

## Patterns of linguistic variation among Glaswegian adolescent males

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**Patterns of Linguistic Variation among Glaswegian  
Adolescent Males**

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1  
2 **Title:** **Patterns of Linguistic Variation among Glaswegian Adolescent Males<sup>1</sup>**

3  
4 **Running Title:** **Variation among Teenage Males in Glasgow**

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7 **Word Count:** **9700**

8  
9 **Abstract**

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11  
12 This article presents the results of an ethnographically informed sociolinguistic investigation of  
13 Glaswegian Vernacular and examines the intersection between language and identity using data  
14 collected from a group of working-class adolescent males over the course of three years from a high  
15 school in the south side of Glasgow, Scotland called Banister Academy. Through the fine-grained  
16 acoustic analysis of the phonetic variable CAT (equivalent to the TRAP/BATH/PALM set, Johnston  
17 1997), coupled with ethnographic observations, this article shows how patterns of variation are  
18 related to Community of Practice membership, how the members of the Communities of Practice in  
19 Banister Academy use linguistic and social resources to differentiate themselves from one another,  
20 and how certain patterns of variation acquire social meaning within the peer-group. This article  
21 contributes to the under-researched area of adolescent male language use and offers one of the first  
22 ethnographically supported accounts of linguistic variation in Glasgow.  
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40 **Key Words:** **Adolescent Male Language Use, Glaswegian, Community of Practice, Vocalic**  
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42 **Analysis, Ethnography**  
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## 1. Introduction

Since the early 1970s, the city of Glasgow, Scotland has been a major site for sociolinguistic research in the U.K. (Macaulay 1977; Macafee 1983; Iacuniello 1992; Lawson and Stuart-Smith 1999; Stuart-Smith 2003; Eremeeva and Stuart-Smith 2003; Stuart-Smith, Timmins and Tweedie 2006). Over the past forty years, studies of Glaswegian have focused on issues of language attitudes (Cheyne 1970; Macafee 1989; Torrance 2003), and lexical erosion and decay (Macafee 1994), while others have examined the nature of language variation and change (Stuart-Smith 1999a), lexical innovation and new developments in the quotative system of Glaswegian adolescents (Macaulay 2006), the relationship between local identity and phonological variation (Braber and Butterfint 2008), and the impact of the media on language change in Glasgow (Stuart-Smith 2006). Few studies, however, have focused on the social meanings carried by different varieties of Glaswegian, and since working-class Glaswegian Vernacular carries distinct, and often socially damaging, meanings, including ‘harsh’, ‘rough’ and ‘slovenly’ (Pollner 1987), as well as ‘aggressive’ (Stuart-Smith 1999b: 211), it seems necessary to investigate the processes which lead to these kinds of social meanings and bridge the gap between linguistic form and social function.

Working within a ‘third wave’ sociolinguistic framework (where language is viewed not as an ‘institution’ but as a ‘practice which unfolds with respect to that institution’, Eckert 2005: 16), this article focuses on how linguistic variants are assigned (or obtain) social meaning through the accretion of locally significant and culturally salient material within four all-male Communities of Practice in a high school in the south side of Glasgow named Banister Academy (all names in the fieldwork are pseudonyms). Although the CofP approach has been used in many studies which have analysed the speech of female speakers (cf. Moore 2003; Alam 2007; Mendoza-Denton 2008), the research presented in this article is one of the few projects to use the framework in an analysis of exclusively male speakers.

Through the presentation of the results of an acoustic analysis of conversational data collected from four CofPs of working-class adolescent males during a three year longitudinal

1  
2 ethnographic investigation, I show that patterns of variation are correlated with particular CofPs,  
3  
4 that linguistic variation is used as a resource for the construction of social identities (Eckert 2000),  
5  
6 and that linguistic variants obtain social meaning when used during specific discursive acts  
7  
8  
9 (Kiesling 2005). I also discuss the extent to which speakers explicitly *distance* themselves from  
10  
11 particular social practices and identities (Bucholtz 1999) and how this distancing contributes to how  
12  
13 speakers construct their social identity (Stuart-Smith, Timmins and Tweedie 2007).  
14  
15

16         The concept of social distancing is an important one to consider, especially in the context of  
17  
18 Banister Academy and Glasgow. Adolescent males are often viewed with suspicion in Glaswegian  
19  
20 society (and the U.K. more generally, Margo and Stevens 2008: 5), usually mediated through the  
21  
22 assumption that working-class adolescent males are more likely to be involved in gang-related  
23  
24 activity (Bannister 2010). This perception is particularly acute in working-class areas of the city,  
25  
26 where ‘residents of such areas are more likely to be directly affected by youth crime, and certainly  
27  
28 to *feel* that it is all around them’ (Anderson and Dobbie 2008: 45). This is not to say, however, that  
29  
30 all perceptions of adolescent males are necessarily negative. Indeed, the *Scottish Social Attitudes*  
31  
32 *Survey* (published in 2008 but based on data collected in 2006) reports that ‘there is certainly a great  
33  
34 deal of concern about “young people today”, but there is also much concern and sympathy *for*  
35  
36 young people in the face of the difficulties of contemporary society’ (Anderson and Dobbie 2008:  
37  
38 5). In a similar vein, it is hoped that the research presented in this article contributes to a better  
39  
40 understanding of the linguistic and social practices of adolescent male speakers in Glasgow and  
41  
42 helps unpacks some of the ideologies surrounding language use in the city.  
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49         The first part of the article describes the social background of Glasgow, briefly discussing  
50  
51 the factors which led to widespread social segregation of the city in to working-class and middle-  
52  
53 class areas and the effect this has had on the ideology of Glaswegian Vernacular. I then move on to  
54  
55 present a description of the fieldwork site, Banister Academy, before outlining the variable CAT. A  
56  
57 quantitative analysis of the data follows, integrating the ethnographic fieldwork to illuminate the  
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1  
2 social role the variable has. I conclude with some general observations on the contribution this  
3  
4 research makes to our understanding of the role of sociolinguistic variation in Glasgow.  
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6

## 7 8 **2. Social Background** 9

10  
11 Located on the west coast of Scotland, Glasgow is Scotland's largest city, with a population of  
12  
13 approximately 600,000 inhabitants. The city has been a major social and economic hub since the  
14  
15 14<sup>th</sup> century, exporting a wide variety of products, services, and knowledge throughout the world.  
16  
17 Alongside London and Edinburgh, Glasgow currently has one of the largest economies in the U.K.  
18  
19 (Yeandle 2010) and is a major provider of call centre employment and technical support (Bristow,  
20  
21 Munday and Gripaios 2000: 527 – 528). The development of Glasgow's economic fortune was  
22  
23 closely tied to two major developments (both now greatly reduced in scope): merchant trade and  
24  
25 heavy industry (Gibb 1983: 36). These industries, however, led to massive overcrowding in the city  
26  
27 centre, ultimately resulting in a reduction in the quality of life for the residents. Part of Glasgow  
28  
29 City Council's solution to reduce this overcrowding was to relocate families (especially working-  
30  
31 class families) to tenement blocks located at the outer edges of the city (Pacione 1995: 159). The  
32  
33 second part of the redevelopment plan involved the construction of peripheral 'New Towns' to  
34  
35 which mainly middle-class and skilled workers moved (Seo 2002: 113). Although this had the  
36  
37 desired effect of clearing space for new developments in the city centre, it also caused damaging  
38  
39 social segregation between rich and poor areas, creating deep-seated territorial divides (McGregor  
40  
41 and McConnachie 1995). The net result of this is a 'twin-track' or 'two-tier' city: a place of  
42  
43 entrepreneurial vitality, tourism, retail activity and cultural festivals amidst the large-scale poverty  
44  
45 and decay that characterises large peripheral estates of the city today (Mooney 2004: 334).  
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53  
54 The effect of this segregation of the city has led to both Glaswegian Vernacular and particular  
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56 areas of Glasgow being closely associated with violence, drugs, and general social malaise. Such  
57  
58 negative evaluations of Glaswegian have been perpetuated by the media over the years, resulting in  
59  
60 a well-entrenched stigma surrounding certain areas of the city and its inhabitants. Of particular note

1  
2 is the stereotype of the Glasgow ‘hard man’, a male individual from a working-class area who  
3  
4 embodies physical strength and aggression and uses violence as a means to resolve interpersonal  
5  
6 disputes (See Lawson (in progress a) for a more detailed discussion of this concept as it applies to  
7  
8 Glasgow). The concept of the ‘hard man’ relies heavily on the stereotypes of physical and mental  
9  
10 toughness, a disregard for personal safety, an ideology of ‘might makes right’, and perhaps most  
11  
12 important, the use of specific forms of Glaswegian Vernacular (Lawson 2008). Indeed, the  
13  
14 association of Glaswegian Vernacular with aggression and anti-social behaviour became a major  
15  
16 ideological point of reference for many in Scotland and further afield. In recent years, however,  
17  
18 there has been a shift away from the ‘hard man’ as encapsulating the negative social ills of Glasgow  
19  
20 to a different section of Glaswegian society: working-class adolescent males. Although this section  
21  
22 of society tends to be stigmatized in many urban areas (Margo and Stevens 2008), the negative  
23  
24 status of such individuals has been increasingly reified by the media (Bawden 2009).  
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### 31 **3. Parkton and Banister Academy**

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34  
35 The area of Parkton (the site where the ethnographic portion of the research was conducted) was  
36  
37 one such working-class area created due to the local council policies outlined above and now has a  
38  
39 population of approximately 30,000 inhabitants. Of the 19,000 inhabitants who are of working age,  
40  
41 approximately 13,000 are employed, 3,500 are full-time students, and 1,600 are long-term  
42  
43 unemployed. In terms of financial aid, 5,000 receive of some form of benefit support while 700  
44  
45 receive job-seekers’ allowance. Although the number of dwellings totals around 14,000, only  
46  
47 approximately 50% of these are owner-occupied, another 500 are privately rented, 3,000 are owned  
48  
49 by the Glasgow Housing Association, and the remainder is of ‘other social rented’ status<sup>2</sup> (this  
50  
51 refers to residences which are owned by the local authority but are rented out). There is no major  
52  
53 industry in Parkton, although the recent development of a local shopping centre has increased  
54  
55 employment opportunities in the food and customer service sector.  
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1  
2 The high school in which the ethnographic fieldwork was conducted, Banister Academy, was  
3  
4 a new building which amalgamated several smaller schools in the Parkton area. At the beginning of  
5  
6 the school year in 2007, the school had 700 students, with the majority of students living within five  
7  
8 miles of the school (for a more detailed discussion of the ethnographic context of Banister Academy  
9  
10 see Lawson 2009). Before turning our attention to the groups which made up the social fabric of  
11  
12 Banister Academy, it will be useful to briefly discuss the concept of ‘Community of Practice’ and  
13  
14 its usefulness in ethnographic research.  
15  
16  
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#### 20 **4. A Brief Outline of the ‘Communities of Practice’ Model**

21  
22  
23 Now a common analytical framework within sociolinguistics, the term ‘Community of Practice’  
24  
25 (CofP hereafter) was coined in the field of Social Learning Theory by Jean Lave and Etienne  
26  
27 Wenger who developed the concept through their work on Vai tailors in Liberia (Lave and Wenger  
28  
29 1991). In the framework, Lave and Wenger use Communities of Practice to explain the process of  
30  
31 social learning in situated contexts. That is, as a new member in a particular community, an  
32  
33 individual is unaware of the everyday social practices in which more established members of the  
34  
35 community are well versed. Through the process of legitimate peripheral participation in the  
36  
37 workplace, these apprentices learned the social practices of becoming a fully-fledged tailor, being  
38  
39 given enough participation in the workplace to expose them to a number of social practices related  
40  
41 to tailoring, but not enough that they could be considered full tailors. As the apprentices learned  
42  
43 more about the tailoring industry, they became more accepted within the workplace, eventually  
44  
45 learning the intricate workings of the industry and ready to pass their skills and knowledge to new  
46  
47 apprentices through the same process. This social learning process underpins the CofP model,  
48  
49 whereby members learn the specific social practices relevant to a particular CofP in the process of a  
50  
51 joint enterprise (see Meyerhoff 2002 for a detailed discussion of the use of the CofP framework  
52  
53 within sociolinguistics).  
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1  
2 Drawing on the idea of the performative nature of gender from Butler (1990), the concept of  
3  
4 the CofP was incorporated in to sociolinguistics in an influential article by Penelope Eckert and  
5  
6 Sally McConnell-Ginet (1992), in which the authors argued for gender to be treated as a practice-  
7  
8 based activity. For Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, gender is not something individuals *have*, but  
9  
10 something individuals *do*. In the course of interaction, social practices construct members of a  
11  
12 community as women or as men (and simultaneously as members of other categories or groups).  
13  
14  
15  
16 Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) define a CofP as:

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18  
19 [A]n aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an  
20  
21 endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in  
22  
23 short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor.  
24  
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27

28 Eckert and McConnell-Ginet highlight here the importance that *all* social practices are given  
29  
30 in the CofP framework, particularly in relation to the construction of sociolinguistic identity. While  
31  
32 an analysis and description of linguistic variation is invariably a sociolinguist's main concern,  
33  
34 speakers draw on both social and linguistic practices through which they present themselves to the  
35  
36 world, including clothing, hairstyle, orientation towards the school, engagement in age-restricted  
37  
38 activities, musical tastes, or the use of specific area(s) for socialising (cf. Eckert 2000; Mendoza-  
39  
40 Denton 2008). A predominant focus on linguistic practice may cause researchers to miss important  
41  
42 social work which is mediated through other channels (Eckert 2000: 34). It is certainly the case,  
43  
44 however, that the use of a particular framework to investigate linguistic variation (including the  
45  
46 Speech Community Approach or Social Network Theory) depends on the aims and objectives of the  
47  
48 research project. As I hope to show in this article, adolescent Glaswegian male identity is not solely  
49  
50 mediated through language (although it is an important factor), and consequently, the inclusion the  
51  
52 CofP approach in this study was an appropriate way of investigating the range of social practices  
53  
54 the pupils of Banister Academy use to construct their social identity.  
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## 5. Ethnography of Banister Academy

Between 2005 and 2007, I conducted a three-year ethnography of Banister Academy (I refer to each year in the analysis as Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3). I began the fieldwork by contacting several schools located in the south side of Glasgow, one of which was Banister Academy. The head teacher (principal) of the school agreed to meet me to discuss the research, and after this meeting, permission was granted for me to conduct the study in the school pending a background check (specifically a Disclosure Scotland Check which is standard practice for any adult wishing to work with adolescents and other vulnerable populations). The first few weeks of the ethnography involved me getting my bearings on the layout of the school, the areas where pupils socialised, the structure of the school day and the general ‘nuts and bolts’ of everyday life in Banister Academy. After several weeks of this, a few pupils started asking me what I was doing in the school, especially since it appeared that I had free reign over how I spent my time during the day (e.g. I did not attend classes or sit in during lessons). After explaining that I was interested in how adolescents in Glasgow used language, I was invited to hang around with them when I was in the school. I attended the school approximately three days a week for the whole school day (approximately 8am until 4pm), spending most of it by myself during class time and the rest with the pupils during break time, lunch time and the end of the day. The majority of the fieldwork was spent inside the school, although occasionally I had the opportunity to go with a group of pupils to the nearby supermarket or wander around the local area when some pupils played truant. Pupils initially found it difficult to interact with me due to my lack of an official ‘role’ within the structure of the school (such as a social worker, trainee teacher, or school inspector), and I tried to show that I had no institutional ties and therefore acted more-or-less independently. I was always aware that my age (in comparison to the pupils) could position me as an ‘authority’ figure, but I always took pains to distance myself from the school, primarily by limiting my interaction with teachers and not attending classes. The more time I spent with the pupils (either just by hanging around or by taking part in a game of football with a group of pupils), the easier it became to chat with them. I spent approximately six

1  
2 months getting to know the pupils before I started the recording phase of the research since I  
3  
4 wanted them to feel comfortable with talking to me before committing their stories to a tape-  
5  
6 recorder.  
7

8  
9 No formal sampling technique was used to recruit participants, and instead, speakers were  
10  
11 recruited through friendship networks (cf. Cheshire 1982). Occasionally, this approach resulted in  
12  
13 an ethnographic cul-de-sac, where a member's lack of network ties beyond the group meant that in  
14  
15 order to establish contact with new groups, I could not rely on existing contacts. The participants I  
16  
17 interviewed tended to be the core members of their respective CofP, although membership of this  
18  
19 core was fluid and variable as the fieldwork progressed. This fluidity meant that some participants  
20  
21 dropped out of their CofP or the school, or moved into other CofPs to which I did not have access,  
22  
23 resulting in the social make-up of the CofPs changing across each year of the ethnography.  
24  
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27

28 Information was collected from the participants regarding parental occupation and area of  
29  
30 residence through a short questionnaire which participants completed prior to being recorded. This  
31  
32 information, combined with information concerning the local area, the status of the school, and  
33  
34 other ethnographic data, suggested that the participants were all from broadly working-class  
35  
36 backgrounds (see also Clark 2008: 256), limiting the usefulness of class as a predictive factor in the  
37  
38 linguistic analysis. Class, therefore, was not quantitatively analysed or included in the regression  
39  
40 model since the conversations I had with the participants suggested that explicit membership of  
41  
42 social class was not a primary means of demarcation between each of the CofPs, and this certainly  
43  
44 seemed to be borne out in my own observations over the course of the ethnography. This is not to  
45  
46 say that class is not an important factor in Glasgow, especially in light of the discussion concerning  
47  
48 the social history of the city in section 2. It was the case that over the course of the ethnography,  
49  
50 discourses surrounding class-mobility and social aspirations were used by specific CofPs as a  
51  
52 means through which they distinguished themselves from other CofPs in the high school. I would  
53  
54 argue, however, that aspirations to join a higher social class (in terms of class mobility) is markedly  
55  
56 different from belonging to a higher social class. Important to the Banister Academy ethnography,  
57  
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60

1  
2 the distinction between the four CofPs was predicated along axes other than social class (see also  
3  
4 Eckert 2000: 55 - 58 for a discussion on the intersection between CofP membership and social  
5  
6 class).  
7

8  
9 Over the course of three years, four main CofPs emerged as salient and locally meaningful  
10  
11 ways of being within Banister Academy (which I named the *Alternative*, *Sports*, *'Ned'*, and  
12  
13 *Schoolie* CofPs). The CofPs and the individual members of each CofP are summarised in Table 1.  
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19  
20 [Table 1 about here]  
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26

27 Participants were assigned to a CofP by using a combination of triangulation between self-  
28  
29 identification, other-identification, and researcher-identification (cf. Mendoza-Denton 2008). This  
30  
31 triangulation became important since very few participants actually self-identified using these CofP  
32  
33 labels, rather preferring to define themselves as 'normal'. Participants, however, also defined  
34  
35 themselves through overt rejection of specific identities (a point to which I return later in section 8  
36  
37 and 9). Individuals who shared social practices tended to socialise and spend time with one another  
38  
39 both inside and outside the school, so the extent to which an individual had shared social practices  
40  
41 with other individuals was an important method of determining CofP membership.  
42  
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44

45  
46 It was perhaps with the Schoolie (and to a lesser extent, the 'Ned') CofPs that the process of  
47  
48 triangulating membership was the most important, especially with occasionally conflicting sets of  
49  
50 information regarding membership status. For example, members of each of the four CofPs would  
51  
52 interact and converse across the CofP 'boundaries' on a regular basis, causing some difficulties in  
53  
54 deciding 'who hung around with who'. While such flexible social relations were related in part to  
55  
56 the overall size of the school, it was also a result of the small size of the year groups. Although  
57  
58 determining CofP membership in any study is a difficult process, I believe that the CofPs outlined  
59  
60

1  
2 below were the principal social identities which the pupils of Banister Academy constructed in their  
3  
4 day-to-day lives.  
5  
6

### 7 8 **5.1. The Alternative Community of Practice** 9

10  
11 The Alternative CofP was made up of Andrew, Jack, Neil, Peter, Kevin and Mathew who were  
12 approximately 14 – 15 years old at the beginning of the fieldwork (between Year 1 and Year 2,  
13 Peter changed from a ‘floater’ member between the Alternative and Sports CofPs to a core member  
14 within the Alternative CofP. See Lawson 2009: 140 - 142 for a more detailed discussion on Peter’s  
15 transition across the two CofPs). All of the speakers were local, all had been born in Glasgow, and  
16 all had attended Banister Academy since 1<sup>st</sup> year (age 12 – 13). This CofP was one of the first I  
17 encountered and from the outset it was clear that they constructed a very different social identity  
18 from other groups in the school. The members participated in social practices which would be  
19 considered ‘alternative’ from a sub-cultural standpoint, as well as by their peers in Banister  
20 Academy. This included practices such as choice of clothing, involvement in certain sports, and  
21 particular musical tastes.  
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36  
37 The first major social practice which marked the Alternative CofP from other CofPs in the  
38 school was music. The members of the Alternative CofP regularly listened and discussed a range of  
39 rock and metal music, including bands such as *Nirvana*, *Cradle of Filth*, *Iron Maiden*, *Metallica*,  
40 and *Slipknot*. These bands tended not to be listened to outside of the Alternative CofP, and in some  
41 cases were actively derided within other CofPs such as the ‘Ned’ CofP. The Alternative CofP also  
42 preferred different types of sports including wrestling, BMX racing, and skateboarding. Such sports  
43 were a stark contrast to the sports preferred within other CofPs (especially the Sport CofP, see  
44 below).  
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55  
56 The core and peripheral members of this CofP distinguished themselves from one another  
57 through clothing. Wearing black leather jackets, biker boots, and rock music branded t-shirts (as  
58  
59  
60

1  
2 Neil and Kevin did) were often sufficient enough to be recognised as a ‘goth’ (Hodkinson 2002) or  
3  
4 a ‘mosher’, although the distinction between the two was not always clear.  
5  
6

7  
8 **1** Andrew: Then there’s, em, moshers,  
9  
10 so they go along wi aw the black stuff (*go along with all*)  
11  
12 and like, the long hair and stuff, like Neil,  
13  
14 the way he does it.  
15  
16

17  
18 **5** Then you’ve got the goths, who’ll just wear white  
19  
20 make-up, and mad (*crazy*) mascara and stuff like that.  
21

22 RL: Right.

23  
24 Andrew: The nails go black.

25  
26 RL: Ok.

27  
28  
29 **10** Andrew: Well, Neil does that sometimes, I think, doesn’t he?  
30

31 RL: Aye, he’s-

32  
33 Andrew: I don’t think I’ve ever saw his nails black actually.  
34

35  
36 RL: Right.

37  
38 Andrew: Right.  
39

40  
41 **15** Then you’ve got-

42  
43 Neil’s-

44  
45 Remember he was sayin he was gaun hauf-goth (*going half-goth*).  
46  
47

48 RL: Mhmmm.

49  
50 Andrew: Right, the boots he’s got are gothic.  
51

52  
53 **20** RL: Right, ok.

54  
55 Andrew: So, the jacket’s kind of gothic as well.  
56

57  
58 (Extract 1. Andrew and Jack, Alternative CofP, Year 1)  
59  
60

1  
2 In line 2 – 4, Andrew comments on the necessary requirements to be labelled a ‘mosher’,  
3  
4 including wearing black clothing and having long hair. From line 5 onwards, however, Andrew  
5  
6 comments on the necessary requirements to be labelled a ‘goth’, noting that Neil had partly adopted  
7  
8 this identity as well. This would suggest that the line between different orientations to an extreme  
9  
10 Alternative style were not so clearly defined, causing difficulties in categorisation even among the  
11  
12 pupils of Banister Academy. In contrast to Neil, Andrew and Jack were not as extreme in their  
13  
14 clothing choices and signalled their Alternative CofP membership in other ways. Andrew regularly  
15  
16 wore wrestling or branded band t-shirts under his school shirt, while Jack was regarded by many of  
17  
18 the other members as having an ‘emo’ style. This refers to a style which favours striped scarves and  
19  
20 jumpers, dark hair with a long fringe combed over the eyes, skinny jeans, and skater shoes and is  
21  
22 defined by the The Urban Dictionary (an online dictionary with user-generated definitions) as:  
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24  
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27  
28

29 ...unenthusiastic melodramatic 17 year olds who don’t smile, high pitched overwrought  
30 lyrics and inaudible guitar rifts with tight wool sweaters, tighter jeans, itchy scarves  
31 (even in the summer), ripped chucks with favorite bands signature, black square rimmed  
32 glasses, and ebony greasy unwashed hair that is required to cover at least 3/5ths of the  
33 face at an angle (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=emo>)  
34  
35  
36

37 Thus, while Jack had a clothing style which was distinctively different from the mainstream,  
38  
39 it was a different style from those characterised by Kevin and Neil. Ultimately, however, all of the  
40  
41 members of the Alternative CofP were distinctive from the other CofP members due to their  
42  
43 participation in non-mainstream social practices.  
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## 48 **5.2. The Sports Community of Practice**

49  
50

51 The Sports CofP was made up of Mark, Nathan, Phil, and Trevor, who were all approximately 14 –  
52  
53 15 years at the start of the ethnography. I was introduced to the Sports CofP near the beginning of  
54  
55 Year 1 by being invited to participate in a game of football (soccer) one lunchtime. It was clear that  
56  
57 this activity was central to the members of this CofP and one which was pursued almost every day.  
58  
59 Indeed, one of the main social practices in which the Sports CofP engaged was sport, specifically  
60  
football and rugby, and the participants regularly engaged in playing, watching, and discussing

1  
2 these activities at length. All members participated in the school rugby team and their daily  
3  
4 interactions were typically based around football. Although football is generally a very important  
5  
6 physical activity for British schoolboys (Skelton 2000: 6), it was interesting to note that there were  
7  
8 never any major discussions about football in the other CofPs, suggesting that in the Sports CofP,  
9  
10 football was a highly visible and important social practice around which the members created their  
11  
12 specific social identities.  
13  
14

15  
16 In terms of dress, the Sports CofP style was not as clearly defined as some aspects of the  
17  
18 Alternative CofP style. One thing which was consistent across all members, however, was that they  
19  
20 all wore trainers instead of shoes, facilitating their regular participation in football during break  
21  
22 time and lunchtime. There was little consistency with regards to sweaters and shirts, although  
23  
24 occasionally members would wear a white shirt with the school tie. Usually, however, each member  
25  
26 would wear either a) the school sweater with a t-shirt underneath or b) the white school t-shirt (with  
27  
28 or without a tie). All three members wore gold jewellery, including chains and rings, although the  
29  
30 members took care to highlight that this did not mean they were ‘neds’ (see below). They also  
31  
32 enjoyed watching television, including popular British soap operas (such as *EastEnders*), and they  
33  
34 tended to listen to more mainstream pop music.  
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### 41 **5.3. The ‘Ned’ Community of Practice**

42  
43

44 The term ‘ned’ usually refers to adolescent males (and females) who are assumed to be involved in  
45  
46 the criminal subculture of Glasgow<sup>3</sup> (cf. Macafee 1994: 139), with the term originating as a term of  
47  
48 reference for criminals within the police force (See Lawson 2009: 11 - 12 for a more detailed  
49  
50 discussion on the etymology of the term). In modern-day Glasgow, the most widely-accepted folk  
51  
52 definition of a ‘ned’ is a working-class, adolescent male who wears a tracksuit, Burberry branded  
53  
54 clothing (recognisable by its plaid design), a baseball cap, white sports trainers (sneakers), gold  
55  
56 sovereign rings, and a Berghaus ‘Mera Peak’ jacket (an expensive hiking jacket). ‘Ned’ social  
57  
58 practices are assumed to be criminal or deviant in nature, including vandalism and petty theft; age-  
59  
60



1  
2 restricted activities including alcohol, smoking and sex; muggings, loitering, criminal damage,  
3  
4 general affray, and gang-related fighting and violence (both organised and random). Indeed, the  
5  
6 term ‘ned’ in Banister Academy (and in Glasgow more generally) is often synonymous with  
7  
8 deviance, criminality, aggression, and gang affiliation. As such, the term is an ideologically loaded  
9  
10 one which encapsulates a range of negative assumptions, taken to an extreme with the popularly  
11  
12 accepted backronym of ‘non-educated delinquent’. My use of the term here is not to further fuel the  
13  
14 negative discourses surrounding adolescent males who might be viewed or labelled as ‘ned’, but  
15  
16 rather to show that this group of males did not fit into any other category in the ethnography and to  
17  
18 reflect that within Banister Academy, this group had a particular social status distinct from other  
19  
20 CofPs.  
21  
22  
23  
24

25  
26 When the study began in Banister Academy, it did not take long to recognise that  
27  
28 adolescents who might be considered ‘neds’ by others in the school were part of its social make-up.  
29  
30 Beyond my own observations, other pupils in the school pointed out that certain pupils were ‘neds’  
31  
32 and that I should not interview them. In Year 2, I gained access to the ‘Ned’ CofP, of which Danny,  
33  
34 Max, Noah, and Rick were the main members. Many of the members of this CofP, however, either  
35  
36 refuted they were a ‘ned’ (such as Danny) or admitted that they used to be one, but no longer  
37  
38 identified as such (such as Rick). Nevertheless, this CofP was marked out as being different to the  
39  
40 other CofPs, most particularly due to their involvement in a range of age-restricted activities  
41  
42 including drinking and smoking. Moreover, they tended to have a more explicit engagement with  
43  
44 the local subculture (for example, they knew local shops where they could buy alcohol and  
45  
46 cigarettes), many members had the occasional foray into fighting, and all listened to New Monkey  
47  
48 (a very active form of dance music). Taken together, these practices positioned the ‘Ned’ CofP as  
49  
50 ‘anti-school’ with a negative orientation towards authority (cf. the ‘lads’ in Willis 1977 and the  
51  
52 ‘townies’ in Moore 2003: 214).  
53  
54  
55  
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57

58  
59 Important to the discussion here is that one of the most commonly cited identifying features  
60  
of ‘neds’ is assumed to be a specific style of language which utilises increased nasalisation, tense

vowel production, and an elevated pitch range (Jane Stuart-Smith, personal communication).

Extract 2 highlights some of the issues surrounding social and linguistic practices which are viewed to be indicative of a 'ned' identity.

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60
- 1 RL: So, what makes a ned a ned?
- Andrew: They think they're smart.
- RL: Right.
- Andrew: And the way they talk,  
5 and their stupid swagger.
- Neil: Aye, the swagger.
- Andrew: ((laughs))  
And the way they talk.  
((imitates 'ned' voice))
- 10 Aw what man?  
Aw, what's up wi you man?  
((laughs))  
That's pure smashing man!  
I'll smash you!
- 15 Neil: They're no talking about (*about*) smashing somebody.  
It's their drinking-  
It's hash (*marijuana*) they're talking about.  
((imitates 'ned' voice))  
'I'm gaunae (*going to*) get a quarter pounder this weekend',  
20 A quarter pounder's a burger mate.

(Extract 2. Andrew, Jack, and Neil, Alternative CofP, Year 1)

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This extract draws on discourses of violence, drug use, and perceived social arrogance within the ‘ned’ community, but it also flags up some interesting aspects of performative speech (lines 10 - 14 and line 19), to which I return later in section 8.

With regards to clothing, ‘neds’ are also assumed to wear gold sovereign rings, high sports socks over the top of tracksuit trousers, Burberry branded clothing, and white trainers (this is the imagery most widely used in the Scottish comedy show *Chewin’ the Fat*). In Banister Academy, however, there did not appear to be any uniformity within the ‘Ned’ CofP in this regard. Some members wore ‘Mera Peak’ jackets, many of them wore some form of gold jewellery, but the assumption of wearing Burberry baseball hats and tracksuits was not reflected in the ethnography. Indeed, the only member of the Ned CofP who actually wore these types of items was Danny who wore a Burberry hat outside of school. Of course, it is possible that these clothing choices were only made outside the school environment when they were socialising with friends, and the fairly restrictive school dress code did not allow for major deviations from the sanctioned uniform.

It was clear from the ethnography, however, that the social practices assumed to be indicative of ‘ned’ membership in Glasgow could not be used as reliable markers for ‘ned’ identity in Banister Academy. Indeed, the most usual social practice taken to characterise adolescent males as ‘neds’, physical violence and fighting, was often discussed more regularly within the Alternative and Sports CofP. This is perhaps more indicative of the fact that physical violence is a part of life for all adolescent males in Glasgow, rather than being the preserve of a small sub-section of adolescent males in the city (Lawson in progress a).

#### **5.4. The Schoolie Community of Practice**

The Schoolie CofP was made up Gary, Jay, Josh, and Victor, and like the other participants in the ethnography, all had been raised in Glasgow. All four members shared a particular affinity for computer games, music (especially playing and performing), and high academic aptitude. Although sports were occasionally mentioned within the Schoolie CofP, this group was not analogous to

1  
2 Eckert's 'jocks' and instead would be closer to the 'geeks' discussed in Bucholtz (1999). The  
3  
4 members of this CofP shared negative attitudes towards alcohol and drugs, had similar outlooks  
5  
6 with regard to life after Banister Academy (the members had aims to pursue careers in areas such as  
7  
8 military history, jazz music, rugby and music teaching) and could be considered more pro-school  
9  
10 than anti-school. This acceptance of, and identification with, the values and expectations of the  
11  
12 school echoes Willis' group, the ear'oles, a group of pupils who conformed to the standards of  
13  
14 'proper' behaviour expected by the educational system (Willis 1977), and it was clear that the  
15  
16 Schoolie CofP members invested something of their own identities in the formal aims of education  
17  
18 and support of the school institution (cf. Willis 1977: 13). Josh and Victor were particular  
19  
20 substantiations of this, and their support of the school was in marked contrast to the other CofPs  
21  
22 who viewed the school as a source of friction and challenge (particularly the 'Ned' CofP members).  
23  
24 Indeed, the only criticism Victor voiced about Banister Academy was that there was not enough  
25  
26 provision for pupils to pursue Advanced Higher courses (roughly equivalent to A-level  
27  
28 qualifications in England).  
29  
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34  
35 Such an orientation towards conformity was also manifested in the clothing choices made by  
36  
37 the Schoolie CofP members. While members of the Alternative, Sports, and 'Ned' CofPs used  
38  
39 particular modes of dress which incorporated some aspects of the school dress code, they still  
40  
41 augmented these clothing choices with a sense of their own individuality and identity (cf. Moore  
42  
43 2003). Many of the Schoolie CofP members, by way of contrast, were the most observant of the  
44  
45 school dress code. Gary, Josh, and Victor all wore white shirts buttoned to the top, with a school tie,  
46  
47 black trousers, and black shoes, while Josh and Victor usually supplemented this with a school  
48  
49 jumper. Gary was more casual in his dress code (for example, he wore trainers instead of shoes),  
50  
51 possibly due to his broader range of social contacts within Banister Academy (in part facilitated by  
52  
53 his younger sister, who was romantically involved with various members of the Sports and  
54  
55 Alternative CofPs over the three years of the ethnography).  
56  
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Jay was the most peripheral member of the Schoolie CofP and this was partly to do with his lack of academic proficiency in addition to being the most active sporting member of the Schoolie CofP (he played rugby at international youth level). Due to the long length of his hair and his musical tastes, it would have been possible to place Jay within the Alternative CofP, even though he did not socialise with any of the Alternative CofP members. He used musical preferences, however, to distinguish himself from (rather than align with) more dedicated Alternative CofP members like Neil who liked death metal music (an extreme version of heavy metal music).

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1 Jay: It's a really odd group we've got.

(0.6)

RL: Uh-huh.

Jay: We've got one of the we-

5 RL: Odd in what way?

(8)

Jay: You've got me, I'm not the smartest guy.

(0.7)

I'm like- in other words it's like a big ar- superhero-

10 Victor: It's- it's- it's [a mixed group.

Jay: [It's like a super-

It's like a superhero team,

I'm big brute and they're the smart guys.

RL: Right.

(Extract 3. Jay, Josh, and Victor, Schoolie CofP, Year 3)

Jay's recognition of the academic aptitude demonstrated by the other Schoolie CofP members was shared by participants in other CofPs, and it was often the orientation towards the school and the establishment which marked out Schoolie CofP members from the other CofPs in Banister

1  
2 Academy. I will now turn to a discussion of the methods used in the analysis of conversational data  
3  
4 collected from the four CofPs.  
5  
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## 7 8 **6. Data Collection and Analytical Approaches** 9

10  
11 The data presented here were collected over three years (referred to as Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 in the  
12 analysis below). The data totalled approximately 30 hours of audio recordings of dyadic and triadic  
13 conversations with myself present, supplemented by long-term ethnographic observation. Most  
14 conversations were recorded in unused classrooms, although due to the changeable nature of the  
15 school day, I had to be flexible as to where and when the recordings took place. The conversations  
16 were recorded in Year 1 using a Sony DAT recorder (Model TCD-D8), and AKG unidirectional  
17 lavalier microphones, while in Years 2 and 3 the conversations were recorded using an M-Audio  
18 Micro-track Digital Recorder and AKG unidirectional lavalier microphones. All data were recorded  
19 at 44100 Hz and then digitised and down-sampled to 21500 Hz at the Experimental Phonetics  
20 Laboratory at the University of Glasgow using a Kay Computerised Speech Laboratory Machine (in  
21 Year 1) and a conversion tool available in QuickTime Pro (Year 2 and Year 3). The data were  
22 listened to through a pair of Sony stereo headphones (Model MDR-V300) and orthographically  
23 transcribed using the conventions detailed in Atkinson and Heritage (1984), resulting in a corpus of  
24 approximately 250,000 words. Where possible, spellings are regularised to avoid confusion and  
25 maintain consistency across the transcripts, but spellings indicative of a Scottish pronunciation are  
26 retained in order to show that the speakers are from Scotland (see Clark 2008 for an alternative  
27 approach to representing Scottish adolescent speech). Glosses are provided for readers unfamiliar  
28 with Scottish English.  
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### 53 54 55 **6.1. CAT** 56

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58 Since the Scottish phonological system (typically) does not have the phonological distinctions  
59 which American or Southern Standard British English has in the lexical sets of TRAP, BATH, and  
60

1  
2 PALM (e.g. there is usually no distinction between *palm* and *Pam*), Johnston (1997) argues for a  
3  
4 separate lexical set which he calls CAT (see also Stuart-Smith 2004: 58 for a more detailed  
5  
6 discussion of Scottish English and Urban Scots phonology). Macaulay's (1977) analysis of CAT<sup>4</sup>  
7  
8 found that working class speakers tended to have more retracted variants than middle-class  
9  
10 speakers, while Stuart-Smith (2007: 1452) comments that CAT tends to be retracted before  
11  
12 approximants (particularly /r/). Many studies of this variable, however, are based on auditory  
13  
14 criteria, and to date there have been no acoustically informed analyses of CAT in Glaswegian.  
15  
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18  
19 During the ethnography, this vowel was identified as one which varied across the four CofPs  
20  
21 and was consequently chosen for further analysis. CAT, along with BIT (equivalent to the KIT vowel)  
22  
23 and (θ) were also analysed (Lawson 2005, 2009) and all three variables showed robust patterns of  
24  
25 variation associated with CofP membership (Lawson in progress b).  
26  
27

## 28 29 **6.2. The Vocalic Analysis**

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32  
33 The acoustic analysis was conducted using PRAAT version 5.0.01<sup>5</sup>. For each token, the start and end-  
34  
35 point were taken at the beginning and end of the vowel periodicity at the closest zero crossings and  
36  
37 F<sub>1</sub>, F<sub>2</sub> and F<sub>3</sub> measurements were taken from the mid-point of the vowel.  
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40  
41 For the analysis in Year 1, approximately 100 stressed, monophthongal tokens were  
42  
43 measured per speaker. In Years 2 and 3, however, every stressed, monophthongal token of CAT was  
44  
45 measured, totalling 1762 tokens in Year 2 and 3750 tokens in Year 3. Due to the changing  
46  
47 membership of each of the CofPs (see section 5), each year of analysis was conducted  
48  
49 independently of one another.  
50

51  
52 F<sub>1</sub>, F<sub>2</sub>, and F<sub>3</sub> frequencies were extracted to a log-file and time-stamped for each individual  
53  
54 token. Formant measurements were first taken using automatic formant tracking in PRAAT, obtained  
55  
56 from Linear Predictive Coding (LPC, Di Paulo, Yaeger-Dror and Wassink 2011: 94). In cases  
57  
58 where the LPC returned values which were incongruent with the spectrogram, visual spectra checks  
59  
60 were made manually by taking a Fast Fourier Transform 'spectral slice' (FFT, see Johnson 2003: 33

1  
2 – 37) at the mid-point of the vowel (Di Paulo, Yaeger-Dror and Wassink 2011: 96). Tokens were  
3  
4 then coded for a range of social and linguistic factors (see Lawson 2009 for a full list of these  
5  
6 factors). Due to the physiological differences between the speakers in Banister Academy, the data  
7  
8 were normalised using the Bark Difference Method (Syrdal and Gopal 1986; see also Adank, Smits  
9  
10 and van Hout 2004 for a critique of various normalisation methods), available online at the North  
11  
12 Carolina Sociolinguistic Archive and Analysis Project<sup>6</sup>. The normalised values of  $Z_3 - Z_1$  and  $Z_3 - Z_2$   
13  
14 (included in Figures 1 - 6) refer to  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  respectively.  
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## 19 **7. Results of the Variable Analysis**

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23 Having outlined the speakers and indicative social practices of each CofP, I now turn to the results  
24  
25 of the linguistic analysis. Where appropriate, the results of multiple linear regression analysis and  
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27 two-way ANOVA tests are reported.  
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40 [Figure 1 about here]  
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54 Figure 1 shows the distribution of the vowels in the CAT, BET and COT lexical sets  
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56 (equivalent to TRAP/BATH/PALM, DRESS and LOT/THOUGHT, Johnston 1997. See also Stuart-Smith  
57  
58 2004). Measurements of the BET and COT sets were taken from across all three years of the collected  
59  
60 data set from a subset of speakers in each CofP. Measurements for the Alternative and Sports CofP



1  
2 were taken from the Year 1 data, while measurements for the ‘Ned’ and Schoolie CofPs were taken  
3  
4 from Year 2 and Year 3 respectively. Consequently, Figure 1 is primarily intended as a guide of the  
5  
6 vowel space of the participants and a general indication of where the CAT vowel is located.  
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16 [Figure 2 about here]  
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26 Figure 2 shows a clear effect of following phonetic environment on realisations of CAT, such  
27  
28 that tokens with a following /r/ are most retracted and tokens with a following nasal are most  
29  
30 fronted. This pattern was found across all three years of analysis of CAT in the Banister Academy  
31  
32 data, suggesting a robust effect of following phonetic environment in realisations of this particular  
33  
34 vocalic variable.  
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### 38 **7.1. Results of the Analysis of CAT in Year 1**

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51 [Figure 3 about here]  
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1  
2 In the Year 1 data (Figure 3), there appears to be no clear separation between the speakers  
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4 on either the vertical ( $F_1$ ) axis or the horizontal ( $F_2$ ) axis, although two speakers (Jack and Nathan)  
5  
6 stand out due to their close and retracted productions respectively. For the remaining four speakers,  
7  
8 their mean values of CAT suggest limited separation on both normalised  $F_1$  and  $F_2$ .  
9  
10

11 The regression analysis confirmed a significant effect of following phonetic environment on  
12  
13 both normalised  $F_1$  and  $F_2$ . The adjusted r-squared values, however, suggested that the model for  
14  
15 normalised  $F_2$  was more predictive than the model for normalised  $F_1$  (adjusted r-squared = 0.290  
16  
17 and 0.058 respectively). Games-Howell post-hoc tests reported a statistically significant difference  
18  
19 between the Alternative and Sports CofP for normalised  $F_2$  ( $p = 0.005$ ), although this is likely due to  
20  
21 Jack and Nathan skewing the result.  
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## 27 **7.2. Results of the Analysis of CAT in Year 2**

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39 [Figure 4 about here]  
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50 The main finding for CAT in Year 2 is that the separation between the Alternative and the  
51  
52 Sports CofPs observed in Year 1 has further reduced (Figure 4), with both sets of speakers now  
53  
54 showing relatively similar mean values in terms of vowel height and retraction (spread values,  
55  
56 however, show slightly more separation than the means). With the inclusion of the 'Ned' CofP, we  
57  
58 see that this set of speakers has more fronted and lowered realisations compared to both the  
59  
60 Alternative and Sports CofPs. The regression analysis of the Year 2 data confirmed that the

1  
2 Alternative CofP and Sports CofP used closer and retracted vowels, with the 'Ned' CofP  
3  
4 correspondingly using a more open and fronted vowel.  
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### 7 8 **7.3. Results of the Analysis of CAT in Year 3** 9

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21 [Figure 5 about here]  
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31 As the number of speakers included in the analysis increases, we begin to see a clearer picture of  
32  
33 variation emerging in the data. The main feature of CAT in Year 3 is a rough division in vowel  
34  
35 height between the Schoolie and the 'Ned' CofP speakers (Figure 5), with Ben, Max and Noah  
36  
37 ('Ned' CofP) lower than each of the Schoolie CofP speakers. The Alternative and Sports CofP  
38  
39 speakers tend to be reasonably similar to each other, confirming past analyses of CAT in Year 1 and  
40  
41  
42 Year 2.  
43  
44

45 The regression analysis confirmed that the 'Ned' CofP tend to used open and fronted  
46  
47 realisations (similar to the results of the Year 2 data), while speakers in the Schoolie CofP produce  
48  
49 more raised vowels. ANOVA tests on normalised  $F_1$  reported a significant interaction between CofP  
50  
51 membership and following phonetic environment, suggesting that the effect of CofP membership is  
52  
53 more likely before approximants and nasals than in other environments. Moreover, Games-Howell  
54  
55 post-hoc tests showed a significant difference between all four CofP on normalised  $F_1$ . ANOVA tests  
56  
57 on normalised  $F_2$  showed a significant effect of CofP and following phonetic environment and a  
58  
59 significant interaction was found between these two factors, with the effect of CofP membership on  
60

1  
2 normalised F<sub>2</sub> more likely before voiced obstruents and approximants, particularly among the  
3  
4 Alternative and Schoolie CofPs. Games-Howell post-hoc tests showed a significant difference  
5  
6 between the retracted Alternative/Sports/Schoolie CofP and the fronted ‘Ned’ CofP ( $p = 0.000$ ), but  
7  
8 not between the Alternative and Schoolie CofPs ( $p = 0.989$ ).  
9  
10

## 11 12 **8. Constructions of Social Identity and Social Meaning in Glasgow**

13  
14  
15  
16 The results described above show us that there exist differences in patterns of CAT variation across  
17  
18 the four CofPs in Banister Academy, with the main difference being between the ‘Ned’ and the  
19  
20 Schoolie CofPs, particularly on the F<sub>1</sub> axis (although Labov (2001: 167) argues for the social pre-  
21  
22 eminence of the second formant, it appears that in Glasgow, both F<sub>1</sub> and F<sub>2</sub> are important in relation  
23  
24 to CofP membership, at least for the CAT vowel). As Eckert (2002) comments, social meaning is  
25  
26 derived through linguistic variables being associated with shared resources, so it would seem that  
27  
28 one possible interpretation of these results is that this variable is a potential resource for the  
29  
30 construction of identity. But how might this be adequately explained by appealing to the data?  
31  
32  
33

34  
35 Clark (2008: 267) argues that one way to determine the social meaning of a variable is to  
36  
37 ask speakers, and with variables above the level of consciousness (Labov 1994), this is certainly  
38  
39 possible. Clark’s study of [□□ ~ □] alternation (Scottish Standard English *house* vs. Scots *hoose*)  
40  
41 demonstrates the high level of social salience which exists in a variable with at least two discrete  
42  
43 realisations, with [□] variants associated with ‘slang’ and/or Scots and [□□] variants associated  
44  
45 with ‘properness’ and higher social classes. Indeed, research in Glasgow which has shown how  
46  
47 working-class adolescent speakers use specific linguistic resources to construct identities which are  
48  
49 both anti-middle-class and anti-establishment (Stuart-Smith, Timmins, and Tweedie 2007: 251) pay  
50  
51 particular attention on dichotomous variants, including [l□x ~ l□k] as alternative pronunciations of  
52  
53 *loch* (Scottish for ‘lake’) and [h□ŋk ~ f□ŋk] as alternative pronunciations of *think* (transcriptions  
54  
55 on the left indicate a traditional Scottish pronunciation while transcriptions on the right indicate an  
56  
57 innovative Scottish, and possibly supralocal, pronunciation). The use of such innovative  
58  
59  
60

1  
2 pronunciations place working-class adolescent speakers in direct opposition to notions of propriety  
3  
4 and ‘poshness’, positioning themselves within a class-based distinction. But perhaps more  
5  
6 important, these variables are used to identify themselves as local to Glasgow (Stuart-Smith,  
7  
8 Timmins and Tweedie 2007: 255), distinguishing themselves from both working-class adults and  
9  
10 the middle-classes.  
11  
12

13  
14 With vocalic variables like CAT, however, discrete variants are more difficult to identify, and  
15  
16 consequently, speakers’ perception of it as having social meaning is more difficult to access. But  
17  
18 through close analysis of the data, it is possible to find instances where speakers use performative  
19  
20 speech to uncover particular kinds of social meaning.  
21  
22

23  
24 As outlined above, one of the most common ways in which adolescents in Glasgow imitate  
25  
26 ‘neds’ is through the use of a collection of linguistic features which are broadly associated with that  
27  
28 particular social group. In one of the extracts introduced earlier in the article we can see an example  
29  
30 of how such ‘ned speak’ is used in practice.  
31  
32

- 33  
34 **1** Andrew: And the way they talk,  
35  
36 and their stupid swagger.  
37  
38 Neil: Aye, the swagger.  
39  
40 Andrew: ((laughs))  
41  
42  
43 **5** And the way they talk.  
44  
45 ((uses ‘ned’ speak’))  
46  
47 ‘Aw what man?  
48  
49 Aw, what’s up wi you man?  
50  
51 ((laughs))  
52  
53  
54  
55 **10** That’s pure smashing man!  
56  
57 I’ll smash you!’  
58  
59

60 (Extract 4. Andrew, Jack, and Neil, Alternative CofP, Year 1)

1  
2 In this extract, Andrew (Alternative CofP) comments that one way through which ‘neds’ can  
3 be identified is their speech. More important, however, is the fact that Andrew also offers his own  
4 imitation of ‘ned speak’ in lines 7 - 10. Andrew’s performance here (Chun 2005: 41) is a cultural  
5 construction understood by all the members of the conversation and prefigures a similar  
6 performance by Neil later in the conversation. While the acoustic analysis demonstrates that there  
7 exist differences between the CofPs, it is possible to compare the acoustic results of Andrew’s ‘ned  
8 speak’ with his usual production of CAT (Figure 6).

18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26 [Figure 6 about here]  
27  
28  
29  
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31  
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36

37 Figure 6 shows that Andrew’s performative tokens are lowered and slightly more fronted  
38 than his non-performative tokens (although it is important to note that the difference between these  
39 two types of tokens is also likely to be related to particular voice qualities, such as nasalisation,  
40 present in the performative tokens) suggesting that he commands two different styles here. The  
41 performative style produced by Andrew is one which is socially meaningful in that his movement  
42 towards this part of the vowel space evokes or is intended to relate to aspects of a ‘ned’ identity.  
43 While it might be argued that the results in Figure 6 are idiosyncratic to Andrew’s speech, this kind  
44 of speech style is common in the speech of Glaswegian adolescents who imitate such a ‘ned’  
45 identity.

46 The concept of negative identity practices (i.e. social practices which distance speakers from  
47 a rejected identity, Bucholtz 1999: 211) is central here. Throughout the ethnographic fieldwork,  
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49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
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60

1  
2 Andrew and members from other CofPs actively distanced themselves from the identity of ‘ned’ not  
3  
4 only through their clothing, their orientation towards the school, and their drinking and smoking  
5  
6 habits (among other social practices), but also through their linguistic variation. Andrew (and others  
7  
8 within Banister Academy) construct a particular interpersonal stance (Kiesling 2005: 21 - 22)  
9  
10 towards the ‘ned’ identity. The deployment of a certain style (related to negative identity practices)  
11  
12 manifests itself as a stance which is actively opposed to the ‘ned’ identity. While this discussion  
13  
14 here has centred on Andrew, such performances were common throughout Banister Academy and  
15  
16 Glasgow more generally, and the active distancing from a ‘ned’ identity was undertaken by many  
17  
18 adolescent males in Banister Academy, as Mark explicitly states:  
19  
20  
21  
22

23  
24           1       Mark:           I’d be worried if I was gettin called a ned.  
25

26                    RL:            Would you, aye?  
27

28                    Mark:            Aye.  
29  
30

31                    (Extract 5. Mark, Sports CofP, Year 1)  
32  
33

### 34 35 **9. Social Extremes** 36

37  
38 Although the members of the Alternative and Sports CofPs occupy a social ‘middle ground’ in  
39  
40 Banister Academy (cf. Moore 2003: 221: 226), it is the Schoolie and the ‘Ned’ CofPs who occupy  
41  
42 the social extremities of Banister Academy. In many ways, these two CofPs operate as the most  
43  
44 divisive agents of social practice. The Schoolie CofP is everything the ‘Ned’ CofP is not.  
45  
46

47  
48 Importantly, members from each CofP typically do not participate in social practices emblematic of  
49  
50 the other (for example, Schoolie CofP members would not smoke). The differences between the  
51  
52 Schoolie and ‘Ned’ CofPs can be found on many different levels, but perhaps the feature which is  
53  
54 most directly relatable to the findings reported by Eckert (2000), Moore (2003), and Mendoza-  
55  
56 Denton (2008) is the level of engagement with the school displayed in the Schoolie and the ‘Ned’  
57  
58 CofP respectively.  
59  
60

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60
- 1 RL: Have youse ever-  
Have you ever enjoyed school?  
(0.7)  
Or is it just always-=
- 5 Noah: =Aye, when I was in primary school.  
RL: Uh-huh.  
Noah: When I was in first year,  
but I've hated it fae (*from*) second year upwards.  
RL: So what happened tae make you hate it?
- 10 (0.5)  
Noah: Just comin tae school.  
(0.9)  
Just,  
(1.0)
- 15 comin tae school.  
I dinnae (*didn't*)-  
I was n- debatin no comin this mornin.  
RL: Right.

(Extract 6. Noah, 'Ned' CofP, Year 3)

Here, Noah states that he dislikes coming to school and his oppositional acts towards institutional authority accord well with similar findings by Willis (1977: 12) who suggests that 'such [opposition] is an almost ritualistic part of the daily fabric of life for the [lads]'. Indeed, conversations with the 'Ned' CofP showed that oppositional stances towards the school were played out in numerous ways, both big and small. These ranged from the theft of school stationery to verbal insults directed towards teachers. The Schoolie CofP, however, not only accepted the authority of the teachers (and by extension the school), but actively embraced it.



- 1  
2           1       RL:           How- how's this school then for anyone-  
3  
4                                   the kind of person that you are?  
5  
6                                   (5.0)  
7  
8                                   Josh:           Good, cause they (*the teachers*) push you.  
9  
10           5       RL:           Mhmmm.  
11  
12                                  Josh:           They let you do-  
13  
14                                   (0.8)  
15  
16                                  Well, I was allowed to do my Standard Grade (*exam at 16*)  
17  
18                                  a year early and all that kind of stuff.  
19  
20  
21  
22

23                   (Extract 7. Josh, Schoolie CofP, Year 3)

24  
25  
26  
27           Not only does Josh allow the teachers to push him on to new scholastic heights, he also  
28  
29           actively seeks out opportunities which allow him to do this. This is in stark opposition to the  
30  
31           position held by the 'Ned' CofP, who take the view that any teacher interference in their everyday  
32  
33           activity is a limitation on their relative independence and personal autonomy.  
34  
35

36           This differentiation of social practice is carried over into a differentiation of linguistic  
37  
38           practice. Indeed, the main difference in the analysis of CAT is between the 'Ned' CofP (fronted and  
39  
40           lowered CAT) and the Schoolie CofP (raised CAT). Although 'ned' and 'schoolie' are not directly  
41  
42           comparable to 'working-class' and 'middle-class', this finding is similar to the results discussed in  
43  
44           Stuart-Smith (1999b), who suggests that middle-class speakers have more raised realisations than  
45  
46           working-class speakers. But if we take a more general view of linguistic practice as a constituent  
47  
48           part of social identity, then it is perhaps understandable that those speakers who have the most  
49  
50           dissimilar linguistic practices should also be those who have the most dissimilar social practices (cf.  
51  
52           Eckert's 'jocks' and 'burnouts').  
53  
54  
55  
56

57           A case can be made that it is within the Schoolie CofP that being identified with a 'ned'  
58  
59           identity carries the largest social cost. With their orientation towards the school and the  
60  
          establishment, members of the Schoolie CofP are preparing to enter the world of work (especially

1  
2 in the domain of white-collar work, as shown by the kinds of jobs the Schoolie CofP members  
3  
4 aimed to join). By utilising a pattern of variation which is dramatically different from that of the  
5  
6 ‘Ned’ CofP, one possible interpretation is that the Schoolie CofPs see it as a risk to their potential  
7  
8 advancement if they sound like a ‘ned’ (indeed, such a feeling was shared by many people in  
9  
10 Banister Academy). Similarly, members of the ‘Ned’ CofP would risk much in the way of their own  
11  
12 personal standing within their own peer-group (and broader sub-cultural groups) if they spoke like  
13  
14 members of the Schoolie CofP. Such speakers were deemed to be unmanly and this view goes  
15  
16 against the accepted hegemonic masculinity within the ‘Ned’ CofP (see Lawson in progress a).  
17  
18  
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21

## 22 **10. Summary and Conclusions**

23  
24

25  
26 The aim of this article has been to offer a sociolinguistic account of adolescent male language use in  
27  
28 Glasgow using ethnographic methodology to uncover locally meaningful social categories, to  
29  
30 investigate the quantitative linguistic differences within these groups, and to attempt to map out  
31  
32 some of the processes underpinning the fine-grained social work language does among adolescent  
33  
34 males in Glasgow. The research presented here represents one of the few sociolinguistic studies to  
35  
36 use the CofP framework in an analysis of adolescent male speech, as well as one of the first  
37  
38 ethnographically informed sociolinguistic studies of Glaswegian. Future work intends to focus on  
39  
40 how speakers are identified by listeners from outside Banister Academy in order to determine  
41  
42 whether the acoustic differences between the four CofPs (especially between the ‘Ned’ and  
43  
44 Schoolie CofPs) are salient and recognisable, although it would undoubtedly be the case that the  
45  
46 listeners would attend to a range of linguistic features over and above the CAT vowel.  
47  
48  
49

50  
51 While the results support the well-established finding that speakers use linguistic variation  
52  
53 and social practices as a means to construct their social identities, I have tried to show the specific  
54  
55 patterns of variation used by adolescent males in Glasgow, and in particular, how speakers exploit a  
56  
57 linguistic stereotype in order to reify their own identities while explicitly distancing themselves  
58  
59 from stigmatised groups. The analysis demonstrates that not only do adolescent speakers have  
60

certain vocalic realisations which align with CofP membership, but also that productions of ‘ned speak’ are socially important markers of identity through which speakers position themselves as ‘not a ned’. Given the status of ‘neds’ in Glasgow and the potential societal repercussions (real or imagined) which might result in identification with such a group, processes of differentiation are clearly important among Glaswegian adolescent males. This article offers one step towards better understanding these processes.

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## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> Figures taken from *City Ward Fact-sheet 2007*, available online at [www.glasgow.gov](http://www.glasgow.gov)

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘ned’ is generally reserved for Scotland, and Glasgow particularly, while ‘chav’ is more common in England (Hayward and Yar 2006).

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that although the lexical set of CAT covers the lexical sets of TRAP/BATH/PALM (Wells 1982), Macaulay (1977) only analysed those tokens from the TRAP set, referring to this variable as (a).

<sup>5</sup> Due to the regular updates of this program, the version detailed here may not be the most current version.

<sup>6</sup> The normalisation tools are available at the NCSLAAP website: <http://ncslaap.lib.ncsu.edu/tools/norm/>

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## APPENDIX

### *Transcription conventions*

41	[[	Simultaneous utterances
42	[	Overlapping speech which does not start simultaneously
43	=	Contiguous utterance
44	(gloss)	Gloss of lexical item
45	(( ))	Paralinguistic item
46	(number)	Silences timed to tenth of a second
47	(.)	Pause less than 0.2 seconds
48	-	Speech stops abruptly
49	:	Sound is prolonged

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**Tables**

Table 1. Overview of the sample in Banister Academy

	<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Sports</b>	<b>'Ned'</b>	<b>Schoolie</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Andrew	Mark	-	-
	Jack	Nathan	-	-
	Neil	Phil	-	-
<b>Year 2</b>	Kevin	Mark	Danny	-
	Peter	Nathan	Max	-
	Matthew	Phil	Noah	-
<b>Year 3</b>	Ray	John	Ben	Gary
	Peter	Mark	Max	Jay
	Neil	Nathan	Noah	Josh
	-	Trevor	Rick	Victor

Figures

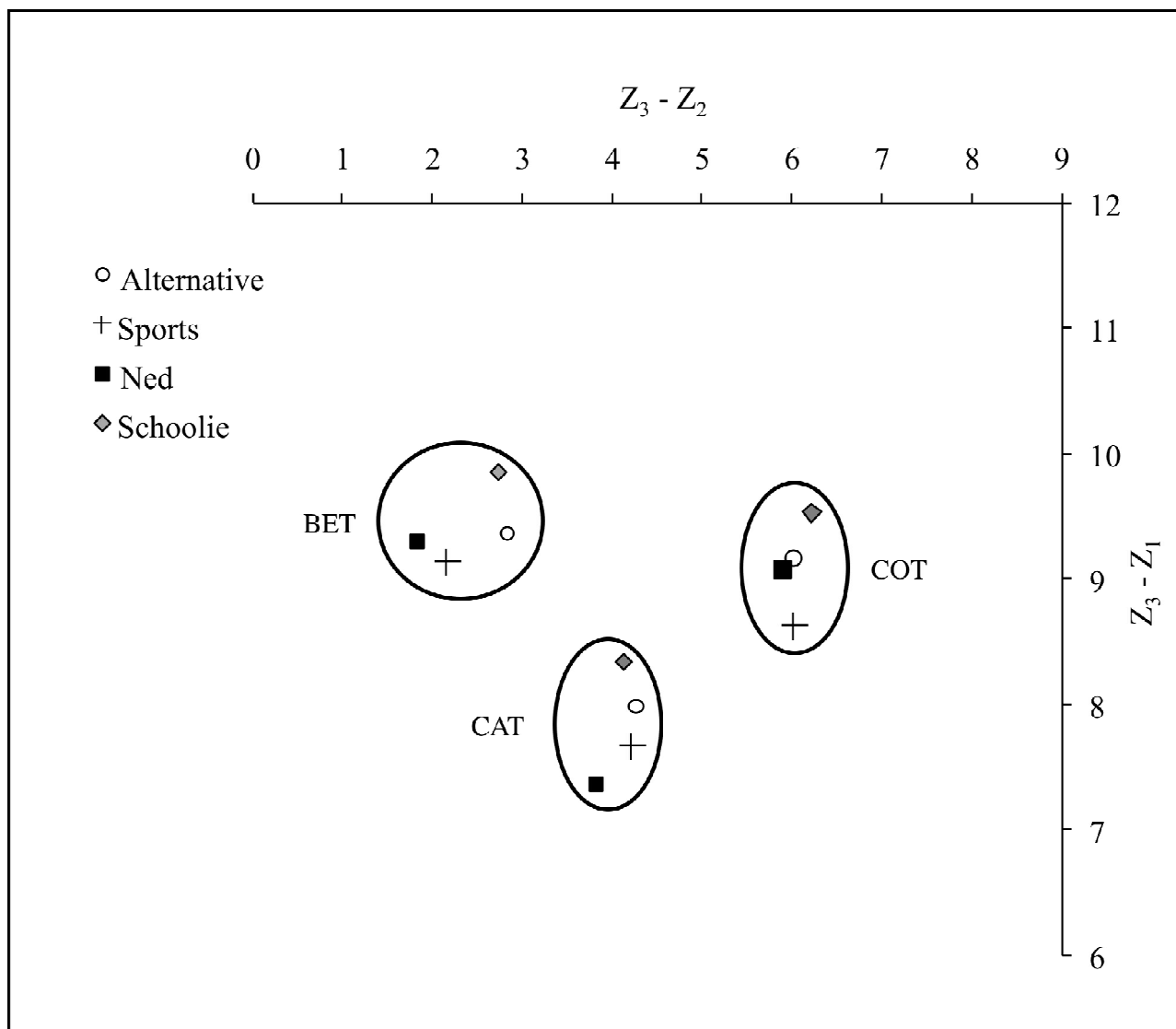


Figure 1. Distribution of three Glaswegian vowels - CAT, BET, COT



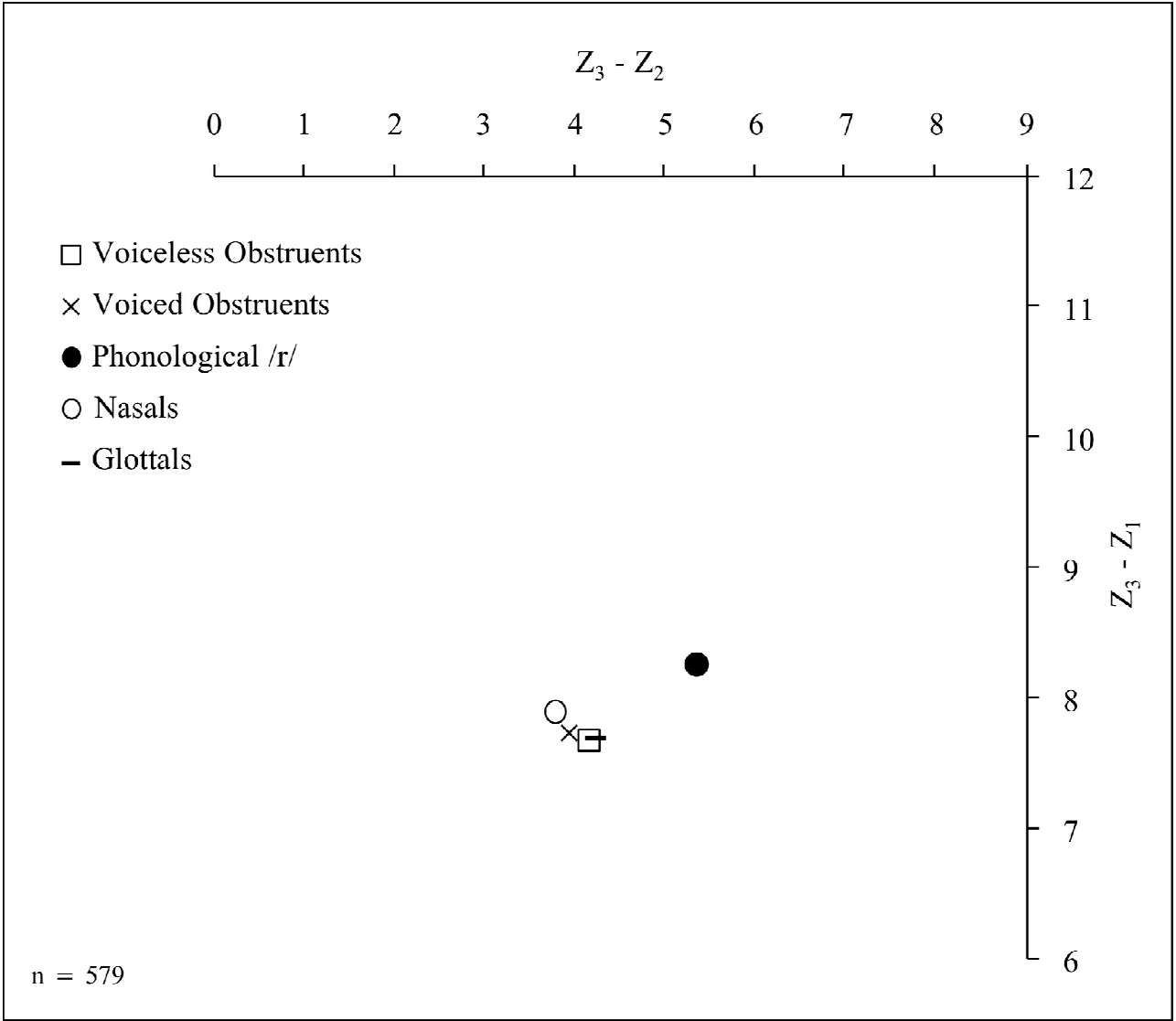
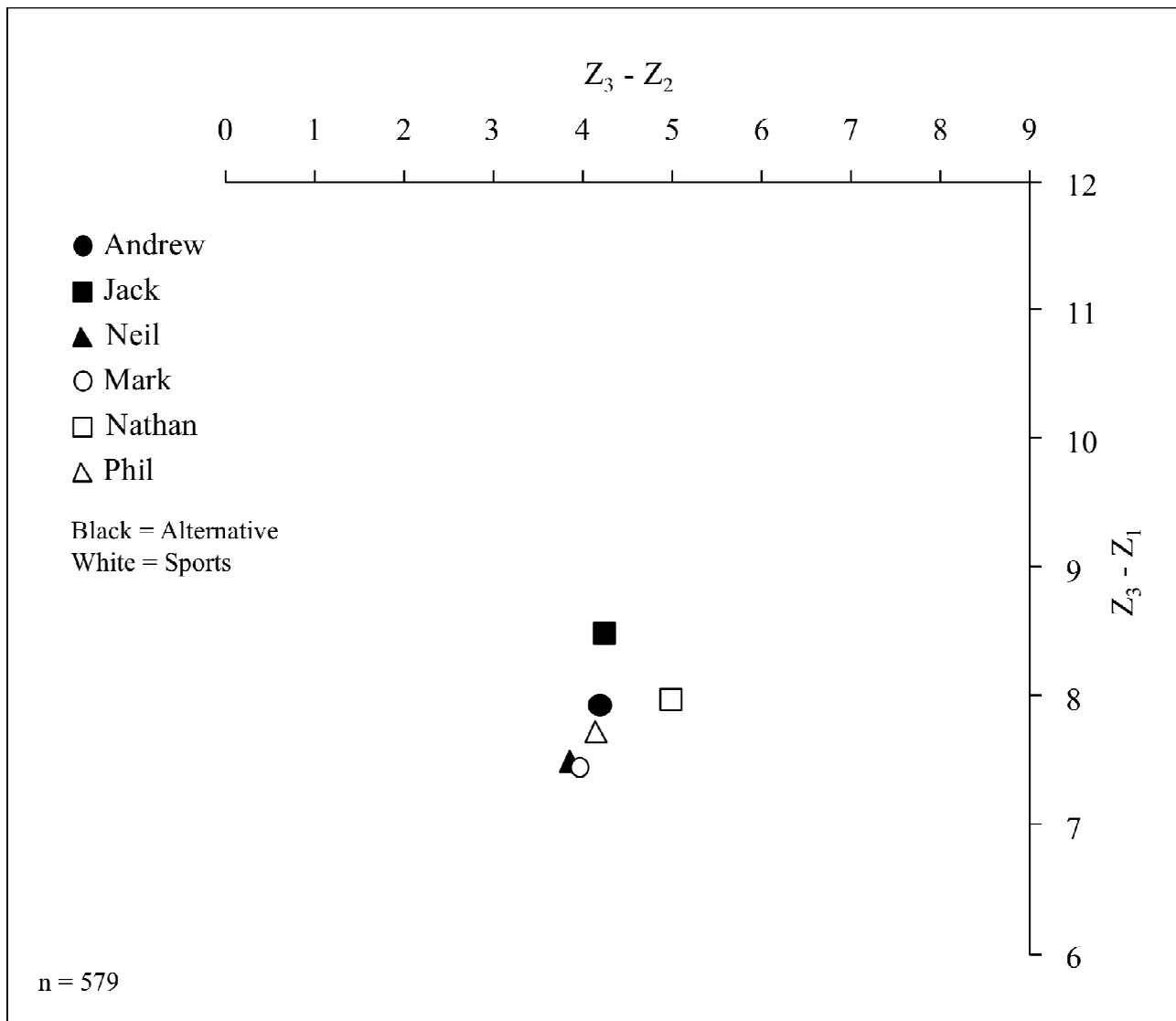


Figure 2. Mean of CAT tokens by following phonetic environment in Year 1



38 Figure 3. Mean CAT  $Z_3 - Z_1 / Z_3 - Z_2$  values across speakers in Year 1  
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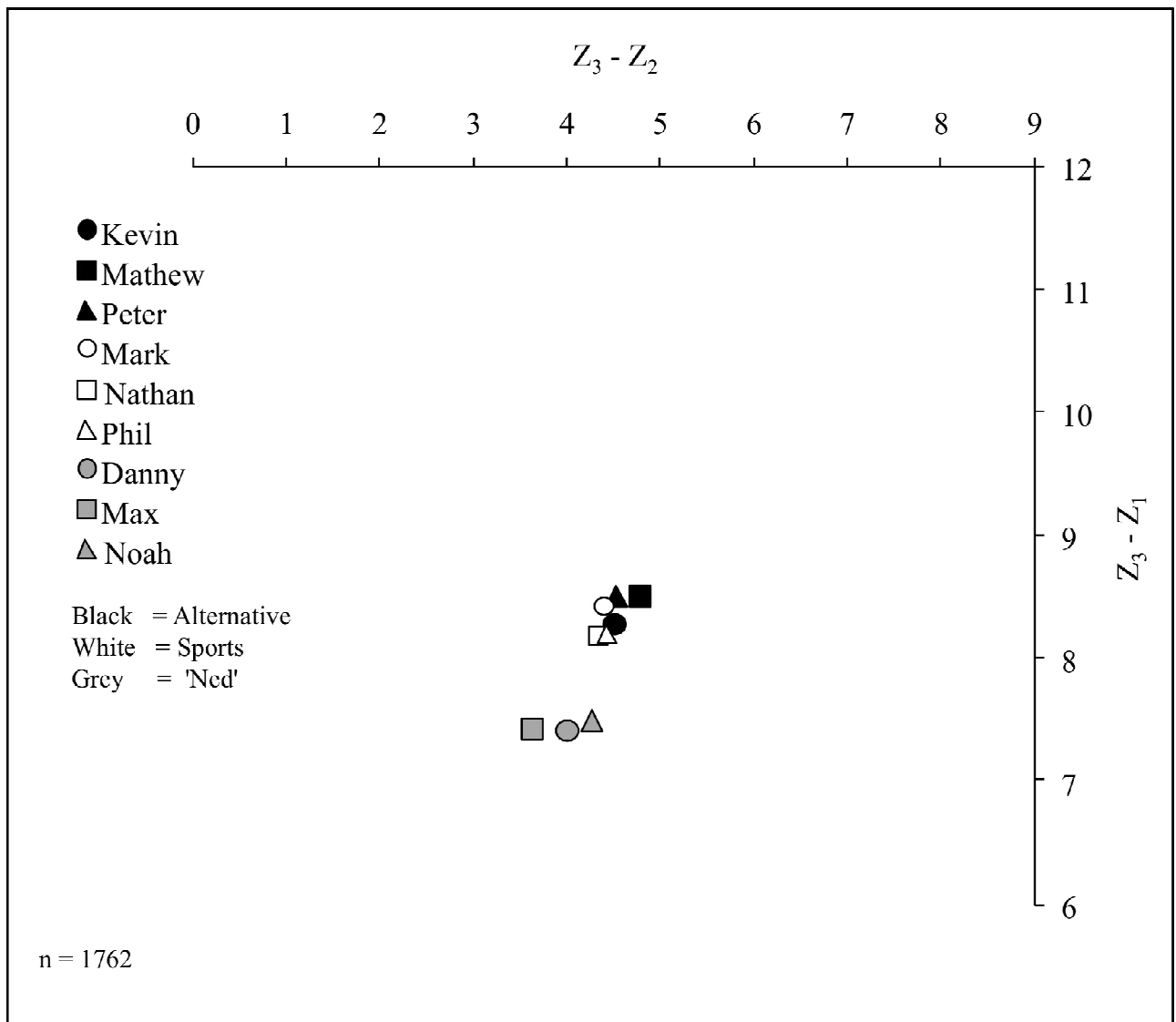


Figure 4. Mean CAT  $Z_3 - Z_1 / Z_3 - Z_2$  values across speakers in Year 2

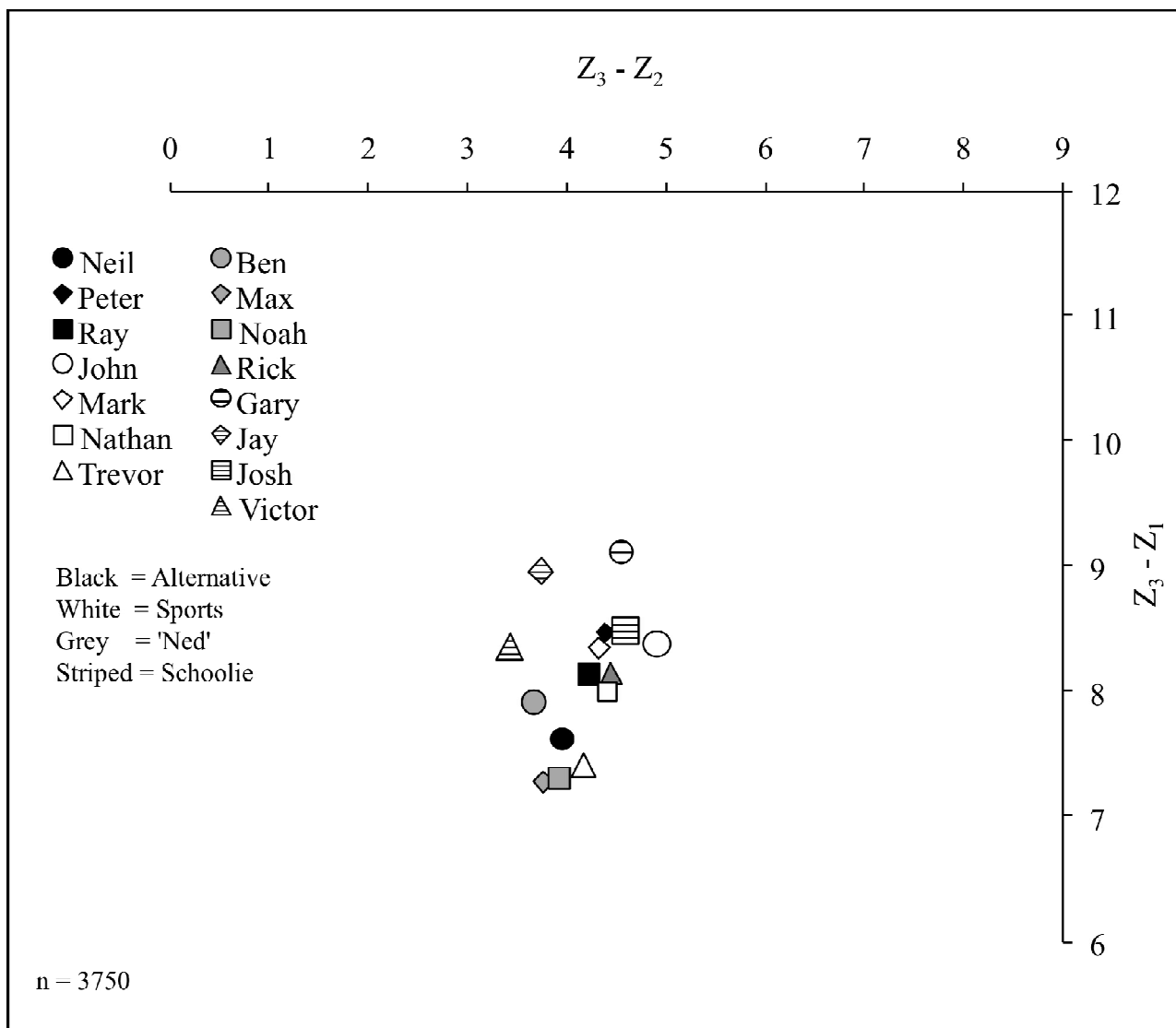
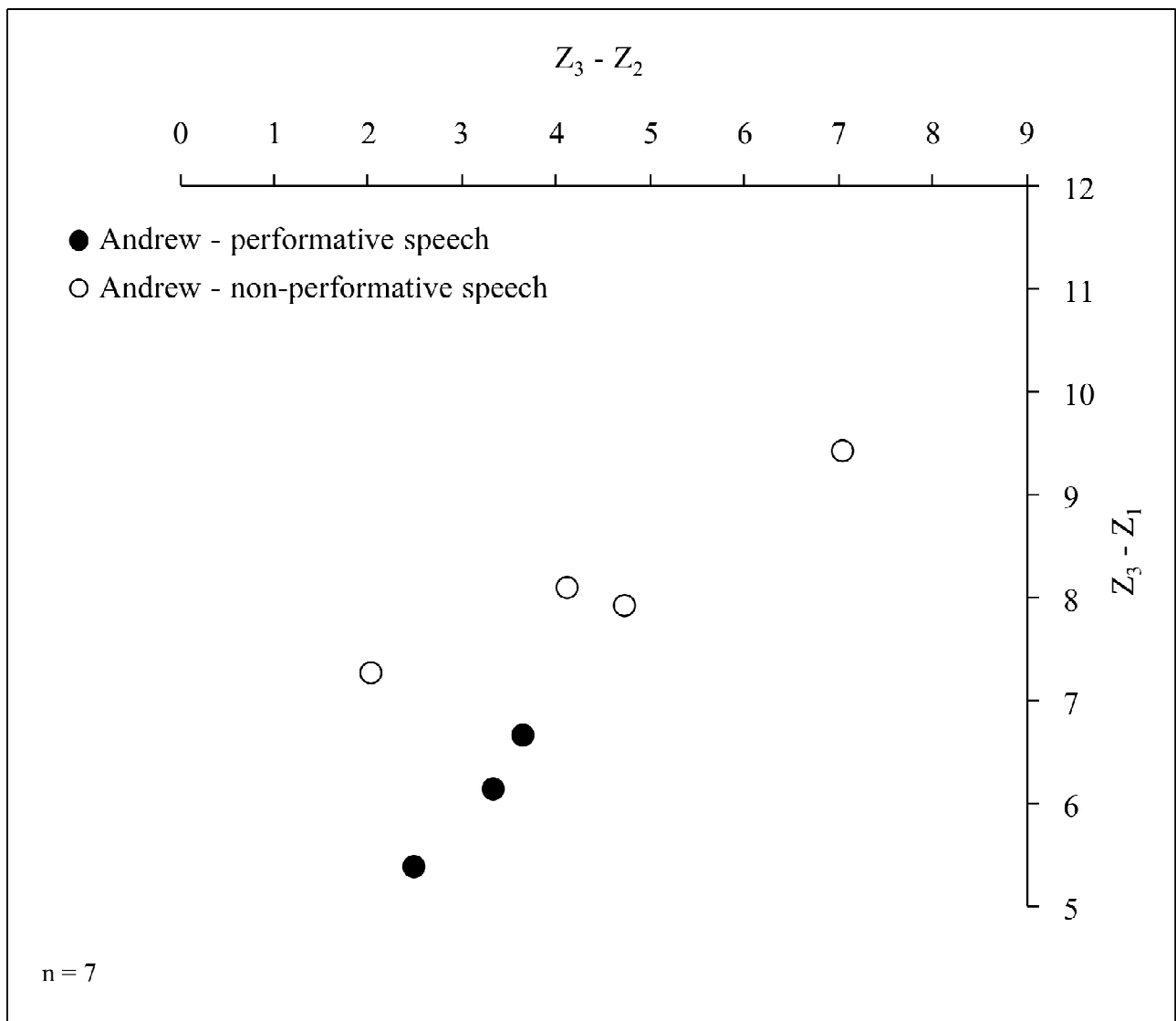


Figure 5. Mean CAT  $Z_3 - Z_1 / Z_3 - Z_2$  values across speakers in Year 3



38 Figure 6. Comparison of CAT values for tokens of *man*

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