

Linguistic Individuation and Conformity among Suburban Chicago Adolescents

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1. Introduction

There are a number of ways in which to understand what is meant by "performance voices." As linguists, "performance" immediately harkens Chomsky's (1965) and the early generative grammarians' explorations into competence-performance. To oversimplify, in this rubric, the individual plays an important role as the data source, with the focus on the production of language, performance, in order to explore what language and linguistic structure are within the psychological capacity, competence, of the ideal speaker. As Hymes (1972) points out, language and the social sphere in which it operates cannot be disjointed, as we cannot ignore the questions of "how" and "why" language is used in various situations. It is the ethnography of communication approach to language that informs the present research agenda. As Saviile-Troike states:

The ethnography of communication takes language first and foremost as a socially-situated cultural form, while recognizing the necessity to analyze the code itself and the cognitive process of its speakers and hearers. To accept a lesser scope of linguistic description is to risk reducing it to triviality, and to deny any possibility of understanding how language lives in the minds and on the tongues of its users. (1989:3)

With the above research goal in mind, we attempt to understand "performance" from a different perspective than the generative grammarians. It is from the linguistic anthropological perspective that we begin our synthesis of scholars' thoughts on the topic. Bauman (1975) is the foundation of our understanding of "verbal art as performance, based upon an understanding of performance as a mode of speaking" (1975:290) which offers us a vehicle for "comprehend[ing] much more of the totality of human experience" (1975:306). We embark on our collection of understanding of performance after Bauman to add Shilling-Estes' (1997:1, under revision) definition of performance "as that register associated with speakers' attempting to display for others a certain language or language variety, whether their own or that of another speech community." We feel that there is no need to add to this definition, however, in that the language or language variety may be not only that of another speech community, but also that of another linguistic community (cf. Silverstein 1996). We then couple this definition with the research of Johnstone (1996) and Johnstone & Bean (1997) in order to go beyond the location of the linguistic variety used by the performer, to understand what these authors call "self-expression" in relation to the question of linguistic individuation and conformity. We further understand performance as Cameron (1997) explores it, as a speech-act in which identity is in part constructed and constituted through performance acts. To round-out performance, we finally turn

to Bourdieu (1991:109) who reminds us that "the use of language, the manner as much as the substance of discourse, depends on the social position of the speaker, which governs the access he can have to the language of the institution," where for us the institution is the peer group and the language of the micro-institution is the sociolect.

This type of research into performance among teenagers is interesting and important because it offers us an opportunity to explore not only the acquisition of communicative competency, but also to explore questions of variation from a qualitative perspective focusing on intentionality and the co-construction of identity. We believe that it may be possible to further understand linguistic and social change by engaging the present topic.

2. The Sociolinguistic Setting

The data for this study was obtained from recordings made of seven residents of a Southern Suburb of Chicago, Homewood-Flossmoor, during the participants' visit to Lincoln Park Zoo, in Chicago on March 7th, 1997. The recordings were made by one of the participants, DD. Of the seven participants, two are female and five are male. Both of the female speakers are Caucasian, while two of the male speakers are Caucasian, one is African- American, and two are of mixed race. The ages of the speakers range from sixteen to twenty-one: one male is sixteen, two males are seventeen, the two females are seventeen, one male is eighteen, and one male is twenty-one. All of the speakers are friends and members of the same dense, closely-knit social network. They met each other in Homewood-Flossmoor (H-F) while attending high school. The two conversation events discussed in this paper occurred during the zoo trip at different points in the afternoon. Both events were triggered by observations made by the speakers while walking around the zoo and were not prompted. The events highlight the groups' use of performance voices and the expression of "self-images" (Johnstone & Bean 1997:223) which act as cohesive devices for the group, as formats for negotiating power struggles, and as explorations of the speaker's evolving sociolinguistic individuation.

3. Recording Methodology

The data for this project was recorded during a single event as the speakers walked throughout the Lincoln Park Zoo. The taping was originally conducted as coursework by DD for investigating the construction of a sociolect and performance voices the group. The recorded material includes roughly two and one-half hours of spontaneous speech. The recordings were made using a portable GE Dictaphone, standard portable cassette tapes, and the built-in microphone of the Dictaphone. The recordings were made in this fashion to allow DD to record the subjects in as natural of a conversational environment as possible. Therefore, devices such as external microphones and headphones were not used, though permission to record was, of course, obtained from all participants prior to the commencement of taping. The first speech event considered in this paper is one minute in length, and the second is one minute, fifty-two sections in length; the first event was recorded indoors at the Great Ape Exhibit; the second event was recorded at the Outdoor Llama Exhibit.

4. Informant Characteristics

The recording contains interactions between the seven participants as one large peer group. This large group is actually a conglomeration of two smaller peer subgroups: one comprised of WJ, AJ, BS, and DC, and the other composed of AC, JS, and DD. All of the informants have been apart of the same social network for at least the last year. The two females are JS and AC. The five males are BS, DC, WJ, AJ, and DD. Six of the speakers grew up in the H-F suburbs; JS grew up in the suburb of Chicago Heights. All of the members of the group, except for JS and DD, attended the same high school, H-F, at the same time (at the time of the research, all were seniors except AJ, who was a junior.)

To briefly summarize how the day's events transpired: WJ, AJ, DC, and BS went to the Zoo because WJ and BS wanted to go, DD went because WJ and BS were going, and JS and AC went because DD was going. All seven people on the excursion know each other well enough to be able to talk to one another casually, but because of the nature of the subgroups involved, certain interactions were more likely to occur than others.

AC is eighteen years old, a resident of Homewood, and she attended H-F High School. AC and DD have known each other for about four years and have been close friends for the last three years. AC met JS through DD about eleven months ago. She met BS through a friend, and she has known BS for about a year and a half; the two have been close friends for about a year. AC met WJ, AJ, and DC through BS, and still considers herself an outsider to their subgroup because "they've known each other for so long" that she doesn't "seem to fit with them because they are in their own world, even when everybody else is hanging out with them." AC is viewed as being extravagant, and the most politically liberal of the group.

DD is regarded as the "older brother" figure in the group because he is the oldest member. DD is twenty-one years old, was originally a resident of Homewood, and attended H-F at one point in time. DD is more of an "outsider" because he goes to college in DeKalb, and is therefore not around the group on a day to day basis and not part of the tertiary social networks at the high school. He is involved with the group when he is home during breaks, weekends, and summer vacations, and he participates in the group as much as possible when in H-F. DD met WJ through a friend about a year and half ago, and he became friends with AJ, BS, and DC through WJ. DD and JS met about two and half years ago and began dating about a year ago.

JS is also eighteen, but she goes to Bloom, the rival high school of H-F. She is the quietest member of the group, due to her shyness, relatively short history with the group, and peripheral membership of being a friend-of-a-friend (cf. Boissevain 1974). Her main connection to the group is through DD, and she only associates with the group when he is present. JS met WJ, AJ, BS, and DC through DD about eleven months ago, but she is more an outsider to their subgroup than either DD or AC are.

WJ and AJ are brothers. WJ is eighteen years old, and AJ is sixteen years old; both have lived in Flossmoor for the past six years and both attended H-F High School. WJ has known BS for about seven years, and the two have been close friends for the last five. WJ is also a quiet member of the group, simply because that is his nature. WJ is actually the key player in the AJ, DC, WJ, and BS subgroup because he is the main connection. Social plans always center around those of WJ, and it is at his house where the subgroup "hangs out." Often, WJ gets himself "into trouble" with the other group members because he argues and will not negotiate his position on issues. WJ is not the group's "bully" however; rather, he is the group's debate instigator and second oldest member.

AJ is considered to be the "stupid" one of the group when compared to the other members; this view stems from AJ's "simplistic" expression of his views. As DC said of AJ, "he can still put up on hell of a fight, as simple minded as he is". AJ met BS through WJ and has been close friends with him for about three years. AJ is also the main drug user in the group. The WJ, AJ, BS, and DC subgroup is known for their drug use (mainly pot and alcohol), and AJ is their leader in this regard. AJ has the connections to the substances that the group desires, and as BS points out, "AJ being so 'simplistic' helps out in our being able to get the shit". Therefore, AJ is useful to the group as a supplier, but this is not the primary reason he is in the group. He is primarily in the group because he is WJ's brother and because he gets along with everyone. According to the group, in an emergency, AJ would prove an unreliable friend because he mainly cares about himself. Despite this fact, the rest of the group still hangs out with him regularly. AJ is always around because of WJ and so everyone gets along with him. However, this acceptance of AJ may be the result of an obligation to WJ, rather than because the group really wants to hang out with AJ. BS is the most popular member while AJ is the group's "least favorite" member.

BS is eighteen years old, a resident of Flossmoor, and he attended H-F High School. BS has known DC for about three years, and the two have been close friends for the last two years. BS introduced DC to WJ and AJ, and they have been close friends for the last year and a half. BS is the key to the interaction of the seven group members in that he is the person who can most easily talk to everyone. BS's verbal performances are viewed as humorous by most of the group most of the time; this is important because being humorous is one of the most important qualities a member of this group can possess. BS is also known for his propensity to say "strange and bizarre" things when engaging in performance speech. AJ and DC mock BS because they consider his performance voices to be "weird," but their mockery is playful in that they encourage and support BS's performances.

DC is seventeen years old, a resident of Homewood, and he attended H-F High School as well. DC is liked by everyone, but he also annoys everyone with his imitations and emulations of his best friend—BS. DC looks upon his imitation of BS as a form of "group unity" that identifies him as a member of the group. DC has his own identity outside of imitating BS, but this seems to surface only when he is in one-on-one conversations. BS often views DC's imitation as a violation of his role as "class clown," and this leads to various power conflicts between the two.

5 Performance Speech—Issues of Power and Solidarity

5.1 Excerpt One

The first conversation is centered around DD's attempts to inform the group further about his reasons for recording, and his general hypotheses for his class project (See all of DD's comments until line 41.). Of particular interest is the function of DC's and BS's performance speech (See all of their comments until line 42.). These verbal acts not only display their understanding of what DD is trying to "get on tape" but also their willingness to perform for him. The participants of this conversation are very aware that they are not only performing on tape for DD, but that they are performing for a potentially wider audience—his class project, the professor, and possible reading audiences such as yourselves. As Schilling-Estes (1997:9, under revision) carefully notes, we need to consider not only the speaker's unease with a particular situation, such as tape recording conversations, that lead speakers to perform, but also the

shifting of roles during a conversation. She furthermore reminds us that speakers are aware that they may be performing for audiences beyond the interviewer and themselves, and are therefore positioning themselves not only in the immediate real-time conversation, but also with future audiences. This positioning is especially important when we consider why this conversation centers around the various performance voices used by the teens and the stylized use of swearing, namely the exaggerated use of swearing as a result of a license to do so.

Unlike metaphorical- and situational- (Blum & Gumpres 1972), or realignment-based shifting (Shilling-Estes 1997, under revision), the performance speech produced by DC and BS not only echoes the topic initiated by DD in line 9, rather than producing a shift, it provides a means for the entire group to participate in a metalinguistic discussion, that of the degree to which they believe they swear compared to their parents while reinforcing group solidarity, namely that they speak alike because they share an understanding of the use and intentional acts communicated through their linguistic choices. Most importantly, these choices are seen by the teens as being in direct to their parents' linguistic choices, thereby contributing to their linguistic individuation and membership in their peer social group.

We note DC's comments in line 11, "Swear words!," which echoes DD's statement in line 9 about what he is investigating for his class project. This utterance cues the other members, the audience, to a style shift through the use of a performance voice (namely squeaky and high-pitched), and thereby, sets the performative listing of "swear words" in line 13. DC's continued use of a high, squeaky voice in line 13 further cues the group that the utterance is intended to be humorous and a verbal display. The appropriate cues were offered and the group responds to DC's performance by cooperative, supportive laughter. The cooperative tone having been set, more members of the group begin to participate in the discourse, as noted in line 15 where BS echoes DC's in line 13.

DD continues his more formal style of explicating the taping situation and goals of his project despite the verbal performances going on around him. Again we note DC's engagement of a ritualized performance, namely echoing the speaker's utterance in a performance voice. An example of this is found in line 17, where DC echoes DD's line 16 with the addition of "swear words."

There is more to this conversation though. Let us briefly consider the evidence supporting our knowledge of the social connections between the members of this group, particularly the interesting question of individuation and power as played out through performance speech by DC and BS. We note that initially it is DC who interacts with DD and performs for the group (line 13), which is then supported by the response of laughter from the group (line 14). In line 15, BS then repeats DC's performance verbatim. In line 17, DC again performs by echoing DD. Instead of BS also echoing the performance, at line 23, BS switches out of the previous performance styles to instead support DD's hypothesis about the use of profanity differing cross-generationally. He then switches back to a performance voice in line 25, now echoing his own comment about the use of "damn" in line 23. DC comments on BS's performance in line 26, by saying "Thanks for that." This is DC's first return to non-performance speech since line 8.

After this point in the conversation, line 26, DC is no longer the main contributor to DD's topic, rather the role is taken over by BS. BS offers both humorous performance speech as well as initiating two topic switches, at lines 34 and 42. Both switches are picked up by DD who at line 35 comments on BS's use of profanity in line 34. At line 36, WJ ritually echoes DD's comment from line 35.

At line 39, BS make an interesting comment "No, that was just now. Those are the people from before." This comment overtly signals the distancing from the performance for an absent audience, DD's project. BS continues to perform in line 44, offering humorous non-sequiturs about the Great Ape House, this time employing one of the ritual voices that the group calls their "gansta' voice." DD then also engages in the display of performance voices in lines 46 and 47, as he comments on the Ape House. Laughter from the group offers confirmation and support of the humor and verbal art that DD and BS have displayed. BS continues in both the performance style and topic of the Ape House, as well as the supportive laughter, by imitating ape sounds in line 49.

EXCERPT ONE: Recorded outside the Monkey Exhibit at the Lincoln Park Zoo

Numbers in parentheses indicate pauses in seconds. Square brackets indicate text overlapping speech.

- 1 DD:I'm trying to figure out how much, what the distance is I have to use to pick up people.(5) You
- 2 know whatever you say is gonna' be anonymous. I'm not gonna report like, ["D said..."]
- 3 DC: [laughs] What is it,
- 4 like, for school or something?
- 5 DD:Yeah. I'm doing a project. I'm studying language, (2) and like how people use different parts of it
- 6 (1) to communicate.
- 7 WJ:[like, ebonics, or somethin'].
- 8 DC:[Are we talkin'] about cuss words?
- 9 DD:Yeah, that could be one thing. Well, that too. I'm looking at the uh, the high amount of swearing,
- 10 amongst uh,
- 11 DC:{squeaky} Swear words!
- 12 DD:teenagers.
- 13 DC:{high}Shit, fuck, da: (laughs) amn!
- 14 DC, AJ, WJ, & BS: (laughs)
- 15 BS: Fuckin' shit! Damn!
- 16 DD:Well, it's one of our ways of communicating now.
- 17 DC:{high}Fuck! It is fuckin' the way we communicate.(laughs)
- 18 DD:Well, no. I mean, like, when our parents were young, they didn't swear anywhere near as much as
- 19 we do.
- 20 AC: (faintly) That's true.
- 21 DD:And so I'm looking at like, how there's a change in like, society today, amongst the youth of this
- 22 country and how they swear more, and stuff like that.
- 23 BS: Well, they say damn and they get yelled at.
- 24 AJ: You're right.
- 25 BS: Damn, Damn, Damn, Damn, Damn!
- 26 DC:Thanks for that.
- 27 WJ:I just think we don't give a shit.
- 28 BS: {"gangsta"} Well, shit, neither do I! Shit!
- 29 DC, AJ, BS, WJ: (laughs)
- 30 BS: Fuck! Shit!
- 31 AJ: Well, fuck the shit!
- 32 DC, WJ, AJ, BS:(laughs)

33 DC:That's damn [right].
34 BS: [I've] got to fuckin' pee!
35 DD:No. None of us in this age group use profanity. Ever.
36 WJ:No, what the fuck are you talkin' about.
37 (laughter from all)
38 AJ: No, fuck that man!
39 BS: No, that was just now. Those are the people from before.
40 (laughter from all)
41 DD:Are we just goin' to look at all the apes today?
42 BS: (looks at plaque) Who the fuck is Lester E. Fishel?
43 DD:Some ape guy.
44 BS: {"gangsta"} Lester! [Don't] eat that corn!
45 DD: [What's that] (laughs)
46 DD:The "Jane (laughs) Goodall Ape Museum". (3) {sing-song} Let's put on little hats (1.5) and
47 make em' walk around and do a dance.
48 (laughter from all)
49 BS: (ape noises)

Certainly, this is but a small sample of data with limited time for discussion, but we can, nevertheless, see that more is going on in these conversations than simple play with profanity among teenage males. There are obvious instances of metalinguistic comments about the discourse, various types of role-relationships are recruited, and continuing negotiations of appropriacy of performative and non-performative acts at both individual and group levels. These issues, among others, become apparent in Excerpt Two.

5.2 Excerpt Two

Bourdieu (1991) discusses the role of the spokesperson for the group, and the authoritative capital with which they are endowed, noting that "most of the conditions that have to be fulfilled in order for a performative utterance to succeed come down to the question of the appropriateness of the speaker—or, better still, his social function—and of the discourse he utters" (1991: 111). In exploring the second excerpt, the issue of minor power struggles and imposed conformity through the use of authoritative voices arises. These issues do not become topics of discussion, rather they are exhibited through reprimands and threats heard at the end of the excerpt that are supported by audience members through the use of performance speech echoing the threat. In this way we note that acts of saying are indeed acts of doing (Silverstein 1997, in progress).

What people say to each other is embedded in culturally-specific terms of interpretability such that the (verbal) text that is produced is "a set of relationships constituting a developmental structure" which is a function of established complex indexical relationships between the conversational partners (Silverstein 1997, in progress: 268). To understand how what is being said is the act of doing culture, that is, the act of constantly negotiating, transforming, and maintaining role relationships and appropriacy norms, we must understand the way in which (verbal) text is linguistically and culturally structured.

As this type of analysis entails rather detailed and lengthy analyses of the text, we will limit the present discussion to an attempt to briefly demonstrate how the social relationships

between the group members, as quickly sketched above, is constantly played out and negotiated through interactional text.

We recall from the discussion of the informants' characteristics that DC and BS, while best friends, are engaged in a power struggle for audience attention and approval from the group. They also have conflicting views of appropriate echoing and/or copying of ritual performance voices—a group specific style of verbal play for the negotiation of role-relationships in terms of individuation and group dynamics. Excerpt Two is a wonderful example of various performance voices by a number of the informants. It is one of the conversations in which nearly everyone participates through numerous self-images as well as verbal acts of group conformity by echoing the ongoing performance of spontaneous song and animal noises. Furthermore, it offers an example of how BS and DC are constantly negotiating their roles and social positioning in the group through acts of individuation that are moderated by the group as a whole, thereby simultaneously constituting acts of conformity.

This topic of this conversation is simply the llamas in the exhibit that the group has come upon. Again it is DD who initiates the topic, and BS who becomes one of the primary responders and then the initiator of the performance aspects of the remainder of the discourse. BS initiates the performance in line 5 by singing. It is DD's reading aloud of the full taxonomy of the llamas in line 6, from the plaque he mentions in line 4, that provides what will be the new lyrics for BS's song in line 16. In the intermediate lines, 7 through 15, nearly the entire group participates in the conversation, offering their various observations, knowledge, anecdotes, and other comments about the llamas. This group participation results in a relatively unstructured volley, allowing everyone to feel part of the group through the shared topic while preserving their individual interests and self-expressions. Unfortunately space and time prohibit our discussing this event aspect of the conversation, and it will, therefore, be left for future research.

Beginning with line 16, BS recommences his singing from line 5 (a typical mode of performance for BS). In line 17, it is AC who is the first to positively respond by laughing and showing approval of the performance by adding a light-hearted comment related to the topic of the llamas: "I always want to wave at the animals." In line 18, BS continues his new song singing "llama llama." Line 19 and 20 involve first DC then AJ echoing BS and singing the same line. At this point, in line 21, BS switches out of the performance speech to comment about his wanting a pet. This new topic is not pursued by anyone in the group, and both DC and AJ follow BS switch and offer conversational topics as well. Both topics are briefly engaged by other group members. In line 24, AC responds to DC's comment about the cold by dismissing it, telling him "You'll get over it." DC then follows-up on AJ's question of whether or not llama's have a mating call by asking, "What?" This prompts an echo of the original question by AJ, which then prompts BS (in line 27) to offer a possible example of a cooing sound the llamas might make. BS's performance is commented upon by AJ in line 28, where he states "That's your mating call Sporn." This type of verbal play, namely ritualized insulting among the members, is recognized and the humorous intent is reinforced by the group through laughter.

While DD attempts a conversational switch in line 31, it is BS's performance of another animal sound that is acknowledged by the group. This acknowledgement is evidenced though AC's affirmation of a good performance by BS in line 33, followed by laughter from the group. When DC copies BS's performance and echoes AC's comment (line 35), BS promptly performs a different sound, dropping the one DC echoed. When AJ echoes DC's comment about BS "being in heat," DC changes the topic (line 38) in an attempt to initiate conversation, but is not successful. In line 40, BS performs the animal noise again, supporting AJ's continuation of the llama topic, and then initiates a conversation with AJ. DC copies BS's new performance in line 41, but is reprimanded now (after his third imitation of BS's verbal acts in this conversation). In line 42 BS directly challenges DC by not recognizing the playful intent of his performance and by calling him "strange." Furthermore, BS threatens to turn off DC's music in the car. DC responds to BS by backing down from the confrontation and

accepting BS's comment that he is "so strange" by saying, in line 43, "I know." In line 44, AJ remains in the conversation, supports BS's reprimand and threat of line 42 by performing DC's voice and mocking what DC is likely to say when BS carries through with his threat.

EXCERPT TWO: Recorded at the outdoor Llama exhibit at Lincoln Park Zoo

Numbers in parentheses indicate pauses in seconds. Square brackets around text indicates overlapping speech.

- 1 DD: Are those ... Those are llamas, aren't those?
2 BS: Those are llamas.
3 WJ: Ye[ah].
4 DD: [It] says right here on the plaque.
5 BS: (4) (sings) One more time.
6 DD: Appalachia-- [llama glama pacos.(laughs)]
7 BS: [llama glama pacos. As in El Paca!] They say that in Spanish. And I didn't know what the fuck it was.
8 DC: What?
9 AJ: Now he knows that llamas are [el pacas].
10 DD: [Oh], they're from Peru and [Bol . . .]
11 AC: [As in El Paco] wool; oh my God, my mom [has like three el Paco wool sweater, and she's] so excited about them.
12 BS: [llama glama paca-- they know what's up with that shit!]
13 DD: Now, the thing is: if they're from Peru and Bolivia, aren't they used to being in like warm weather too?
14 BS: [Exactly.]
15 AC: [They have a] lot of fur. OK? They make sweaters out of their fur. (1) They should be fine. (sniffles)
16 BS: (sings) Llama glama paca.
17 AC: (2) (laughs) I always want to [wave at the animals.]
18 BS: [(sings) Llama llama.]
19 DC: (sings) Llama llama.
20 AJ: (sings) Llama llama.
21 BS: (2) I wanna' pet.
22 DC: Alright dude, it's cold outside.
23 AJ: Do any of you [guys know if they got] a mating call?
24 AC: [You'll get over it.]
25 DC: What?
26 AJ: Do they have a mating call?
27 BS: (makings cooing sound)
28 AJ: That's you're mating call, Sporn.
29 AC: (laughs)
30 DC: (laughs)
31 DD: Which one's the baby, [I wonder?]
32 BS: [(makes baa-ing noise)]
33 AC: [That's quite a successful making call. (makes same baa-ing)]
34 (laughs from all)

- 35 DC:(makes noise, too) Sporn's in heat.
36 BS: Yeah. (1) (makes animal noises) Aie. Aie.
37 AJ: He's in heat (laughs).
38 DC:(2) (laughs) That was the best time when we were going Downtown to see Jerry Springer
39 (laughs).
40 BS:(makes same new animal noise) Aie. Aie. AJ, what the fuck are you doing over there?
41 DC:(laughs, makes same new animal noise) Aie. Aie.
42 BS: You're so strange. I'm gonna' turn your music off when we get to the car.
43 DC:(laughs) I know.
44 AJ: He goes {imitates Darryl's voice} damn! (laughs) (2) You can't turn off this song dude!

6. Conclusions

The volleys in these conversations are extremely interesting not only in terms of the different uses of performance speech as means for group collaboration, but also in terms of the exhibition of who is considered to have the power to change topics, how that power is negotiated, and what the appropriacy norms for performance in the group may be. These events highlight the group's use of performance voices and the expression of "self-images" (Johnstone & Bean 1997: 223) which act as cohesive devices for the group, as formats for negotiating power struggles, and as explorations of the speaker's evolving sociolinguistic individuation. Granted in such a condensed time, we can only hope to offer glimpses of these aspects of sociolinguistic performance and performative acts. In conclusion, we would like to cite Baumann, as we feel he best remarks upon the importance of this type of research:

Performance ... is a unifying thread tying together the marked, segregated esthetic genres and other spheres of verbal behavior into a general unified conception of verbal art as a way of speaking. Verbal art may comprehend both myth narration and the speech expected of certain members of society whenever they open their mouths, and it is performance that brings them together in culture-specific and variable ways, ways that are to be discovered ethnographically within each culture and community. (1975:291)

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