello'*
(Link Up TV, Instagram)

8.3.1.3.   DH-stopping

The orthographic representation of, i.e., [d] for /ð/ as in <dis> for <this> is perhaps the most pervasive variant spelling in the social media corpus. This observation is unsurprising given that there is a wealth of research which has shown that <d> for <th> is a well-established variant spelling. For instance, in his research on the orthographic representation of DH-stopping, Callier (2016) finds spellings such as <dis>, <dat> and <dey> to be stereotypical and enregistered features of a number of 'internet varieties'. Such observations may be accounted for by Woolard's suggestion that word initial stopping in words with definite reference (e.g. this, that, the, them) have become salient stereotypes of non-standard speech, which make this variable

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"ripe for social semiotic and stylistic work" (2008:443).

Similar to Woolard's (2008) observations of the feature in speech, in the corpus of Snapchats and Instagram posts, the orthographic representation of DH-stopping, whilst relatively pervasive, appears to be largely restricted to the function words <dis>/<this>, <dat>/<that>, and <dem>/<them>, and to a lesser degree, <doe>/<though> (Figure 18 & Figure 19). This pattern largely mirrors the spoken language analyses where these words accounted for the vast majority of stopped tokens (see §4.8.2).

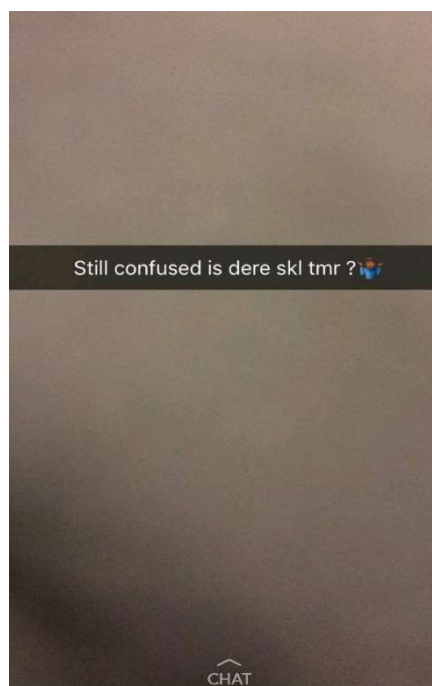**Figure 18** *'Tutor video'*
(Rochelle, Snapchat)

Figure 19 *'School tomorrow'*
(Sam, Snapchat)

Whilst it is not possible to make any definitive conclusions regarding the sociolinguistic distribution of the orthographic representation of this feature given the small size of the corpora, it is worth noting that the only examples of DH-stopping are from those speakers with non-White heritage. For instance, Figure 18 is a screenshot taken of a video in which Rochelle records her friends fooling around at school, tagging this video with a caption in which she represents *though* as <doe>. Rochelle, who is of African heritage, also happened to be one of the speakers who exhibited the highest rate of DH-stopping in her speech. Similarly, in Figure 19, Sam, who is of Caribbean heritage, appeals to the audience to ascertain whether he

has school (<skl>) tomorrow (<tmr>) in which he uses the orthographic representation of DH-stopping in the word *there* <dere>. This adds some support to my earlier interpretations of the feature in speech as an ethnic marker (see §4.8.2).

On Instagram, the feature is also particularly prevalent across both Link Up TV and Street Blogs. In particular, DH-stopping is often represented in posts that reference Caribbean, often Jamaican, cultures and practices. This suggests that, perhaps, at the level of orthography, DH-stopping still retains its stereotypical social meaning as an ethnic marker (e.g., Moll, 2015; Callier, 2016; cf. Gates, 2018).

One plausible explanation for the appearance of this feature is found in the extent to which Link Up TV and the Street Blogs uses elements of Jamaican Creole in their captions. As I will go on to show, features of this variety are relatively pervasive. It is therefore possible that spellings that appear orthographically represent DH-stopping, such as <dem>, are in fact elements of Jamaican English (cf. Moll, 2015). The association of this feature as an ethnic marker and its appearance in posts that have a strong ethnic dimension to it should therefore be unsurprising.
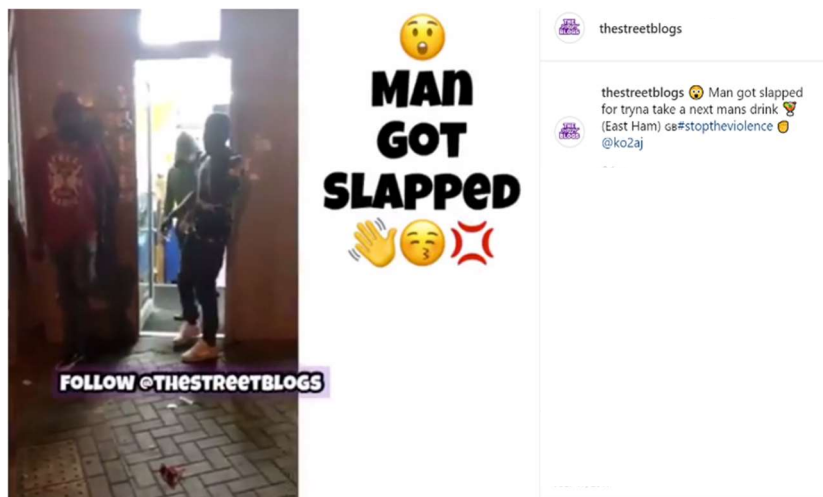
8.3.2   *Man* [P]

Figure 20 *A video of an 'assault' (the Street Blogs, Instagram)*

Surprisingly, pronominal *man* is not represented in any of the individuals' Snapchats. There are a number of possible reasons as to why this may be the case. First, the Snapchat corpus comprises only 350 Snapchats taken from eleven individuals, and not all of those individuals use *man* [P] in speech. In particular, the heaviest users of

man [P] did not contribute to this stage of the analysis. Second, as I have shown in §5.7, *man* [P] is not only infrequent, but it appears to be heavily constrained by the interactional context in which this feature occurs. The lack of any synchronous interaction in Snapchat Stories may then go some way in explaining why there is an absence of this feature in this dataset.

Further evidence for this line of reasoning comes from posts taken from Instagram. Whilst *man* [P] is absent from my corpus of Snapchat posts, it is frequently represented in content uploaded to both of the Instagram accounts analysed here. Not only is this feature represented in the orthography, but it also most frequently references the same semantic and pragmatic values that were identified in the spoken language corpora in §5.8. In other words, *man* [P] is overwhelmingly used as a third-person singular subject pronoun.

The similar referential values of *man* [P] in speech and writing are shown in Figure 20. The image is a screenshot taken from a video that has been uploaded of an altercation in which an individual is assaulted. The accompanying text 'man got slapped' refers to the third-person singular subject use of man that I find to be the most prevalent in the spoken language data. In the caption accompanying, we see that the pronoun is again repeated alongside the use of the nominal *man*: 'take a next mans drink'. Similarly, in other captions we see pronominal man used overwhelmingly to refer to 3rd person singular subjects, hence captions such as: "man said 'grease up the ting'", "man's running for his life", and "man got bumped" (the Street Blogs).[37]

8.3.3   *Ey*

Presumably due to its very specific interactional function which lends itself to synchronous communication, the attention signal *ey* is not orthographically represented in either the Snapchat posts or those from Instagram. The only evidence of *ey* that I could identify in the digital data was the use of this feature not as an

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[37] It is also possible to interpret these cases as the bare noun reading, e.g., "(a) man got slapped". Whilst this is a plausible interpretation, I would argue for the pronominal reading of these tokens based on the fact that there are instances where a bare noun reading is difficult/ unlikely. For instance, where <man> refers to a single individual who is already specified in the discourse (see also Chapter 5).

attention signal but rather as a marker of surprise or excitement, similar to the use of non-attention signal marking *ey* in speech (see Chapter 6). The two instances of this use of *ey* are found in one Snapchat post from Danni and an Instagram post from Link Up TV. In both contexts, this feature is represented orthographically as <Ayyy>. For instance, in in Figure 21, assumedly having just boarded a bus, Danni is surprised to see that bus has integrated USB chargers in the seats, allowing her to charge her phone. Overlaying text with <ayyy>, her use of this feature refers not to the attention signalling function identified in §6.4.2, but rather the secondary function of this feature as a way to signal excitement or participation. Such a reading is supported by her use of the 'party popper' emoji which signals surprise or celebration.
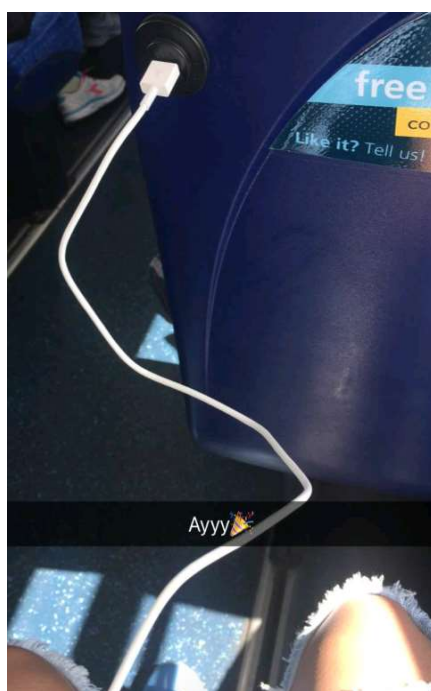

Figure 21 *Orthographic representation of <ayyy> (Danni, Snapchat)*

On Link Up Tv and the Street Blogs, we see a similar function of what is orthographically transcribed as <ay> where the vowel lengthening represented by <y> is highly variable, as in <ayyy> and <ayyyyyyy>. Again, like Danni's post, these tokens do not function as attention signals, but rather refer to the secondary function of the discourse marker identified in §6.4.2. As discussed, it seems likely that the specific

interactional function of <ey> is likely to be a contributing factor in the absence of this feature in the social media posts.

8.4   Social Distinctions Beyond the 'Offline'

The examination of the orthographic variation confirms, in part, that many of the spoken language features analysed in earlier chapters, are also represented in the social media posts extracted from Snapchat and Instagram. As predicted, it is likely that many of these forms resemble features of the users' own vernacular, as in the case of Snapchat, or represent features typically associated with the imagined community, as is the case on Instagram.

Whilst these non-standard spellings are no doubt relevant to the current analysis, as acknowledged in contemporary analyses of digital communication, orthographic variation is just one component of a broader semiotic system that users draw from in discursively constructing aspects of their (online) identities (Androutsopoulos, 2016). This point is particularly relevant in relation to the data analysed here. As discussed in previous sections, the declining popularity of Facebook and Twitter amongst the youngest demographic, symbolises a more general shift away from textual social media to more multimodal platforms. Indeed, the two platforms analysed here, Instagram and Snapchat, both privilege pictorial affordances over text-based communication. Given the marginal role of text in these social media posts, it seems appropriate to examine practices beyond orthography and orthographic variation to fully explore the ways in which users' appropriate the multimodal affordances of platforms to signal orientations towards particular social dimensions (see also Mortensen, f.c.).

Here, I argue that the differences between the two datasets in terms of the author and purpose of content, may actually be helpful in informing different levels of the analysis. On the one hand, the data gathered from individuals' Snapchat Stories permits an exploration of the ways in which users present themselves online with regard to the specific context of Lakeside. Data extracted from Instagram, on the other hand, permits an analysis that examines the content in relation to the networked public (boyd, 2010) – the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) of users. Based on this line of reasoning, I argue that by combining the two datasets, it is

possible not only to explore the specific social distinctions that individuals made at Lakeside, but also relate these to more general social patterns within the wider community. Thus, I propose that social media presents an opportunity for the analyst to 'scale up' their interpretations of micro-level phenomena, by examining how these situated identities are dependent on or relate to some macro-level social category or persona.

My arguments here draw directly on theories of 'scale' – a concept that has been discussed at length in history and social geography, and more recently, in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (see *inter alia* Blommaert, 2007; Carr & Lempert, 2016). In the literature, the term 'scale' has been used to refer to those stratified hierarchies – both 'vertical' and 'horizontal' – that characterise the social relations between individuals (Blommaert, 2010). Typically, scholars have operationalised 'scale' as a binary between 'micro' and 'macro' analytic categories. However, in reality, these social processes are essentially 'layered' in that micro-level social processes are informed and shaped by broader, macro-level structural elements of social organisation.

Discussions of scale help analysts conceptualise the relationship between the micro-level situated linguistic practices that speakers' make and their relationship with broader patterns of linguistic variation and change. As Blommaert (2007:3) suggests, whilst "acts of communication are all uniquely contextualized, one-time phenomena; [...] we understand them because of their manifest lack of autonomy: their coherence with previous traditions of making sense, their connection to shared, enduring patterns of understanding such as frames". In other words, micro-level linguistic phenomena, whilst emergent or situational in use, are embedded within broader regimes of social structure.

Whilst there has been an increased interest in theorising scale in recent years, there is a long tradition of variationist sociolinguistic research which seeks to explain the interrelationship of micro- and macro- social hierarchies and their influence on language variation and change (e.g., Labov, 1963; Eckert, 1989; 2000; Snell, 2010; Kirkham, 2015). Indeed, other ethnographic sociolinguistic approaches which explore variable patterns of language use have demonstrated that the situated categories and distinctions that speakers make are almost always relative to some broader structural category. For instance, in Eckert's seminal Belten High study

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(1989; 2000), the distinction between the jock/burnout identities that speakers oriented towards, whilst specific to that context, indirectly reference models of social class.

In order to interpret the interrelationship between micro-identities and the macro-demographic forces that serve as the foundations of those distinctions, researchers have generally referred to metapragmatic representations in (old) media or examined these distinctions using traditional offline ethnographic methods (e.g., social class: Eckert, 1989; Snell, 2010; ethnicity: Drummond, 2018a; Gates, 2018; and gender: Lawson, 2013). Whilst this approach has no doubt been productive, I would argue here that, in addition to these approaches, online data offers a prime opportunity to examine the interdependence between the micro-level distinctions that speakers make and the persistent macro-level social dimensions that provide the foundations for those emergent qualities.

As a vast resource of user-generated content, social media seems an appropriate context through which to explore these scalar relations. As I have argued, examining Snapchat Stories may be helpful in examining the identities and social worlds of the specific individuals of those at Lakeside. Whilst analysing those viral representations of styles or personae referred to as 'memes' uploaded by the Instagram accounts, may be helpful in revealing what Agha (2007: 154) refers to as the "social regularities of metapragmatic typification". That is, the ways in those enregistered personae and the linguistic forms, personal attributes and behaviours become objects of discourse themselves.

Based on my exposition laid out here, in what follows, I conduct a type of content analysis on the Instagram and Snapchat content, organising the sample of 850 posts into thematic categories based on the prevailing emergent patterns in the data. This approach combines aspects of content analysis, supplemented by my observations garnered during the extended period of online and offline ethnography – what Altheide (1987) refers to as 'Ethnographic Content Analysis' (see also Kozinets, 2010). Through qualitative close reading of the data, I explore the ways in which the social life of the individuals at Lakeside become networked online. At the user-level, I examine the ways in which users signal alignment with particular identities by depicting elements on their perspective through Snapchat Stories. Whilst at the community-level, I explore the Instagram posts as contributing to the

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enregisterment (Agha, 2003) of a discernible urban British youth subculture.

By examining social media posts, I seek to explain how this cultural orientation becomes culture becomes reconfigured in digital space. I do this by exploring three thematic categories that emerge in the posts: Ethnicity and ethnic practices, an orientation towards the urban environment, and appreciation of urban music subcultures. Here, I demonstrate that many of the individuals at Lakeside align with a particular type of 'urban' culture that is largely influenced by diasporic and transatlantic Black, in particular Caribbean, cultures, and that is heavily influenced by the British working-class lived experience (cf. Gunter, 2008; Reid, 2017; Bakkali, 2018). I first examine this orientation at a 'broad' level (i.e., in relation to Lakeside as a whole) before discerning how the gully more specifically exhibit a particularly strong orientation towards this culture.

8.4.1   Ethnicity

In the foregoing analysis ethnicity was not included in the statistical models or distributional analyses because, as I have discussed elsewhere, ethnicity (or even race for that matter) did not seem to be a contributing factor in the adolescents' social distinctions. As discussed in §3.9, friendship networks did not appear to suggest any degree of ethnic homophily (cf. Hewitt, 1989; Kirkham, 2013; Gates, 2018).

This pattern seems to substantiate some more general trends observed in other sociolinguistic accounts. In similar contexts to Lakeside, other scholars have been unable to find any evidence direct evidence for ethnic patterns of sociolinguistic variation. In their study of MLE, for instance, Cheshire and colleagues conclude that the multiethnolect is an "ethnically neutral" variety (2011:157). Similarly, in his research on Multicultural Urban British English (i.e., MUBE), Drummond (2018b:185) concludes that "straightforward ethnicity is not a relevant explanatory category" for rates of TH-stopping – a variable which was historically associated with ethnic varieties of English (e.g., Jamaican English; Sebba, 1993).

Nevertheless, whilst these analyses have been unable to identify any statistical evidence for ethnic stratification, this does not negate the importance of ethnicity in the picture of language variation more generally. In the context of Lakeside, I would suggest that a simple inability to identify a statistical correlation

between ethnic categories and patterns of variation alone is not sufficient enough to dismiss the importance of ethnicity in the variable patterns examined here. Rather, I argue that a straightforward account of ethnically linked variation is too simplistic to capture the complex influence of ethnicity and race in informing the variable patterns at Lakeside (see also Gates, 2018 for a similar argument). Instead, what I wish to suggest here is that patterns of variation at Lakeside index ethnic distinctions, albeit only indirectly (see also Drummond, 2018a/b for a similar argument).

Indeed, whilst I did not identify any ethnic homophily at Lakeside nor observe individuals adopting a distinctly racialised identity in the offline (cf. Gates, 2018), in online space, the individuals made much more conscious efforts to index aspects of their heritage (see also Tagg et al., 2016). On Snapchat, posts frequently referenced diasporic influences as well as ethnically linked social practices and norms. For instance, a number of the individuals would post advertisements for Black hair salons and Caribbean fast food restaurants, whilst others advertised and recorded their attendance at the Hackney Carnival, an annual celebration of West Indian culture in the borough.

Figure 22 *Jamaica in the World Championships (Sam, Snapchat)*

Figure 23 *Jamaica in the World Championships (Josiah, Snapchat)*

However, overwhelmingly, references to heritage and ethnic identities were made by those individuals who are non-White and, more specifically, those young people with Caribbean heritage. Those users with other ethnic backgrounds (e.g., White British: Julia/Christina; Polish: Bartek/ Feliks) were not seen to explicitly reference their ethnic heritage in the same way that Black individuals did.

A case in point are the examples in Figure 22 and Figure 23. Responding to Jamaican athlete, Usain Bolt's, performance in the 4 x 100m relay at the 2017 World Championship, the two users (Sam and Josiah) explicitly align themselves with their heritage, with their families both hailing from Jamaica. In Figure 22, Sam uses the first-person pronoun 'I' and the formulation 'speak for all Jamaicans' to directly align himself with Jamaica's (and more specifically, Usain Bolt's) performance at the World Championships. The use of the 'broken heart', Jamaican flag and the 'downcast face' emojis all make Sam's reaction to these events more explicit. In Figure 23, a similar type of ethnic indexation occurs where, again in response to the World Championship result, Josiah excuses Bolt's performance due to an injury. Again, we a direct claim to this identity through the use of the Jamaican flag emojis.

Whilst such direct claims to ethnic identities are, perhaps, unsurprising given Josiah and Sam's Caribbean heritage, other individuals with non-Caribbean heritage were also seen to seen to interact with social media accounts and engage with online content that had a particularly strong ethnic dimension to it. Indeed, both Street Blogs and Link Up TV regularly post content that references practices, cultures, and music genres that have distinctly racialised genealogies. Overwhelmingly, these posts reference concepts and practices that developed in Black communities.

Whilst some of these influences can be traced to African cultures, the vast majority of these references relate to Caribbean cultures and communities. These influences are noted by Boakye (2019:19) in his discussion of Black British culture. He notes that whilst African influences have been less perceptible owing to its positioning as an 'ideologically low status culture', "West Indian, specifically Jamaican, cultural norms [...] have become ingrained in [...] British youth culture". Thus, it is possible that prevalent references to this culture, suggests that Caribbean and West Indian influences have become a type of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1991) for young individuals, with Jamaican culture specifically occupying an

ideologically privileged position in shaping a discernible British youth subculture.

The extent to which West Indian culture has become a type of social capital for young people has shaped the emergence of a distinct British youth subculture, can be determined by the types of posts uploaded to the two Instagram entertainment channels, Link Up TV and the Street Blogs. The accounts often post content that celebrates Jamaican music styles, promote artists producing bashment, dancehall and reggaeton music, and depict dance styles that originate from the Caribbean, such as 'whining'. Other posts reference Jamaican identity labels, such as 'yardie' – used to refer to expatriate members of the Caribbean diasporic population – as well as 'mandem' and 'gyaldem' – the collective terms for groups of men and women (Moll, 2015; Patwah, N.D.). Similarly, several posts reference Caribbean social and cultural norms and practices, including food and drink that originates from the Caribbean, such as the soft drink 'ting'. In addition to these cultural references, there is also the prevalent orthographic representation of Jamaican Creole, which I turn to next.

8.4.1.1. Jamaican Creole

In the Snapchat data, lexical items that are well documented features of Jamaican Creole are frequently represented by individuals with both Caribbean and non-Caribbean heritage (cf. Moll, 2015). Creole forms include 'yard' (*house*), 'rah' (an exclamation of disbelief or surprise) and 'bruk' (*break*).

An example of the use of Jamaican Creole in the individuals' Snapchat is found in Figure 24. In the image, Talisha, who has mixed White British heritage, has remediated a video that she watched on an entertainment channel. The video shows an individual who has been caught in the crossfire of a firework and is suffering from visible injuries. Uploading this video to her Story, Talisha adds her response to this video in the form of a series of three 'surprised' emojis and the caption: 'Firework is not a joke bmt' – where 'bmt' refers to the Jamaican Creole phrase *big man ting* meaning 'grown up' or 'adult' matters or concerns (Jamaican Patwah, N.D.). Below this, she also uses the expression 'Rah' – a common Jamaican Creole marker of exclamation – to signal her surprise and disbelief at the situation.

Similarly, in Figure 25, Michael – who is of White British heritage – takes

what Zhao & Zappavigna refer to as an inferred' selfie of his feet using a geotagged filter to situate that photo within the specific context – 'Shoreditch'[38]. On top of this image, he overlays some text which relates this to his friend's house, using the Jamaican Creole form 'yard'.

Figure 24: *'Firework incident'*
(Talisha, Snapchat)

Figure 25: *'Friend's yard'*
(Michael, Snapchat)

I would argue here that Talisha and Michael's use of these features appears not to be directly indexing their alignment with or proficiency of Creole nor are they using features of this variety to index some other ethnic identity (cf. Sweetland, 2002). Rather, as with many of the other these forms, Jamaican Creole lexical features such as 'yard' and 'rah', appear to have become enregistered as more general components of an 'urban' youth vernacular that is indirectly influenced by Caribbean cultural flows.

On the entertainment channels on Instagram, we see that, like the individuals' Snapchats, both the Street Blogs and Link Up TV commonly upload posts that contain variant spellings which appear to reflect some spoken language feature of Caribbean varieties of English. This includes those references to West

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[38] a neighbourhood in the vicinity of Lakeside.

Inidan identity labels, such as the Jamaican Creole terms, 'yardie' and 'mandem', which are prevalent on the Street Blogs. For instance, Figure 26 is a screenshot of a video of an assumedly Jamaican man who is involved in an altercation, in which he is referred to as a 'yardie'. The indexical association of this form with Caribbean culture is made clear through the addition of the Jamaican flag emoji and the description in the caption of the video which explicitly defines the subject as a 'Jamaican man'. Here, it is quite clear that whilst this term may retain some of its indexical association with Jamaican diasporic communities, it is also enregistered as part of a more general cultural orientation that the platform promotes.
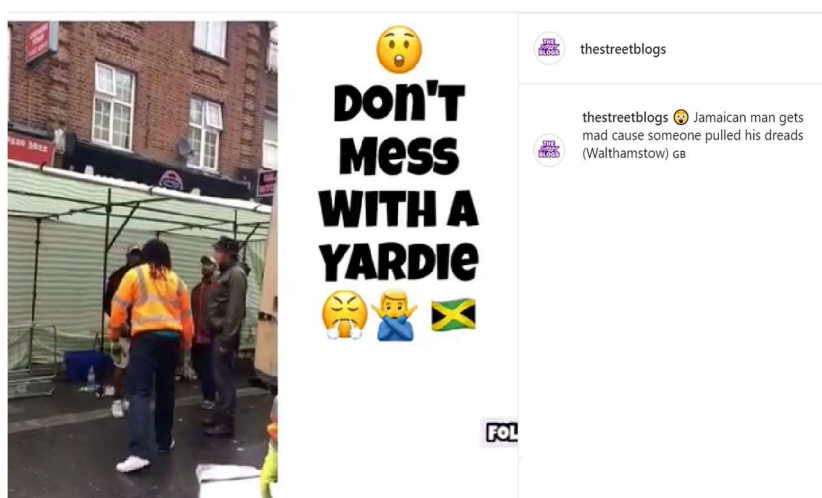

Figure 26 *Don't mess with a Yardie' (the Street Blogs, Instagram)*

Similarly, as in the Snapchats, various lexical features of Jamaican Creole are found in the posts uploaded by both channels. This includes lexemes such as 'rah', 'yard', 'lock arf' (*lockdown/shutdown*), 'waa gwaan' (*what's going on*).

One possible interpretation of the prevalent use of Creole here, by both those with Caribbean and non-Caribbean heritage, is that this resembles a type of 'crossing' (Rampton, 1995). Whilst this is a reasonable suggestion, I would argue that a more credible explanation of the explicit representations of Jamaican Creole and culture point to the origins and social meaning of the youth subculture that is being adopted by those at Lakeside. Rather than these individuals stylistically 'crossing' into Jamaican Creole, it appears that features of the variety have become enregistered as part of a variable repertoire of features that are associated with a particular type of youth culture. As Hewitt observes in relation to interethnic friendships in London as far back as the 1980's, the adoption of features typically found in Black varieties of

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English (including Jamaican Creole) by White adolescents seems to suggest an orientation towards "[B]lack youth culture" (1989:149). I would argue that a similar process here is at play, as illustrated by the multiple references to Creole and Caribbean culture in both the Snapchats and Instagram posts.

However, whilst ethnicity is clearly an important dimension in the construction of this 'street' culture, it appears to be just one facet of a much more complex social reality. Thus, it is clear that individuals who orient towards this culture, such as the gully, are not adopting Black or Caribbean identities per se, but are rather using elements of this culture to carve out a distinctly unique British identity that involves multiple influences from a broad spectrum of social influences (cf. Bucholtz, 2010). Here, importantly, it is not a *Caribbean* identity that they are laying claim to because this culture appears to be grounded not only in relation to these diasporic influences, but also in relation the UK. More specifically, this cultural orientation is often represented in imagery of the urban landscape, with major cities such as London and the Birmingham, well featured in the posts.

8.4.2   The City

With Lakeside based in an inner-city neighbourhood in the East of London, it is perhaps unsurprising that the city and experiences of 'urban' life are documented heavily in the Snapchats of the individuals at the club. Indeed, many of the Snapchats of the individuals at the club focus specifically on themes that are associated with urban populaces and neighbourhoods (Robins & Cohen, 1978). Themes that are regularly documented include those that are both positive: friendships, family relationships, and local activities; and negative: crime, violence, gang-related issues, aspects of urban life. These experiences are documented by those at Lakeside as narratives of their social environments, both in relation to the immediate estate or the surrounding area of Hackney and in relation to the broader context of the city of London.

For many individuals, posting Stories that relate to their immediate social context appears to be a way of indexing notions of 'localness' (see also Mortensen, f.c.). For instance, Figure 27, is a remediated screenshot of another individuals' Story posted by Sam which references a Daily Express article that documents an acid

attack at the annual Notting Hill Carnival. He tags this photo with the 'loudly crying face' emoji' and the text, <kmt> 'kiss my teeth'. It is likely that this post has both ethnic and local connotations. As an annual event that takes place in the West London neighbourhood of Notting Hill, the Carnival is a street festival that celebrates British West Indian culture. Sam's post references both an interest in the event and an emotional reaction to the news of an acid attack that happened during the Carnival. Here, as a type of 'memetic response' (Gal, Shifman & Kampf, 2015), Sam's post reveals an emotional attachment to the event, both in terms of the relevance of this event to his Caribbean heritage, but also in regards to his awareness that the assault is symptomatic of the urban landscape.

Figure 27 *Acid attack at Notting Hill Carnival (Sam, Snapchat)*

In another post some weeks later, Sam uploaded a screen capture of a newspaper article that reported a fatal stabbing on the estate in which Lakeside is based. In that post, we see a similar reaction to the events, with Sam adding a 'broken-heart' emoji to the screenshot. As with the post in Figure 27, this Story indexes both his connection to the local area and his awareness of the social realities of living in an inner-city neighbourhood.

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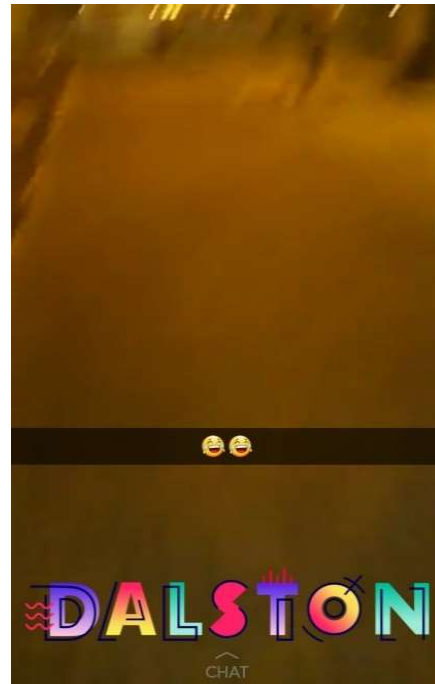**Figure 28** *'Hackney filter'*
(Sam, Snapchat)

Figure 29 *'Dalston filter'*
(Rochelle, Snapchat)

In other posts posted by the rest of the group, individuals articulate a narrative of their experience of living in an inner-city neighbourhood in other ways. This includes recordings of their school-life, participation in local extra-curricular activities, as well as following local gang accounts. For instance, a number of individuals who would upload screenshots of videos and images taken by local gangs to their own Snapchat Stories. As with Sam's posts, by engaging with and uploading this content, the individuals not only index their belonging to the immediate community, but also demonstrate an awareness of the realities of their social environments.

In other posts, users indexed notions of localness and their connection to the city in more direct ways. This includes a number of individuals who used geo-tagged filters to explicitly contextualise their Story in relation to the specific location in which it was taken (see also Page, 2018). For instance, consider Figure 28 and Figure 29 in which Rochelle and Sam make use of the geo-tagged filters that reference the local neighbourhoods of 'Hackney and 'Dalston'. Similar types of geo-tagging practices are documented by Mortensen's (f.c.) in her research on adolescents' Snapchat use in Jutland, Denmark, where she argues that such filters enable the individual to position themselves in relation to the local area. Specifically,

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she suggests that, by using geo-tagged filters that situate the speaker within the local area, they are able to claim a type of place attachment to the local area of Jutland. I would argue that a similar type of place indexation occurs in the use of these geo-tagged filters by the individuals at Lakeside, such that by using these geo-tagged filters, the individual lays claim to a distinctly 'local' identity.

Similar themes are also prevalent in the posts from the Instagram entertainment accounts. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the two accounts that actively document what they refer to as 'urban' culture. Posts extracted from the Street Blogs regularly reference life in inner-city communities, documenting the social realities of the urban landscape. Of course, this 'urban experience' is classed insofar that it is a uniquely working-class experience of the city. Many of the Street Blogs posts reference themes of police interaction, with whom the account refers to as 'piggies', and violent and criminal acts are well documented in a number of videos. A case in point is Figure 30, a remediated article of a stabbing that took place in the East London neighbourhood, Newham. The article has been posted alongside a caption that expands on the article and the hashtag #StopTheViolence. Other uploads include videos of 'mass brawls', altercations and other types of 'drama', set alongside the urban environment.
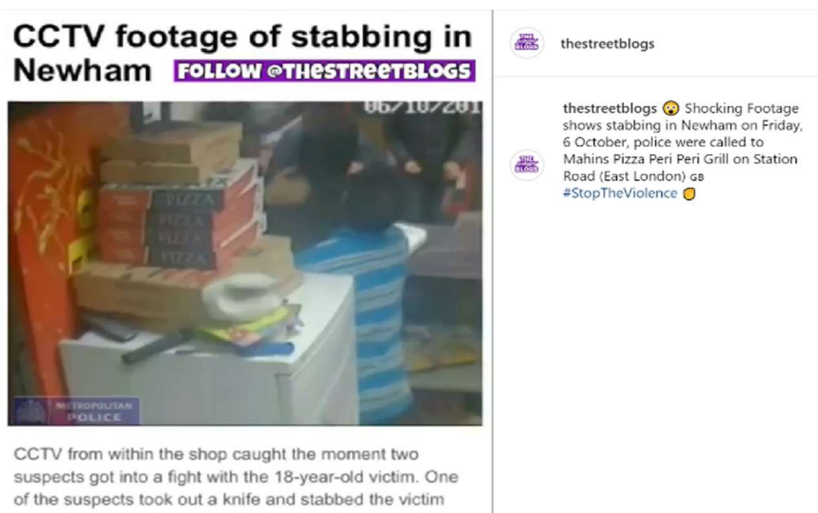

Figure 30 *'CCTV footage of stabbing in Newham' article (the Street Blogs, Instagram)*

As a number of scholars have documented, the themes represented in the posts uploaded by the Street Blogs transcend the medium of social media, with deprivation and crime very much part of the lived, working-class urban experience

(Gunter, 2008; Ilan, 2012; Reid, 2017). These urban narratives become reworked in digital space. Content which depicts themes of crime, violence – issues associated with the physical urban environment – are reinterpreted as digital representations of those narratives. Engaging and accessing that content therefore permits the individual user access to the broader imagined community – a digital manifestation of the urban lived experience.

Whilst the Street Blogs uploads content that references experiences of city living in very direct ways, posts extracted from Link Up TV reference this theme only indirectly. Nevertheless, the influence of the city is still relatively pervasive in shaping the content that is uploaded to the account. Having been established in London, the account regularly uploads content that advertises events, gigs and festivals in the city. Similarly, in the wake of the Grenfell Tower atrocity in West London, the channel uploaded numerous posts that promoted local fundraisers and community events for the victims of the fire.
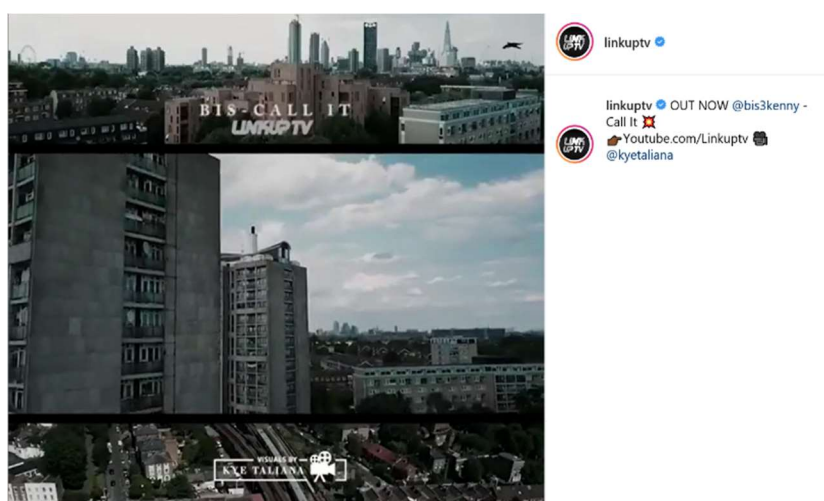

Figure 31 *Music video for 'Bis - Call it' (Link Up TV, Instagram)*

However, overwhelmingly, the 'city' is represented by the channel through its focus on showcasing what it refers to as 'urban music'. The representation of the city is achieved through the channel showcasing music videos and releases which are produced by UK (mainly London) based artists, whose lyrics focus heavily on these themes.

Given the origins of Link Up TV in urban music promotion, it is therefore perhaps unsurprising that many of the artists featured on the platform produce music

that depicts experiences of the city and the urban environment. Indeed, in the music videos uploaded by the channel, the urban environment is reimagined in online space through those digital representations of high-rise housing blocks and cityscapes, whilst the lyrics produced by those artists reference social issues associated with urban environments. For instance, Figure 31 is a music video for the song 'Call it' by the rapper, Bis – part of the notorious Kennington (South London) based crew 'Harlem Spartans'. The music video itself has a distinctly urban aesthetic to it. High-rise London housing estates and the skyline of central London are prominently featured in the video. The lyrics, too, focus on themes of urban life, referencing illicit activities and organised gang crime. Here, these posts feed more directly into the widespread representation of music subcultures which I discuss next.

8.4.3   Music Subcultures

As alluded to above, there is a distinct interrelatedness between representations of the city or urban life and the promotion of music genres and artists that have been described as 'urban subcultures'. Such themes are obviously most pervasive in the posts extracted from the entertainment channels, owing to their origins as music promotion channels. However, 'urban' music genres such as grime and bashment are also frequently referenced by individuals at Lakeside in their Snapchat Stories. Here, many of these posts centre on the users' engagement with urban music genres. In fact, a number of users – mainly gully individuals – would regularly upload screenshots of music videos or celebrate the new release of a particular track or album via their own Snapchat accounts. Here, by uploading screenshots to their Stories, these users not only signal their interest in this music style to their imagined audience (Marwick & boyd, 2012), but seek to position themselves as an acculturated member of the urban music scene.

A case in point is Figure 32. The image, uploaded to Sam's Story, is a screenshot of the track 'No Don' by grime artists Lotto Boyz and Not3s, promoted by the grime entertainment channel, GRM Daily. His use of the 'zipper-mouth' and 'fire' emojis suggest a positive orientation towards this particular video/song, as well as his engagement with the entertainment channel, GRM Daily which features similar content to Link Up TV. Similarly, Figure 33 is a Snapchat taken from

Michael's story in which he references the YouTube channel 'GRIMEREPORTTV', produced by the English rapper and MC, Big Narstie. The channel, like LinkUpTV, primarily promotes grime artists and new releases, but it also uploads various other UK-based viral videos. Michael's orientation towards this channel is confirmed by the of the 'party popper' emoji to symbolise his excitement, and the 'fire' emoji which refers to the 'recentness' (as in 'hot right now') of the content. The positive evaluation of this report is confirmed by his use of 'big up' meaning 'give praise to'.
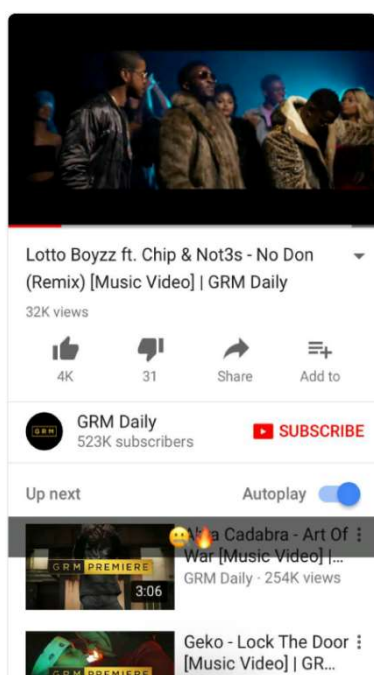

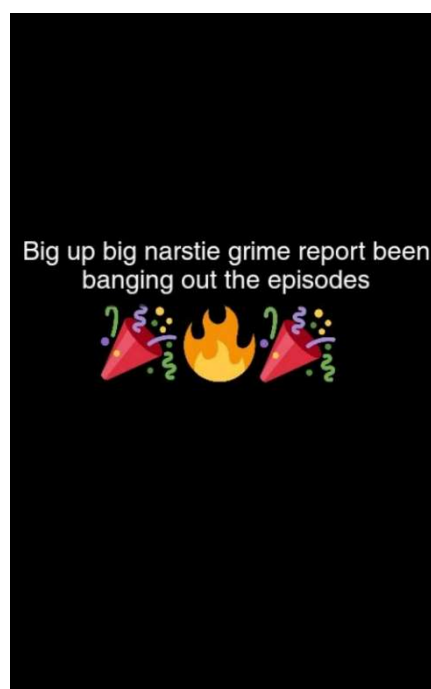**Figure 32** *Music video for 'Lotto Boyz ft. Chip & Not3s - No Don' (Sam, Snapchat)*

Figure 33 *Response to 'Big Narstie's Grime Report' (Michael, Snapchat)*

The individuals' engagement with these types of urban music subcultures may be unexpected given the recent mainstream success of grime artists, such as Stormzy and J Hus (see Boakye, 2017). However, for the individuals at Lakeside, the themes that characterise grime lyrics may be altogether more relatable. Many of the Instagram posts extracted from the two entertainment channels, make explicit references to music subcultures that focus heavily on documenting a lived experience of the urban landscape. As discussed, Link Up TV showcases music that deals with social issues that are experienced by communities in inner-city neighbourhoods, such as crime, violence and marginalisation (see, for example, Gunter, 2008; Ilan, 2015).

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Such themes are particularly prevalent in the representation of grime music, which is a widespread music genre on the channel.

As a genre of music that was developed in the social-housing estates of Bow, East London, grime music is inextricably tied to lived experiences of working-class youth in the city. Whilst grime is often compared to hip-hop, unlike this genre's lyrics which tell an optimistic narrative of upwards mobility, grime is "the *cri de coeur* of the dispossessed, the narrative form of urban life" (Melville, 2004: 31). The genre, which combines elements of American rap and hip-hop, Jamaican dancehall, drum and UK bass and garage, has emerged as an urban subculture, that is uniquely British (Boakye, 2017; 2019), but also more specifically, London. Having emerged in the city, the lyrics of grime music focus heavily on articulating an authentic narrative of inner-city London life, such that as McKinnon notes, grime music "lives in East London [...] and maybe only makes sense in East London" (2005:1, cited in Barron 2013).

Whilst the criminal and violent aspects of grime lyrics have been problematised in media, others have pointed to these themes as indicative of the individuals' experience of a collective marginalisation (Boakye, 2017). With the majority of grime artists 2nd generation migrants, these narratives are articulated from a distinctly racialised perspective. As Barron (2013) notes, many of the founding artists who contributed to the development of grime are the descendants of those migrants to the UK in the 1950s who experienced high levels of deprivation and discrimination, residing in working-class housing estates such as the one where Lakeside is based. The accounts and experiences that inform their lyrics are therefore the experiences that those individuals face as a marginalised population.

Given that Link Up TV was established to promote urban music genres – including grime – it is perhaps unsurprising that the genre is well represented in posts that advertise new releases and music videos for grime artists. And, whilst the Street Blogs has shifted away from showcasing UK talent, urban artists still feature prominently in the posts and on the channel. This includes the aforementioned Spotify playlist – the 'Street List' – that is updated weekly with new releases by urban music artists.

8.5 The 'Digital Road'

In the above, I have sought to examine the ways in which the social realities of the young people at Lakeside become networked in digital space. I have suggested that the three thematic dimensions that emerge in the social media posts, reflect the emergence of an 'enregistered' (Agha, 2003) type of youth subculture. To define this in more explicit terms, this would be an apparently 'urban' (as defined by Link Up TV) subculture that has strong associations with the Caribbean – in particular Jamaica – and is rooted in a particular working-class experience of the city. In practice, this cultural orientation articulated through the individuals' engagement with urban music genres such as grime and trap and is reflected in the adoption of fashionable sportswear styles. In the literature, this cultural orientation has often been referred to as 'Road culture' (Gunter, 2008; Reid, 2017; Bakkali, 2018).

Whilst the academic literature on the topic is scarce, Road culture is most often discussed more generally in accounts of urban subcultures (e.g., Ilan, 2015). Typically, Road culture is defined as a British interpretation of 'street' culture (Gunter, 2008:352; Boakye, 2019; cf. Lane, 2018), emerging out of Black Trans-Atlantic diasporic popular cultures from the US and the Caribbean. Here, the term 'street culture' is used to refer to those practices and styles that are associated with the urban lived experience and are the "product of social, economic and cultural exclusion" (Ilan, 2015:3). Often, these experiences are articulated from a distinctly racialised perspective, as in the case of Hip-Hop in the U.S. Nevertheless, whilst Black cultural influences and practices have largely shaped this subcultural orientation, in reality, participation in and engagement with aspects of Road culture crosscuts ethnicity and race (Ilan, 2015; Reid, 2018).

At its most basic level, the notion of the 'Road' can be tied to a physical space, usually the urban neighbourhood in which the individual resides. But, 'being on Road' or 'being Road', as these phrases suggest, imply a certain type of ideological disposition. Hallsworth and Young (2011) define this mentality as a particular type of 'hood' orientation. For some, this may include criminal aspects of urban life. However, for most, participation in Road culture is mostly lived out in a 'non-specular' fashion (Gunter, 2008). This includes the individuals' engagement with particular types of music, fashions and communities. When conceived of in

these terms, engaging in Road culture is "not about rebellion or hedonism, rather it is centred upon meeting up with friends, 'hanging on Road' [where] Road life is about friendships, routine and the familiar or doing nothing" (Gunter, 2008:352). Thus, whilst the notion of the 'Road' may be tied to the physical urban environment, it is actualised through the "distinct (road) practices and norms, shared language, beliefs and values" (Reid, 2017:10; Gunter, 2008; Bakkali, 2018).

Here, I argue that it is this system of 'norms', 'shared language' and 'values that become 'enregistered' (Agha, 2003) components of what I refer to here as the 'Digital Road' – a term that I adapt from Lane's (2018) Americentric notion of the 'Digital Street'. In using this term, I am referring to the digital migration of the Road aesthetic and Road cultural code, whereby the social practices, music genres, identities and lived experiences of the 'Road' become reconfigured and 'uploaded' to the networked (super-)public of social media.

For a culture that is inexplicably tied to the experience of the urban environment, this digital migration complicates the very foundations of Road culture. Whereas engagement with this cultural orientation was once very much tied to the individuals' experience of the physical urban environment – usually their specific neighbourhood – in the contemporary context, participation in Road norms, values and practices is constituted through engagement with this cultural orientation in both the on- and offline (cf. Lane, 2018).

Here I argue that by examining the individuals' social media practices at Lakeside, it is possible to examine how components of the 'Digital Road' become reified. By linking these macro-level practices to the individual user, I seek to examine how the young people at Lakeside adopt aspects of this cultural identification in digital space. Here, I suggest is that the digital 'enregisterment' (Agha, 2003) of Road culture is directly shaped by the individuals' engagement with social media accounts which upload content that depicts aspects of this 'urban' culture. As 'authorities' (Gal & Woolard, 1995), Instagram accounts such as Link Up TV and the Street Blogs are the digital platforms through which practices, styles (both linguistic and otherwise) and norms become enregistered as 'Road' (cf. Reid, 2017). It is through these accounts that the once offline identities, styles and values that were once solely constituted in the physical context of the urban environment become reimagined in digital space.

For many, the digital reconfiguration of Road culture enables users to orient towards this culture across physical and temporal boundaries. Individuals can therefore engage with these representations and align with the values, norms and identifications that these platforms (and subcultures) promote regardless of the constraints of the offline. In what follows, I seek to examine the ways in which the young people at Lakeside engage with aspects of Road culture, focussing specifically on the gully's more conscious alignment with this identification.

8.5.1   Aligning with the 'Digital Road'

So far, I have discussed the individuals' alignment with Road culture at a relatively broad level, acknowledging the dominant status of this cultural orientation amongst the young people at Lakeside. Given that Road culture is intimately tied to the lived working-class experience of the urban environment (Gunter, 2008; Bakkali, 2018), it is perhaps unsurprising that many individuals, including those gully and non-gully members, exhibited some alignment with the Road aesthetic or engaged with aspects of Road culture in some way. However, whilst this may have been the dominant subcultural orientation at Lakeside, not all individuals aligned with this cultural orientation in the same way and several actively aligned themselves with other distinct youth subcultures. Indeed, there were many individuals who did not listen to grime music, show an interest in gang crime or engage with the social media platforms or content that I've discussed here.

A case in point is Max. As an individual who generally diverged from the rest of the youth group both in terms of his social networks and linguistic repertoire, he also did not engage with the main cultural orientation of the group. Identifying as a gamer, he instead participated in online gaming communities and mainstream youth culture. And, unlike his peers, he was seldom observed using social media to engage with the gaming community but would rather use Facebook to connect with school friends and family members.

Whilst Max is an example of an individual who rejected the Road cultural orientation altogether, it was also possible for individuals to engage in aspects of Road culture but yet exhibit only a passive orientation towards this subculture. To take one example, Charice and Danni would often engage with similar online

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content and were dedicated grime fans. But their engagement with Road culture was limited to a superficial level through the appreciation of urban artists and styles which, in recent years, have become recognised in mainstream mass media. As such, it was clear that participation or engagement with Road culture (e.g., grime music) alone could not predict membership of the gully nor directly explain the sociolinguistic patterns identified in earlier chapters (cf. Drummond, 2018a/b).

However, whilst other members were seen to passively engage with aspects of Road culture, for the gully, alignment with this subculture was much more concerted. In both online and offline contexts, gully members actively committed themselves to adopting the norms, values and practices that are promoted by Road culture. This included those members who reported in interviews that they produced their own grime lyrics and tracks (e.g., Extract (3)), whilst a small minority of individuals recalled stories of low-level criminal activities that they had been involved with. These activities served as signifiers of these individuals 'doing' Road, establishing themselves as a member of the acculturated ingroup.

On the 'Digital Road', the gully directly aligned themselves with Road culture by engaging with social media accounts that depcited elements this subcultural orientation. This included following entertainment channels including those discussed here, as well as accounts maintained by individuals from the local area. For instance, a number of members reported that they followed Snapchat accounts of local gangs, whilst others followed accounts where they viewed fights between individuals from local secondary schools.

In this sense, the 'Digital Road' offered a way for these individuals to engage in 'Road' culture beyond the physical bounds of Lakeside. As Lane (2018) observes, with the digital technology available to record transient events such as fights and gang encounters, the temporality and spatial framework of otherwise ephemeral encounters becomes extended beyond that moment in time. As such, the (temporary) persistence (boyd, 2014) of Snapchat Stories and Instagram posts provided a way for members of the gully to acquaint themselves with local (i.e., London) issues and engage with the imagined community beyond the specific context of the 'moment' in which the image was recorded (cf. Georgakopoulou, 2016).

A clear example of how this alignment was indexed across temporal-spatial

boundaries is in the how the gully members' demonstrated an awareness of gang activities across geographically disparate areas of the UK. In interviews, when I asked questions about their perceptions of different London neighbourhoods, a number of the gully boys referenced their awareness of gang crime in the South London neighbourhood of Kennington, some 10 miles away from Lakeside. In one interview, keen to ascertain how they acquired this knowledge, Jack and Harinder both referred to the gang's social media presence, disclosing that they followed the Snapchat Stories of gangs in the area.

Figure 34 *The Street Blogs post (Josiah, Snapchat)*

Figure 35 *The Street Blogs post (Sam, Snapchat)*

In conversations amongst gully members, these references were often made to support their alignment with the urban environment and social context. Thus, not only did accessing these videos allow them to index themselves as part of the imagined collective (Anderson, 1983), but amongst friends and interviews, these stories were often recalled as a way for that speaker to demonstrate their 'street' credibility (Ilan, 2012) to affirm their 'Road' status.

Alignment with this cultural orientation was also indexed through those offline conversations that included intertextual references to the 'Digital Road', including content uploaded by Link Up TV and Street Blogs. This included memes

and other content where stock-phrases or terms were appropriated in offline conversations (e.g., see §7.3.2 for a discussion of 'DUCT TAPE'). Often, these intertextual references were used to explicitly claim an alignment with the subcultural orientation that these accounts promoted and as part of a more general attempt to foster in-group bonds amongst members of the acculturated ingroup (see also Sierra, f.c. for a similar argument).

Perhaps most relevant to the current analysis is the way in which members of the gully directly aligned with aspects of Road culture by posting screenshots of content from relevant social media feeds to their own Stories and profiles. This included local gang videos and references and news of grime artists' recent releases (e.g., see Figure 32) but also posts directly taken from the two entertainment channels analysed here, the Street Blogs and Link Up TV.

A clear example of this explicit indexation is found in Figure 34 and Figure 35. The two examples are taken from the Snapchat Stories of Josiah and Sam. The images are two screenshots taken of videos uploaded by the Street Blogs. Here, by remediating these videos, Josiah and Sam provide a type of intertextual 'memetic response' (Gal, Shifman, Kampf, 2015), directly aligning with the content uploaded by this channel. By laminating this content on their personal Story, they not only signal their engagement in and appreciation of Road culture to their imagined audience of neighbourhood peers, but also indirectly index themselves as a member of the imagine acculturated audience (Anderson, 1983) that I have argued these entertainment channels facilitate.

8.6   The Gully and the 'Digital Road'

Whilst for many, engaging in aspects of Road culture has become a prevalent and widespread form of expression, as suggested by the mainstream success of grime music and increasing use of Jamaican Creole in youth culture more generally, at least for the gully, participation in this culture was seen to be much more concerted. In this section, I argue the gully not only orient towards this culture more strongly than their peers, but actively commit to embodying this cultural identification. Specifically, what I suggest is that the gully adopt the aesthetic, physical and linguistic qualities of an enregistered identity (Agha, 2003; 2007) that is prevalent in Road culture –the

'Roadman'.

In what follows, I suggest that the Roadman has become a type of commodity register (Agha, 2011) by which individuals – such as the gully – adopt to index their alignment with Road culture. Here, I use the social media data, to examine how, in the infrastructure of the networked public, this identity becomes metapragmatically represented as a type of commodifiable identity, using the posts from Link Up TV and the Street Blogs to support my interpretations.

8.6.1   The Gully and the 'Roadman' Persona

The fact that the local identity of the gully constitutes an all-male group of individuals is not coincidental. As I have alluded to in previous sections, Road culture promotes a particularly hegemonic form of masculinity. Being 'Road' and engaging in 'Road' practices is, according to Gunter (2008), very much related to the maintenance and performance of hyper-masculine styles of self-presentation. Indeed, for many young men living in urban neighbourhoods, personal qualities such as toughness, aggression and, immediate gratification become positively evaluated as dominant forms of masculine presentation (Reid, 2017).

On the 'Digital Road', these pervasive ideologies of masculine self-presentation are visible in the content posted to the social media accounts that many of the individuals interacted with. Numerous posts uploaded by the account reference violent and criminal activities – behaviours typically associated with hyper-masculine styles of self-presentation (Gunter, 2008; Ilan, 2015). Whilst other posts feature images of male subjects adopting stereotypically 'masculine' stances. These stances evident in the extent to which subjects embody what has been referred to as the 'cool pose', whereby the adoption of 'tough' and 'solidarity' stances serve as the "signature for true masculinity" (Majors & Mancini Billson, 1993:28; see also Bakkali, 2018; Boakye, 2019).

This observation goes hand-in-hand with the more general absence of female subjects in posts uploaded by both entertainment channels. Even on Link Up TV, the overwhelming majority of urban music artists that the channel promotes are male. Female artists are much less represented. In other non-promotional music content, when female subjects are featured, these posts tend to feature overly

sexualised representations of women. When viewed in relation to the wider cultural orientation, the lack of female subjects across these platforms can be related to the influence of Road culture as promoting a hegemonic type of heteronormative masculinity.

Here, the extent to which Road culture promotes a specific hegemonic masculinity, both online and offline, may go some way in explaining why the gully is an exclusively all-male peer group. Whilst in other contexts adolescent peer groups reflect a degree of gender homophily (e.g., Moore, 2003; Kirkham, 2013; Gates, 2018), it is clear that for the gully, this is exacerbated by their alignment with Road culture. Indeed, whilst females may participate in aspects of Road culture, this subculture is largely influenced by the male-experience of the urban environment (Boakye, 2019:361). As Bakkali (2018:160) notes more generally in relation to urban subcultures, female contributions to the street cultural sphere tend to be overshadowed, if not erased.

Nevertheless, for the all-male gully, the hyper-masculine stances and modes of self-presentation that Road culture promotes appears to have become types of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1991). Consequently, the norms, values and ideologies associated with being 'Road', become reinterpreted as components of the 'gully style'. By adopting these stances, gully members embody the cultural capital of these modes of self-presentation as indexing their alignment with Road culture (cf. Bakkali, 2018:96).

Here, I argue that this alignment is made altogether possible because these norms, values and personal qualities are recognised as stylistic components – or in Agha's terms 'diacritics' – which have acquired "an enregistered link to stereotypic personae" (2011:37, emphasis original). In the context of the current analysis, I suggest that "stereotypic personae" is the characterological figure of the 'Roadman'. Since the local category of the gully is reliant on the broader persona of the Roadman, indexing oneself as the gully permits the individual to access the cultural capital of that identity on Road (cf. Bakkali, 2018; Ilan, 2012). This orientation is signalled through the deployment of those semiotic diacritics which attain some indexical association with the Roadman persona (Agha, 2011).

In the literature, the term 'Roadman'[39] has been used to refer to those males who do 'Road' – where the notion of 'doing' Road refers to 'street living' (Boakye, 2019) – or the 'urban lived experience' (Reid, 2017; Bakkali, 2018). For many, this identity label is often associated with the notion of 'badness' (Gunter, 2008), with the individual typically engaging in hyper-masculine and often contentious behaviours such as low-level criminal activities ranging from fraud to more serious crimes (Bakkali, 2018:10)[40].
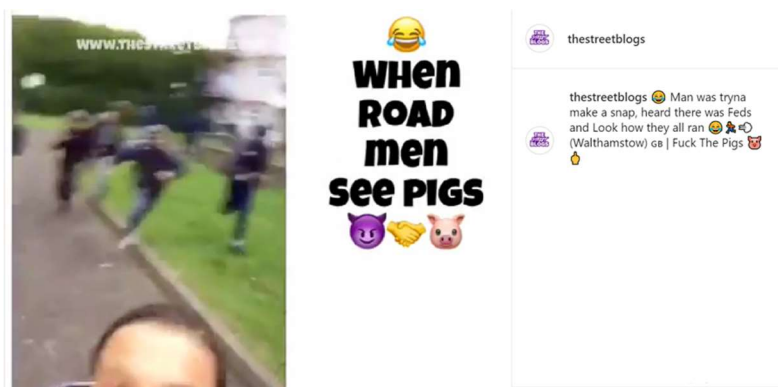

Figure 36 *'Police pursuit' (the Street Blogs, Instagram)*

With the identity of the 'Roadman' often associated with criminal and illicit behaviours, it is perhaps unsurprising that is often interpreted as a pejorative term. Indeed, when asked to describe this term in interviews, a number of the other non-gully individuals gave damning accounts of the identity label, referencing the criminal aspects of this identity. However, for many the Roadman identity has become somewhat of an accolade. This paradoxical identification is noted in the literature. For Gunter, the attraction of Road culture for many young men is related to the social realities of the urban lived experience. He suggests that many young men feel compelled to adopt aesthetics of the Roadman identity in order to create a "'safe' path through the potential dangers of hyper-masculinist neighbourhood life" (Gunter, 2008:355). Whilst for Boakye (2019), the Roadman persona is a way for

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[39] The origins of the term, like the culture, can be traced to Black, specifically Caribbean influences, where in Jamaican English it is common practice to refer to an individual by their occupation by adding the noun *man* as a prefix hence generating an identity category: *Roadman, Battyman, Wasteman,* and so on (Jamaican Patwah, N.D.).

[40] It is important to note the differences between 'Roadman' and other mainstream working-class identity labels such as the 'Chav'. Whilst the former is an ingroup term and often used by those who identify as such, the term 'Chav' is a pejorative term used by outgroup members.

young men to acquire 'outlaw status', such that this identity has become an "aspirational archetype that offers status from the margins" (2019:360). For many young men, then, it is possible that adopting elements of the Roadman persona is a way through which they are able to index themselves as 'anti-establishment' and therefore 'cool' (Bakkali, 2018; Boyake, 2019).

The adoption of the Roadman persona by the gully is made altogether possible because this identification has become what Agha (2011) refers to as a type of 'commodity register' – that is those styles which become interpretable by individuals as "common culture" (2011:22). This type of enregisterment can be seen in the extent to which aspects of this identity are represented in social media posts on the Digital Road. For instance, in

Figure **36**, the post references the enregistered quality of the 'anti-establishment' stance as indexical of the Roadman persona. The figure is an example of a remediated Snapchat video of an individual who is being pursued by the police. When uploaded by the Street Blogs, the channel has superimposed the text: 'when Roadmen see pigs (the police)', referring to the content of the video. The use of the sentence initial preposition 'when' in this meme, as a type of standard construction used in other posts, also appears to suggest some habitual association of this behaviour with the identity category of the Roadman. The caption to the right of the video clarifies the content of the video.

Here, the multiple semiotic layers of this post function together to reify the association between the Roadman persona and an anti-establishment orientation. This is evident both in the actual content of the video – in that the individual is being pursued by police – but also in the descriptors of the police as 'pigs' and the caption uploaded by the account which states 'Fuck The Police'. Together, these representations appear to index the 'outlaw' status that is often attributed to this identification.

8.6.2   The 'Roadman' as an Enregistered Identity

As I have discussed above, what makes the gully's orientation towards adopting elements of Road culture possible is that the 'Roadman' identity appears to have become an enregistered persona (Agha, 2003). As illustrated in the numerous posts

which refer to this identity, the 'Roadman' is characterised by the adoption of several stylistic dimensions, both aesthetic and ideological. This includes the adoption of 'street-wear' fashion styles (Gunter, 2008) as well as orientation towards the dimensions of Road culture explored in previous sections, such as crime, the city and 'urban' music genres. Together, these facets are combined together as a type of stylistic bricolage (Hebdige, 1984) that constitutes the unique 'Roadman' identity that
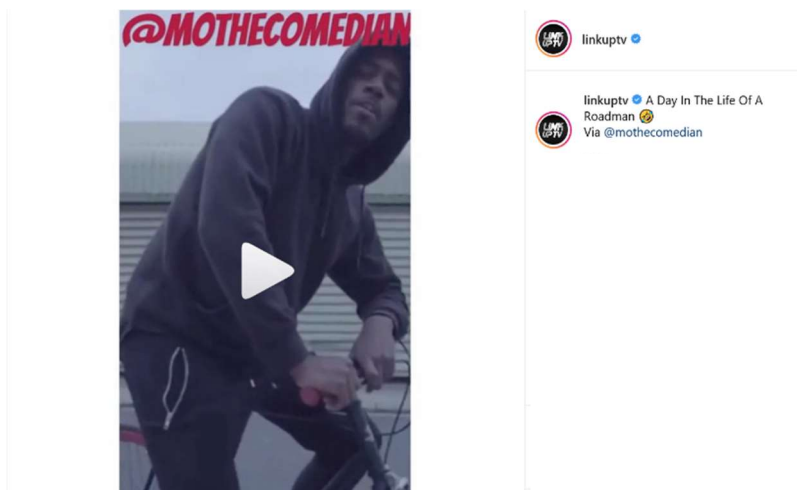

Figure 37 *'A day in the life of a Roadman' (Link Up TV, Instagram)*

the local category of the gully is dependent on.

Before exploring this identity in more detail, it is important to make clear here that my argument is not that gully boys are *actually* Roadmen, at least in terms of the definition applied in other (sociological) research on this identity category. Indeed, whilst some of the gully reported participating in low-level crime or other illicit aspects of this cultural alignment, there is clear distinction between these adolescents and the adult men who commit themselves to this lifestyle (cf. Gunter, 2008; Reid, 2017; Bakkali, 2018). Rather, I argue that these gully members are emulating certain aspects of this lifestyle by adopting the 'commodity register' (Agha, 2011) of the Roadman persona, in both online and offline space, to signal their alignment with Road cultural norms, practices, and values.

Here, examining digital data may be one such way of extrapolating these enregistered components of this identity. As I have argued, on the Digital Road, posts uploaded by Link Up TV and the Street Blogs not only establish the norms, values and practices of Road culture, but also participate in the process of enregisterment which links this ideology to specific personae. Since, according to

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Agha, "meta-signs that formulate images of use or users are always overt (perceivable)" (2011:25), online posts such as those extracted from Instagram, may be one such way of examining the perceivable enregistered characteristics of personae.
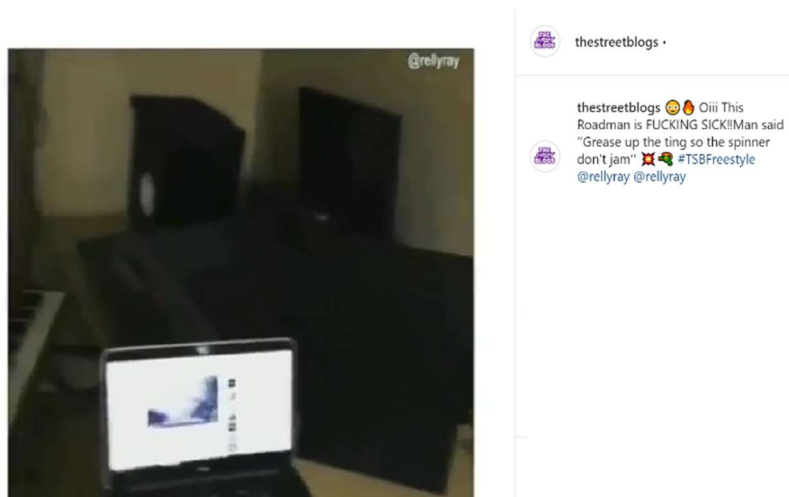

Figure 38 *Video by 'Relly Ray' (Link Up TV, Instagram)*

The digital enregisterment of the Roadman persona can be seen in Figure 37. The image is a remediated Snapchat video originally uploaded by 'Mo the Comedian'. The caption of the video reifies the behaviours and qualities of the Roadman performance as habitual qualities of this identity, as inferred by the construction of 'A Day In The Life'. In the video, the comedian performs a parodic sketch of the 'Roadman' persona. His performance references aspects of the Road lifestyle, such as soliciting money, the adoption of the fashionable street style aesthetic, and the use of particular linguistic features, e.g., the pronominal use of *man*, elements of Jamaican Creole. The content of the video is relatively unremarkable and, rather than focussing on the criminal aspects of this identity (cf.

Figure 36), references many of the 'mundane' aspects of Road life (Gunter, 2008).

Similarly, Figure 38 is a post extracted from the Street Blogs. The video is a remediated post from the grime artist, Relly Ray, in which he improvises – or 'freestyle' – raps a verse of a new track. The caption to the right of the video uploaded by the Street Blogs references the identity label of the 'Roadman', where this is applied not as a pejorative label but rather confers status to Ray (cf. Boakye, 2019) as 'FUCKING SICK' (i.e., very good).

Taken together, posts such as those examined in Figure 37 and Figure 38,

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suggest that practices, styles and linguistic features represented in those posts have become enregistered components of the 'Roadman' style. As internet memes, the semiotic references of these posts and the relevance of the 'Roadman' persona are recognised by those members of the acculturated audience (Shifman, 2014; Gal, Shifman, & Kampf, 2015). The relevance of these memes is largely in the extent to which they contribute to establishing Road values, systems and beliefs. But, equally, they also point to the enregisterment of a linguistic style as indexical of the Roadman persona. For instance, in Figure 38, the caption refers to two features examined in this thesis – the third-person singular pronominal *man* ('man said') and TH-stopping ('Grease up the <ting>') – are referenced simultaneously. Here, the use of orthographic variants which resemble some spoken language feature are directly associated with the content of the video and the Roadman persona.

In other posts uploaded by the channels, we see a more direct link between the commodifiable linguistic variety and the enregistered characterological figure of the Roadman. This is the case in a number of posts that reference the 'Roadman accent' and videos which offer a 'lesson in Roadman dialect'. These metapragmatic representations of the linguistic variety reference a number of the features analysed here, including the pronominal use of *man* and TH-stopping.

8.6.3   From the Offline to the Online

Taken together, the online representation of the 'Roadman' points to the enregistered qualities of this persona as a type of 'commodity register'. By examining this persona in relation to the gully, I have argued that this group index their strong affiliation towards Road culture by deploying the semiotic diacritics (Agha, 2011) that are associated with the Roadman persona. This is constituted in both online space – where individuals align with content posted on the Digital Road – and in offline space – where individuals adopt the aesthetic and personal qualities of the Roadman. In interaction, deploying the semiotic diacritics of this persona, help the individual to fulfil certain stylistic and interpersonal purposes, such as enacting certain stances of solidarity amongst members of the ingroup.

At the same time, conceptualising this identity as a commodity register explains why there is variability in the ways in which the gully orient towards adopting

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the aesthetic and linguistic practices of the roadman. As Agha notes, "[p]ersons acquainted with commodity registers can deploy criterial diacritics in conduct to gradient degrees" (2011:28).

When considered in relation to the foregoing speech analyses, it is possible to suggest that the three spoken language features have become enregistered as components the Roadman style. Utilising these features in interaction therefore not only indexes that individual as Gully in the specific context of Lakeside, but also draws on the indirect association of the 'Roadman' persona as a 'commodity register' that allows that individual to access the cultural capital of deploying that identity in the urban environment.

8.7   Summary

In this chapter I have analysed social media data in relation to the variable patterns of spoken language data examined at Lakeside. By conceptualising social media as a resource that enables the analyst to explore the metapragmatic representations of styles, identities and personae, I have suggested that it is possible use online data used to 'scale-up' micro-level observations of sociolinguistic patterns in relation to their macro-level realities. From this perspective, I provided an ethnographically informed content analysis of the individuals' Snapchat Stories and entertainment Instagram posts, teasing out a more general orientation towards an enregistered type of youth subculture – 'Road' culture. By examining the specific ways the gully individuals orient towards this culture, I have suggested that they emulate aspects of an characterological figure that is indexical of Road culture – the Roadman. Examining the digital enregisterment of this identity, I have argued that the aesthetic, linguistic and physical qualities of this persona are made available to individuals through the status of this style as a 'commodity register' (Agha, 2011). By using elements of this style in interaction, individuals – in this case the gully – are able to exploit the cultural capital of this identity as indexing their alignment with the norms, values, and beliefs promoted by the Road subcultural orientation.

9 Conclusion

9.1 From MLE to the Gully: From Varieties to Styles

This thesis has presented a stylistic analysis of language variation in an East-London youth group, Lakeside. Informed by extensive ethnographic participation, I have sought to explore patterns of sociolinguistic variation in relation to the speakers' membership of a given CofP. By examining the variability across three distinct features that represent different levels of the linguistic system, I have demonstrated that the distribution, function and social meaning of these features cannot be accounted for by macro-level factors alone, but rather can be explained in relation to the speakers' orientation towards a particular group identity that is specific to Lakeside – the gully. Exploring the networked interactions and engagements of the young people, I have gone further to link this micro-level identity to its macro-level reality – the Roadman. I have argued that the Roadman reflects a particular type of enregistered 'characterological figure' that is stylistically adopted, both aesthetically and linguistically, by gully members as a type of 'commodity register' (Agha, 2003; 2011).

In making these arguments, it is necessary to acknowledge that the approach presented here differs somewhat from other existing contemporary accounts of language variation in London. As discussed extensively in other sections, in recent years, the overwhelming bulk of variationist research in the city has focussed on documenting the emergence of a new multiethnolect, MLE. These studies have mostly focussed on analysing the distribution of features in terms of their broad distribution, examining sociolinguistic patterns at the macro- level (though cf. Gates, 2018). The approach taken in this thesis differs from existing accounts of MLE (e.g., Fox, 2007; Cheshire et al., 2008; 2011) in that I take a micro-level lens to examining

how speakers stylistically adopt elements of the variable system to construct local-level identities. Whilst there are clear theoretical and empirical differences between the two approaches, there are obvious intersections between the current analysis and the existing literature. These issues concern not only the research context of East London, but also more pressing questions regarding the status of MLE as a multiethnolect variety.

Given these intersections, it remains unclear how the stylistic practices analysed in this thesis relate to more general patterns of language variation in London, since many of the variables analysed here as enregistered components of the Roadman (and gully) are also claimed to be features of MLE (Cheshire, 2013; Cheshire et al., 2008). Indeed, whilst I have focussed on three specific features in this analysis, it is clear that these features are part of a much broader linguistic style that is indexical of the 'Roadman' persona. Evidence for this claim is found in more general sociological accounts of Road life. For instance, in their respective assessments of the Road cultural orientation, both Reid (2017) and Bakkali (2018) reference a number of the features that I analyse here in relation to the gully and that are documented in MLE. Reid (2017) provides a glossary of terms used by her respondents that are also used by members of the gully, whilst Bakkali (2018) provides transcripts of interviews with individuals engaged with Road culture that includes orthographic representations of several of the linguistic features examined in this thesis. Similarly, in his analysis of grime music and Road culture, Ilan (2012:45) notes that certain linguistic qualities have become "part of grime's vernacular", whilst Gunter (2008) refers to the 'code combining' of Patois with London vernaculars (i.e., MLE). How then, given the differences between the two approaches, can we understand these stylistic practices in relation to the broad variety of MLE?

In order to answer this question, I suggest that it is worthwhile examining the genealogy of MLE and Road culture. With both the linguistic variety and the cultural orientation claimed to have originated in the working-class neighbourhoods of East London (cf. Cheshire et al., 2008; Gunter, 2008), it appears that MLE has become the vernacular through which Road culture is articulated. The enregistered identities and styles that are associated with this cultural orientation are therefore likely to be characterised by linguistic features typically associated with MLE. As such, the

linguistic style that constitutes the 'Roadman' can be interpreted as one stylistic formulation of operationalising a very specific cultural alignment – that with Road culture. This style is made possible not just because of the similar genealogy of MLE and Road culture in the working-class neighbourhoods of East London, but also because these features have acquired interactional and discursive qualities that are particularly relevant to the construction of this identity.

By focusing on the social meaning of variation, I have argued that the three features analysed in previous chapters fulfil very specific discursive functions, such as the attention signal *ey* which I have argued indexes a 'dominant' stance. These interactional affordances, I argue, can help us explain the variation at Lakeside. In the case of *ey,* for example, whilst others may use this feature to achieve similar interactional work, it is the gully who use this feature most as the group who value the indexical quality of this feature. The association of form with social category, is therefore understood as a consequence of 'stance accretion' (Du Bois, 2002), where the sedimentation of stances, practices and norms become enregistered as 'distinctive' components of the Roadman identity (Irvine, 2002; Irvine & Gal, 2000; Benor, 2010).

This approach not only explains the variable patterns at Lakeside, but also allows for creativity and change in the development of personae. As the social meaning of features is not fixed, but rather is dependent on the specific context, it is possible that other groups and individuals may use these features to construct disparate and unrelated identities (e.g., Moore, 2003; Snell, 2010). Thus, whilst the stylistic approach presented here focusses on one very specific identity, one could conceivably establish multiple working-class styles and identities by combining elements that have often been classified as features of the broad variety of MLE for particular stylistic purposes (see, for example, Gates, 2018).

In making these arguments, I am fully aware that the account presented here promotes an altogether different conceptualisation of language variation in London than has been offered by other contemporary analyses. Previous accounts have tended to conceptualise MLE as a dialect or variety that is spoken by individuals maintaining diverse social networks. Cheshire and colleagues, for instance, define MLE as a multiethnolect which has superseded cockney as "the unmarked [working-class] Labovian 'vernacular' for many speakers" (Cheshire et al., 2011:153). They go

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further to propose that the variability in the use of these features can be accounted for in terms of the speakers' ethnicity or the diversity of their friendship group (e.g., Cheshire et al., 2008).

Whilst I do not mean to downplay the significance of these findings, the current analysis, however, suggests that the distribution and function of the three features analysed here can be better accounted for in terms of the social meaning of a given feature, as opposed to its dialectal distribution. Unlike the existing literature on MLE, the variability observed in current analysis is accounted for not by macro-level factors, such as ethnicity (cf. Cheshire et al., 2008), but rather by the individuals' alignment with a particular social group and/or their cultural orientation.

Here, the tension between the current approach and existing accounts of MLE relates more generally to an ongoing discussion in the literature that concerns the debate between stylistic and variety-based approaches. Quist (2008) views the practice-based approach as a natural progression of sociolinguistic accounts. She notes that large-scale surveys typically precede practice-based approaches, with the large-scale patterns identified in the former approaches providing the foundations for more nuanced accounts of the social meaning of variation. This appears to be the case for MLE. Indeed, in the context of London, researchers have started to question whether MLE constitutes a style or variety (e.g., Kerswill, 2013), whilst a growing body of research has sought to investigate how speakers utilise features of MLE stylistically (e.g., Pichler & Williams, 2016; Gates, 2018). This thesis aims to contribute to the latter body of research, presenting a sociolinguistic account of adolescent language use in East London which is more in line with third-wave perspectives on the social meaning of variation (see *inter alia* Eckert, 2003; 2012; Moore, 2003; Snell, 2010).

Against this backdrop, this thesis argues language use is better conceptualised as a type of 'social practice' (see *inter alia* Eckert, 1989; 2000; Moore, 2003; Snell, 2010), in which features typically analysed as MLE are deployed variably by speakers. Like Cheshire and colleagues (2011), I view features of MLE as constituting a 'pool' of resources but, I go further to argue that speakers use these features for particular stylistic and interactional purposes. In reaching this conclusion, I propose that these features are better conceptualised as components of a broader linguistic repertoire that is characterised by a "fluid set of linguistic

resources" (Benor, 2010:160).

This account not only better explains how components of this repertoire coalesce and become enregistered as styles and characterological figures (Agha, 2003), but can also help us understand these practices with regard to more general patterns of language variation in London and their social correlates. By focussing more on the micro-level social meaning of features, it is possible to explain the variable patterns of language use beyond identifying correlations between features and social categories.

As noted in earlier chapters, seminal research on MLE has tended to conceptualise this variety as a 'multiethnolect'. However, this term implies a relatively static correlation between language and social factors. The repertoire approach, however, allows for changes in the social meaning of variation beyond directly indexing category membership, such as ethnicity or race. Whereas the distribution and use of MLE features have tended to be explained in relation to the speakers' ethnicity or the ethnic diversity of their friendship networks (Cheshire et al., 2008), this analysis suggests that speakers stylistically adopt features which index ethnicity only indirectly. In the case of the current analysis, the gully adopt features to index their *direct* alignment with Road culture, indexing ethnicity only *indirectly* through the association of this cultural alignment with Caribbean and Jamaican culture. This account not only offers a more nuanced perspective on language variation in London, but it also allows us to provide a description of language use that avoids the possible problematic and essentialised interpretation that White speakers are attempting to 'sound Black'.

Given the importance of these cultural identifications in the development of individuals' personal and social identities (Boayke, 2019), I would argue that a stylistic approach is well suited to examining language variation in London, and indeed in other diverse urban centres. With the prevalence of Road culture and grime in contemporary culture, it seems that future research which examines how these styles, personae and cultural alignments are adopted by speakers in other social contexts would be a fruitful area of investigation (see also Drummond, 2018a/b).

9.2   Beyond the Offline: Social Media in Variationist Sociolinguistics

In addition to the insights offered here on the status of MLE, I have gone further to argue for the relevance of examining individuals' digital practices in relation to variable patterns of language use. Over the course of this thesis, I have proposed a method for integrating multimodal social media data into the variationist paradigm. By taking a third-wave variationist perspective, I argue that an analysis which seeks to understand the social meaning of the variable patterns of language is well suited to the 'blended' ethnographic approach proposed by Androutsopoulos (2008). Conceptualising the online as a type of 'augmented reality' (Jurgenson, 2012), I have suggested that the online should not be perceived as separable and distinct from the offline, but rather, enmeshed in our everyday lives. When considered as part of a much broader social system, it is possible to view the networked practices of users as deeply embedded within the everyday (offline) social networks, interactions and identities that those individuals participate in, such that these practices can examined in relation to patterns of language use.

By examining social media at both the user and community level, I have argued that it is possible to explore how the situated practices of speakers relate to or are contingent on some macro-level social reality. Analysing individuals' social media practices therefore not only allows us to explore the micro-level practices of users, but also the ways in which they orient towards aspects of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) of users that those platforms facilitate. Consequently, for variationist analyses that seek to understand the social meaning of variation, social media may be a particularly useful resource in examining the metapragmatic representations of styles, identities and speech varieties that are socially salient and become reified in digital space (cf. Agha, 2011). Examining the ways through which users orient towards these identifications means that it possible to use social media data to 'scale-up' our interpretations of the situated practices that we observe in a given community, relating these to more general linguistic, cultural and social phenomena.

The method outlined in this thesis differs substantially from the existing analyses which consider online and digital data from a variationist perspective, in that I offer an approach which argues for considering social media beyond examining the

variability in textual forms of communication. As acknowledged in other sections, the overwhelming bulk of variationist sociolinguistic research that considers digital data tends to focus on examining patterns of written variation. The main purpose of this research has been to understand the extent to which orthography can be used as a proxy for speech (e.g., Eisenstein, 2015; Tatman, 2015), with most analysing population-level statistics of patterns in text. Whilst this approach is no doubt beneficial for our understanding of population trends in language use, the tendency for variationist sociolinguistic analyses which examine digital data to focus on macro-level patterns in text means that this approach risks repeating some of the limitations of the first-wave of CMC and variationist research (cf. Georgakopoulou, 2006; Eckert, 2012). This an approach is further constrained by the increasing move towards 'photo-first' social media platforms. As such, it is abundantly clear that a 'sociolinguistics of social media' (Androutsopoulos, 2016) that seeks to understand variable patterns in language use, must be able to account for patterns beyond text.

The model suggested here, however, should be interpreted as diminishing the importance of orthography and orthographic variation. Rather, I have suggested that – following Androutsopoulos (2006; 2008) – non-standard spellings and other orthographic features should be analysed as part of a much broader digital semiotic context, in which users appropriate a range of multimodal features (of which orthography is just one) to construct meaning. Of course, it is necessary to acknowledge here that this point has long been acknowledged in other areas of sociolinguistics (e.g., Georgakopoulou, 2016; Zappavigna & Zhao, 2017; Page, 2018). However, few variationist sociolinguistic analyses have considered social media from this perspective. This thesis aims to present a model of how this can be achieved.

In making these arguments, I advocate an approach to social media that benefits from the insights from related disciplines such as media and digital sociology to understand the ways in which the offline/online dimensions are deeply enmeshed. Rather than restricting the focus of this analysis to one mode or the other, I have suggested that the offline/online practices of speakers are co-constituted across digital and physical space. As such, examining online data therefore may not only be useful in examining the digital practices of users but could also help us understand the ways in which these practices are contingent on or are influenced by the individuals'

offline social networks and subcultural orientation(s) (see also Miller 2016). For variationist sociolinguistics, I argue that this point is particularly relevant given that the 'offline' spoken practices that we observe speakers participating in may actually be influenced by their experiences and interactions on digital platforms.

In the context of the current analysis, these arguments appear to be particularly salient. As noted elsewhere at length, adolescents are some of the heaviest consumers of social and digital media. Whilst few existing variationist sociolinguistic analyses of youth styles consider both the online and offline practices of their adolescent sample, I would argue that this is an oversight. For this demographic, it seems wholly likely that their experiences of the sociolinguistic landscape will be influenced not just by their physical interactions with individual speakers, but also those which are mediated through Snapchat, Instagram and other social media platforms. Future research therefore should document not just the digital practices of youth populations but also the ways in which these practices are located in the broader social context in which they occur.

A further point that this model addresses is the status of digital and social media in influencing language variation and change. Given the increasing convergence of digital technology and the offline, it seems necessary that variationist sociolinguistic analyses should consider not just the 'offline' social factors influencing language use, but also the ways in which online practices provide speakers with new sociolinguistic opportunities. In the context of the current analysis, the potential diffusion of media forms and styles beyond their context of origin, such as the Roadman and Road culture (see also Drummond, 2018a/b), suggests that mediatised interactions may play a more important role in influencing language variation and change than has been traditionally argued. Similarly, with social media and memetic references featuring as part of the individuals' repertoire (e.g., Sierra, f.c.), it seems that approaches which seek to understand stylistic and performative language variation should address how these intertextual references are utilised in interaction. This thesis demonstrates the utility of blended ethnographic approaches in examining the intersection of offline and online space with regard to variable patterns of language use.

This conclusion brings me to the central argument of this thesis. I have argued that blended ethnographic approaches should play a much more central role

in variationist studies. And whilst the role of social media in offline language use is underexplored in the field at current, it is hoped that this thesis prompts the start of a research agenda which seeks to understand the influence of social media and mediatised interactions in shaping sociolinguistic patterns of language use. The issues raised here as well as by others suggests that such a research trajectory is warranted not just on the basis that it is possible to assess the utility of existing sociolinguistic theories and concepts in regard to digital data but, following the agenda set out by Georgakopoulou and Spilioti (2016:3), may "play a key role in shaping current debates about re-conceptualizations of core concepts" within the field. Of course, adopting such an approach is not without its challenges and I acknowledge the logistical and theoretical difficulties of operationalising analyses which consider both offline and online practices of speakers. However, if we are committed to understanding language use in its social context, extending the scope of our analyses *beyond the offline* is a necessary and inevitable step for variationist research.

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