Dialect Enregisterment in Performance

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This paper explores sociolinguistic enregisterment in two comedy sketches performed by a team of radio DJs. I show that dialect enregisterment works differently in these high performances than in other genres. Unlike the cultural artifacts that have been the focus of previous work, this sort of broadcast comedic performance creates multiple possibilities for the enregisterment of unexpected linguistic forms. Linking locally-occurring forms to multiple models of speech, behavior, and action, performances like these expand the set of potential meanings of particular forms by linking them with new or additional registers, creating semiotic alignments between different social identities that can be indexed by the same forms. Thus, in addition to describing what an idealized ‘culturally literate’ audience member needs to know in order to understand the performance, it may also repay our effort to ask how actual hearers understand what is going on.


KEYWORDS: Audience, dialect, enregisterment, performance, Pittsburgh, radio

The process by which sets of linguistic forms become ideologically linked with social identities has been called ‘enregisterment’ (Agha 2003, 2006). Enregisterment occurs through ‘metapragmatic’ activities that permeate discourse (Silverstein 1993). These are activities in which people show one
another how forms and meanings are to be linked. In recent work, my colleagues
and I have been exploring how one set of linguistic forms has become enregistered
as the dialect known as ‘Pittsburghese’ through a variety of discursive practices,
including face-to-face conversational interaction, online discussion board talk,
personal experience narrative, and the production and consumption of t-shirts
(Johnstone 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2011; Johnstone, Andrus and Danielson
2006; Johnstone and Baumgardt 2004).

In this paper I explore sociolinguistic enregisterment in a setting that turns out
to be considerably more complex: highly self-conscious broadcast performances
of speech and social identity. My data consists of two comedy sketches performed
by a team of radio DJs. Both sketches revolve around characters who talk in
ways that can be taken to sound local, thus potentially enregistering features of
their speech with Pittsburghese. But the characters’ speech can be taken to index
other things about them, too, including gender, class, profession, and personal
identity. I ask whether dialect enregisterment works differently in these high
performances than it does in other genres. How do the facts that the sketches
are created and performed by professional actors, clearly framed as humorous
performances, and broadcast via radio and internet to a wide audience shape
how the sketches draw on and create links between linguistic form and social
meaning? To answer this question, I explore what social identity or identities
are being evoked or created (and thus what kinds of enregisterment are being
proposed) in each sketch, and what linguistic forms can be said to be doing this
semiotic work. I use this analysis to support two claims – one theoretical and one
methodological – about high performance.

First, I argue that performances such as these can mean different things to
different hearers. I suggest that they are, in fact, designed to do so. Unlike
the cultural artifacts that have been the focus of previous work on dialect
enregisterment, this sort of broadcast comedic performance creates multiple
possibilities for the interpretation of unexpected linguistic forms. As a result,
different audience members may draw on different cultural frameworks to make
these forms meaningful. By linking locally-occurring forms to multiple models
of speech, behavior, and action, performances like these can act as a centrifugal
force, expanding the set of potential meanings of particular forms by linking
them with new or additional registers, creating semiotic alignments between
different cultural schemata that can be indexed by the same forms. (By ‘cultural
schemata’ I mean models of what possible meanings are and what kinds of
forms can index them. For example, a cultural schema that links linguistic
differences with differences in correctness leads Americans often to hear the
difference between two variants as meaning ‘correct’ in the case of one and
‘incorrect’ in the case of the other. Another widely shared cultural schema is
one that links linguistic difference with place, so that the use of a variant form is
heard as meaning that the speaker is from somewhere else.) Performances can,
thus, counteract the focusing, centripetal force of enregisterment practices like

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the others I have studied, which tend to standardize the dialect by limiting the number of forms enregistered with it and reducing their polysemy.

Although the argument I make here points to the need for descriptions of how particular groups of people actually interpret the skits and comparisons among subsets of the skits’ actual audiences, I do not do either of these things here. Instead, I simply show that the skits can evoke different social identities in different ways for different listeners. I do this primarily on the basis of ethnographic work in Pittsburgh conducted between 2001 and 2011 that has involved talking to Pittsburghers about what Pittsburgh speech, and particular features of Pittsburgh speech, mean to them, as well as observing how features of local speech are interpreted in other contexts. For specific examples of inter-individual differences in the interpretation of these two skits, I draw on listenings to and discussions of the skits with a group of men and women of different ages, with varying degrees of access to Pittsburgh cultural knowledge and familiarity with Pittsburgh speech (relevant in both skits), varying degrees of familiarity with the popular music of the late 1970s (potentially relevant in the first skit), and varying degrees of immersion in discourses surrounding motherhood, politics, and working-class femininity and masculinity (relevant in one or another of the skits).

My primary argument leads, secondarily, to a methodological caveat to scholars interested in the linguistic and cultural outcomes of performance. In addition to describing what an idealized ‘culturally literate’ audience member needs to know in order to understand a performance, it may also repay our effort to ask who may actually be in the audience and how those people might understand what is going on. While focusing on hypostatized ‘acculturated’ audiences helps us see how performance is implicated in the transmission of culture and language, focusing on the multiple interpretive schemata brought to bear by actual audience members, each culturally literate in a different way and to a somewhat different degree, can help us see how performance can be implicated in cultural and linguistic change.

THE ENREGISTERMENT OF DIALECT

Linguists have traditionally thought about linguistic variation in terms of ‘varieties’: relatively stable sets of linguistic rules or conventions that can be mapped onto physical or social spaces. The varieties called ‘dialects’ are ones that can be mapped onto geographical space, or, in the case of ‘social dialects,’ onto demographically defined social groups. A person who employs features of a particular variety can, in this way of thinking, be identified with the place or group the dialect maps onto. Sociolinguists’ work over the past decade or two has productively complicated this picture. We now ask questions about why people use features of one variety or another, rather than assuming that people inevitably speak the way they first learned to speak, and the answers we arrive
at have to do with identity and agency rather than only with geography and demography. And we ask how linguistic features get linked with varieties in the first place. How do particular words, ways of pronouncing words, grammatical patterns, and patterns of intonation come to point to particular identities and activities?

One useful way of thinking about this comes from linguistic anthropologists in the semiotic tradition. Drawing on the work of Roman Jakobson and Charles S. Peirce, anthropologists Michael Silverstein (1992, 1993, 2003) and Asif Agha (2003, 2006) have developed a framework that helps us see how ‘social meanings’ and linguistic choices can come to be linked and how sets of linguistic choices can come to be understood as varieties. Two of the key concepts in this framework are indexicality and enregisterment. A sign is indexical if it is related to its meaning by virtue of co-occurring with the thing it is taken to mean. When we hear thunder, we often experience lightening, rain, and a darkening sky, so the sound of thunder may lead us to expect a storm. Because the sound of thunder evokes storminess in this way, thunder noise can be used to evoke a storm in a staged play. Likewise, if hearing a particular word or structure used, or a word pronounced a particular way, is experienced in connection with a particular style of dress or grooming, a particular set of social alignments, or a particular social activity, that pronunciation may evoke and/or create a social identity.

Indexical links between forms and meanings can be fleeting, idiosyncratic, and changeable. But indexical links are often created in the context of already-available cultural schemata. To talk about this, it is useful to use Agha’s (2003, 2006) concept of enregisterment. A register emerges when a number of indexical relationships begin to be seen as related; a particular linguistic form (or non-linguistic sign) is enregistered when it becomes included in a register.

My co-workers and I have used a combination of historical research, ethnography, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistic interviews to describe how a set of linguistic features that were once not noticed at all, then used and heard primarily as markers of socio-economic class, have come to be linked to place and enregistered as a dialect called ‘Pittsburghese.’ Speech features now thought of as local figure in practices of social identification as potential markers of social class and local orientation and as tools for making more self-conscious regional identity claims. In the process, we have looked at a variety of discursive practices and material artifacts that serve to link locally-hearable speech forms with the city. In some cases, the indexical linkages people are invited to make are obvious, and the cultural schema that organizes the enregistration process is unambiguous. For example, a t-shirt that depicts local linguistic forms in speech balloons emanating from windows in the Pittsburgh skyline makes the hard-to-miss suggestion that these forms are to be linked with the city, a suggestion that makes sense in the context of the widespread cultural schema that links places with dialects and dialects with places. Someone who failed to get this point would find the shirt mystifying. Likewise, a person who sums up a situation in which
someone corrected her grammar by saying ‘That’s a Pittsburgh thing’ has clearly formed an indexical link between the non-standard form she used and her place of origin.

In what follows, I turn to a class of cases in which things are not so simple. In the radio performances, the potentials for enregisterment are multiple, and we cannot be sure what indexical links will be forged or what cultural schemata will be evoked to enregister them. The construction of humorous personae like the ones in the skits can enregister particular linguistic forms in multiple overlapping ways, some linked to place and some not, sometimes aligning different cultural schemata with one another but sometimes juxtaposing conflicting schemata. Broadcast humor like this must appeal to a wide audience; it has to be funny in different ways to different people. It can be useful, as a way of getting at widely circulating ideologies of language and identity, to stipulate a ‘culturally literate’ or ‘acculturated’ hearer who understands every instance of non-standard or unexpected speech the same way as the performer does and the same way as every other hearer does. However, doing this obscures how the stochastic nature of discourse, perhaps particularly performance, can lead to ideological change, broadening the repertoire of forms associated with a particular persona or activity and shifting their meanings. To put it another way, describing the knowledge of an idealized listener highlights how the meanings of linguistic choices become focused and standardized, while describing the multiple meanings a performance can have highlights the creative, emergent side of the process.

THE SKITS
The data to be analyzed in what follows consists of two comedy skits performed by the cast of WDVE radio’s ‘DVE Morning Show.’ (I use the skits, and my transcriptions of them, with the permission of WDVE Radio.) WDVE’s programming is geared particularly to young and middle-aged men. The station is the radio broadcaster for Pittsburgh Steelers (American football) games and was the long-time source of the distinctive and beloved voice of play-by-play announcer Myron Cope. The music is rock from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The station’s website offers links to slide shows that include ‘Wind Blown Skirts,’ ‘Sexy World Cup Fans,’ and ‘Busty Boxing Babes,’ as well as photos of cheerleaders and attractive young female station ‘crew members’ at the most recent Pittsburgh Steelers game. The Morning Show airs during commuting hours, 6:00 – 9:00 a.m. On the show, music, news, and traffic and weather reports are interspersed with skits performed by Jim Krenn, Randy Baumann, and other station crew members and guests. The skits are typically two to three minutes long.

The skits I analyze here were reproduced on a CD released around 2000 (it is undated) that was sold in local record stores to raise money for charity. They were originally performed on the Morning Show. One, called ‘Mother,’ is (or can at least be heard as) a parody of a song by the same name by Pink Floyd.
The other is a ‘Commentary’ performed by Jim Krenn, the *Morning Show*’s star DJ, playing the fictional WDVE Station Manager Stanley P. Kachowski.

**The skits are performances**

Whether or not all discourse is, in a technical sense, performance, there is no question from an ethnographic point of view that these two skits count as performances to the audiences for whom they are designed. As Richard Bauman (1977: 11) describes it,

> [P]erformance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. . . . From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the performer is thus marked as subject to evaluation for the way it is done . . . . Additionally, it is marked as available for the enhancement of experience, through the present enjoyment of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself. Performance thus . . . gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity.

Anyone who took the content of the skits as literal accounts of reality would either be a complete cultural outsider or be pretending to be one. What the performers are responsible for is not propositional truth but ‘displays of communicative competence,’ and the skits are evaluated not (or not only) on the basis of how realistic they are but on how well they are done. The point is enjoyment resulting from the combination of cultural celebration, mild cultural critique, and competent, original performances of fictional personae. If the performers are successful, audiences laugh. The performers are behind microphones in a radio studio, inviting audiences to ‘regard [them] with special intensity.’ Furthermore, the skits are “keyed” as performances (Bauman 1977: 16–24) via ‘special codes’ involving the use of non-standard and/or unexpected words, pronunciations, and intonation patterns; ‘special paralinguistic features’ such as music, laughter on the part of the performers, and raised speech volume; and ‘appeals to tradition’ including the evocation of characters and settings that the audience is familiar with and the creative use of familiar strategies for constructing the skits.

**Mother**

This skit was performed by Randy Baumann, singing and accompanying himself on the guitar, and Cris Winter (a female member of the *Morning Show* crew), who played the Mother character. I focus on Winter’s performance here, though the lyrics sung by Baumann are included in the transcription. In my analysis of the skit, I explore the potential indexical meanings of the linguistic choices Cris Winter makes as she voices the Mother character. Of the many possibilities, I focus on three: Winter could be said to use linguistic variation to sound like a mother, to sound working class, and/or to sound local. I use the following
typographic conventions to highlight the sets of features I will discuss in what follows: elements of the performance that might index a mother’s style are underlined; elements that might index a working-class persona are italicized; and elements that might index a Pittsburgh identity are in bold-face. I have not tried to highlight every feature that could conceivably be taken as an index of one or another of these three styles, only the ones I will be talking about. Some features can index more than one social identity. Phonetic features that could be semiotically associated with any of these social identities are also transcribed phonetically in the column to the right, and explanatory glosses about material that requires insider knowledge to interpret are below the transcript. Transcription conventions can be found in the Appendix. The phonetic features I will be discussing in connection with this skit are as follows:

• Monophthongal realization of /au/, so that slouch can be pronounced [slaʃ].
• Fronted realization of /o/, so that over can be pronounced [o<vr].
• Lowered, rounded realization of the low back vowel /a/, so that soccer can be pronounced [sɔkr].
• Vocalized realization of /l/, so that old can be pronounced [o+d].
• Deletion of /δ/, so that that can be pronounced as [æt].
• Alveolar realization of -ing, so that smoking can be pronounced as [smo<kn].
• Elided pronunciations of going to [gæn], have to [hætf], let me [lem], etc.

Extract 1: ‘Mother’ (RB = Randy Bauman; M = Mother; the skit can be audited at http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/bj4/Mother.mp3)

1RB Mother says I better sit up straight.
M You’re gonna get curvature of the spine like your Uncle Lou don’t slouch!
2RB Mother tells me not to make that face.
M If you keep makin’ at face you’re gonna freeze like at!
3RB Mother calls me out by all my brothers’ names.
M Jim, Frank, Charlie, Gar-, whatever the hell your name is, get over here!
4RB Oooh ahh, mother drives to all the games.
M Git your ass in the car I haveta pick up your sister at soccer after I drop you off at karate!
5RB Mother told me to eat all I took.
M There’s kids starvin’ in Africa that’ll love them Brussels sprouts! Ain’t yinz paid no attention to that Sally Struthers’ commercial?

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6  RB  Mother made it clear she wasn’t my cook.
M  Ohh, you don’t like Brussels sprouts? Well feel free to order off the menu! We have Like It, or Lump It. b
7  RB  Mother always spit on tissues to clean my face.
M  Come here, your face is filthy. Lemme get that crud off it!
8  RB  Ooooh ahh Mama hates a messy place.
M  What the hell happened in here? What if company comes over?
9  RB  Hush, now baby, baby, don’t you cry.
M  If you’re gonna cry I’m gonna give ya something to cry about.
10 RB  Mama’s gonna be your alarm clock for you.
M  Git outta bed!
11 RB  Mama will be your doctor too.
M  Put Vicks on your chest!
12 RB  Mama’s gonna wait up until you get in.
M  Mama will always find out where you’ve been.
13 RB  Mama’s gonna make sure your underwear’s clean.
M  So help me, if you get in an accident and you got skid marks in your underwear I’m gonna die.
14 RB  Ooooh, babe, ooooh, babe, oh babe, you’ll always be baby to me.
M  No matter how old you get you’ll still be my baby, and you’re not too old for a lickin’!
15 RB  Mother caught me out back getting ((pause)) high.
M  Were you‘unz behind the garage smokin’ pot?

a. Sally Struthers: an actress known and satirized for appearances in late-night TV commercials raising money for poor children in developing countries.
b. ‘Like it or lump it’: Eat it or go without. Here the Mother character uses the two phrases ‘like it’ and ‘lump it’ as if they were the names of menu items.
c. Vicks: mentholated petroleum jelly, a traditional remedy.
d. Boone’s Farm: inexpensive flavored apple wine.

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Many regular listeners will hear the song as a take-off on a song of the same name by Pink Floyd, released on the album called *The Wall*. The lyrics of the song are based loosely on those of the Pink Floyd song, and the choruses are the same as the Pink Floyd ones. *The Wall* is a collection of dark-toned songs performed in the character of a disillusioned overdosing rock star who wants to wall himself off from the world; the original ‘Mother’ depicts a bleak back-to-the-womb fantasy. In the skit, lines of the now parodically sentimental song about the singer’s mother alternate with spoken-word illustrations by a ‘mother’ character voiced by a female member of the show’s crew. The parody invites *Morning Show* listeners to recognize the skit as a take-off on the Pink Floyd song, although not all the focus group members actually did. People who did not get the Pink Floyd connection could still enjoy the skit. A great deal of the potential humor of the skit has to do with the mismatch between the sentimental-sounding song lyrics and the persona of the mother character who illustrates them, and noticing this does not depend on knowing the original song.

The mother identity is clearest on the level of reference and word choice. The sung part of the skit sets the character up as a mother, depicting her as doing things mothers do such as telling their children to sit up straight, chauffeuring them, spitting on tissues to clean their faces, occasionally getting their names wrong in the heat of the moment. This aspect of the skit’s potential meaning resonated particularly with the female members of the focus group, who said they could see themselves in the character. Among the many things the mother character does that could be taken to index that she is speaking as a mother are using the kin terms *your uncle* (line 1) and *my baby* (14); reusing formulas that many listeners would associate with a stereotypical mother (‘If you keep making that face you’re going to freeze like that’; ‘There are kids starving in [part of the world] that would love that [food item child isn’t eating]’); and adopting sing-songy intonation in ‘No matter how old you get you’ll still be my baby’ (14). The mother character is both typical and atypical: her behavior departs sometimes from the sentimental cultural schema of good motherhood with which her audience is familiar (and which is evoked in the lyrics) and teeters on the brink of the cultural schema of the bad mother, who shouts, curses, and threatens to hit. Yet, as noted, she reminds some listeners of their mothers and others of themselves as mothers, sometimes because they too act in some of these ways but would not publicize the fact.

It would be hard to imagine anyone understanding or appreciating this skit without noticing at least some of the ways in which the social identity of the mother is played with, and, indeed, no one in the focus group missed this. But there are a number of possible ways of hearing where this mother is located in class and space. For one thing, she could be a working-class mother. Linguistic variants that sound working class to at least some Americans include:
voice quality (low pitch, relatively monotone intonation);
• morphosyntactic features such as multiple negation (‘Ain’t yinz paid no
  attention . . .’);
• git [gɪt] for get;
• the alveolar variant of ‘ing (mak[ɪn] in line 2, starv[ɪn] in 5, drink[ɪn] in 12,
  lick[ɪn] in 14, and smok[ɪn] in 15); and
• elision associated with fast, casual speech (gonna [ɡoʊnə], haveta [hætə], that’ll
  love [ðællvə], lemme [ləmi] ‘let me’, comp’ny [kʌmpni]) ‘company’.

Heightened rhoticity, particularly at the beginning of the skit, could sound
working-class; it could also sound place-linked to some hearers, since it can be
heard in Appalachian speech. Likewise, the stopping of interdentals (that [æt],
the [æ], them [dɛm], and so on) is in its distribution both working class and local
and can be heard either way. References to class- and gender-linked practices
like drinking Boone’s Farm might also encourage a hearing of the character that
evoked working-class register and, possibly, enregistered some of these features
with it. The focus-group member who had recently moved to Pittsburgh and was
not yet attuned to the sounds of and discourse about Pittsburgh speech heard
the mother character primarily as working class.

For another thing, this mother could sound like she is from the Pittsburgh
area. Winter makes a gesture toward this reading of her character’s identity at
the very beginning. In the (stressed) last word of the first line she pronounces
slouch with monophthongal /au/, as [sləʊʃ]. Monophthongization of /au/ (so
that house can sound like [haʊs] or out like [aʊt]) is stereotypically associated
with Pittsburghese, or the local dialect as it is locally imagined. Winter does
not monophthongize /au/ in every possible environment in the skit, so that, to
someone who can hear this variant as different from the standard variant, it may
stand out perceptually when she does. Of five opportunities to monophthongize
/au/, Winter does so only once. Interestingly, she does not monophthongize the
/au/ in Brussels sprouts, thus failing to take advantage of another phrase-final,
stressed, ‘phono-opportunity,’ to use Coupland’s (1985) apt term, to display the
feature. This inconsistency could be taken to index the fact that Winter does
not monophthongize /au/ in her ‘real’ (unselfconscious, everyday) persona; we
return to this sort of enregisterment below.

Another widely recognized index of a Pittsburgh identity is to use yinz or
you’unz, rather than you, as the second-person plural personal pronoun. Winter
does this twice. Another feature of the performance that could sound local, at
least to some listeners, is the fronting of /o/. Like monophthongal /au/, this
feature is variable in Winter’s performance. Of ten opportunities to front /o/,
Winter does so four times, all in particularly audible places where the fronting
is likely to stand out: ‘Get over [oʊvr] here!’ in line 4, ‘Ohhh [oː]h’, you don’t
like Brussels sprouts?’ in line 6, ‘No matter how old [oʊwʌd] you get’ in line 14,
and ‘Were you’unz . . . smokin’ [smoʊkɪŋ] pot?’ in line 16. Vocalization of /l/, a
feature of local speech that outsiders often notice, occurs only twice in Winter’s
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performance, both times in the same word, old [o^d] in ‘no matter how old you get.’ line 14.

Line 8 includes the words soccer and karate in stressed, phrase-final and in one case line-final position. Winter pronounces both with the rounded low back vowel, [ɔ], that linguists identify as characteristic of the Pittsburgh area. This vowel takes part in the Pittsburgh Chain Shift proposed by Labov et al. (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2005: 271–272). To an outsider’s ear, like mine and those of all but one other members of the focus group, it can sound as if soccer and karate had been chosen, over other activities mothers could drive children to, precisely because they provide opportunities to showcase this vowel. Pittsburghers do not notice this feature of local speech, since it is the result of a merger and, thus, sounds the same to them as the other, more widespread variant of this vowel in North America. So local listeners could not, for the most part, hear this as an index of local identity. Winter pronounces the merged low back vowel this way invariably, throughout the skit, which suggests that it may not be part of the performance from her point of view, either. Still, it is hearable to a non-Pittsburgher as evoking a Pittsburgh identity. For all the focus-group members except the newcomer, features of Pittsburgh speech and features of working-class speech overlapped in different ways. Some listeners, for example, heard alveolar -ing as local, some as working class, some as both.

To sum up, Winter’s character is likely to be taken as a mother by any listener. This means that aspects of the way Winter talks evoke and create one or more cultural schemas of motherhood. The linguistic forms she uses may already be enregistered as indexes of one or another of these schemas for a given listener. For another listener, the performance may enregister them. For most listeners, what happens is probably a mix of the two processes: they hear certain forms as familiar indices of models of motherhood, while other forms become associated with motherhood for the first time. Additionally, some listeners take the Mother character to be a Pittsburgher. Some take her to be working class. Some may hear Cris Winter in her public persona as Cris Winter the DJ, in addition to hearing the character she creates in this skit.

The fact that the mother voice alternates with lines of a song highlights the contrast between the voice (or voices) represented in the song and the voice (or voices) represented in the spoken lines. This juxtaposition also contributes to the enregistration process by which features of the mother’s speech become linked with social identities. But this does not work the same way for every listener. Some may hear the skit as a comment on the Pink Floyd song, so that the mother schema evoked in the original song becomes overlaid with the ones evoked in the parody. For some, the performance may overlay a mother schema on a Pittsburgher schema, so that the song is about what a Pittsburgh mother is like. Or the song could be interpreted as a depiction of a working-class mother, or as a comment on all mothers, or as a parody of one’s own mother. In other words, the language of the performance, on all levels, can potentially be or become enregistered with multiple cultural schemata. Likewise, multiple listenings (for
people who own the CD) can enregister the same forms in different ways for the same listener.

Stanley P. Kachowski/Jim Krenn

The skit called ‘Stanley P. Kachowski and Gore’ instantiates a sub-genre of Morning Show skits that is familiar to regular listeners: Jim Krenn’s Stanley P. Kachowski character makes regular appearances on the show. Stanley P. Kachowski is presented as the ‘station manager’ of WDVE. Although he is sometimes represented as barging in on the DJs in the studio, at other times he performs monologues which are framed as pre-recorded editorial commentary about current events. The one under consideration here is of this sort. This skit was originally broadcast during the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign, when then Vice-President Albert Gore was running against George W. Bush to replace Bill Clinton as President, with Senator Joseph Lieberman as Gore’s running mate. It takes off from a recent visit to Pittsburgh by presidential candidate Gore and vice-presidential candidate Lieberman. The monologue revolves in part around a pun on ‘Tipper,’ which is Gore’s wife’s name.

There are at least three kinds of enregisterment that could be going on in the turns produced by Jim Krenn, who plays the Stanley P. Kachowski character. First, Krenn could be heard as representing Kachowski as having a Pittsburgh accent. Second, Krenn could be heard as representing Kachowski as having a stereotypical working-class, male lifestyle. Third, Krenn could be heard as representing himself as himself, in a performance of his own public persona consistent with audiences’ expectations. All three of these activities involve the use of non-standard speech forms that reinforce the content of the skit. Randy Baumann plays the role of the announcer, who introduces and concludes the monologue. Baumann also breaks away from this role and into his public persona as Randy Baumann, on occasion.

I use the following typographic conventions to highlight the sets of features I will discuss in what follows: In Baumann’s lines, elements of the performance that might index formality are underlined. In Krenn’s lines, elements of the performance that might index a working-class male style are italicized and elements that might index a Pittsburgh identity are in bold-face. As with the ‘Mother’ skit, phonetic features I discuss are also transcribed phonetically in the right-hand column. Again, I have not tried to highlight every feature that could conceivably be taken as an index of one or another of these three styles, only the ones I will discuss. In addition to the ones listed in connection with the ‘Mother’ skit, I discuss the following phonetic features in connection with this skit:

- Lowering of /ɛ/, so that commentary can be pronounced [kɑməntɛ’rɪ]
- Fronted realization of /u/, so that boom can be pronounced [bu’m]  
- Lowering of /ʌ/, so that stuff can be pronounced [stʌ’f]  
- Stopping of /ð/, so that that can be pronounced as [ðæ] or those as [doʊ’z]
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Extract 2: Stanley P. Kachowski and Gore (A = Announcer; SPK = Stanley P. Kachowski; RB = Randy Bauman; JK = Jim Krenn; the skit can be auditioned at http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/bj4/KachowskiGore.mp3)

1 A And now with a commentary, please welcome General Manager of WDVE, Mr. Stanley P. Kachowski.

2 SPK Hey, Stanley P. Kachowski, P is for politics, you know Gore is in town, what a go-, oh what a great time we had, I gotta tell ya I'm not really political or anything like that, you know we were partyin' they're, everybody's sayin' how, you know he's boring and stuff, this guy ain't boring, he's crazy! Hey I'm tellin' you, Randy, he's a wild man!

3 A [Well that goes s- against his image, I would say, Stan =

4 SPK = Did you see on the news they sai- who endo- who endorsed them, Franco Harris, did you see that?

5 A No.

6 SPK Yeah, Franco Harris come out 'n endorsed them. And he's wild, they didn't have it on the news but then Van Morrison came out on the other side and endorsed them and did you see 'He inhales! He inhales!'

7 A/ RB ((laughs))

8 SPK You know and Gore's just throwing his arms up in the air, and stuff, So we go down there's me, there's Gore, there's Lieberman, right and you know what we do we hop in my pea-green Vega, you know.

9 A/ RB The three of you?

10 SPK 'cause we want to be inconspicuous. So, don't worry, don't worry, I have my my Foster Grants on, my my sunglasses, just to give that, you know, little look of the,
11 A/RB Secret [Service[^d]]

12 SPK [Secret Service, kind of look, you know, and, uh, the cookie sheets that I have, riveted on the you know, fender areas of my pea-green Vega to pass]

13 A/RB [(laughs)]

14 SPK [inspection for emissions test, pretty sure those are bullet-proof. But anyway, so we’re driving, we go down Club Elite, OK, we go in there, and and Gore looks at me and says ‘Stanley, your money’s no good in Club Elite,’ cause I’m like getting all kind of cash from people for this campaign thing. I’ll just write it into one of those campaign fund-raisers account. ‘Oh, OK.’]

15 A = Big fan.

16 SPK Big fan. So anyway we go in there and we’re, you know Albert gives us some great seats and we’re sitting there and next thing you know, (Terry Weigel) comes over to Gore, you know, and he goes, ‘Hey, I may be running for President but I but right now I’m already Vice President.’ You know, so next thing you know, he’s getting a lap dance. They’re screaming, crowd’s screaming, all of a sudden you know, they’re getting in- the crowd’s even getting into it (watching this), they’re yelling ‘tip, tip, tip!’ And then he pulls out twenty dollars, you know he s-, he just sticks it in the g-string, and screaming ‘tip!’ he gets another twenty ou- ti- ‘tip!’ puts it in right in there, (they) yell ‘tip!’ you know the whole crowd (and) ‘Tipper Gore’s in the doorway!’

[^d]: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2011
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17 A/RB  ((laughs))

18 SPK/JK 'She's in the doorway'! ((A/RB laughing))

The crowd was trying to help him out! ((A/RB laughing)) You unz should have seen the look on his face! Oh, my good-, he jumped up, he just went. (A/RB laughing) she grabbed him by the ear and just twisted it and boom, he was just, he was gone. Me and Lieberman just looked at each other, we went down to Primanti's got a kosher capicola and cheese and, you know, just polished that off, and that was the end of the night. This is Stanley P. Kachowski, reminding you, tipping is good ( )

19 A/RB For a written transcript of Mr. Kachowski's statements, send a self-abused, stomped antelope to WDVE, Pittsburgh.

a. Franco Harris: A former Pittsburgh football star who often makes public appearances in the area.
c. ‘He inhales!’: A reference to a well-known political faux pas, when then U.S. Presidential candidate Bill Clinton told an interviewer that he had tried marijuana in his youth but ‘didn’t inhale.’
d. Secret service: The plain-clothes guards who protect the President and other political figures whose jobs put them at risk. Members of the secret service stereotypically wear dark glasses.
e. Cookie sheets: Flat metal baking trays.
f. ‘Pass inspection for emissions test’: In Pennsylvania, automobiles must be inspected annually to ensure they are safe (‘pass inspection’). They must also pass an ‘emissions test’ that measures pollutants emitted by the car. Krenn has conflated the two kinds of tests here.
g. Club Elite: A Pittsburgh night club where strip-tease is performed.
h. ‘Campaign fund-raisers account’: Money donated by members of the public to support a political campaign. It would be highly questionable to use such money to entertain people at a strip club.
i. Terry Weigel: Presumably a star in pornographic films.
j. Vice President: The stress on the word vice brings out the potential ambiguity of ‘Vice President,’ making it hearable as meaning ‘the president of vice.’
General Manager of WDVE, Mr. Stanley P. Kachowski.’ The music continues to repeat throughout the performance. Baumann’s use of Kachowski’s full title and the honorific ‘Mr.’ continue the scene-setting, as does the announcer’s low-pitched, relatively monotone, evenly-spaced voice and the lowered /ɛ/ he produces in commentary [kamante’ri], which can be heard as an attempt to pronounce the word the way it is spelled or to sound vaguely British. What follows would constitute a complete violation of the expectations set up by the introductory framing, if much of the audience did not actually expect something like it.

To represent Kachowski as speaking with a Pittsburgh accent, Krenn voices him in such an accent, drawing on stereotyped links between a subset of locally hearable non-standard phonological features and local identity. As mentioned above, one of these is the monophthongization of /au/. The name Kachowski (which Krenn, of course, chose for his character) is itself a phonological opportunity for the production of this variant, with /au/ in its stressed syllable. Krenn has Kachowski start by saying the name, monophthongizing the /au/: [køtʃəski]. Also close to the beginning of the skit is the word town, which is a stereotypical environment for /au/-monophthongization when it occurs in the word downtown ([dauntaun]) (Johnstone, Bhasin and Wittkofski 2002). Unlike Winter, however, Krenn is consistent having Kachowski monophthongize /au/: of 15 occurrences of /au/ in Kachowski/Krenn’s speech in the skit, 13 are monophthongal, one is partly monophthongized, and only one is diphthongal. Like the Mother character, the Kachowski character employs other features that can be associated with Pittsburgh speech, by insiders and/or by outsiders: you’unz; fronted /o/; a rounded low back vowel; and vocalized /l/. Like Winter, Krenn produces the rounded variant of the low back vowel invariantly. His /o/-fronting is, however, much more consistent than Winter’s. As noted above, Winter’s Mother character fronts /o/ only in particularly audible words, and less than half the time, whereas Krenn’s Kachowski fronts /o/ in 29 out of 40 possible cases, or almost three-fourths of the time. In Krenn’s skit, it is the non-fronting of /o/ that is unusual. Non-fronted /o/ occurs in unstressed syllables of proper names (Franco, lines 4 and 6, and Inferno, line 14), in ‘Oh, okay,’ (line 14) where he is quoting his character, in particularly fast speech (two instances of you know at the punch line of the ‘tip her/Tipper’ joke, line 16), and in the word capicola, line 18. Krenn stops fronting /o/ at the end of the skit, in line 18, where you know, don’t know (twice), and vote all have non-fronted /o/. At this point Krenn is arguably moving out of the Kachowski persona and into the Jim Krenn the DJ persona. Additionally, Krenn almost invariably lowers /ʌ/ in words like stuff, just, and something, and he sometimes fronts /u/. Neither of these features of Pittsburgh speech is part of Winter’s performance.

‘Stanley P. Kachowski,’ a stereotypical Polish-immigrant name, evokes a working-class persona for local listeners, since stereotypical working-class Pittsburghers are descendants of the Eastern European immigrants who came between 1890 and 1920 to work in Pittsburgh’s steel mills. Features of Krenn’s
speech that might point to his character’s being working class include some of the same features we saw in Winter’s performance of the mother: elision (gonna [gə’nə], on the [ɔnθ], of the [ɔfθ]); alveolar -ing; and deleted or stopped interdentals. Non-standard syntax can also be enregistered with a working-class male schema: non-standard negation in ‘this guy ain’t boring;’ and a non-standard preterit form in ‘Franco Harris come out and endorsed them.’ Krenn can also rely on the content of the skit: ‘partying’ at a strip club; being ‘wild;’ going to Primanti’s (a popular sandwich shop) for a late-night meal. In line 10 of the skit, Krenn has Kachowski pronounce inconspicuous in a slow, somewhat labored, hyper-correct way, [ɪnknæspɪkjʊs], that suggests that the word is not part of Kachowski’s everyday lexicon.

Representing Kachowski as driving ‘a pea-green Vega’ is a succinct way for Krenn to invite the inference that the Kachowski character is later-middle aged and from working-class roots. Chevrolet Vegas were produced in the 1970s; they were inexpensive and sporty-looking and appealed to young men of limited means, like the working-class generation that came of age in 1970s Pittsburgh, when steelmaking jobs were quickly disappearing. They were also unreliable, it turned out, now considered candidates for ‘the worst Detroit car ever’ (Newman 2008), and the pea-green color soon looked dated. Someone driving such a car (not to mention imagining that baking sheets are bullet-proof) is also represented as hapless, to listeners who get the reference. This sort of haplessness goes along with the working-class Pittsburgh male persona with which Krenn can be taken to be playing. Since getting the reference requires remembering the cultural milieu of the 1980s, only the older focus-group members were able to articulate what the ‘pea-green Vega’ could suggest. To others, the reference was funny because green is an unusual color for a car, but most of the humor of this segment of the skit was carried by the reference to using cookie sheets for bullet-proofing.

The reference to ‘kosher capicola and cheese’ sandwiches can be heard as another such tightly-packed, multi-voiced indexical, simultaneously pointing to the facts that Joseph Lieberman (an observant Jew) eats only kosher food, that a sandwich combining cheese and meat could not be kosher, that the real Jim Krenn knows these things, and that the fictional Stanley Kachowski is oblivious to them. Only one focus-group member got this, however, and only on repeated listening. For those who did not, ‘kosher capicola and cheese’ was funny in a different way, because it seemed over-specified and, for some, because kosher food and Primanti’s are not usually associated in local minds.

Performances of fictional personas are inevitably laminated (Goffman 1986: 156–157) on the actors’ performances of their own public personae. As Bakhtin (1981) showed, performances are always ‘double-voiced’ in that the voice of the performer is always intertwined with the voices of the characters being performed. It is clear in the data at hand, both from the ethnographic evidence and from linguistic details, that the public persona of Jim Krenn the WDVE DJ is hearable to many people who listen to Stanley P. Kachowski skits. For one thing, it is hearable to some listeners that Jim Krenn, unlike Cris Winter, has a Pittsburgh
accent. Although they both draw on the same repertoire of features that can be heard as voicing Pittsburgh-sounding personas in their performances, Krenn is, as we have seen, much more consistent in using these features throughout the performance than Winter is. While Winter performs Pittsburgh speech by selectively (and inconsistently) deploying particularly salient features of the dialect like monophthongal /au/, fronted /o/, and you’unz, Krenn’s performance includes both salient features of local speech and ones that are not. In addition, Krenn’s speech is characterized by a phonological variant that Winter does not use. Krenn’s /ʌ/, in words like stuff, come, club, and something, is almost invariably lowered. This means that Krenn’s speech, unlike Winter’s, displays both elements of the Pittsburgh chain shift described by Labov et al. Although lowered /ʌ/ is never commented on or self-consciously worked into performances of local speech, listeners who are familiar with the gestalt that is a Pittsburgh accent and who have heard Krenn in situations in which he is not performing Stanley P. Kachowski may in fact know that he always sounds like a Pittsburgher, even if his performance is not as exaggerated as in the Kachowski role. People who know about him (which is fairly likely in the case of fellow Pittsburghers, since Krenn has often been profiled in the press) know that he grew up in a working-class family in an old, working-class, inner-city neighborhood. Thus, at least some listeners hear not just a fictional character but Jim Krenn the radio DJ as well.4

In fact, some of the potential for humor in the ‘DVE Morning Show skits has to do with how the parodic double-voicing calls attention to itself. In general, the fact that Krenn, Baumann, and their colleagues are local celebrities means that local listeners are likely to know who is doing the performances on the show and what to expect in the performances. This means that the fact that there are authorial voices behind the characters’ voices is harder to overlook than it is in the routine double-voicings of everyday conversation. In particular, the skits often play with the fact that laminations of personas projected as ‘real’ and personas projected as ‘fictional’ can come unstuck, so that the performer slips between the voice of his character and a voice that can be heard as his or her own.5 In the Stanley P. Kachowski skit this can be heard to occur in the lines I have labeled with two sets of initials, those of the performer and those of his character. Lines 1–11 contrast Randy Baumann speaking in character as the announcer (A) with Randy Baumann speaking as Randy Baumann the DJ (RB).

In line 1, as noted above, Baumann speaks in a formal style, pronouncing commentary with a stylized lowered vowel in the final syllable and adopting formal diction. In line 2, Kachowski addresses the announcer as Randy (‘I’m tellin’ y-, Randy, he’s a wild man!’). The fictional announcer could be fictionalized Randy Baumann doing part of his DJ job, or Jim Krenn could be slipping out of the Kachowski character to address Baumann the way he would if Krenn were not in character as Kachowski. Baumann treats this turn as having been spoken in character, though, and, in line 3, Baumann responds in character as the
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announcer, addressing Kachowski (‘Stan,’ or possibly a cut-off ‘Stanley’), not Krenn (who would be ‘Jimmy’), and sticking to the careful diction (‘I would say’) of the announcer character.

In line 7, however, Baumann responds to the Kachowski turn of line 6 by laughing, something the announcer would not do. Here, in other words, Baumann has come unstuck from the announcer, slipping out of an announcer persona and into a Baumann persona. He does likewise in his subsequent two turns, interjecting a request for clarification in line 9 and adopting a more casual tone than the announcer’s (you as [jʊ]), and interjecting to assist Krenn in his improvisation by suggesting a phrase, ‘Secret Service,’ in line 11.

At the end of the skit, however, the Randy-the-DJ persona and the announcer persona become completely intertwined. Baumann speaks in the announcer’s formal diction, referring to the other speaker as ‘Mr. Kachowski,’ pronouncing the article a as [æ] rather than [ɑ], and pronouncing Pittsburgh as [pʰɪtsbʊk], vocalizing the /r/ in such a way as to suggest formal British speech to many Americans. He voices a formula often heard at the end of commentaries of the sort being played on here: ‘For a written transcript . . . send a self-addressed, stamped envelope . . . ’ But his play on the words of this formula (‘self-abused, stomped antelope’) evoke the Randy Baumann persona, the persona of the comic DJ. Krenn stays in character as Kachowski throughout most of the skit. But in his final turn, he, too, can be said to break partly into Jim Krenn persona, no longer fronting /o/ and laughing because Kachowski’s story is so funny.

To adapt Dell Hymes’ (1975) term, ‘breakthroughs out of performance’ such as these can serve as cues to performance, reminders that something double-voice, reflexive, and artful is going on. They can also point to the improvisational quality of the performance, in that things can spontaneously become so funny that the actors ‘crack up,’ falling out of character. When they do, they fall into other characters, however, those of themselves as they present themselves on the ‘DVE Morning Show,’ Jim Krenn and Randy Baumann, the drive-time DJs.

To sum up, features of Krenn’s and Baumann’s speech, like the features of Winter’s speech discussed above, can be heard in multiple ways, or, to put it another way, enregistered according to multiple cultural schemata. A feature that evokes (and helps to construct) a Pittsburgh persona may also evoke (and help to construct) a working-class persona, or it may evoke both, thus serving to overlay and align Pittsburgh and working-class identities. The same feature, or the distribution of the feature across the skit, may also enregister the feature with the Jim Krenn persona, reminding listeners (or creating the impression) that Krenn is a working-class Pittsburgher. Alternatively, a person could hear this skit and find it funny because of the joke about Al and Tipper Gore, oblivious to how the skit plays on characterological stereotypes. And there are many other references, overt and covert, to identities and events that may be juxtaposed in new ways, for some listeners.
DISCUSSION

To answer the question I posed at the beginning of this paper, dialect enregisterment works somewhat differently in the 'DVE Morning Show' skits than it does in other genres. Whereas conversations about speech, dialect dictionaries, t-shirts, and the like tend to focus and standardize the list of things that count as instances of Pittburghese, the Morning Show skits tend to open up new possibilities for the enregisterment of locally-hearable linguistic forms. The defining feature of linguistic performance is that it calls meta-communicative attention to itself, putting on display not only what the message means but how. Performance puts the focus on what Roman Jakobson called the 'poetic function' of discourse; 'The set [Einstellung] towards the MESSAGE as such, focus on the message for its own sake, is the poetic function of language' (Jakobson 1960: 356). Poetic discourse (in this broad Jakobsonean sense) is reflexive: it is about itself, sometimes as much as it is about what it denotes. Performers ask not just ‘What does it mean that I am saying these words?’ but ‘What does it mean that I am saying these words this way?’ As a result, ‘poetic patterning extracts discourse from particular speech events and explores its relationship to a diversity of social settings’ (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 61).

In the case of the 'DVE Morning Show' skits, audiences are implicitly asked to reflect on: what it could mean that a mother character has a Pittsburgh accent; what it could mean that she also sounds working class; how good mothers and bad mothers are related; why the station manager would sound like a working-class man; why an announcer would try to sound British; what it says about Jim Krenn that he sounds the way he does. Not all audience members are asked the same questions – if one cannot hear a rounded low back vowel, then this feature could not mean anything – and no one is given answers. Thus, the skits act as a centrifugal force, mixing characters and voices up in new ways and so opening up new possibilities for the indexical meaning of familiar forms.

Much of the previous research on dialect stylization (Coupland 2001; Rampton 1999) has as its central problematic how ideas about cultural and linguistic authenticity are reproduced. As I have shown, however, not all instances of dialect stylization are meant to project just one set of meanings, and not all audience members share the same interpretive repertoire. As Coupland notes in the context of a wider look at stylization, 'high performance and heavily stylized representations complicate the links between sociolinguistic practice and social meaning' in that 'they can . . . expose those links quite strikingly and make them available for critical reassessment' (Coupland 2007: 171). As I have shown here, the use of non-standard or otherwise unexpected forms in performances can reinforce existing form-meaning links, call existing links into question, or create new links, and which combination of these possibilities actually occurs depends on who is listening. Thus, to return to the second of the two themes of this paper, a full account of dialect enregisterment in performance should take into account that the interpretations of hypothetical 'culturally literate'
audiences are not the only ways such performances can be heard. This suggests the need for work based not just on the analyst’s interpretations but on the interpretations of other potential audience members as well.

NOTES

1. For comments and other help at various stages in the writing and rewriting of this paper, I would like to thank Jennifer Andrus, Richard Bauman, Allan Bell, David Britain, Andy Gibson, Adam Hodges, Scott F. Kiesling, Tom Mitchell, and Mark Thompson, as well as audiences at the University of Freiburg, Germany and the University of Lancaster, U.K. A Faculty Research Leave from Carnegie Mellon University in 2010–2011 and a generous semester-long research fellowship in 2011 from the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) at the University of Freiburg provided the time to do this work. Andrea Moll graciously translated the abstract into German.

2. Thanks to Mark Thompson for suggesting this.

3. In this chain shift, the central vowel /ʌ/ is lowered towards the position of /a/, which moves up and back to merge with /ɔ/.

4. On at least one YouTube video, Jim Krenn is identified as Stanley P. Kachowski even though he is not actually performing that role (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rktzCAGsaxA). This points to how closely the two identities are laminated, for some listeners.

5. In this respect the WDVE Morning Show performers are like the African American drag queens described by Rusty Barrett (1998), who perform both in the persona of a female celebrity and in ‘their own unique persona,’ which is also highly stylized.

REFERENCES


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APPENDIX: Transcription conventions

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<thead>
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<th>Convention</th>
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| underline  | In Extract 1: Elements that might index a mother's style have been underlined.  
In Extract 2: Elements that might index formality (Bauman) have been underlined. |
| Bold-face  | Elements that might index a Pittsburgh identity have been bolded. |
| italics    | Elements that might index working-class style are set in italics. |
| ((laughs)) | Laughter, pauses, and other aural elements of the skits that cannot be easily transcribed in words are enclosed in double parentheses. |
| speaker 1 talks = speaker 2 talks | Aligned equals signs indicate that the second utterance follows immediately on the first. |
| speaker 1 [talks] [speaker 2 talks] too | Square brackets enclose simultaneous speech, which is left-aligned. |
| (words I was not sure of) | Single parentheses signal that the material inside them is the transcriber’s best guess, since the words were unclear or unknown. Empty single parentheses indicate the presence of verbal material we could not make out. |

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