‘Don’t even [θ/f/h]ink aboot it’: An ethnographic investigation of social meaning, social identity and (θ) variation in Glasgow

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As a relatively new phenomenon in the phonology of Scottish English, TH-fronting has surprised sociolinguists by its rapid spread in the urban heartlands of Scotland. While attempts have been made to understand and model the influence of lexical effects, media effects and frequency effects, far less understood is the role of social identity. Using data collected as part of an ethnographic study of a high school in the south side of Glasgow, Scotland, this article addresses this gap in the literature by considering how TH-fronting is patterned across three all-male, working-class, adolescent Communities of Practice, and how this innovative variant is integrated within a system of the more established variants [θ] and [h]. Drawing on recent work on linguistic variation and social meaning, the article also explores some of the social meanings of (θ), particularly those variants which previous research has reported as being associated with ‘toughness’, and suggests how these meanings are utilised in speakers’ construction of social identity.

Keywords: Glaswegian, sociophonetics, (θ), adolescent male language use, linguistic variation, Community of Practice, ethnography

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**1. Introduction**

The increase in TH-fronting\(^2\) in Scotland (where /θ/ is realised as [f] in words like *think* and *through*, Wells 1982: 328), has been one of the major surprises in recent sociolinguistic research on Scottish speech communities for a number of reasons. First, TH-fronting is not a traditional phonetic feature in Scottish English, especially in word-initial position, where speakers have the choice of the standard variant [θ] or, in certain classes of words, the non-standard variant [h]. Second, the leaders of TH-fronting appear to be non-mobile working-class adolescents rather than middle-class, loosely-tied, mobile speakers (cf. Milroy 1987). Third, although TH-fronting is a typical feature of London English (Wells 1982; for a general discussion of TH-fronting in the UK see Foulkes and Docherty 1999: 17; Kerswill 2003), the widespread adoption of the non-standard variant [f] by working-class speakers in Scotland is a relatively recent trend, contravening well-established models about how linguistic change is propagated (cf. the geographical diffusion model, Kerswill 2003: 239 – 240 and the dialect contact model, Robinson 2005: 189; Stuart-Smith and Timmins 2006: 171).

The increase in TH-fronting in Scotland has consequently raised a number of questions about how and why it is spreading, and in particular, why a feature strongly associated with London varieties of English is being used by speakers who have little to no contact with this variety. Stuart-Smith and Timmins (2010) argue that the influence of the media, including television programmes such as *EastEnders* (a London based soap drama), is one possible reason for the increase of TH-fronting in Scotland (and Glasgow specifically), while other work on TH-fronting in Scotland has focused on understanding the influence of lexical category (Stuart-Smith and Timmins 2006), lexical frequency (Clark and Trousdale 2009), dialect contact (Brato 2012) and phonological structure (Schleef and Ramsammy 2013). But while much has been written on media effects, lexical effects and frequency effects, very little has been said about the influence of social identity on a speaker’s pattern of variation. This is surprising given the robust research literature which shows that a speaker’s social identity is often one of the key predictors of linguistic variation (Eckert 2000; Moore 2003; Lawson 2011, although see Trudgill 2001, 2008 for a critique of the centrality of identity in treatments of sociolinguistic variation).

Answering the call made by Stuart-Smith and Timmins (2010: 53) for a more ethnographic approach in order to understand the intersection of identity categories and TH-fronting in Glasgow, this article addresses this gap by offering an ethnographically-informed account of linguistic variation among three adolescent, all-male, working-class Communities of Practice in the south side of Glasgow. Using data collected over the course of a long-term study in a high school named Banister Academy\(^3\), I outline how the current picture of (θ) in Glasgow can be augmented by fine-grained ethnographic description which uncovers locally-grounded social distinctions. As such, this article contributes to our understanding of how variants of (θ) are distributed across an apparently homogenous group of speakers, furthering our knowledge of the

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\(^2\) Although Wells (1982: 328) uses the term ‘TH-fronting’ to refer to ‘the replacement of the dental fricatives [θ, ð] with the labiodentals [f ] and [v] respectively’ (Wells 1982: 328), I follow Stuart-Smith and Timmins (2006) who use the term to refer only to the replacement of the voiceless dental fricative [θ] with the voiceless labio-dental fricative [f]. The term ‘DI-fronting’ is reserved for the replacement of [v] for [ð] and is not discussed here.

\(^3\) All names given in the fieldwork (school name, participants, etc) are pseudonyms.
Social meaning, social identity and (θ) variation in Glasgow.

In the next section of the article, I discuss the background of (θ) and TH-fronting in Scotland before moving on in section 3 to consider the relationship between linguistic variation and social meaning. In section 4, I discuss the relevance of the Community of Practice model within ethnographic sociolinguistics, followed by an outline of the Communities of Practice encountered in Banister Academy in section 5. In section 6, I discuss the methodology used in the study, while section 7 presents the results of the quantitative analysis of (θ). Section 8 brings together the qualitative and quantitative material and discusses how variants of (θ) are used in the construction of social identity, and particularly the relationship between non-standard variants and specific conceptualisations of masculinity.

2. (θ) and TH-fronting in Scotland

Traditionally, Glaswegian (and other varieties of Scottish English more generally) has two main variants of the variable (θ): the standard dental fricative variant [θ] and the local, non-standard glottal fricative variant [h]. In terms of linguistic constraints, [h] is principally found in word-initial position (although it can also be used in word-medial position, Clark and Trousdale 2009: 41; Lawson 2009: 102), and is restricted to a particular subset of high-frequency lexemes, namely think and thing and their associated lexical derivatives (such as thinking, thinks, things etc, Clark and Trousdale 2009: 39). [θ], on the other hand, has no such lexical restrictions. These variants also have a clear class distribution such that [θ] is primarily used by middle-class speakers (Stuart-Smith and Timmins 2006) while [h] is primarily used by working-class speakers.

Although [θ] and [h] are well-established in Glasgow, however, a new variant [f] appears to have gained considerable ground over the last 20 years. Indeed, the rapid spread of [f] has, as mentioned above, been a central focus in recent phonological and sociolinguistic research in Scotland.

The first formal mention of TH-fronting in Glasgow can be found in Macafee (1983: 34, fn. 26), who notes that even though the variant is not evidenced in her dataset, there is some anecdotal evidence that young speakers occasionally use the ‘Cockney form’ [f]. Stuart-Smith, Timmins and Tweedie (2007: 254) suggest that the variant can be traced back even earlier, to at least the mid 1950s, and there are some examples of [f] reported in folk poetry and songs from the 1960s onwards (one notable example includes the line “they’re aw Cafflicks up oor close”5).

To date, the most systematic investigation on TH-fronting in the city has been the work of Jane Stuart-Smith and colleagues, using two corpora of conversational data (one collected in 1997 and the other collected in 2003). Their analysis shows that since 1997, [f] has steadily increased in use, particularly among working-class adolescents (Stuart-Smith et al. 2007: 236). One reason for this is that unlike [h], [f] is more productive, occurring in word-initial position (e.g. three, [fri]), intervocalic position (e.g. gothic, [goftik]), and word-final position (e.g. both, [bof]). Consequently, the variant has a far greater potential for uptake across the lexicon. [h], on the other hand,

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4 In some parts of Scotland, such as Fife in the east, an additional variant [ʃ] exists, usually before /r/ (e.g. three). This variant, however, is rarely attested in Glasgow (Clark and Trousdale 2009: 39).

5 Gloss - “They’re all Catholics in our alleyway”. I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for this example.
is primarily restricted to a small subset of high-frequency lexemes, namely the THINK/THING set and their associated lexical derivatives (Stuart-Smith and Timmins 2006).

It appears to be the case, however, that these high-frequency lexemes ‘slow down’ the spread of TH-fronting. In their analysis of frequency effects in data collected as part of a linguistic ethnography of a pipe band in Fife (named the West of Fife Highland Pipe Band, or WFHPB), Clark and Trousdale (2009: 49) comment that although speakers are more likely to adopt the innovative form [f] in higher frequency words than lower frequency words, the high-frequency words of the THINK/THING lexical set actually resist innovation due to their entrenched status within the lexicon.

Beyond lexical and frequency effects, recent work has also touched on how speakers use TH-fronting as a resource in the sociolinguistic construction of identity. For example, Clark and Trousdale (2009: 51) highlight how social identity is a significant predictor of the use of [f] in their data, pointing out that:

[The] factor group ‘community of practice/friendship group membership’ substantially outranks all other constraints on the variation. In other words, there is a very strong correlation between the use of the labiodental fricative and membership in a particular social group in this community.

Similarly, the analysis by Stuart-Smith et al. (2007) intimates that social identity is a significant factor in understanding how TH-fronting is patterned across urban adolescent speaker communities, although their discussion lacks the social detail afforded by ethnographic fieldwork.

Understanding how TH-fronting is implicated in the construction of social identity is intimately tied to understanding what social meanings surround TH-fronting in Scotland more generally. As Clark (2008: 154) highlights, despite the fact that TH-fronting is strongly associated with varieties of Southern British English (particularly London varieties), adolescent Scottish speakers do not appear to be adopting [f] as a way of marking alignment with English nationality. Stuart-Smith et al. (2007) also offer limited evidence that Scottish adolescents orientate positively towards England, arguing instead that adolescent speakers in Glasgow ‘seem to be using all possible linguistic resources to construct identities which are as anti-middle-class, and anti-establishment, as possible’ (Stuart-Smith et al. 2007: 251). Relatedly, Clark (2008: 155) suggests that because TH-fronting is more associated with working-class speakers, one of the social meanings of [f] is ‘rough’, at least within WFHPB. As Trudgill (1972) and Kiesling (1998) point out, non-standard variants are typically associated with physicality and male power, so it is perhaps no surprise that as a non-standard variant, [f] can index ‘roughness’. Taking these discussions as a point of departure, I consider in this article why [f] might mean ‘rough’, how far this meaning of ‘roughness’ is enacted across other adolescent communities, and how TH-fronted variants interact with other variants of (θ) in Glasgow. Before turning to these points, however, I briefly consider in the next section the extant literature on variation, social meaning and social identity.
3. You are what you speak?: Variation, social meaning and social identity

In the early years of sociolinguistic research, variation was viewed as a simple reflection of social differences. For example, Trudgill’s analysis of (ing) in Norwich (1972) showed that male speakers used higher rates of the alveolar nasal variant [n] while female speakers used higher rates of the velar nasal variant [ŋ], irrespective of social class. Adopting a ‘first wave’ perspective (Eckert 2005), Trudgill theorised that speakers used specific patterns of variation because they were male or female (see also Levon 2010: 11). While first wave studies offered robust correlations between linguistic variation and social groupings (e.g. Labov 1972; Macaulay 1977), they were challenged on the basis of their binary treatment of gender, the limited attention on the intersection of class and gender, their focus on more macro-level patterns of variation, and their view of style as primarily controlled by a speaker’s attention to their speech.

In ‘second wave’ studies, sociolinguists began to focus on more local speech communities (e.g. Milroy 1987), but it was only in ‘third wave’ studies where sociolinguists started treating variation as a constituent part of social identity instead of seeing linguistic variation simply as a reflection of social differences. As Eckert (2005: 30) points out, the change from first wave to third wave approaches “[moved] the study of variation off in a new direction. Rather than defining variation in terms of the speakers who use variables, [third wave studies seek] the meanings that motivate particular variable performances”. More specifically, Eckert’s quote highlights the need for sociolinguists to move beyond a straightforward description of who uses which variants and instead to see style as ‘persona construction’ rather than ‘attention to speech’ and thus tackle how linguistic variables acquire ‘social meaning’.

In this vein of work, one group instrumental to developing a theoretical framework at the intersection of linguistic variation, social meaning and social identity was the California Style Collective (1993). Drawing on anthropological work on subcultures (Hebdige 1979), one of their key arguments was that ‘meaning making’ typically occurs through a process of ‘bricolage’, where “a speaker chooses bits of linguistic practice from various sources and recombines them in order to create a ‘style’ or identity” (Kiesling 1998: 71). The process of bricolage relies, in part, on the notion of indexicality, that is “the creation of semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 594).

Of course, the social meaning of a linguistic variable is also dependent on the kinds of speakers who use it and the context in which it is used (Eckert 2002: 5), but since such insights are difficult to obtain without some way of understanding the kinds of social positionings and stances adopted by participants, sociolinguists working within the third wave paradigm have relied on the deployment of ethnographic methodology to uncover the social meaning of a variable, moving beyond the global and situating linguistic practice in the local sphere. Importantly, ethnography privileges a ‘bottom-up’ approach, rather than the ‘top-down’ approach characteristic of many early quantitative sociolinguistic studies. This approach also necessitated the introduction of new framework, the ‘Community of Practice’.
4. Communities of Practice and ‘Third Wave’ sociolinguistics

Although sociolinguists are primarily concerned with the processes of linguistic variation and change, Mendoza-Denton (2008: 3) argues that ‘[linguists] must look at language by looking beyond language, we must look holistically at the life-world of the people with whom we work and investigate the richness of practices that are inextricably tied to language’. Since this perspective is not characteristic of first wave studies, third wave studies required new ways of investigating social practices and showing how these practices were linked to the language use. Consequently, one of the key developments of the third wave model was the introduction of the Community of Practice (CoP hereafter), incorporated into sociolinguistics in an influential article on language and gender by Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) in which they defined a CoP as:

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

Extending these ideas, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) and Eckert (2005: 17) argue that engagement with, and production of, practices is how speakers construct their social identities, and linguistic variation is viewed as a key social practice through which speakers show their allegiance and membership of particular social groups while simultaneously constructing their identities as members of that group.

Linguistic variation is, however, only part of the story of understanding how speakers construct their social identities, and Mendoza-Denton’s comment highlights that it is not enough for sociolinguists to focus wholly on variation in tackling this endeavour. Indeed, work which focuses on social practices beyond language has shown how central non-linguistic practices are in mapping out the complex processes of identity construction, and in a traditional quantitative study, there is a danger of overlooking social distinctions which do not emerge at the level of language and assuming that speakers in a particular social context belong to the same speech community. By adopting a Community of Practice approach, we can go beyond a straightforward quantitative description of linguistic variation and integrate a range of social information in our pursuit of better understanding the sociolinguistic construction of identity. This perspective has, however, been thus far relatively neglected in discussions of linguistic variation in Glasgow.

5. Communities of Practice in Banister Academy

The data considered in this article were collected during a three-year longitudinal ethnography of a high school in the south side of Glasgow named Banister Academy between 2005 and 2007, and in the analysis below, I focus on data collected from three CoPs which I named the “Alternative”, “Sports”, and “Ned” CoPs. The speakers in each of the CoPs were between 14 and 15 years old at the beginning of the fieldwork, and each CoP consisted of three speakers

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6 Although this is a relatively small number of speakers per CoP, this is not uncommon in ethnographically-informed sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Moore 2003; Mendoza-Denton 2008).
Membership of a particular CofP was decided through a combination of self-identification, other-identification and ethnographic observation, along with identifying patterns of shared social practice. Since CofP membership is fluid and changeable, triangulation is a useful way of capturing a specific constellation of CofP membership at a particular time. Due to the dynamic nature of CofP membership and the vagaries of ethnographic fieldwork, however, not all speakers are represented in each year (see Lawson 2011: 233 for a breakdown of CofP membership by year). Some problems arose with the lack of opportunities to gain access to particular CofPs and speakers, while other speakers were unavailable for recording for a number of reasons (e.g. not attending school). The practical effects of these difficulties meant the speakers in each year of data sometimes vary. For example, membership of the Alternative CofP changed the most radically, with some members from Year 1 leaving the CofP entirely, while the Sports CofP was relatively stable throughout the fieldwork. Rather than conflate speakers across each year of data, however, and consequently run the risk of mis-representing the dynamic membership of each CofP, the decision was taken to keep each year of analysis separate.

The members of the Alternative CofP were some of the first pupils I met at Banister Academy, and it was immediately obvious that a number of their social practices fell outside what would be considered ‘mainstream’. For example, they rejected almost all mainstream sports, such as football and rugby, and preferred a range of ‘extreme sports’, including BMX riding and American wrestling. Similarly, their musical tastes were more in-line with rock and metal bands such as Nirvana, Cradle of Filth, Iron Maiden, Metallica, and Slipknot, and knowledge of this genre of music was a particularly valuable social commodity. Their clothing choices reflected these social practices, with many members opting to wear t-shirts branded with their favourite band or wrestling icon, or black leather coats and biker boots instead of a regular sports jacket and trainers preferred by other CofPs.

In contrast, the Sports CofP were marked out by their engagement with a range of mainstream sports, primarily football and rugby. Football, and to a lesser extent rugby, were the sports around which many of the Sports CofP members structured their days, both inside and outside Banister Academy. Football in particular was a key activity pursued every break time and lunchtime, with certain venues in the school playground carefully guarded (or contested) for use by the group. As a result of their daily sporting activities, the Sports CofP members opted to wear trainers, school jumper with a t-shirt, or a white shirt, either with or without the school tie. None of the members of the Sports CofP wore the school blazer, instead wearing a regular jacket over their uniform. The Sports CofP also invested time watching mainstream television programmes such as EastEnders which was a regular topic of conversation.

Before discussing the last CofP, it is worthwhile outlining what the term ‘ned’ means within Glaswegian society more generally, particularly for readers unfamiliar with social labels in Glasgow. The term typically refers to a working-class adolescent male who wears a tracksuit, Burberry branded clothing (recognisable by its plaid design), a baseball cap, white sports trainers, gold sovereign rings, and a Berghaus ‘Mera Peak’ jacket (an expensive hiking jacket) who is assumed to be involved in a range of anti-social, criminal and/or age-restricted behaviours, including vandalism, assault, theft, drinking, smoking and drug-taking. As such, the stereotypical picture of

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7 My first ever interaction with the members of the Sports CofP was through being invited to play a game of football (soccer) one lunchtime.
a Glaswegian ned is almost wholly negative, exploited in comedic media representations (e.g. the BBC comedy show *Chewin’ the Fat* contains a segment entitled ‘The Two Neds’ in which two urban adolescent males engage in a variety of anti-social behaviour against two middle-class older males).

My main aim in using the term, however, is not to further the discourse of social marginalisation and stigmatisation which typically surrounds this group, but rather to highlight the fact that the group was marked out as different by their peers. This distinction was partially based on the assumption that they were involved in a range of anti-social and criminal behaviours, but there were also other, more innocuous, reasons, including the belief that such individuals misbehaved more in class. Indeed, the Ned CofP were typically involved in the local subculture, including skipping school, participating in age-restricted activities such as smoking and drinking, and low-level crime such as petty theft and minor vandalism, but there was no evidence of them being involved in more serious criminal activity such as assaults or muggings (a few were, however, involved in isolated instances of gang-related violence). In terms of dress, the members of the Ned CofP only adopted a few of the stereotypical practices. For example, one member wore a Mera Peak jacket and several of them wore gold sovereign rings, yet the deployment of these specific practices was not uniform across the entire CofP, thus, it is difficult to talk of a ‘ned’ identity as a homogenous entity, in contrast to the dominant picture held by many Glaswegians.

6. Data and analysis

In an auditory analysis of approximately 15 hours of conversational data, 550 tokens of word initial (θ) were identified and marked up using PRAAT (version 5.1.09). Given the lexical constraints outlined above, word initial (θ) was separated out into two main patterns in the descriptive analysis (section 7). Pattern I covers those words which can take either [θ], [f], and [h] (e.g. *think*, *thing* and associated lexical derivatives), and Pattern II covers those words which can take only [θ] or [f] (e.g. *through*, *throw*). Clark and Trousdale (2009) take Pattern I words to also cover (θ) in word-medial position (e.g. *everything*), but in this article I focus only on (θ) in word-initial position.

The data were subject to a binomial mixed-model logistic regression analysis using the add-on *Rbrul* for the programming package *R* (Johnson 2009), an approach which has grown considerably in recent sociolinguistic research (Drummond 2011; Schleef, Meyerhoff and Clark 2011; Schleef and Ramsammy 2013). Unlike traditional ‘fixed-effect’ models used in sociolinguistics (such as Varbrul and GoldVarb), Rbrul accounts for both ‘fixed’ effects (such as male/female, young/old, CofP membership) and ‘random’ effects (that is, factors which are not normally replicable, such as the individual speakers recruited for a study). As Drummond (2011: 294) points out, ‘by including individual speaker as a random effect, the model is able to account for the fact that some speakers may favour a particular variant to a greater or lesser degree than their relevant fixed factors would predict’ (see also Johnson 2009: 365).

An additional benefit of Rbrul is the way in which the program deals with the independence of observations in a dataset, an approach which is very different to that utilised in older statistical software (e.g. GoldVarb). In GoldVarb, each token is treated as though it is a single observation, unrelated to previous or future observations. As Johnson (2009: 363) notes, however, in most quantitative linguistic analysis, tokens are not independent since they are
grouped according to which speaker produced them. In programs such as GoldVarb, there are two ways of dealing with this issue. The first is to leave out the factor group of ‘speaker’. In this approach, however, the influence of external variables, like gender or age, will be dramatically overestimated. The second option is to include ‘speaker’ as a factor group, yet this can lead to a model in which external effects are underestimated and those factors which might be the best fit are excluded. Johnson (2009: 364) outlines the difficulties in adding ‘speaker’ as a fixed effect in a statistical model, but because Rbrul can include ‘speaker’ as a random effect, it is better equipped to deal with the issue of determining which effects are more influential, external effects or inter-speaker variation.

Johnson (2009) also highlights the fact that most sociolinguistic datasets are unbalanced and tokens are not evenly distributed across speakers. Since this can impact on the ‘fit’ of a statistical model, it is necessary to use a statistical method which can ‘balance out’ the unevenness inherent in most sociolinguistic datasets. With regard to the data presented in this article, it should be noted that there was indeed an unequal distribution of tokens across speakers. Since the data were collected from spontaneous conversation, there was no way to ensure that every speaker would produce an equal (or near equal) number of (\(\theta\)) tokens. Consequently, some speakers used a high number of tokens with (\(\theta\)) while others used a relatively low number. Nevertheless, Rbrul is equipped to deal with such imbalances. Lastly, Rbrul deals better with Type I errors, where a chance effect is identified as a real effect (in contrast to a Type II error which is when a real effect goes unidentified). Consequently, the program is able to ‘capture external effects, but only when they are strong enough to rise above the inter-speaker variation’ (Johnson 2009: 365).

Lastly, Rbrul is generally more suited to large-scale sociolinguistic studies and thus larger ‘pots’ of tokens, and while it would have been preferable to have analysed Pattern I and Pattern II words together, the fact that \([f]\) is an innovative non-standard variant while \([h]\) is a traditional non-standard variant means that it is difficult to conflate them in one statistical model. Consequently, models were run on Pattern I and Pattern II datasets separately following the breakdown outlined below:

1. Pattern I (A) – Standard variant vs. non-standard variants (i.e. \([\theta]\) vs. \([f, h]\))
2. Pattern I (B) – Non-standard variant I vs. non-standard variant II (i.e. \([f]\) vs. \([h]\))
3. Pattern II – Standard variant versus non-standard variant (i.e. \([\theta]\) vs. \([f]\))

The data were also coded for the linguistic and social constraints outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1. Independent social and linguistic variables used in statistical model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorical variables</th>
<th>Factor levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CoP membership</td>
<td>Sports ~ Alternative ~ Ned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preceding class</td>
<td>Vowel ~ Pause ~ Obstruent ~ Sonorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following class</td>
<td>Vowel ~ Pause ~ Obstruent ~ Sonorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Syllable</td>
<td>Monosyllabic ~ Multisyllabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Television ~ Area ~ Age-restricted ~ event Sports ~ Friends ~ Dating ~ School ~ Fighting ~ Filler ~ ‘Neds’ ~ Arguing ~ Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random effects</td>
<td>Speaker and Word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preceding and following phonological category were coded in this way in order to discover whether variants of (θ) were influenced by the manner of articulation of the preceding and/or following segment, and which variant would be more likely before a vowel or a pause. Preceding and following vowel was not coded for front/back since previous research had shown this not to be a significant predictor (Clark and Trousdale 2009: 43). Because the nature of the dataset was restricted from the outset, a number of factors which have been included in other statistical treatments of (θ) could not be included in the Banister Academy data. For example, since all the speakers are male, it was not possible to code for ‘male’ and ‘female’, as we would normally expect in a traditional sociolinguistic analysis. Similarly, class was also controlled across the sample, as were region and age. Moreover, by focusing only on word initial (θ), all tokens have /θ/ in the onset position, so there is no need to code for ‘onset’ and ‘coda’ position (e.g. think vs. both), nor can we code for the position of (θ) in the word (initial, medial or final). So although the number of predictive factors here seem rather small (compared to, for example, Clark and Trousdale 2009: 43 – 44 or Schleef and Ramsammy 2013), this is primarily to do with the structure of the dataset than any underlying disadvantage of the coding process.

7. Results of analysis of (θ)

In the following section, I present the results of the analysis of (θ) across all three CofPs. I first outline the general patterns of variation of (θ) in Pattern I and Pattern II in each year, followed by the results of the regression analysis for each pattern. In section 8, I consider the results in light of the ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Banister Academy to develop a better picture of the social meaning of variants of (θ) and how these variants are implicated in the construction of social identity in Glasgow.

7.1. Pattern I results: Year 1

For Pattern I (θ) in Year 1, there is a higher use of the standard variant [θ] by the Alternative CofP speakers. The Alternative CofP speakers also tend to use a lower rate of [h] than the Sports CofP speakers, although Jack is something of an outlier here and is categorical in his use of [h], outstripping all other speakers in the Year 1 sample8, while Andrew is the only Alternative CofP speaker to use [f].

In the Sports CofP, there appears to be a stronger tendency for [h], although Phil uses a slightly lower rate of this variant, patterning more with Andrew (Alternative CofP) than with the two other members of the Sports CofP. Phil and Nathan also use several tokens of [f], while Mark is the only speaker to use [θ].

8 Interestingly, Lawson (2011) showed that Jack’s CAT vowel was also distinctly different from the other Alternative CofP speakers, suggesting a low level of involvement within this CofP. Indeed, in Year 2 and Year 3 of the fieldwork, Jack gave up membership of the Alternative CofP and began socialising with another group in Banister Academy, suggesting that his peripheral status within the Alternative CofP precluded acquisition of their patterns of variation.
Two main regression analyses were run; the first with ‘standard’ versus ‘non-standard’ as the dependent variable (so \([\theta] \sim [f, h]\)) and ‘non-standard’ as the application value, and the second with \([f]\) versus \([h]\) and \([h]\) as the application value. Four independent variables were entered into the model (‘Community of Practice membership’, ‘preceding phonological class’, ‘topic’ and ‘number of syllables’), and both ‘word’ and ‘speaker’ were entered as random effects. Following phonological class was not entered since in Pattern I words the following phonological class is always a vowel. In both statistical models, however, none of the predictors emerged as significant. This is not surprising given the relatively disjointed picture of variation presented here.

7.2. Patterns II results: Year 1

For Pattern II (\(\theta\)) in Year 1, there is a clear division according to CofP membership, with the Sports CofP categorical in their use of \([f]\). The results for the Alternative CofP show that they use both the standard \([\theta]\) and non-standard \([f]\), with Neil the leader for \([\theta]\). These results, in combination with the results for Pattern I (\(\theta\)) suggests that, overall, the Alternative CofP speakers are more standard. It is important to note, however, that even though the Sports CofP speakers are categorical in using \([f]\) in the Pattern II context, they only produced 23 tokens in total. Andrew, on the other hand, produced 45 tokens in total, with a far wider lexical range than the Sports CofP speakers. Despite this, however, for those words which are common across both the Alternative and Sports CofPs (namely three and through), we have evidence that the Sports CofP speakers never use the standard variant, unlike the Alternative CofP speakers.
Figure 2. Word Initial (θ): Pattern II among all speakers in Year 1

Only one regression analysis was run with [θ] versus [f] (since [h] is not permissible in Pattern II words) and [f] as the application value. Five independent variables were entered into the model (‘Community of Practice membership’, ‘preceding phonological class’, ‘following phonological class’, ‘topic’ and ‘number of syllables’), and both ‘word’ and ‘speaker’ were entered as random effects. For this model, CofP emerged as the only significant factor (Table 2).

Table 2. Statistical model for word initial (θ) Year 1: Pattern II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application value: [f]</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Log-odds</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CofP membership</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.546</td>
<td>&gt;0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p &lt; 0.05</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>-8.546</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>Topic, preceding phonological class, following phonological class, number of syllables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Deviance = 47.826 df = 9 intercept = 10.581 mean = 0.908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the model above, the log odds and factor weights show that speakers from the Sports CofP prefer the variant [f]. That CofP is significant in this model aligns with the results outlined in the descriptive analysis above, where [f] was categorical among Sports CofP speakers.

7.3. Pattern I results: Year 2

Moving on to consider word initial (θ) in Year 2, we can see that the results alluded to in Year 1 become more developed. For example, in the Alternative CofP we see that Kevin and Mathew have a similar rate of the standard variant [θ], and all three speakers have similar rates for [f]. For [h], however, Peter, uses a relatively high rate, while Kevin and Mathew use a far lower rate. As was found
in Year 1, it appears that the Alternative CofP generally use a higher rate of the standard variant and relatively lower rates of the non-standard variants.

Continuing the pattern of variation established in Year 1, the main variant in Pattern I words in the Sports CofP is [h], with all three speakers using a very high rate of this variant, and it is categorical for Nathan. Compared to the Alternative CofP, the Sports CofP have low rates of [f] and [θ], with Phil the only speaker to use [f], and both Mark and Phil using low rates of [θ].

While the low number of tokens produced by the Ned CofP means that we must be cautious about interpreting these results, we can nevertheless offer some tentative conclusions, with the main finding being that all three speakers are categorical users of [h].

As with the Pattern I data in Year 1, two regression analyses were conducted. Unlike the results for Pattern I data in Year 1, however, both regression analyses returned CofP as a significant factor in the model (Table 3 and Table 4).

As the log odds and factor weights in Table 3 show, speakers from the Ned CofP prefer non-standard variants, while the Alternative CofP speakers are most likely to use the standard variant [θ]. More specifically, as Table 4 shows, the Ned CofP
speakers strongly prefer [h] rather than [f] (also demonstrated in the descriptive analysis above), while the Sports CoP speakers are more likely to use [h] rather than [f] (albeit at a lower rate), and the Alternative CoP speakers more likely to use [f] rather than [h].

Table 4. Statistical model for word initial (θ) Year 2: Pattern I (B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application value: [h]</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Log-odds</th>
<th>Factor weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CoP membership</td>
<td>‘Neds’</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.312</td>
<td>&gt;0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p &lt; 0.01</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>-4.817</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-7.495</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>Topic, preceding phonological class, number of syllables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Deviance = 77.111  df = 9  intercept = 7.166  mean = 0.840</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4. Pattern II results: Year 2

For Pattern II words in Year 2, all three speakers in the Alternative CoP again use both the standard and non-standard variants. More specifically, Peter uses the highest rate of [f] and the lowest rate of [θ], while Mathew and Kevin use relatively similar rates of both variants (Figure 4). The tendency towards [f] continues within the Sports CoP, with all three speakers using high rates of the non-standard variant. Mark is the only speaker who displays a marked use of [θ] which accounts for over 35% of his overall variation, while [f] is categorical for Phil and almost categorical for Nathan, who uses only one token of [θ] in the word “three.” The results for Year 2 are slightly different from what we might expect given the results in Year 1 where all three speakers were categorical in their use of [f].

For the Ned CoP, the low token count means that again, the results should be taken cautiously. Nevertheless, the main tendency in Pattern II is for the Ned CoP speakers to use [f]. Indeed, both Danny and Noah have categorical [f], but the results for Max show that he uses both [θ] and [f]. Max, however, only produces five tokens of (θ) across the entire dataset, meaning that even small variations in his variant choice will have dramatic effects on the final results (and on the results of the statistical analysis). Indeed, over the course of his interview, Max produced only two tokens of [θ] which accounted for 40% of his variation (for the word “three”), although he used both [f] and [θ] in this lexical item.

The regression analyses did not return CoP (or any other predictor entered into the model) as significant, a result which can be attributed to Max’s pattern of variation. Indeed, when Max was removed from the model, CoP approached significance (p = 0.0596), while the omission of the Ned CoP from the model showed that CoP also came close to significance (p = 0.0617). Both regressions showed that with the omission of Max, CoP trended towards being a significant predictor in the model, although it just failed to reach significance.
8. Discussion

Since previous research on (θ) in Glasgow conflates Pattern I and Pattern II words (e.g. Stuart-Smith and Timmins 2006; Stuart-Smith et al. 2007), it is difficult to directly compare previous research with the Banister Academy data. Nevertheless, we can confirm existing trends on the progress of TH-fronting in Glasgow on a more general level (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of main phonetic variants for (θ) in word initial position in the 1997 Corpus, 2003 Corpus, and Banister Academy data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variants</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2009 (Banister Academy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[θ]</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[h]</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[f]</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison of the Banister Academy results with those reported by the Glasgow Speech Project shows that, generally, the use of [f] is increasing at the expense of [θ], while [h] remains relatively stable. This, however, is only part of the story, since when we look at the local patterns of variation in Banister Academy, we see that even within an apparently homogenous group of working-class adolescent male speakers, there are fine-grained patterns of (θ) variation.

The results show that the Alternative CofP is generally the most standard, the Ned CofP speakers are the most non-standard, and the Sports CofP falls somewhere in-between. Following the third-wave approach, however, it is not enough to simply describe the variable patterning across these three CofPs, and in order to add an extra layer of analytical description, it is important to account for why different CofPs use variants of (θ) in different ways and the social
meaning of variants of (θ) within Banister Academy (and by extension, Glasgow more generally). Taking as a point of departure Clark’s claim that [f] indexes ‘rough’ and the claim by Stuart-Smith et al. (2007: 251 - 253) that [f] is involved in a complicated process of locally based language ideologies in which TH-fronted variants are part of an ‘anti-establishment’ stance, we can begin to piece together how far these meanings are developed across the CofPs in Banister Academy, the extent to which the potential social meanings of [f] interact with the other variants of (θ) in the city, and how these variants might be exploited by speakers in the construction of specific social identities.

8.1. ‘Hink yer hard aye?’ Roughness and toughness in Glasgow

Glasgow is a post-industrial city with a high concentration of working-class communities, and as such, it is reasonable to assume that the views of the young men in Banister Academy about what constitutes ‘real’ masculinity would be influenced in part by the historical and socioeconomic reality of the city in which they live (Johnson and McIvor 2004, 2007). Indeed, one specific conceptualisation of masculinity involves the evocation of a range of behavioural traits which would be considered as hegemonically masculine, including physical toughness, bravery, and a willingness to fight, crystallised most obviously in the concept of the ‘hard man’, a working class male identity structured around the actual or potential deployment of such practices (see also Lawson 2013 for a more detailed discussion of this idea).

In Glasgow (and Scotland more generally), the non-standard variant [h] is strongly identified as a social class marker, and specifically as a marker of working-class speech. As noted above, variants usually acquire meaning by virtue of the people who use them, and since the concept of the ‘hard man’ (and by extension, notions of ‘roughness’ and ‘toughness’) is most strongly associated with working-class communities (Trudgill 1972), an indirect indexical chain emerges whereby non-standard variants come to be associated with such meanings. For example, the following tweet (collected in May 2012), draws attention to the association of Glaswegian with violence and aggression, an association which is regularly exploited in media representations of Glasgow (cf. ‘The Big Man’ from the BBC comedy show Chewin’ the Fat).

@Joey7Barton hink yer hard aye? Mon doon the pitches in glasgow sunday nights n ill break both yer legs then yer jaw ya scouse scumbag

In the tweet, the dense cluster of Glaswegian features (such as use of the FOOT vowel in doon, the lexical item aye, the contracted form mon for come on, and the use of [h] in think), in conjunction with imagery of fighting, aggression, and football violence, all work together to create a picture of ‘tough’ masculinity.

To relate these issues back to the Banister Academy data, given that the use of [h] is most pronounced within the Ned CofP, it is reasonable to ask how far the use of categorical [h] within this CofP is related to the construction of a particular masculine ideal of the ‘hard man’.

As I noted above in section 5, the Ned CofP members were engaged in a number of age-restricted and anti-social practices, including minor gang violence, alcohol consumption and smoking. While these were social practices other CofPs almost completely avoided, they were taken to be part and parcel of being a member of the Ned CofP, and part of being a ‘real man’. Indexing this

9 Gloss of the twitter message - “Think you’re hard, aye? Come on down to the football (soccer) pitches in Glasgow Sunday nights and I’ll break both your legs then your jaw, you Scouse scumbag”.
form of ‘tough’ masculinity is not restricted only to visible social practices like fighting and drinking, but also extends to particular forms of speech (Parker 1992: 146). More important, however, is the fact that deploying particular linguistic features which are indexical of ‘toughness’ means that speakers do not have to rely on other, more socially-risky, practices like fighting to perform ‘tough’ masculinity, particularly in situations where the outcome of a fight is not guaranteed. Indeed, social practices like fighting and other violent physical actions are often viewed as a ‘last resort’ for the maintenance of ‘tough’ masculinity due to the inherent risks associated with using such practices (Anderson 1997). Thus, if a speaker can convince a second party that they are capable of violent physical action without actually doing so, the potential social cost is much lower.

Moreover, speakers engaged in the performance of communally-understood and socially-embedded identities (such as the ‘hard man’) are typically required to use ‘valid’ linguistic resources in order to avoid social censure, and the use of non-standard variants is often a key component of establishing oneself as ‘tough’.\(^{10}\) Importantly, the proposed identity construct must match with particular patterns of linguistic variation, otherwise the performance is viewed as invalid and illegitimate (drawing on the idea of ‘variation rights’, Mendoza-Denton 2008: 252). These ‘valid’ linguistic resources in the case of the ‘Ned’ CoP would be those non-standard variants which avoid any indexical association with the ‘establishment’, and since the local subculture (the culture towards which the ‘Ned’ CoP orientates) is in opposition to the ‘establishment culture’ represented by, for example, the school, it would be unusual for the Ned CoP speakers to use the standard variant [θ]. This was confirmed to me during an off-tape conversation with a female member of the ‘Ned’ CoP who commented that ‘only posh people say think’ (with [θ] rather than [f] or [h]). For the speaker, [θ] indexes ‘posh’, and I would suggest that such an ideology is common among other members of the ‘Ned’ CoP. This also aligns with the comment by Stuart-Smith et al. (2007: 253) that standard variants such as [x] in loch index ‘middle-classness’ in Glasgow, so it is no surprise to see the same ideology extended to other standard variants such as [θ].

[h] also has strong ‘place’ connotations, and given Glasgow’s reputation as a city of crime and violence (Davies 2007; Braber and Butterfint 2008: 24 - 25), I suggest that [h] is an important way of indexing ‘Glaswegian-ness’, with all the ideological associations this entails. For the Ned CoP in particular, their association with Glasgow is an important part of their identities (Lawnson 2009: 365 - 367), and I argue that their use of [h] is one way of reifying not only their belonging to the city, but also of exploiting the more indirect ideological associations being Glaswegian involves (see also Braber and Butterfint 2008 for a discussion of local identity and sound change in Glasgow).

Within those CoPs which do not draw on the idea of the ‘hard man’ to the same extent, the idea of ‘tough’ masculinity is nevertheless still important, including a desire to be viewed as a competent fighter, a tough individual, and physically strong. If [h] does mean ‘tough’, then the relatively high rate of [h] within the Sports CoP is understandable. Indeed, additional evidence of this indexical meaning of [h] can also be found in the fact that not only is Nathan

\(^{10}\) As a piece of ‘anecdata’, I encountered this during a shopping trip in Birmingham city centre where I witnessed a theft at one of the markets. During my attempts to intervene and alert the stall owner, I was intercepted by one of the thief’s associates who enquired where I was going. Despite my default variety now being Scottish Standard English, I attempted to diffuse the situation by style-switching into a strongly Scots guise, drawing on (I supposed) well-known associations of Scots as a ‘friendly’ accent. I was promptly informed that I should ‘drop the hard man act’.
one of the categorical [h] users in Year 2, but he is also someone who was strongly invested in the idea of the ‘hard man’ persona and who attempted to present himself to his peers as someone ‘not to be messed with’. His high use of [h] is, I argue, one of the ways in which his construction of a ‘tough’ masculine identity is enacted.

Lastly, speakers in the Alternative CoP almost completely reject [h], a finding which fits in with the notion that the Alternative CoP are more closely aligned with the ‘establishment’ and orientate more positively towards the school than the Ned CoPs members. For example, many of the Alternative CoP members commented that they enjoyed coming to school and recognised the importance of education in securing well-paid employment. It is reasonable to suggest that the use of the standard variant [θ] is part of this identity construction.

8.2. Finking about [f] and competing social meanings

The picture is somewhat complicated by the appearance of [f], since [f] is neither ‘local’ nor ‘traditional’, yet it remains a robust and productive variant across all three CoPs, particularly in the Ned CoP. As was noted above, previous research has suggested that one of the core meanings of [f] is ‘tough’, and in light of the leaders of [f] in Banister Academy (the Ned CoP), this interpretation makes sense.

However, we also have to find an explanation for the relatively advanced use of [f] within the Alternative and Sports CoP. It could be that these two groups of speakers are demonstrating some sort of ‘anti-establishment’ stance, and the use of [f] is an important way of doing so, particularly since [f] is the only possible non-standard variant in Pattern II. But the Alternative CoP (and to a lesser extent, the Sports CoP) did not construct their identities as ‘anti-establishment’ in the same way as the Ned CoP members did. For example, while the Alternative CoP speakers tended to reject most mainstream social practices, at the same time, they were invested in the idea of schooling and had eyes towards skilled careers once they left school. Similarly, even though the Sports CoP members were more orientated towards the local subculture than members of the Alternative CoP, they were still invested in education and were never explicitly ‘anti-school’. I argue that the simultaneous use of [θ] and [f] among the Sports and the Alternative CoPs is a way for these speakers to straddle the divide between the ‘anti-establishment’ and ‘establishment’ cultures; as ways for these speakers to meet a range of conflicting social demands. As such, determining issues of social identity has less to do with focusing on the meaning of one variant in isolation, but rather understanding how variants pattern with one another across discourse.

We are still, however, left with the problem of competing indexical meanings of [f] set out in previous research. In order to reconcile the idea that [f] indexes ‘rough’ (Clark 2008: 155), as well as ‘anti-establishment’ and ‘anti-middle class’ (Stuart-Smith et al. 2007: 251), I suggest that there is an ongoing cyclical relationship at work, whereby enacting an ‘anti-establishment’ culture involves a positive orientation towards the idea of ‘tough’ masculinity and that establishing a sense of ‘tough’ masculinity involves developing an ‘anti-establishment’ stance. This is not to say that [f] does not have an indexical field (Eckert 2008, see Figure 5), but that the two meanings of ‘toughness’ and ‘anti-establishment’ are those ones which are the most salient and productive in Banister Academy, to the extent that they are dialogically bound together and contingent upon one another, rather than isolated and insulated.
9. Conclusions

This article contributes to ongoing discussions regarding the social productivity of TH-fronting in Scotland and complements those results found by Stuart-Smith et al. (2007). In particular, by adopting an ethnographic perspective on phonetic variation among young men in Glasgow, we have seen how the patterning of (θ) across the sample is closely related to CoP membership and how ethnographic methodology can help us illuminate patterns of linguistic differentiation within an apparently homogenous group of speakers. Not only does this research show how a group of speakers who may be nominally defined as ‘working-class’ have subtly different, but socially productive, patterns of variation, the findings also lend further support to the well-established idea that speakers closely attend to language variation in the construction of locally-embedded social identities. Indeed, by considering the question of why working-class male speakers use non-standard variants, we have developed a more nuanced account of the social meaning of a relatively new variant in Glaswegian, and importantly, how it interacts with more established variants of (θ). More specifically, I have argued that the use of non-standard variants can be exploited as a low-risk way for speakers to construct an identity of ‘tough’ masculinity, while the use of both standard and non-standard variants allow speakers to negotiate the ‘grey area’ between ‘establishment’ and ‘subcultural’ contexts. As such, this article augments Stuart-Smith and Timmins’ point (2007: 255) that “the amplification or exploitation of [innovative variants by working-class speakers]...is at least partly to be explained in terms of the construction of specific, locally situated identities which simultaneously signal their own identity and differentiate them from ‘posh’ people”. Since ethnographic fieldwork offers a better insight into how these identities actually emerge in locally-embedded contexts, we can not only add an extra layer of local description, but can also move towards a fuller account of the role played by both ‘old’ and ‘new’ variants of (θ) in the sociolinguistic construction of identity in Glasgow.

10. References


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